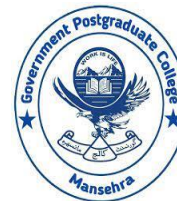




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## Professor and Berlin as a Reflection of Dali in Money Heist: A Symbolic Analysis

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<b>Article Information</b> Received: April 20, 2022 Revised: June 02, 2022 Accepted: June 25, 2022 Available Online: July 30, 2022	<b>Abstract</b>  <i>Digital content has a big effect on people and has changed the way we watch movies in many ways. Movies and series aired on modern streaming services, especially Netflix, have grabbed the attention of the masses. The essence of historical phenomena and iconic artists has been observed in the modern cinema of the 21<sup>st</sup> century. Likewise, this study is based upon the top-rated Spanish series of 2019, Money Heist (La casa de Papel). Through symbols, the researchers tried to find Dali in the two characters, that is, Professor and Berlin in the TV show Money Heist. The study intended to find how these characters reflect Dali through symbols, colors, and actions. The study followed Jung's theory of symbolism (1964) from his book "Man and His Symbols." The researchers conducted the study through the methodology of Leewen's multimodal approach (1996) of visual analysis, which states that meanings are communicated not just through verbal mode but also through visual mode. This study is significant because of its innovative methodology. The findings of the study confirm the traces of the iconic artist Dali in the characters of Professor and Berlin through their symbols, colors, and actions in Money Heist.</i>
<b>Keywords</b> Dali Symbolism Money Heist Visual Mode	
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## 1.1 Introduction

### 1.1.1 Symbolism

Symbolism is a 19th-century movement in art and literature that started in France. In symbolism, symbols are used to convey thoughts and ideas. Chadwick (1971) defines *symbolism* as an escape from the real world to the world of imagination. These are the thoughts of poets and writers that take a person into a mystical world. In his book *Symbolism*, Chadwick (1971) says that "symbolism is any mode of expression which, instead of referring to something directly, refers to it indirectly through the medium of something else." (p. 1). Gill and Angosto-Ferrandez (2018) state that symbols are essential elements of life that mold our perception of the world and help us make an acute sense of things. Gill and Angosto-Ferrandez (2018) further say that symbols are not univocal but multivocal, which means that they do not have a single interpretation but can have many interpretations according to the understanding of everyone within a particular community. Thwala (2017) states that "symbolism is not only vital in poetry but to all modes of discourse because of its allegorical, metaphorical, and representative character" (p.1). Thwala (2017) further says that symbolism is the depiction of our concepts, ideas, and actions. Laganà (2016) in his work, describes Jung's symbolism (1947) that "symbols are produced at times expressed in geometric forms of humans, semi-humans, gods, goddesses, animals, and plants" (p.1). In Jungian theory, signs and symbols are different because signs have fixed meanings while symbols can have many meanings. Language is a sign, while an image or representation is a symbol that holds a mysterious meaning. Symbolism is used in literature to give it a much deeper meaning. Symbolism can be any person, any action, any object, or any situation.

### 1.1.2 Salvador Dali

Dali (1904–1989) was born in Figueres, Spain. According to Ferro (2018) Dali was one of the most eminent painters of the 20th century. He was an outrageous and outlandish Surrealist artist whose peculiar art brought him all the fame throughout the world, which is celebrated today. His most well-known works are *The Persistence of Figueres*, *The Metamorphosis of Narcissus*, and *The Dream Caused by Bees' Flights*. Dali aspired to Freud, and his works were based on religious, sexual, and personal themes. In the 1930s, Dali conceived the idea of the paranoiac-critical method, which became an essential Surrealist method. In this method, paintings or images are created in a hallucinatory kind of state. He was known as a creative genius and was famous in Spain, America, and many other parts of the world.

### 1.1.3 Object of the Study

*Money Heist* is a Spanish series written by Alexa Pina, a resistance against the government initially titled *La Casa de Papel*, later dubbed into English and aired on *Netflix* as *Money Heist*, the top-rated series of 2019. The series is based upon a heist carried out by a mastermind professor and a group of eight professional thieves to print millions of *euros* at the *Royal Mint of Spain*.

### 1.1.4 Problem Statement

Digital content has a significant impact on people and has molded our society in various ways. Movies and series, especially those aired on the modern streaming service *Netflix*, have grabbed the attention

of the masses and have enforced trends in society. This platform shows how many historical events, myths, and important people are related to movies through their themes and characters. Similarly, Dali is one of the most influential figures who has not only influenced art and literature in general but also modern cinema, including movies, animated films, and series. Therefore, this study explores the characters of Professor and Berlin as a reflection of Dali in *Money Heist*.

### 1.1.6 Research Questions

The study probes the following questions:

1. How does the character of Professor reflect Dali in *Money Heist*?
2. How does the character of Berlin reflect Dali in *Money Heist*?

### 1.1.7 Significance of the Study

The study is significant as it analyses Professor and Berlin's characters as a symbolic portrayal of Dali in *Money Heist*. The said study also represents the influence of Dali on modern movies and his never-dying stardom. The study is also important because two characters are studied as a symbolic portrayal of Dali rather than one. Further, the study is significant because of its innovative methodology, which is Kress and van Leeuwen, (1996) multimodality approach to visual representation as a method rather than a framework. Kress and van Leeuwen (1996) proposed the approach of multimodality in 1996. According to him, meaning is communicated not just through a verbal mode, that is, language, but also through a visual mode that includes images, colour, sounds, actions, and symbols.

## 1.2 Literature Review

Ouweneel (2012) says that the role of fiction is to present supernatural elements as accurately as possible. Although fiction is not something tangible, the viewers or readers consider it to be accurate. Ouweneel (2012) further justifies that the role of fiction is not just for the sake of pleasure, but it has a much deeper meaning to it. According to Severson (2020) symbolism was at its peak during 19th-Century Romanticism. During the 20th century, many filmmakers, especially in *Hollywood*, started using symbolism in their movies. Severson (2020) further writes that symbolism is used in literature, poetry, and most notably, in films or movies where things visually stand out. Symbolism can be of many kinds, like cultural, religious, emotional, or romantic. Jung's (1947) theory of symbolism is essential in literature, the arts, and modern-day movies and films. In their book, *Man and His Symbols* Jung et al., (1964) defined symbolism as anything in shapes, like humans, animals, water, fire, and artificial things. Symbols are important in religion, culture, and art. Balasubramanian and Varghese (2017) state that "Movies are the visual-auditory symbolic narrative that explains the living reality of people" (p.2). Balasubramanian and Varghese (2017) further say that Jungian symbolism is infused in the modern media in various forms. Movies like "*Grapes of Wrath*", *Indiana Jones*, *Persona*, *Dark City*, *The Holy Mountain*, *Warm Bodies*, and *Inception* are influenced by Jungian symbolism. Hodgkinson (2012) states that symbolism allows the audience to interact with the movie, receive the hidden messages, and experience the emotions. According to James (2018), colour symbolism in movies is seldom used with the imagination in which colours have been used creatively and intrinsically. Film directors use colours not just for aesthetic purposes, but they put a lot of thought

into colour symbolism in their movies to connect with the audience. Choi and Kim (2012) state "The function of colours in conveying meaning is very affected to analyze the visual power implications and effects on human feelings that colours have in the movies." Symbolism plays an important role when it comes to Dali's art. Dine (2015) writes that Dali, being a surrealist artist, used symbols and dream analysis. Dine (2015) further claims that Dali was not just an influential personality in the arts but also played an essential role in other fields like psychology, symbolism, mysticism, and philosophy. Dali was also prominent in cinema. King (2007), in his book *Dali, Surrealism and Cinema*, says that Dali was a movie lover who watched old comedy films all the time. Even film celebrities were inspired by Dali, but despite his significant influence in cinema, he did not receive the recognition he deserved. King (2007) refers to Dali as a sacred monster of the cinema. Rothman (2012) mentions Dali as the most prominent artist of the twentieth century who demonstrates tiny marginal imageries as important factors. According to Ferro (2018) Walt Disney approached Dali in 1945. Dali worked with John Hench to create films, and he also created advertisements. The most famous animated movie, *The Adventures of Alice in Wonderland*, is also influenced by Dali's painting. Dali's movies include *Father of the Bride*, *Chaos and Creation*, *Soft Self-Portrait*, and *Spellbound*. Murphy's point of view (2009) the well-known surrealist artist Dali was famous for his craziness in both art and persona. Mcneese (2006) states, "Dali's unique style enhanced the quality of his work, including the melting clocks, which became a symbol for the entire surrealism movement." His biographer, Gottesman (2016) writes that even ages after Dali's death, his brand name, Salvador Dali, is still alive. His famous mustache and his exciting personality have become symbols of new inventions in art and fashion. Dali was an inspiration for the series *Money Heist*. Pagnis (2016) describes the series *Money Heist* as "anarcho-centric, anti-establishment, and anti-capitalist" (p.8). Pagnis (2016) further explains that the series is based on the heist and the gain of power against the government. Along with his fellows, Professor calls themselves the "resistance" against the government and sings "*Bella Chao*" as their anthem. Olivier (2021) titled the series "a protest film series" because of the background music of the narrative. Deniz (2021) in his book "*International Perspectives on Rethinking Evil in Film and Television*" discussed the effects of the transmission of creative as well as risky narratives from independent new television platforms like *Netflix*. *Money Heist* is one example of such a phenomenon. Tocena (2020) discusses the reason behind the surprising success of the series *Money Heist* on *Netflix* rather than on linear television. The study is based on observing Professor and Berlin's characters in the series *Money Heist* and comparing them with Salvador Dali. The study also explores how Dali influenced modern media like movies and series

## 1.3 Theoretical Framework and Methods

### 1.3.1 Theoretical Framework

The study is focused on the analysis of both the characters of the Professor and Berlin in *Money Heist* as a reflection of Dali. The study follows Jung's (1964) theory of symbolism. Jung (1964), in his book, *Man and His Symbols*, states, "a word or an image is symbolic when it implies something more than its obvious and immediate meaning" (p.8).

### 1.3.2 Research Methodology

The study has opted for a qualitative research design. The method adopted for the study is Kress and van Leeuwen's (1996) approach to multimodality because the study's analysis required visual representation. Kress and van Leeuwen's (1996) multimodel approach includes the analysis of communication in all its forms but mainly focuses on visual observations. According to Kress and van Leeuwen (1996) multimodel approach, meaning is communicated not just through a verbal mode but also through a visual mode that includes images. Therefore, colour, actions, and symbols are used as the tools of analysis.

### 1.4 Analysis

*Money Heist* is a Spanish series written by Alexa Pina, a resistance against the government initially titled *La Casa de Papel* and later dubbed into English and aired on *Netflix* as *Money Heist*. It is the top-rated series of 2019. The series is based upon the heist carried out by a mastermind professor along with a group of eight professional thieves to print millions of Euros at the *Royal Mint* of Spain.

The Professor, also known as Sergio Marquina, is the main character of *Money Heist*, who planned the heist of the *Royal Mint* of Spain. He carried out the heist to fulfill his father's dream. By appearance, the professor seems to be nerdy, but he is a highly intellectual and sharp-minded person.

*Andres de Fonollosa*, aka *Berlin*, is the second main character of the series. He is a very clever member of the heist with a successful criminal record of 27 robberies with 434 precious diamonds from one of the famous museums in *France*. He is the man in charge of the first heist of the *Royal Mint*. He served as the main antagonist of the first part, turned into an antihero in the second part, and then a posthumous character throughout the fifth part. The researchers look at how Dali is shown through color, symbol, action, and sound in the characters of Professor and Berlin.

#### 1.4.1 Professor and Berlin as a Colour Reflection of Dali

Color is an important tool to convey various meanings and its power cannot be denied. In the setting of the *Money Heist*, red is one of the most prominent and important colours in the form of different objects like phones, cars, balloons, ribbons, pens, costumes, sofas, etc. The colour red has different meanings and interpretations in different contexts. Red symbolizes courage, war, sacrifice, anger, love, bravery, lust, revolution, and rebellion. Going back to history, the colour red was highly significant in Ancient Rome, where gods were dressed in red clothes, symbolizing power. In Celtic culture, red was the colour of death. In South Africa, red represented sorrow, and in Christianity, red represents Jesus Christ's sacrifice and blood. In Japanese culture, red symbolizes good luck. Similarly, the colour red plays an important role in Spanish culture. The red colour in the Spanish flag represents bullfighting, which is a symbol of war and blood. The national spices of Spain are saffron and paprika, which are also red in colour. So, red holds a very sentimental value for Spain. In *Money Heist*, the colour red symbolizes revolution or resistance against state power. Since the heist carried out by the professor is a revolutionary act, it represents the rebellious nature of the professor himself. The Professor reflects Dali in his nature because, just like Dali, he was also rebellious. While carrying out the heist, the professor says, "We are not just undertaking the heist at the Mint, but also a resistance against the system." In another scene, it is said that "the professor's life revolved around one idea: resistance".



Similarly, Dali's art also rejected capitalist society. The red scarf wrapped around the figure in his painting *Venus of Milo with Drawers* represents his aggression against power. In another painting, *Burning Giraffe*, the red colour on the figure's face, hands, and the burning fire on the giraffe again symbolizes the war against the corrupt state.

Just as Dali's art reflected his rebellious and revolutionary nature, Professor's planned heist reflected his rebellious and revolutionary nature. The colour red is prominent in both Dali's paintings and the *Money Heist*.



*Figure 1 Burning Giraffe by Dali*



*Figure 2 The Red Orchestra by Dali*



*Figure 3 Red jumpsuit and Red sofa*



*Figure 4 The Red Car*

The costume selected by the professor for the heist is a red jumpsuit, which symbolizes resistance, revolution, and blood. It also symbolizes the dedication and passion of the Professor towards the heist. Since the heist planned by the professor was the most critical and highly risky job, a red jumpsuit was selected to represent the intensity of the heist. The same aspects of resistance, passion and dedication can also be found in Dali's nature and his art. So, the professor reflects on Dali through his passion and dedication.



*Figure 5 Red jumpsuits in Money Heist*

#### **1.4.2 Professor and Berlin as a Symbolic Reflection of Dali through Symbols**

The Professor, also known as Sergio Marquina, is the main character of *Money Heist*, who planned the heist of the *Royal Mint* of Spain. He carried out the heist to fulfill his father's dream. By appearance, the professor seems to be nerdy, but he is a highly intellectual and sharp-minded person.



Masks in any digital content or movie play a very significant role. It is an important tool to communicate meaning. A mask is not just selected as a source of disguise or to hide the identity of the characters; rather, a mask is selected to reveal the identity of the characters and make an everlasting impression on the audience. Masks have always been popular in the entertainment world, including superhero movies, horror movies, thriller movies, etc. Some masks that became iconic and are still remembered to date are the Zorro mask, V for Vandetta, Batman mask, Spiderman mask, and Scream movie mask.

In *Money Heist*, the mask selected by the professor for the heist is the *Dali mask*. The Dali mask consists of Dali's face with a raised moustache and eyebrows, with bulging eyes and a serious face. So, the Dali mask has a lot of meaning and is a symbol of Dali himself. The Dali mask is also a symbol of resistance, revolution, and freedom, just like Dali himself. The Dali mask selected for the heist showcases the nature of the Professor as a rebel and a man who believes in freedom just like Dali. Dali's iconic mustache symbolizes individualism and freedom, just like the Professor. So, the professor reflects on Dali through his character.



*Figure 6 Salvador Dali*



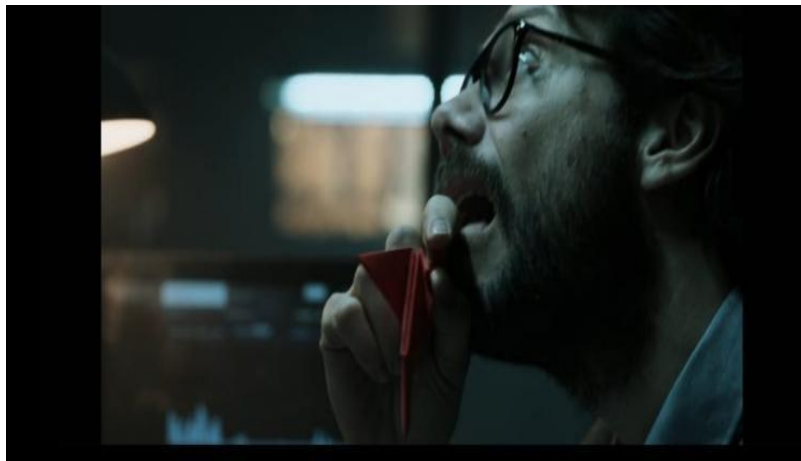
*Figure 7 The Dali mask in Money Heist*

The art of *origami* originated in Japan, initially known as *orikata*, meaning folded shapes. It spread from Japan to China, South America, Europe, and Spain. In Spain, it is known as *papiroflexia* or "pajarita". The Spanish philosopher and author Miguel de Unamuno (1864-1936) helped in the spread of this art throughout Spain. The art of origami is highly symbolic because it has different meanings in different cultures, in Japanese culture it means peace, in Chinese culture it means purity, and in Greece and Rome, it symbolizes love. Origami is also significant in the sense that it represents a person's thoughts and actions.

In *Money Heist*, the professor often makes origami in the shape of a bird. Because the bird is a symbol of "freedom" and "success," the bird origami in the series also represents the freedom and success that the professor has always desired and reflects on Dali because Dali always wanted to be successful in his art and be freed from power. So, similarly, the professor also wanted to be successful in the heist and be freed from the corrupt state. The professor's confused thoughts are also reflected in the art of origami, just as Dali's paintings showed how his thoughts were all over the place.



*Figure 8 The Red Origami Bird*



*Figure 9 The Red Origami Bird*

The title of *Money Heist*, when translated, "*La casa de papel*" means 'the house of paper'. The paper represents money or a bank. Like Dali, the professor planned such a massive heist not only as a form of resistance to power but also out of a desire for money. Dali was known as *Alvida Dollars*, which means 'eager for money'. In the words of Dali, "I am going to tape some money to my cheeks and see if it doesn't draw prosperity to me." "Liking money as I like, it is nothing less than mysticism. Money is glory". This shows how the professor depicts Dali through his love for money.



*Figure 10 Money rules everything around*



*Figure 11 Dali and Money*

### **1.4.3 Professor and Berlin as a Reflection of Dali through Actions**

The two main characters of the series, Professor and Berlin, will be analyzed as the symbolic portrayal of Dali through their actions in the series, *Money Heist*. The researchers find traces of Dali through the actions and reactions of the two characters, the Professor and Berlin, in the events of the series.

The famous artist, *Dali*, was born in 1904 in Figueres, Spain, located 16 miles from the French border. Later, he migrated to Madrid for his art studies. The mastermind professor (Salva) in the series was also born on the outskirts of Madrid, Spain to a middle-class family. His father was a thief and was killed by police during a robbery.

Dali was a very creative and fashionable artist who was in the spotlight throughout his career for his unique dressing sense. He was often seen in a proper suit with a long coat during his late 20s. In the series, the Professor is observed in a regular formal suit throughout, which adds a classic touch to his personality as a leader of the plan. Professor would also begin his conversation with the inspector

by mentioning what she was wearing. The dressing was a significant element in both Professor and Dali's personalities.

Dali was a mysterious person with a very serious and strange facial expression. In his interviews and appearances on television shows, he was seen with somewhat ambiguous expressions. He used to hallucinate with wide eyes and a long thin mustache headed upwards. These shocking expressions showed the psychological state of Dali's intellect and how busy his mind was with unique and mysterious thoughts. The professor in the series is a calculated person with a dark mustache and a beard who is often observed with dead serious expressions. He does not usually swing his arms while walking, and he used to correct his glasses from their bridge in a particular way. These details reveal their nervousness as well as his determination to carry out the plan. Both Professor and Dali were brilliant personalities with deep and unique intellects.

Dali was a great surrealist painter. He introduced surrealism widely in his paintings, producing masterpieces like *Persistence of Memory*, *Surreal and Optical Illusion*, and *Metamorphosis of Narcissus*. He depicted his paranoid critical method in the production of these timeless pieces, which hold deep meaning and strategies behind them. *The professor* was of fine reason, with a deep understanding of psychology, criminology, and biology. He spent his childhood in a hospital fighting disease and never went to school. He had planned the heist for nine years and had devised all possible solutions to any problems that might arise during the heist. He trained his partners for five months, taught them rules, and is conscious of every step he takes. He has planned the heist very meticulously with strong strategies and is directed towards the accomplishment of the plan. Both Dali and the Professor had deep strategies behind their products.

Dali had a strange sense of dress, especially in his 30s. He used to risk his life for attention at public events. He once wore a swimming costume in a TV show in which he almost died of suffocation. The Professor also used to dress in disguise when he was in trouble or had to deceive the police. He once became a beggar to wipe the evidence, and then, in another episode, he was dressed as a joker to enter the hospital.

Dali had a brother who died before his birth. His name was Salvador Dali, so the name of the young Dali was after his late brother. Dali was often told that he was the reincarnation of his late brother. Later in the series, it was revealed that Berlin (the man in charge of the heist) is the Professor's brother. He had great leadership qualities and also planned the second heist of the Bank of Spain.

When Dali was expelled from the surrealist movement in 1934 He invited Duke Fulco de verdula, a self-made jewelry designer who was working for Coco Chanel and Paul Flato to visit and discuss a potential collaboration. He designed his art with diamond emeralds and rubies, making breathtaking jewelry pieces. On the display of his jewelry, he wrote in his catalog "Paladin of a new Renaissance, I too refused to be confined. My art encompasses Physics, Mathematics, Architecture, Nuclear Science, Psycho Nuclear, Mystico Nuclear and Jewelry not painting alone". Berlin in the series was a jewelry theft. He was wanted all over Europe for his jewelry robberies. He had stolen 435 diamonds from the famous *Museum of Paris*.





*Figure 12 The Eye of Time*

*Dali* was obsessed with fame and money during his lifetime. *Dali's* nickname was Avida Dollars, which loosely translates as "eager for dollars". In the series, Berlin was frequently associated with wealth and opulence. He entered the world of crime to maintain high living standards. He owned an enormous chapel in the series featured in the flashbacks later.

*Dali's* paintings were often inspired by the women around him. Most of his art revolves around women. He has obscenely portrayed women in his artwork. His wife is the muse who inspires his art in various ways. *Dali* loved women and was provoked by them often. According to the sources, *Dali* used to fantasise about women sexually in his dreams and depicted those sexual thoughts in his paintings. Berlin in the series is very much into women. He already had four divorces before the heist and was involved with one of the hostages in the heist, named Ariadna. He trapped and used her for his psychosexual urges throughout the heist. He used to find peace and pleasure around Ariadna. Women were the driving force behind the efficiency of both the artist and the character, Berlin, who needed Ariadna to keep up with the heist.

*Dali* fell in love with a Russian woman named Gala. When he met her, she was already married to a surrealist poet. Later, she got married to *Dali*. Even after the love and marriage, they both had extramarital affairs, and they both had no issue with that. In the series, Berlin was a flirty character with multiple affairs. He used to treat women as sexual objects or entities.



*Figure 13 Female figure with head of flowers*

In 1980, Dali developed Parkinson's-like symptoms and severe trembling in his hands and his nervous system was also damaged. In the series, Berlin also had a disease named Helmer's myopathy that caused him muscle stiffness and shivering.

*Dali* was a rebellious artist. He was expelled from the school multiple times because he told the teachers he was incompetent, saying "I am more intelligent than these professors. I, therefore, refuse to be examined by them." From his dressing to his statements, he was unique and rebellious. Berlin in the series is the most rebellious of all the members. He risked the lives of both his members and the hostages. The professor told them not to kill anyone in the heist, but he told Denver to kill Monica which violated the rules. Then he also tried to kill Rio, but due to the trembling of his hand, he couldn't pull the trigger. He stated before he died that "I am the resistance". The Professor also stated in an episode that "we are the resistance".

Public relations were of significance to Dali. With his strange sense of dressing and abnormal behavior, he used to get the attention and sympathies of the masses. Despite Berlin's rebellious and rigid personality, his dignity and image were very important to him. When the intelligence team accused him of indulging in women's trafficking, he demanded a media reporter in the *Royal Mint*. He gave a sentimental live interview to the reporter about his innocence and was successful in building his image in front of the public.

Dali often stated that he would never die and that his legacy would continue. One of his quotes says, "I will never die." "Geniuses never die". In another statement, he said, "I believe in general death, but not in Dali's death." I believe in my death becoming "almost impossible". Berlin, on the other hand, dies in the second season, saving the other members of the heist, but his presence is preserved in the flashbacks through the fifth season. He becomes a posthumous character in the series.

## 1.5 Conclusion and Findings

The study proves, through using tools such as colour, symbolism, and action, that Salvador Dali's legacy has been kept alive in contemporary cinema.

*Money Heist* is the most popular series on Netflix, which is also the most successful commercial streaming network of the 21st century. Traces of Dali can be seen obviously reflected in the two frontline characters of *Money Heist*, Professor, and Berlin. The aims and objectives of the research, which were developed within the theoretical framework of Jung's (1964) and Leuwen's (1996) multimodel theory of visual analysis, corroborate Dali and his unfailing stardom in the characters of Professor and Berlin.

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