

Gender as Trauma in Buñuel's *Un chien andalou*

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In his text, "Cinema, Instrument of Poetry" (1953), Luis Buñuel encapsulates his view on the function of the film-maker in a quotation by Friedrich Engel's, which he appropriates:

The novelist [or film-maker] will have accomplished his task honourably when, through a faithful depiction of authentic social relations, he will have destroyed the conventional representations of the nature of these relations, shaken the optimism of the bourgeois world and obliged the reader to question the permanence of the existing order, even if he does not directly propose a conclusion to us, even if he does not openly take sides.¹

It is my contention that this is precisely what *Un chien andalou* (1929) sets out to do with regards to gender. As it is well established, its poetic, surrealist, often dream-like nature, allows for -even encourages- various readings and layers of interpretation, which co-exist with one another. This paper argues that, in line with the intention expressed above, one of the functions of this film is to identify and depict social assumptions and attitudes towards gender, to challenge their conventional representation and to question the permanence of the existing gender relationships and roles at the time the film was produced.

Although a black and white, silent film only seventeen minutes long, *Un chien andalou* remains one of the most influential and celebrated short-films in the history of cinema. Co-written and directed by Luis Buñuel and Salvador Dalí,² released in Paris in 1929, the film became a sudden and unexpected success which secured their admittance into the French surrealist circle lead by André Breton. The nonsensical and fragmented storyline, or lack thereof; the *mise-en-scène*, (created by Dalí), bursting with symbolism; the unconventional appearances of characters; the disorienting intertitles; the incoherent representation of time and space; and the clever use of montage come together to create a oneiric atmosphere which invites ambiguity and defies the neatness of a single unequivocal interpretation.

Deeply influenced by psychoanalysis, here I contend that *Un chien andalou* is largely an exploration of trauma. In his preface to the publication of the script for *Un chien andalou*, Buñuel expresses his adherence to "surrealist thought and activity"³ in a reference to Breton's 1924 First Surrealist Manifesto.⁴ As it is well-known, this manifesto aimed

for nothing less than expressing "the actual functioning of thought",⁵ which hoped to accomplish by challenging and destabilizing reason so as to access the contents of the subconscious mind. Not in vein, Andrew Webber describes *Un chien andalou* as "psychically driven".⁶ Not only is *Un chien andalou* arguably filled with disturbing, sometimes even violent and traumatic images, (the slicing of a woman's eye, crawling insects, decomposing animals...); more radically than that, the lack of temporal coherence and of spatial structure as well as its fragmented narrative (interspersion of apparently disconnected shots and the lack of a coherent resolution to the action) reminiscent of the logic of dreams, all mirror the fragmented identity and fragmented discourse associated with the traumatized self. Thus, the connection between Buñuel's early take on cinema and the subconscious, and by extension trauma, comes to light.⁷

It is the trauma produced by an overly rational society that leads surrealists to question the place and value of rationality, and to search for alternative forms of expression and thought. Lest not forget that Surrealism itself is deeply rooted in the aftermath of WWI; it constitutes largely a reaction against the mechanisms and structures in society which led to the war as much as against the actual trauma inflicted by it, not least the inescapable awareness of our own mortality, as frequently represented in the film by the presence of insects, ants and moths, and more vividly by a large dead, decomposing donkey. Influenced by psychoanalysis, but also by Nietzschean philosophy and Marxism, Surrealism serves as an expression of existential trauma left by both. The film is full of references to the existential conflict between the overbearing presence of religion in contrast with the vacuum left by God's death as announced by Nietzsche. This is captured in several scenes of *Un chien andalou*, but is most famously represented in the one where a young man is seen picking up two ropes in order to drag two stone tablets (presumably with the Ten Commandments), two grand pianos containing dead donkeys, all of which is tied up to two priests (played by Jaime Miratvilles and Salvador Dalí himself) who are also being dragged. In addition to this, the film also echoes the trauma of modernity itself, a fast-paced, class-structured society which forces the individual to adapt to the innumerable changes in technology and in the ever faster pace of everyday life. An example of this can be found in the scene where, surrounded by hectic traffic, a policeman is exerting his authority, by aiming to control the traffic and the people around a particular character (an

androgynous woman, played by Fano Messan), who does not conform to society's norms and expectations, to whom we shall return later in this paper.⁸

By opening the doors into the subconscious, surrealist cinema, and *Un chien andalou* in particular, not only grants us a glimpse into our repressed impulses and desires, but it also becomes a suitable vehicle to expose and express trauma by, first, identifying those traumas which have been confined to the subconscious and, second, by expressing them through the use of moving images and sound in a way that surpasses the limits of common language and everyday reality. That is to say that avant-garde surrealist cinema provides an outlet for the articulation of trauma in a language that is kindred to the language of its native environment, the subconscious.

Following on from previous research which has studied *Un chien andalou's* take on desire, sexuality, feminism, psychoanalysis and trauma,⁹ this paper suggests that, more fundamentally, what *Un chien andalou* does is to highlight gender itself as traumatic. In other words, the film underscores how, it is the internalized and conventional social construction of gender, rather than any biological distinctions, that underlie the prevalent -but flawed- expectations, roles, and relationships between men and women in Western European society during the late 1920s.

Not everyone agrees, however, with the argument that Buñuel's textual transgressions are indicative of his attempt to subvert the patriarchal system.¹⁰ Although it is certainly true that a correlation between the two should not be automatically assumed and it would undoubtedly be a long stretch to claim that Buñuel was in anyway a feminist,¹¹ it is my contention that *Un chien andalou* is profoundly critical of the construction of gender and of the constraints it ultimately imposes on social and sexual freedom, both so dear to Buñuel. Based on the analysis of several scenes, characters, images, and symbols, this paper will argue that as part of its wider critique of the values of the bourgeoisie and of rationality itself, *Un chien andalou* also charges against traditional gender divisions and gender roles, to the point that a detailed analysis of the representation of gender in this film will reveal that gender, insofar as it is a social construct, is also portrayed and denounced as a traumatic experience.

We will explore this proposed interpretation of gender as trauma through the analysis of various key scenes.¹² Please note that the following examples are not presented by order of appearance in the film, rather -for the sake of analysis-, they are organized in reference to broad thematic categories.

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Violence against women

Described by Webber as "at once iconic and iconoclastic assault upon the eye",¹³ the opening scene in which Buñuel himself prepares a razor to slice the eye of the female protagonist (played by Simone Mareuil), who willingly allows for this to happen,¹⁴ continues to shock even contemporary allegedly numbed audiences. Weber observes in Buñuel a traumatophilic tendency "present in the recurrent mutilations",¹⁵ none of which is more poignant than the inescapable extreme close-up shot of an eye being sliced, which he dubs as the "primal cinematic trauma".¹⁶

Countless interpretations have been proposed for this scene:¹⁷ a psychoanalytic reading may suggest a reference to the Freudian castration-fear,¹⁸ whereas a surrealist reading would consider the image of the slit eye as a one of the "visual syntagmas that announce the emergence of a new language";¹⁹ it may also be read as an assault on conventional ways of looking at and seeing the world; or, more constructively, as a "ritualistic opening of the eye"²⁰ in preparation for the break with convention and expectation which is to come; or even, more widely, as a metaphor of cinema's power to truly open the viewer's eyes. On the other hand, as Ramey suggests, this scene constitutes primarily a violation, a loss of innocence of Mareuil's character and of the viewer.²¹ There is no getting away from the fact that, regardless of its psychoanalytic or poetic interpretations, this scene is first and foremost quite literally an assault, a violation -by a man- of an eye, a woman's eye at that (although, actually, the eye of a dead cow was used for filming). The subsequent result of this act is blindness.

As discussed above, these interpretations do not cancel each other out, but rather -because of the multilayered nature of symbolism, they overlap with one another. Therefore, I suggest that in addition to the various readings discussed, this blinding act also invites several questions about gender based on Buñuel's well-known transgressive impetus: Why is the woman's eye being slit? Jenaro Talens suggests that this act tantamounts to a rejection of the patriarchal tradition which forces women to see differently.²² This metaphorical interpretation, however, bypasses the implications of the literal gendered and violent act which takes place. In contrast, Russel questions the anti-patriarchal status of this film, particularly, the assumption "that violation leads to knowledge."²³ Russell analysis focuses on the recurrent presence of different forms of rape in Buñuel's films, starting with *Un chien andalou*. I would like to focus our

attention, however, in the more immediate outcome of this act of violence and its implications: blindness. Are women allowing themselves to be blinded, just like Mareuil's character is? Why are women being blinded? What are they being incapacitated to see? Is it the imbalanced power relationships between men and women or it is, rather, women's own power that is being concealed and taken away from them? Are we as a society being blind to such imbalanced power games? Whereas much of Russell's argument rests on questioning Buñuel's willingness to subvert patriarchy, there can be little doubt that whatever his intention may be, whether to denounce or merely reflect existing social and sexual practices and values, he does expose gender relationships bringing to light that which otherwise may go unnoticed.

The slitting of the eye is not the only act of aggression against women portrayed in the film; other instances of this are the female protagonist being harassed and later groped. It is my contention that such scenes are indicative of Buñuel's attempt to shock and to expose the unsaid (including the imbalance of power between men and women, the relationship between violence and sexual attraction, and quite possibly Buñuel's own frustrated male desire), rather than being of the thoughtless reflection of patriarchal values.

The implications of such exposure should not be underestimated, as we, the spectators, impotently watch these acts of violence, bearing witness to them, while they occur before our eyes, raising a new set of questions about the trauma of men's violence against women and about the brutality underlying gender and sexual relationships, but also, more poignantly, our own role in them.

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Cross-dressing

By understanding gender as a social construct, the implicit link between gender roles and relationships of any kind (professional, familial, sexual relationships...) on the one hand, and the establishment on the other is also being underscored. Buñuel's anti-establishment position has been widely acknowledged, particularly so in his early career.²⁴ Following this line of argument, it is my contention that Buñuel also extended his anti-establishment stance to gender. In fact, as we shall see below, there are abundant examples in *Un chien andalou* to indicate that traditional gender roles are challenged time and time again in this film.

Cross-dressing is one of the most obvious instances of this. In fact, it is significant that this short-film prominently includes several scenes

portraying male and female characters who cross-dress. The male protagonist, Pierre Batcheff, wears in several occasions (while cycling through the streets and later on lying in bed) what seems to be either a nun's habit or a frilly maid's apparel, that is, female clothing; in addition, there are also a couple of scenes revolving around an androgynous-looking young woman, Fano Messan, who wears a combination of men's and women's clothes, illustrating what Ramey refers to as gender-blending.²⁵ Significant implications for gender and trauma stem from Buñuel's use of these characters, as discussed below.

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The eye slitting scene is followed by an intertitle which simply says: "Huit ans après".²⁶ What we see next is couple of long shots of a man, cycling through half-empty streets. Although, initially, we only see him from behind, the camera eventually gives us a frontal medium shot, so that we are able to see the cyclist wearing some kind of women's uniform over his suit and a diagonally striped locked box hanging from his neck. Soon afterwards, these images become interspersed with various shots from a woman (Simone Mareuil) who, while sitting in her apartment, suddenly stops the act of reading (significantly, a book with a photograph of Vermeer's *The Lacemaker*, a traditional female occupation)²⁷ as if overcome by worry. Mareuil's reaction shots create a sense of foreboding which serves as a preamble to the accident the cyclist suffers, as he falls off his bike for no apparent reason, hitting his head on the pavement. The woman, who witnesses the accident from the window, quickly goes in his aid, profusely kissing him, while he lays unconscious on the street.

After the bicycle accident, the female protagonist lays out in bed the items of female clothing which the cyclist was wearing over his suit and along with some of the contents of the striped box he was carrying, namely, a necktie. She later proceeds to sit down and intently observe the objects on the bed. What she sees (or presumably imagines) is a succession of shots alternating from her original lay out of the clothing to a rearrangement which differs from the first one in that the necktie, an almost exclusively male piece of clothing and a phallic symbol, is eloquently assembled as part of the top portion of the habit/uniform. Does this indicate the reintegration of male and female elements in Batcheff's character? Is this indicative of this woman's desire for the cyclist to be actively wearing the tie (as opposed to keeping it boxed away) and thus becoming manlier in her eyes? There is no definitive answer to these questions, but this scene is suggesting a destabilization of commonly accepted external and arbitrary

indicators of gender, such as clothing, and is ultimately symptomatic of the fragility of our established gender divisions.

This is followed by the reappearance of Batcheff's character (now simply wearing his suit), who is standing still next to a door, while looking closely at the palm of his hand, which is crawling with ants. The woman, who sees this, soon joins him and we see a two-shot of them. What is particularly telling is that, as Ramey explains,

while Batcheff's reaction in the film to the oneiric image of the ants is one of distress, Mareuil remains distinctly unmoved, as if her character is less preoccupied by, and more accepting of, societal constraints on individual agency, a recurring theme in the film that we shall revisit later.²⁸

This contrast becomes even more marked when shortly after this point, the male protagonist shows difficulty -or plain unwillingness- to control his more based instincts: we see how he takes a salacious pleasure in the androgyne being run down and killed by a car and how he pursues the fulfillment of his sexual desires with disregard for the woman's resistance towards his advances, harassing and groping her. However, the scene where he is carrying the pianos, the donkeys, and the priests, may well indicate that he cannot be so easily dismissive of the weight of religion and tradition. Nevertheless, at the end of the scene, he does let go of the ropes dragging this weight and pursues the woman once again, although in vein.

Subsequently, he appears lying in bed, looking distressed and wearing again his nun's habit/maid's uniform over his suit. It is then when a second man turns up wearing a suit and a hat (although we only see him from behind). After speaking to the lying man sternly, the new character gets rid of the feminine items of clothing throwing them through the window. It is obvious by his behavior that this new character disapproves of the first man's cross-dressing, whom not only is being reprimanded and stripped of the offending items, but he is also being punished for his transgression (looking at the wall, arms raised like a child). It is then when, in a dramatic twist, the admonishing character slowing turns around and the tormented face of Batcheff himself is revealed. Batcheff's character is in conflict with himself. He is ultimately the one forcing himself to follow society's gender rules and expectations, and, in essence, limiting his own freedom. This inner conflict eventually finds its resolution when the formerly cross-dressing character shoots and kills his moralist alter ego, perhaps suggesting men's inability

to rein over their instincts and desires or perhaps, more widely, the triumph of instinct over morality and tradition.

But this is not the end of it: the women's attire and the stripped box which the cyclist used to wear reappear towards the end of the film, in a scene where the female protagonist is on a romantic walk on the beach with her new love interest. Bemused and curious, she and her partner both look at these objects quickly discarding them again. Is this indicative of Batcheff's character having been forgotten? How come, if this new young man never met him? So the emphasis is not placed on the actual character, but on the representation and subversion of the gender roles and distinctions symbolized by these objects. That being the case and considering that these objects wash ashore after the death of one-side of Batcheff's character, a more plausible interpretation would be that this scene reflects on the very little impact his individual act of resistance, his cross-dressing, had on the great scheme of things, for in contrast with his defiance we see the traditional heterosexual couple leaving the objects behind and moving on in a carefree manner. In short, the establishment wins by continuing to perpetuate its bourgeois values; while this cross-dressing character is tormented by his impulses and desires and ultimately meets an untimely death, the heterosexual couple gaily walk away.

However, this is only a momentary illusion, as the next scene (according to the intertitles, in spring) portrays them dead, half-buried in the sand. So, Buñuel is not exploring the perils of cross-dressing, he is having a go at our understanding of gender distinctions by questioning and challenging traditional gender roles, while showing that ultimately there is no happiness to be found in heterosexual, rule-abiding couples either.

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As indicated earlier, there is one other cross-dressing character, whose fate is equally bleak. We are first introduced to this character shortly after the ant-crawling scene, as the hole in the hand infested with ants fades away to refocus on the armpit hair of a woman lying on the beach, which dissolves to a medium shot of a sea urchin, which in turn also dissolves into a zenithal shot of a person; a figure, with short, dark hair, neatly combed to the side, wearing a long trenched coat, who is using a cane to poke at a severed hand: a man's hand. As the angle of the camera changes and we eventually get a full frontal shot, we realize that this figure is, in fact, a woman, wearing lipstick and women's shoes, while dressed partly as a man.

This character is surrounded by an agitated crowd and two policemen who are trying to contain it. Amongst the onlookers, we can also see the two main characters, observing the scene from their apartment window.

The importance of windows and the liminality they represent, that is, their nature as a threshold between two realities, should not be overlooked. Andrew Webber draws attention to the window scenes in this film from a political perspective as a "symptomatic structure of framing and mediation for that dialectical model."²⁹ Additionally, they are also deeply symbolic in relation to gender; the liminal nature of windows, as communicating frames between two distinct spaces, offers the possibility of looking through the glass and into the space beyond, without actually taking part of that other reality, as the two spaces remain distinctly divided. Looking into the Other, but doing it from afar, that is, without crossing the threshold to penetrate it, to experience or become the other, thus expressing a tension between the attempt to approach, understand or simply come closer to the opposite gender, while being ultimately unable to cross the divide and fully enter his/her reality.

The scene is interrupted when one of the policemen turns around to address the androgyne. He starts with a formal military salute, cementing his male authority and the rigidity of his ways; a military salute which according to Ramey suggests that his agency is "controlled, or parasitized, by the military element of the controlling social system".³⁰ Following this, he rigorously scolds her. There is a parallel here with the other cross-dressing character, who likewise is scolded by a male figure and who also dies (at least a part of him) shortly afterwards. It is clear that society does not look favorably upon deviations from gender expectations and that it is perilous to challenge them. There is an implied sense of danger in the subversion of gender roles, which is portrayed in this scene through cross-dressing, but also through the power play suggested by the fact that a woman, who adopts some of the characteristics of a man, is playing with a man's hand, possibly suggesting metaphorically that she may have control over his decisions or actions. In fact, it is even the hint of such control that raises fears of emasculation and, ultimately, castration. As Ramey argues, by poking at the severed hand, "the androgyne has allowed the repressed fears of castration and loss of agency to come too close to the surface, to become almost 'undisplaced', and has thereby caused a disturbance."³¹ A side-effect of her actions (her challenge to authority and customs, her gender blending, and the power play implied) is the unintended interest that these are

awakening in the curious, frightened, and bewildered crowd, thus creating an incident of public disorder. The result is that she must be stopped. Hence, the policeman proceeds to pick up the severed hand and carefully places it in the stripped box and hands it to the character at the center of the commotion, the androgynous woman, who takes it with care while looking forlorn. What emerges from this scene is an illustration of the intersection between gender and power on the one hand, and trauma on the other. Not only is trauma at the root of the established relationship between gender and power, but any attempt to alter such relationship is perceived as dangerous and destabilizing to the point of being traumatic. Finally, the policeman disperses the crowd and the androgyne is left alone, immobile in the middle of the road, facing the oncoming traffic which eventually kills her, to the delight of Batcheff's character, who was looking all along. In other words, the end of the scene is marked by the androgyne's death: her subversion is suppressed, her challenge neutralized.

What both of these cross-dressing characters have in common is that they both suffer traumatic fates: on the one hand, the androgyne woman is run down by a car, while, on the other, the cross-dressing cyclist disassociates from himself, turning into two separate and distinct characters, to the point that unable to reintegrate both parts of himself, one shoots the other killing it.

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Fluid identities

This film is not only critical of established gender distinctions and their implications, but it also offers itself as a constructive medium by which to propose the redefinition of female and masculine gender. As Flitterman-Lewis indicates, the narrative disruptions inherent to *Un chien andalou*, "suggest something of the dynamism of the unconscious forces and in so doing elicit possible alternative constructions of the 'feminine'."³² But Buñuel does not stop at the feminine. This film also seeks to redefine the masculine, since the traditional understanding of masculinity is constantly undermined through the instability of the main male character. Powrie interprets this instability as a symptom of the crisis of masculinity, as the viewer sees how the male character suffers victim of his desire and the need to repress it.³³ We see how Batcheff's character suffers various traumatic experiences, most notably, the fall from the bicycle, the hole in the hand with crawling insects, and the self-inflicted killing of the double. In the face of this, Powrie concludes that "gender appears increasingly an accident, a joke played

by a silent God, as aleatory as the dress codes which *Un chien andalou* playfully questions."³⁴

It is my contention that this dynamism as well as this sense of crisis result in the suggestion that gender identities are more fluid than we were led to believe, which is illustrated through the various instances of gender blending and nowhere is this clearer than in the scene of the interchange of body parts between the two main characters.

The scene opens with a medium shot of a closed door, which Mareuil's character proceeds to open. Then, the image dissolves into a receding medium shot of her, closing the door behind her, while looking intently at a moth, which is on the wall opposite her. The camera increasingly focuses on the moth, until we get an extreme close up of its head. The significance of this lies in that the moth is more than a conventional symbol for death. As Ramey explains, "entomologists are usually unable to determine the gender of caterpillars without dissection, as the genitals are only activated at the adult stage."³⁵ Thus, for Ramey moths are indicators of gender-ambiguity. This is, in fact, the key to interpreting the scene which follows, where we see a succession of medium shots of Batcheff's character and the woman looking intensely at each other while some unexpected changes take place. The man covers his mouth, wiping it off. In defiance, the woman reacts by taking a mirror and lipstick from her purse and, as she paints her lips (a feminine act), armpit hair (reminiscent of pubic hair) appears where the man's mouth used to be. Shocked, the woman immediately checks her armpit to discover her own hair is missing. Upset, she covers her shoulders with a scarf and sticks her tongue out while preparing to leave the room. In essence, both characters stage a duel of sorts loaded with symbolism. While subscribing to Ramey's Freudian interpretation of the displaced body parts and the tongue-penis correlation,³⁶ I would also like to suggest that the moth functions as a preface to the scene, instructing the viewer to reframe the significance of what James Lastra calls "erotically interchangeable parts"³⁷ in the context of fluid gender and sexual identities.

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In conclusion, I suggest that with *Un chien andalou*, Buñuel embraced the expressive possibilities that the alliance between film and surrealism offered, and used them to open a window into the subconscious. As he puts it, "The cinema seems to have been invented to express the subconscious life, whose roots penetrate so deeply into poetry."³⁸ As such, cinema presented

itself as an unparalleled suitable vehicle through which to expose and articulate trauma.

As illustrated with the examples above, Buñuel used this film to explore the trauma of gender, as imposed on men and women by society. It is my contention that this film portrays such gender distinctions as traumatic, pushes their boundaries, and advocates for greater gender and sexual freedom.

1 Luis Buñuel, "Cinema, Instrument of Poetry (1953)," in *The European Cinema Reader*, ed. C. Fowler (London; New York: Routledge, 2002): 45-48 (48)

2 For further details about Dalí's contribution to this film, please refer to Haim Finkelstein, "Dalí and *Un Chien Andalou*: The Nature of Collaboration," in *Dada and Surrealist Film*, ed. Rudolf E. Kuenzli (New York: Willis, Locker & Owens, 1987), 128-42

3 Luis Buñuel, "Preface: Un chien andalou," in *Film Manifestos and Global Cinema Cultures: A Critical Anthology*, ed. S. MacKenzie (Berkeley; London: University of California Press, 2014): 31. Please note that this text was first published in, in French, in the journal *La révolution surréaliste* 12 (1929). It was translated into English by Garrett White and published in Luis Buñuel, *An Unspeakable Betrayal: Selected Writings of Luis Buñuel* (Berkeley, Calif: University of California Press, 2002)

4 André Breton, *Manifeste du surréalisme* (Éditions du Sagittaire: Paris, 1924)

5 Quoted from the following translation: André Breton, "Manifesto of Surrealism (1924)," in *Manifestoes of Surrealism*, trans. R. Seaver and H. R. Lane (United States of America: University of Michigan Press, 1969) 1-48 (26). First published in Paris, France as *Manifestes du Surréalisme* by Jean Jacques Pauvert, 1962 and in the United States as an Ann Arbor Paperback in 1972

6 Andrew Webber, "Cut and Laced: Traumatism and Fetishism in Luis Buñuel's *Un Chien Andalou*," in *Projected Shadows: Psychoanalytic Reflections on the Representation of Loss in European Cinema*, ed. A. Sabbadini (Hove; New York: Routledge, 2007), 92-101 (92)

7 Although Buñuel is one of the pioneers in identifying the relationship between cinema and the subconscious, leaving the door open to teasing out its relationship to trauma, it is only during the last two decades that a significant body of research is emerging explicitly on the relationship

between cinema and trauma. Following on from previous research on trauma theory in literature lead by Cathy Caruth, Shoshana Felman and Dori Laub, the relationship between, on the one hand, cinema in general and avant film and experimental film in particular and, on the other, trauma has been explicitly established in a special issue of the journal *Screen*, entitled *Special Debate: Trauma and Screen Studies* (2001). In particular, see Maureen Turim, who draws a parallel between the use of flashback in film and its similarity to the flashbacks experienced by trauma sufferers: Maureen Turim, "The Trauma of History: Flashbacks Upon Flashbacks," *Screen* 42. 2 (2001): 205-10. See also E. Ann Kaplan, who suggests a relationship between gender, trauma and melodrama in film: E Ann. Kaplan, "Melodrama, Cinema and Trauma," *Screen* 42.2 (2001): 201-04. Finally, also please refer to Dirk Cornelis de Bruyn for a succinct overview of the trauma theory in film: Dirk Cornelis Bruyn, *The Performance of Trauma in Moving Image Art* (Newcastle upon Tyne: Cambridge Scholars Publishing, 2014), 6-24

8 Needless to say that, Buñuel's ideological and political alliances are full of contradictions and his positions do change overtime, all of which is reflected on the evolution of his films. Contrary to the Surrealist pledge implicit in *Un chien andalou* for the subversion of the dominant rationality and the desestabilization of bourgeois religious and sexual values and behaviours, the mature Buñuel, as María Soledad Fernández Utrera explains, exhibited a pessimism rooted in the individualistic nature of the human being which overshadowed his earlier hopes for social and ideological change. See María Soledad Fernández Utrera, "Buñuel: Los Años Ácratas," *Bulletin of Spanish Studies* 93. 4 (2016): 607-22 (612). This is why, the interpretation and conclusions this paper will suggest are only applicable to *Un chien andalou* and I do not wish to imply that they should be extrapolated to his subsequent filmic production.

9 This is quite probably one of the most widely analyzed short-films in cinema; therefore, it would be impossible to provide a comprehensive bibliographic reference list here. However, with regards to the topics outlined above, it is worth highlighting the following papers: for reflections on psychoanalysis, feminism, and frustrated male desire see Phil Powrie, "Masculinity in the Shadow of the Slashed Eye: Surrealist Film Criticism at the Crossroads," *Screen* 39.2 (1998): 153-63; for a feminist interpretation of the film revealing its misogynist content, please refer to Dominique Russell, "Blinding Women: Buñuel, Feminism and the Representation of Rape," in *Buñuel: El imaginario transcultural*, ed. G. Lillo (Ottawa:

University of Ottawa Press, 2003), 189-97; for a psychoanalytic reading see Linda Williams, *Figures of Desire: A Theory and Analysis of Surrealist Film* (Urbana; London: University of Illinois Press, 1981), 53-105; see also Andrew Webber who offers a psychoanalytic analysis from the perspective of trauma and fetishism: Webber, "Cut and Laced," 92-101

10 See Russell, "Blinding Women," 189-90; see also Fernández Utrera, "Los Años Ácratas," 612

11 Not in vain, Russell underscores "the abundance of gender stereotypes and sexual violence directed at women in his films". See Russell, "Blinding Women," 189

12 We must bear in mind that actions, in this film, do not unfold in a lineal or logical form with regards to time and space, consequently, there is no plot as such, however, it is still possible to talk about scenes.

13 Webber, "Cut and Laced," 94

14 See Ramey, James. *Bulletin of Spanish Studies* 93.4 (2016): 575-606 (588)

15 Webber, "Cut and Laced," 96

16 Webber, "Cut and Laced," 94

17 See specially Elza Adamowicz, *Un Chien Andalou: French Film Guide* (London; New York: I.B. Tauris, 2009), whose second chapter is largely devoted to the analysis of this scene. See also Raymond Durnat, *Luis Buñuel* (Berkeley: Univ of California Press, 1977); Fernando C Césarman, *El Ojo De Buñuel: Psicoanálisis Desde Una Butaca* (Barcelona: Anagrama, 1976); and also Williams, *Figures of Desire*

18 See Williams, *Figures of Desire*, 85; see also Webber, "Cut and Laced," 97

19 See Ramona Fotiade, "The Slit Eye, the Scorpion and the Sign of the Cross: Surrealist Film Theory and Practice Revisited." *Screen* 39, no. 2 Summer (1998): 109-23 (116)

20 Adamowicz, *Un chien andalou*, 69

21 Ramey, "Baroque Buñuel," 589

22 See Jenaro Talens, *The Branded Eye: Buñuel's Un Chien Andalou* (Univ of Minnesota Press, 1993), 61

23 Russell, "Blinding Women," 193

24 Despite having been born to a well-off bourgeois family, during the 1920s and 1930s, Buñuel is widely considered to have held a (sometimes radical) left wing ideology. See Gwynne Edwards, *Lorca, Buñuel, Dalí. Forbidden Pleasures and Connected Lives* (London; New York: I.B. Tauris, 2009), 2. At the same time, most family, friends, and critics also agree that rather than espousing a particular ideology, Buñuel's views were heretic and, in essence,

he was simply subversive. See Marsha Kinder, "The Nomadic Discourse of Luis Buñuel: A Rambling Overview," in *Luis Buñuel's The Discreet Charm of the Bourgeoisie*, ed. M. Kinder (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005), 1-30 (3)

25 Ramey, "Baroque Buñuel," 584

26 "eight years later" [my own translation].

27 Webber's article focuses on the film's preoccupation with lace and lacemaking, a heavily gendered object and activity. Thus, he underscores how the main subject of the painting, the lace-maker, is "a female figure who wears a collar not unlike the cyclist's." Webber, "Cut and Laced," 97. Thus, Webber draws attention to another form of gender blending, by which the reference to the painted subject gender and trade, suggests a new layer of gender complexity associated (through intertextuality) to Batcheff's character. See also Ramey, who offers his own interpretation of the presence of *The Lacemaker*, which for him "signals that the film has now reached the second of the three stages of Greek Fate." Ramey, "Baroque Buñuel," 590

28 Ramey, "Baroque Buñuel," 582

29 Webber, "Cut and Laced," 92

30 Ramey, "Baroque Buñuel," 585

31 Ramey, "Baroque Buñuel," 586

32 Sandy Flitterman-Lewis, "The Image and the Spark," in *Dada and Surrealist Film*, ed. Rudolf E. Kuenzli (New York: Willis, Locker & Owens, 1987), 131

33 See Powrie, "Masculinity in the Shadow," 162

34 Powrie, "Masculinity in the Shadow," 163

35 Ramey, "Baroque Buñuel," 592

36 Ramey, "Baroque Buñuel," 597

37 James Lastra, "Buñuel, Bataille, and Buster, or, the Surrealist Life of Things," *Critical Quarterly* 51. 2 (2009): 34

38 Buñuel, "Cinema, Instrument of Poetry," 47