I have worked in art all my life. I will be primarily speaking of art, but parallels with ordinary human life are quite permissible.

In all times, all nations have their heroes; always had them and always will. The heroes are fairly easy to identify: they are the personalities who show courage and take on the responsibility themselves to discover laws, to create beauty, to defend, to enlighten, and to lead. The hero always has individuality. He is always different from the others. He does not mix or interbreed with the crowd. The hero is always distinguished by virtue. His activity is ultimately directed, without any personal gain, toward the survival and the prolonging of the human race. Heroes are creators.

Alongside the heroes, in every society, are antiheroes. They are called by various names. They are ultimately creators of death, antagonists of life. They live only for their own interests, which are generally limited to the three “pillars”: money, sex, and entertainment. This is also generally true of the life of the regular citizen, the ordinary Joe. However, antiheroes’ lives are always mercenary and destructive. Large in number, they create their own subculture. They bunch together, they can be elitist, and they disregard generally accepted moral rules.

Through manipulating consciousness, modern societies have managed to valorize the antihero’s main life principles as forward progress toward some other freedom, toward a certain novelty. On this soil, a special subculture has formed, spiritual nourishment for a vast segment of society. This subculture has manifested itself particularly in art, which in the modern world has turned, for various reasons, into a business. The triad of artistic celebrities, their interpreters, and the glamour magazines has proven to be a deadly tumor that is destroying its once-mighty forefather capitalism, with its positive qualities of entrepreneurship, freedom of choice, individuality. That is in essence. On the surface, however, this triad practically turns art into parody even as it serves art. Parody is not just secondary or tertiary with respect to the original; it is a distortion of the original’s essence—and frequently its destruction. This trinity’s moral and intellectual witches’ Sabbath has become the norm. This derangement, having
become the destroyers’ new moral center, is reflected in art with frightening power and consequence. And now let us proceed to the facts.

*The goal and predestination of art*

In 2010, as I was walking down a street lined with art galleries in New York, I walked into an exhibition. At this so-called show, I received an incomparable blow. All the walls in the gallery were hung with depictions of old folks’ genitals (both sexes) photographed in minute detail and presented in huge high-definition images. Such technical mastery! Such freedom! How sick can an artist be? What kind of walking carrion, both photographer and gallery owner, offers to visitors such a horrifying “artistic” exhibition? This is the path blazed by the geniuses of surrealism, with their psychopathy, cynicism, and mysticism.

I do not want to be killed by this anticulture; I want no such “aesthetic sense” from the delirium of mentally ill individuals. If I agree with the brainwashing of academic textbooks, art theories, and art books regarding “conceptions,” and if I agree with the manipulators of the gallery business, then I am killing myself. But my consciousness tells me, STOP!

Whether by chance or not, I found several books and articles together on my desk that intertwined into a single whole as I reflected on a very substantial topic: meaning in art. The books are *Aesthetics* by Hegel; Dali’s diaries, *The Secret Life of Salvador Dali Told by Himself* and *Diary of a Genius; Manifesto of Surrealism* by André Breton; and *Degeneration* by the psychiatrist Max Nordau (1849-1923). Reading these books and articles all at the same time proved to be very useful in evaluating art—and people in art—in general, and in painting in particular. Some may ask, why these books? Who is this Nordau? Why Hegel and not … ? What has Breton to do with it? Why Salvador Dali?

Because!

To those who disagree I say, please proceed into the world of academic research works, those polished diamonds of verbal aesthetics where life has become a scheme, a matrix. And while you’re at it, visit a gallery of “modernity-modern” art, for the sake of being purified and blessed, so to speak.
So there we have it: high philosophy expressed in Hegel’s truth and concepts; an analysis of the creative work of well-known (in their time) personalities of art and literature from the psychiatrist Nordau’s perspective; brain spray in Breton’s *Manifesto of Surrealism*; and the works of a famous creator-idol pretending to his own Dalinist philosophy of life and painting. Strange as it may seem, all these together have bared today’s state of art and its interpretation in relief.

Creativity is an area so complex that without at least a basic understanding of phenomena in art, orienting oneself in its heroes and antiheroes is simply impossible. I heard it said many times: why rummage in this matter (it is supposedly unethical; better not notice them); let artists create: draw, paint, sing, model, carve, and compose. It doesn’t matter what; the important thing is, they create. It is supposedly politically incorrect, rude, and petty to dig in the Augean stables of morals, be they about art or life in general. Everyone is individual, and those “not-right” people will die out should they cease to be in demand.

But they will not die out! They are legion upon legion!

And they clone themselves, especially in modern societies, with frightful force in order to hold out and crush true art by mass. This is natural: it is easier to survive in a crowd, just as in an animal pack. However, a leader always emerges from a multitude, and the crowd follows him even into the abyss. In art, this phenomenon has been tragic; nonsense has become a flag followed by its shapers: newspaper and magazine heavyweights, art collectors, “haberdasher” managers of modern museums, and…by the crowd, who always eat up the leftovers in this feast of modern art fashion.

So, will true art drop naturally off the cliff?

It should not!

Where are the meaning and the true beginning in art? After all, art can be defined as a fairy tale that never ends or as a magical deception with no *universal* laws of beauty, but only the individual’s creative freedom.

Just as in every other profession, a linguistic system of signs exists in art to enable people to understand each other. An unrecognizable language serves only the singular purposes of the critic or creator who is alien to the universal. The unintelligible creative language of one man (who is in some cases seriously ill) that has no semiotic foundation
cannot be recognized and understood. Conversely, there can be no professional skills without a culture of thought. No special character or ephemerality of an unintelligible artistic language, no “elite performance” can be the goal of art. The goal and the ideal in art lie in the depth of the human spirit, and the sentient man’s need for art is centered in the recognition of both his spirituality and that of the world around him.

Culture is collective memory, a universal value. It is like air. In art and in artistic creation, culture manifests itself through the artistic image. Of course, every epoch in art speaks with its own language, its own media. However, the essence of art remains the same in all times: to show the depth of the human spirit.

What for? In order to survive!

The essence of man, his difference from the rest of the entire biological world, is thinking—purposeful thinking—to survive and to consciously endure! There can be no false truth in survival. One cannot build or design an airplane, a camera, a locomotive, a car, and so forth based on deception. If that were so, we would not be able to fly, to photograph, or to ride. Likewise in art, fraud cannot be the means to achieve a human goal. Any kind of invention is tied to the human spirit; it is fertilized by intellect. Deception cannot be a human goal; as Goethe said, it is not meaningful to survival.

Art’s essence should be directed at man as a thinking and feeling being. We understand any creation only through thinking, correct? The aesthetic understanding of a work of art is born only from its recognized spiritual content. In all forms of art, in all their variety, the constant of essence and meaning remain the pillars. The concepts are detailed at the deepest levels of the philosophy of art in the classics of philosophy, Hegel and Kant.

The theory of anti-art

Many are those who tried—and did—create (or modernize) the philosophy of art, including the theorists of meaninglessness in art. André Breton, that ideologue of surrealism, together with his allies who shared this philosophy (including Dali), asserted that consciousness is very harmful to art. According to his theory, the creator must certainly be an insane psychopath—but so must the public in order to appreciate the supreme flight of the mystifiers. Consciousness is devilry!
But how can I appreciate you, Messrs. Academics, if no thought process is required? In a trance?

The main idea of surrealism is to advance “forward” to non-awareness on the level of animals. We have already seen in our time a dog that has walked down this path and set an example. Now this canine genius (!) is busy creating. It wants to convey its spirit somehow. And it has succeeded; its oeuvre is in demand and sells!

I say with certainty: this all comes from “the book of death” of art.

A wild U-turn has taken place. Stupidity has triumphed. High art shriveled from its delicacy and yielded to the mob. It ceded its tongue to chirping.

Here is the course from the great to the obscene.
It matters not whether the subsequent madonnas are the essence or grotesque, whether missing or exaggerated links are in this chain, whether some local truth lies in these monstrosities or not. The last one of these masterpieces represents the very bottom to which the so-called conception falls. It is death in art, the death not just of the creator’s thought but also of the viewer/collector. And even this stuff is in demand and is promoted.

One can, of course, use meaninglessness in art for entertainment, which is indeed what mostly takes place. One can trade aesthetic emotion for sensual reflection. One can
mix high spirituality with graphic design work or poster art; justify it through considerations of modernity and fashion; proclaim this mix to be a “new vision” or “conceptual art”; find a couple of pretty quotes and confirmation that some Great Ones supposedly held to similar conceptions. But…

It is *not permissible* to use this for manipulation and in this fashion assert the meaning of art!

This newly fashionable output must be evaluated truthfully and put in its proper place on the grocery shelf. Ranking vulgarity using some sort of scale of values amounts to killing the human thought that extracted us from the animal state. Everything must have its place and its price that are named and recognized. Even though the monetary equivalent of obscurantism is negligible compared to true spiritual value, the constant substitution of fraud, or simulacrum (a term used by Jean Baudrillard), for the main values of art inevitably leads to destruction of art. These simulacra now stick out everywhere: from galleries, from clubs, from museums (even major ones), from radio, from television…from all places where pop art finds a home.

*The principles and criteria of art*

If we fail to define the principles, criteria, and meaning of art and instead exclusively follow the verdicts of “the heavyweights of fashion” and their reactions in the “weighty” publications, evaluation of art regresses to the ordinary Joe’s “I like it—I don’t like it.” The beautiful (in its philosophical interpretation) is replaced by *taste*. Taste is superficial; as a rule, it relates only to form. The so-called culture of taste fears depth of analysis. It is based solely on individual judgments; it deals with consumers’ needs. The row over the leadership of the culture of taste centers on its principal fruit: fashion. Producing stuff that is ever brighter, ever more cockerel-like, and ever more vulgar is a bother. Interpreters, journalists, and advertisers struggle with whether or not to grant some particular creator access to their journalistic holiness. This is what the struggle in art today is about. To expose—or to anoint?! Haberdashers of all sorts do not fight over the essence of art; they fight for the favorable opinion of a journalist or two (at this point, eyes are cast heavenward, as if speaking of God) who can appoint one a “celebrity”—or grind one into the dirt. God forbid someone’s work should be called
“household art.” It’s over, then! Anathema! And should the work be shaped within frames that exist for that particular purpose, then the rejection is total. A well-shaved trough for ritual services—that is today’s norm! Everything is packed into this trough, from paintings to decorative objects. The authors and gallery owners tirelessly create to satisfy the fault-finding stare of the journalist/interpreter. The curators of exhibitions seek to please with their innovation and to perform a thorough selection of “conceptions” that fit the pulse of the brand-new time. As a rule, interpreters see a work’s “weight” (in the form of price) as its “necessity” (and therefore truthfulness). But please note that all this is done only by people who have their own subjective tastes and their own position in society, their own state of mental health (which matters a lot), and their own origins and education, as well as monetary compensation for their oh-so-hard labor and a thousand other factors guiding them.

As the saying goes, there are as many opinions as there are people.

One opinion says that talent and genius (Dali called himself one) are the illumination of a special mind for which there are no reference points, for which no signs of expression exist; that the genius’s pure subjectivity is actually the truth; that what causes his inspiration—alcohol, drugs, perversions—doesn’t matter; what matters is that it works for him. However, the pettiness of content reduces the work to the level of the personal, the particular. When the criterion of the universal in beautiful/ugly is absent, the private genius depends entirely on his own taste. The deceptive similarity to that which is great presents us viewers with only the form, the taste of such a performer. A private genius is a “domestic genius.”

The more important the artist, the deeper the issues of the human spirit that agitate him and induce him to create. The greater the talent, the more pronounced the impact of his works, which are preserved by the people staunchly through all times. Few examples of this exist in all areas of artistic creation combined. There are thousands of composers, but none are worth listening to except the few written in “the book of life.” Almost everyone is an artist, but none are worth looking at except the ones written in “the book of life.” The same thing applies to sculptors. As for singers, the range is from the great Maria Callas from “the book of life” to the hoarse performer called Lady Gaga from “the book of death of art,” and so on.
Still, the obscurantists and the merchants of obscurantism will not be able to blot out the names of the great ones even centuries later. I was delighted to read these words by Anthony Tommasini, a *New York Times* critic who emerged from the sphere of music, which he understands from within.

There are other critics, especially in the field of painting, who can make like roosters: “Just let me crow, and nothing after that matters!” Their criticism is a dime a dozen. Revealing the essence of the work of art in a practical way is almost beyond the powers of the degenerate journalist army. They produce simple depictions, as if a sighted one was talking to the blind: “We see circles, dots, and stripes. They are colored and very modern. They look like homes or mounds…” Or take the critical article whose author has an issue with the wall paint color in an art gallery. She really, really hates white, and that’s that! She thinks white is dull. The fact that they drove a huge nail in that white wall and hung a jacket with many multicolored ribbons on it—and called it art—did not interest the lady critic. These kinds of articles by “prominent” critics have become the norm.

Or how about this kind of criticism: He (!) did it for the first time! Sensational! Innovative! He nailed a boot into the heart of another boot. Astounding meaning. This is the freshest conception! Such is the frequent mode displayed by commentators, even educated and well-known ones. Well, I can understand the artists, but this stuff is promoted by experienced journalists! In such authoritative publications as the *New York Times*, it is hailed with words like “hallelujah!” I am certain they understand that they serve the base crowd, and serve it they do. Day after day, they polish my brain with meaninglessness while using deliberate fancy verbiage.

It is regrettable that so much money and energy are wasted on emptiness. Of course, the authors of such commentaries have power only as long as they are employed by publishers. I wish they would retire already. Similar ones would take their place, though.

Let me remind, you, however: Leonardo da Vinci was not the first one to paint a woman, but he remains the First One.

These warriors of the pen, armed with word-juggling skill, are convincing only until the next turn. Everything significant requires a different kind of analysis and a different kind of courage. It doesn’t fit in the paradigm of nausea-inducing standards; it is
individual. Everything significant requires labor and inside knowledge of the subject. It is troublesome, it takes a lot of time, and it requires engaging the thought process. What for?

In order to survive!

What will be left in the history of art centuries later are things that possess artistic value. Thanks be to God, a punishment currently exists for the wallpaper makers, the playbook builders, the pathetic designers, the parodist postermakers, and those who sing their praises. This punishment is the medium of the time and one over which they have no power: the modern wheel, the World Wide Web, where one can find and see what has human meaning in art, which works have professional and artistic power. Some people have tried to persuade me, “Don’t watch that stuff. Go to the good museums. They are few, but they are in good order. Even so, the bad spreads like locusts and threatens to consume the good. Quantity transforms into quality. This law works universally.

Everything that is alive and has survived is born of the human spirit and meaning. It belongs to all, and it is universal…in order to survive!

Breton’s surrealist gibberish

The duce of surrealism is André Breton (1896–1966), who managed to turn the reflection of the human spirit in art into meaninglessness. Breton was the son of a clerk who graduated from a church school and then took courses in medicine and psychiatry at the Sorbonne. He failed to obtain professional qualification and a diploma, and then he was seduced by literature. He invented so-called automatic writing—impersonal creativity. He proclaimed mechanistic virtuosity to be the meaning of art not just in literature but also in painting. The point of mystical surrealism was to free oneself during the creative process from the control of the intellect, from aesthetic taste, and from experiencing anything. Indifference and detachment became the new aesthetic.

A theoretical basis emerged: Freud’s psychoanalysis (the theory of psychological universality in human sexuality, derived from the “experience” of treating seven patients). The new thinkers associated conscience and morals with the old, which is hostile to the novelty of the times. Jung’s analytical psychology was not taken into account for it required generalization and thinking, while Freud’s psychoanalysis proved
to be a one hundred percent fit for the foundation of amorality laid by the theorists of nonsense: the brain is but an appendage to the genitals. Morality, guilt, and shame (the things that distinguish people from beasts) were rejected by the theorists of surrealism as burdens. The animal instinct—this is what man must consist of! The maddened intellect found itself on maddened historical ground in a maddened reality, and it boiled over! The result has been utter delirium from the inspirers and from their followers!

Right away, artists became drawn to this novelty. Nothing should be illuminated by either feeling or thought. One should not think but rather just keep drawing in a delirium. Create and assert yourself in a hypnotic dream, as in a trance with eyes closed. Keep pushing your brush or pencil over the surface to show your unblemished genius. And so they kept pushing, and showing, and keep on showing still.

This is how Nordau explains such deviations of the human psyche:

It is known by the way that in psychopaths, certain nerve nodes are usually in disorder, especially the ones related to sex life. The irritations emanating from them create notions of erotic nature in the brain—and constantly, since the disorder itself is of long duration. As a consequence of this, the erotic element is often admixed to all notions [italics mine–V.B.] of the psychopath.

The brain of the exhausted and degenerate elaborates nebulous presentations, because in any case it is not in a condition to respond to a stimulus by vigorous action. Hence ignorance is artificial weakness of mind, just as, conversely, weakness of mind is the natural organic incapacity for knowledge.

That is, the theorist’s “sur” is a typical disease of the brain that must be treated, not fostered.

Nonetheless, Breton was an authoritative and authoritarian leader, a tyrant even. His ideal was Hitler, as it was for Dali. And here is an example of Breton’s psychopathy, which is similar to Hitler’s: “Leave everything. Leave Dada. Leave your wife. Leave your mistress. Leave your hopes and fears. Leave your children in the woods. Leave the substance for the shadow. Leave your easy life, leave what you are given for the future. Set off on the road.”
I can practically hear the shriek and see the arm raised in salute: “Heil myself!”

The welter of the historic period started swinging the crowd’s pendulum. It became an active force that mixed everything in one heap: mysticism, psychoanalysis, revolutionism, rebelliousness, street morals, and so forth. The inspirers of ideological thoughtlessness assumed leadership positions and led their flock to intellectual degeneration, and in art they led it to the precipice.

Breton also tried to realize himself in politics and even managed to join the Communist Party (not for long, though; he must have gotten bored). Thus he became a “Marxist” for a while. (Marx, though, used to say in such cases, “If they are Marxists, then I’m no Marxist.”)

Breton’s Manifesto took shape by 1924. In this parade of nonsense consisting of a heaping of quotations, unsystematic name-dropping, pulp fiction, mysticism, spiritism, mentions of psychoanalysis, and so forth, the insane Frenchman became the leader of surrealism, which theoretically fertilized the masochist “genius” thinking of Dali expressed in the so-called philosophy of Dalinism.

_Dalinism: From the theory of marasmus to its practice_

Talking to a newspaper reporter, the French Academy member and writer Michel Déon, a friend of Dali, described the artist as an educated actor who played many roles in his life, including the roles of provocateur, mystifier, and jester. A small remark in the annotation to the interview says that it was Déon who edited and sometimes rewrote many of Dali’s books and articles. What was edited out and what was retouched are not known, but Dali’s paintings are the best confirmation that the editing was appropriate. Déon’s statement about Dali being educated sounds very doubtful to me. Dali’s diaries—which are to some degree the man’s true face and his most sincere tale about himself—speak very eloquently of his “supposed educatedness.” The topics and problems that circled about in his specially educated brain were expressed in his “Dalinist philosophy.” Its foundation is as primitive as those of a savage aboriginal: egocentric audacity (= colored feather), depraved sex (= sex), refined-depraved gourmandize (= banana). Dali called his loose wife (M. Déon says she was exceptionally liberated sexually) the Virgin.
Mary; he called himself the Savior; and he called his debauched union with this “virgin” (and not only with her) the Holy Family.

Even though I am not at all religious, I cannot refrain from saying, how dare you!

I do believe that Dali appointed himself a genius too hastily. Apparently, his “excessive educatedness”—or perhaps the delirium in his brain—caused him to use words without understanding their meaning.

The values that Dali reveled in are no different from the usual delights of the consumer crowd—bread, circuses, and sex. Nothing new there. However, in the case of the pathologically depraved Dali, all this is manifested in a particularly disgusting way. No level of professional skill—not even the highest level—can overshadow the abomination that shines through his entire life and work and is worshipped by his followers.

A delusion of grandeur, or an exaggerated sense of superiority, is a clinical diagnosis—the ABC of psychiatry, so to speak. The sublimated inferiority of such people causes them to be tyrants and to slight everyone who appears in their field of influence or offers them resistance.

“The great mystifier”: this term has become stuck to Dali and with good reason. Let us see what the psychiatrist Nordau has to say about mystification and its manifestation. He writes:

He who sees the world with the eyes of a mystic sees only a rippling dense fog in which he can find anything at all. Everything that is clear, definite and has only a single meaning seems vulgar and trite to a weak head; *everything that has no meaning seems deep to it* [italics mine—V.B.] and can thus be interpreted in any fashion….Inherited or acquired mental weakness and ignorance lead to one and the same result: mysticism….Mysticism for the most part has a definite erotic tint, and when the mystic sorts out his vague notions, he is constantly inclined to ascribe to them an erotic content.

This diagnosis fully covers the essence of Dali. The most amazing thing is that Dali himself confirms this diagnosis. I will present below several quotations (in the first
person) from the diaries *The Secret Life of Salvador Dali Told by Himself* and *Diary of a Genius*. Since this article is not academic research, I will make no references to pages in the works quoted. The reader can absorb it on his own by reading the original texts. Moreover, I would like to induce the reader to immerse himself in the “depth” of this fallen artist’s so-called philosophy. I apologize right away for the plentiful quoting; I resorted to it since many would simply refuse to believe a simple retelling.

**Dali: The embodiment of marasmus, or, Hitler in art**

While Breton theorized, Dali realized the delirium of surrealism in practice. One should keep in mind that not everyone is capable of such an implementation, no matter how many marasmatic theories he may have read. You see, some artists who adhere to conceptualism or surrealism are themselves normal people, so they simply exploit the public’s brainlessness and the marketplace’s demand for idiocy. Dali’s case is special. Whenever I have looked at his perverted paintings, I have always been troubled by the thought, what kind of consciousness or self-consciousness must one have in order to delight in painting the loathsome? Most of Dali’s paintings suggest that the painter is clearly mentally ill. Sure, he is ill, but it is unclear why no one notices it. And now, as I mentioned above, I have gotten my hands on those “genius” diaries. I confess that my premonitions were fully justified. Moreover, Dali’s revelations exceeded all my expectations. The reading of these opuses dotted all the i’s. It became clear that Dali truly was a clinically ill psychopath with extreme masochistic inclinations, similar in his thinking to Hitler. He can be called Hitler in art with full justification, since he did no less harm in that sphere than Hitler did in other spheres. I am sure that this comparison will draw criticism to me. Some will shout, “He was an excellent painter! His technique is genius!” and so forth. However, Hitler too was a brilliant orator and an organizer of genius. Try telling that to people who survived the Holocaust. The harm done by these two antiheroes is comparable: pathology in life and in art as the reflection of life.

As could be expected, Dali imagined himself a genius since early childhood, and throughout his memoirs, he described with relish which traits of his thinking and
character formed this self-awareness. Here in the very first lines, he writes with obvious delight:

I peed in my bed almost until the age of eight—purely for my own pleasure. I reigned and ruled in the household. Nothing was impossible for me. My father and mother practically worshipped me.

In a normal family, such behavior by a child would have caused the parents to seek a doctor’s advice. Apparently, though, their brains were likewise not in order, since some other deeds of their son caused them no concern, either. The genius proceeds to recount with rapture how at age five he pushed a boy on a tricycle off a bridge and into the water. The boy fell from a height of four meters and was of course injured. Here are the feelings experienced by the little but already formed sadist:

I then run home to tell the news. All through the afternoon pans full of blood were carried out of the room where the child was to be bedridden for more than a week….I don’t recall experiencing the slightest sense of guilt throughout that day. That same evening during the regular evening walk I pureheartedly delighted in the beauty of every blade of grass.

These inclinations of his grew stronger with every passing year. He writes ecstatically:

I am six years old….In the corridor I saw my three-year-old sister traveling on all fours. I stopped and after a moment’s hesitation kicked her in the head with all my might—and ran on my way, consumed by feverish joy from my wild escapade.

The wild escapades continued and took the form of abusing almost everyone. Already by age seven, this youngster was drawn to the erotic—the perverted kind, since his erotic sense was aroused not only by women, but also by different foods, such as crabs, lobsters, and crayfish. And not only that. Read his relish:

What pleasure it is to crunch with one’s teeth the heads of small birds? Is there any other way to eat brains?
One of his allies in surrealism, one Laporte D., a theorist of excrement (I kid you not), called Dali a “non-ordinary thinker,” and he was not mistaken. This genius really did possess a special tool for thinking that was located not in his brain, but in his… read for yourselves:

The jaws are the main instruments of our philosophical knowledge. What can be more philosophical than the supreme moment when you suck in the marrow from the bones cracking under your molars? When you’re freeing bone marrow from all its covers, you appear to yourself equal to god. It is the taste of truth itself, soft and naked as it is extracted from the bone well—when you seize it with your teeth, you become possessor of the truth in the first instance!

I suppose the reader has guessed already where this thinker was drawing truths of the second instance from; that will be discussed below. At this point, we arrive, surprisingly, at his statement of his own objective reality. This time he writes without rapture:

I wasn’t all that clever, and apparently in compensation I was given the ability to reflect everything. I became a reflector in the supreme degree because of my “distorted polymorphy” as well as my phenomenally arrested development; having imprinted in my mind the vague heavenly memories of the breastfeeding baby—memories of the erotic kind—I kept clinging to pleasures with the boundless stubbornness of an egoist. Meeting no resistance, I was becoming dangerous.

It is simply amazing that no one saw the danger at the time, even though he made no secret of his “reflections,” staying in a “uterine state” where he was comfortable “as in heaven.” It turns out that it was precisely in this state that he had all kinds of visions, of which “the most magnificent one was the vision of two fried eggs suspended in space.” These eggs not merely became imprinted in his consciousness, but also defined his genius before he was even born, albeit as embryos that blossomed grandly once he left “the uterine state.” The world was waiting precisely for this blossoming, naturally. And so that the world made no mistake about who had arrived, Dali prompts:
Ring all bells! Let the peasant bent over his field straighten his back which is like the trunk of an olive tree bent by the tramontana wind; let him perch his cheek on his gnarled hand in the noble gesture of the thinker…Look! Salvador Dali was born. The wind died down, and the sky is clear. The Mediterranean Sea is placid, and on its smooth surface seven sunrays glisten in a rainbow as if on fish scales…. They are easy to count—and so what? Salvador Dali needs no more!

Understandably, Dali describes with particular relish his post-puberty period in which his inborn masochism is intertwined with sex. Here is an impressive excerpt from the memoir:

One of my lady friends who always admires me hinted more than once already about the beauty of my legs…She is sitting on the ground; her head is lightly resting on my knee. Suddenly she lays her hand on my leg—I feel the barely perceptible caress of her trembling fingers. I jump to my feet right away, seized by the feeling of jealousy of myself, as if I had suddenly become Gala. I push my admirer away, throw her to the ground and stomp on her with all my might. People barely manage to drag me away from her bloodied person.

Already at that time I loved to recall nostalgically an event, which never actually took place. I supposedly observe a naked baby being bathed. I don’t care if it’s a boy or a girl; I’m looking at the buttock, in which there is a hole the size of an orange; in it ants are swarming. The baby is turned from side to side; for a moment it is laid on its back, and I think that the ants are about to be crushed. But the baby is standing on its feet again—and the ants are nowhere to be seen. The hole is gone too. I have difficulty determining the date when this false remembrance appeared, but it is one of the most vivid ones. [italics mine—V.B.]

I cannot bring myself to quote, let alone to retell, Dali’s erotic entertainments, including those with his wife Gala, which he narrates with spittle on his lips. Many of these are reflected in his paintings, though. Masochistic-erotic types like him love to stare at them. And even that is not all. He describes with pleasure another loathsome
aspect of his personality: together with his friends, he borrowed “needed sums,” and failure to return the moneys produced not “pangs of conscience” but, on the contrary, nothing but delight. The man was an abomination in every respect.

In conclusion, a couple drops of perfume are needed in order to complete the perfection of his image with some French flair:

I discovered perfume! I switched on the soldering iron, which I used for engravings and boiled some fish glue in water. I then ran to the back yard where some sacks of goat dung were standing—I only half liked that aroma until then; I took a handful of the dung, threw it in the boiling water and stirred it with pincers. At first the smell of fish hit me, then the smell of goat. A bit of patience is called for; the mixture will achieve perfection when I add a few drops of lavender oil.

Ah, the miracle! Now this is precisely the smell of a billy-goat. I cooled the mixture, and it turned into a paste which I smeared all over my body. Now I am ready.

Oh yes, now he’s truly done.

*   *   *

Again and again the question emerges: how can such a pervert be taken seriously by the world around him, and even elevated by some to the rank of genius? The answers are easy to find, strange as it may seem.

Look around you, or read some statistics collected by psychologists. There are hundreds of thousands of psychologically unsound people around us, including thousands of perverts. Just take a look at the crime statistics. Dali’s world is the world these people live in; they recognize their own visions and sensations in his paintings. This world also includes a certain number of journalists, scholars, and other adherents of Dali and his ilk.

However, there is also the world of mass consumers, the broadest social stratum whose consciousness is easily susceptible to manipulation. This brainless herd are the main consumers of nonsense. It is they from whom the professional merchants of art make their money.
Breton, Dali, conceptualism, surrealism, and other such “isms” have no relation to art; they have to do with money. Debilitated mentality—which is manifested in glamour, simulacrum-like authoritative writings, and pop art—has resulted in the demise of the empire called High Art. Art in its very essence cannot fall victim to the victim syndrome; it always was and always will be. Art is weakened, however, by the generation of drug addicts and alcoholics, by debauched types and cynics, by the unscrupulousness of the pathetic interpreters and haberdashers, by the trading houses that promote their delirious geniuses with artistic indifference.

But I do not want to be killed by this bane.

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