1 Producing *Un chien andalou*: myths of origin

> Our imagination, and our dreams, are forever invading our memories; and since we are all apt to believe in the reality of our fantasies, we end up transforming our lies into truths.
> Luis Buñuel

Luis Buñuel:

> When I arrived to spend a few days at Dalí's house in Figueras, I told him about a dream I'd had in which a long, tapering cloud sliced the moon in half, like a razor blade slicing through an eye. Dalí immediately told me that he'd seen a hand crawling with ants in a dream he'd had the previous night.
> 'And what if we started right there and made a film?' he wondered aloud.
> Despite my hesitation, we soon found ourselves hard at work, and in less than a week we had a script. (Buñuel 1984: 103–4)

Salvador Dalí:

> Luis Buñuel one day outlined to me an idea he had for a motion picture that he wanted to make, for which his mother was going to lend him the money. His idea for a film struck me as extremely mediocre […] I told him that this film story of his did not have the slightest interest, but that I on the other hand had just written a very short scenario which had the touch of genius, and which went completely counter to the contemporary cinema.
> This was true. The scenario was written. I received a telegram from Buñuel announcing that he was coming to Figueras. He was immediately enthusiastic

> over my scenario, and we decided to work out several secondary ideas, and also the title – it was going to be called *Le Chien andalou*. (Dalí 1968: 205–6)

When reading Buñuel and Dalí's accounts of the production of *Un chien andalou*, from script to scenario, shooting, first viewing and promotion, it is interesting to consider the contexts of these descriptions, which explain the sometimes shifting, often contradictory, stories of the making of the film, coloured by subsequent events and disputes, and mythified over time. Firstly, the film was made with the aim of opening the door of Surrealism to the two young Spaniards, which explains why the film was cast in an explicitly surrealist mould, and promoted in line with the principles of Surrealism, the zealous (mis)application of surrealist precepts by two model candidates for Breton's movement. Moreover, Buñuel and Dalí fell out in 1930 over the making of *L'Age d'or*, which might explain Dalí's later claims to sole authorship of the concept and his downplaying of Buñuel's role in writing the script and shooting the film. Since such accounts privilege individual or intersubjective elements over collective sources, giving priority for example to the role of dream images and an alleged automatism in the writing of the screenplay, they wilfully obscure the cultural contexts of the film's production, and in particular the specifically cinematic borrowings and quotations. This wider intertextual framework of the film will be explored in chapter 3. The present chapter will focus on the conception, realization and reception of *Un chien andalou* as told by Buñuel, Dalí and the surrealist group, in accounts which determined to a large extent subsequent interpretations of the film as quintessentially surrealist.[1]

From scenario to screen: a close collaboration

Buñuel and Dalí met in 1920 as students at the Residencia des Estudiantes in Madrid. Buñuel had enrolled in 1917 for a degree in agronomy which he soon abandoned to study literature and philosophy, graduating in 1924. Dalí registered in 1920 at the Academy of Fine Arts. By January 1929, when they wrote the screenplay, Buñuel had had extensive experience as a film critic, programmer and assistant, while Dalí was becoming an

established artist and had written articles on film and photography (see chapter 3 for further details). Buñuel produced *Un chien andalou* after two uncompleted film projects. His original idea for a joint film, based on a short story by Ramón Gómez de la Serna, was rejected by Dalí (1968: 205), who considered it 'extremely mediocre […] avant-garde in an incredibly naïve sort of way'. The sum of 25,000 pesetas Buñuel received from his mother for this project was to be used to produce their film.

Whose scenario was it? The statements by Buñuel and Dalí quoted at the beginning of this chapter present contradictory accounts of their respective roles in the conception of the film. Buñuel states that the idea for the film originated in two dream images. He underlines the spirit of complicity between the two friends, a complicity that dated from their student days in Madrid. In a letter to their fellow-student Pépin Bello (10 February 1929), Buñuel writes: 'Dalí and I are more united than ever, and we have worked together to make a stupendous scenario, quite without precedent in the history of the cinema. It is something big. You will love it' (Aranda 1975: 58). In later interviews he repeatedly emphasizes the collaborative spirit of the enterprise. He declares to Aranda for example: 'The plot of *Un chien andalou* is a joint work. On some things we worked very closely together. In fact Dalí and I were extremely close during that period […] But the film is mine' (Aranda 1975: 59). He underlines the collaboration yet again in his memoirs, when he states: 'The amazing thing was that we never had the slightest disagreement; we spent a week of total identification' (Buñuel 1984: 104).[2]

While Buñuel emphasizes the collaborative aspect of the project, Dalí gives himself the lead role, attributing only a bit part to his collaborator. He proclaims on more than one occasion his responsibility for the concept, stating that he had written the scenario before Buñuel's arrival in Figueras – jotted down on the lid of a shoebox! – and claiming that their collaboration concerned only minor elements. Although the original scenario has not survived, Buñuel himself acknowledges Dalí's 'protagonism in the *conception* of the film' in a letter to him (24 June 1929) written shortly after the film's first screening (Gibson 1997: 192). Dalí's repeated claims to be the creator of the scenario can be explained not only by the artist's characteristic self-promotion, but also as the consequence of his

later dispute with Buñuel over his contribution to *L'Age d'or*, and over the credits for both *Un chien andalou* and *L'Age d'or*, where Dalí's name does not figure. In a letter to Buñuel dated May 1934, Dalí writes: 'I have just seen *Un chien andalou* at Studio 28, and imagine my *stupefaction,* my *indignation* when I saw that my collaboration is *not* credited *at all*. As you will understand, this is such a gross *moral* and *material* wrong that I immediately put the matter in the hands of a lawyer' (Sánchez Vidal 1988: 202).

According to Buñuel, he and Dalí wrote the script in six days in January 1929 at Dalí's home in Figueras.[3] The point of departure of the script, as recorded in his memoirs quoted above, was the account of two dream images: his own dream linking a cloud passing across the moon to a razor cutting an eye, and Dalí's image of a hand crawling with ants. This, however, contradicts the fact that he had originally attributed both images to Dalí, which would seem to confirm the latter's responsibility for the concept (Bataille 1985: 29).[4] The script was conceived and realized as a montage of dreamlike images and irrational associations. They accepted images and gags that came spontaneously to mind, eliminating all logical associations: 'Our only rule was very simple: no idea or image that might lend itself to a rational explanation of any kind would be accepted. We had to open all doors to the irrational and keep only those images that surprised us, without trying to explain why' (Buñuel 1984: 104). Buñuel gives an example of their working methods:

> We chose only those images that surprised us, and that we both accepted without discussion. For example, the woman grabs a tennis racket to defend herself against the man who wants to attack her. He looks around for something and (now I am talking to Dalí): 'What does he see ?' – 'A flying toad.' – 'Bad !' – 'A bottle of brandy.' – 'Bad !' – 'OK, I see two ropes.' – 'Good, but what is there behind these ropes?' – 'The chap pulls them and falls because he is pulling two large dried marrows.' – 'What else?' – 'Two Marist brothers.' – 'And then?' – 'A cannon.' – 'Bad!' – 'A luxurious armchair. No, a grand piano.' – 'That's great, and on top of the piano, a donkey... no, two rotting donkeys.' – 'Fantastic!' In other words, we conjured up irrational images, without any explanation. (Turrent and Colina 1993: 30–1)

They thus deliberately and programmatically gave priority to striking images and non-sequiturs, rejecting conventional storytelling and any psychological coherence.

Buñuel and Dalí construct their accounts of the production of the script in terms of play, free association and the aleatory, according to a surrealist model, a reference explicitly and repeatedly acknowledged by Buñuel. His statement in the 1929 preface to the script: '*Un chien andalou* would not exist if Surrealism did not exist', is echoed in a text from 1947: '*Un chien andalou* would not have existed if the movement called surrealist had not existed' (Mellen 1978: 151–2). Their interest in Surrealism predated 1929. During the 1920s there were frequent exchanges between the Spanish avant-garde and the Paris surrealist group. Spanish writers and artists went to Paris (a group of painters, musicians and poets, including José María Hinojosa and Gregorio Prieto, met regularly at the Rotonde café in Montparnasse) and Paris surrealists went to Spain to lecture (André Breton in Barcelona in 1922, Louis Aragon at the Residencia in Madrid in April 1925). Articles on Surrealism and translations of surrealist texts were published regularly in Catalan and Spanish avant-garde reviews such as *L'Amic de les Arts*. Buñuel had read Sade, Lautréamont and Jarry, Surrealism's literary precursors. Dalí's 1927 dream-paintings have close affinities with de Chirico and Tanguy's dreamlike landscapes (Ades 1982: 45). Although in 1927 Dalí notes his resistance to the surrealist exploration of the unconscious, stating that he values the clarity and objectivity of the photographic lens over 'the murky processes of the subconscious' (Dalí 1998: 13), in the final issue of *L'Amic de les arts* (March 1929), which he co-edited, Dalí aligns himself wholeheartedly with Surrealism, quoting Breton and referring to Benjamin Péret as 'the most authentic French poet'.

The surrealist technique consciously adopted by Buñuel and Dalí to produce the screenplay was that of automatism. It was written in six days, perhaps in imitation of Breton and Philippe Soupault's collaboration on the first surrealist text *Les Champs magnétiques*, written in 1919 in less than two weeks in very similar conditions of intense collaboration. They freely adapted Surrealism's 'recipe' for producing an automatic text or drawing: take a blank sheet of paper or canvas, clear your mind of any preconceived theme or story, and write or draw anything that comes to mind, guarding against the intervention of reason (Breton 1972: 29–30). Buñuel describes their method:

> We looked for an unstable and invisible balance between the rational and the irrational that would allow us to understand the unintelligible, and unite dream and reality, the conscious and the unconscious, outside of any symbolism […] It was not a question of linking one image to another in relation to reason or the absence thereof, but simply of finding a continuity that would be satisfying for our unconscious without detriment to the conscious, and, moreover, with no direct relation to the rational. In other words, it was in fact a question of approximating, in theory, what Breton had defined as the precise process of Surrealism. (Aub 1991: 51–2)

This text recalls Breton's definition of Surrealism in his 1924 *Manifesto of Surrealism*:

> SURREALISM. masc. nn. Psychic automatism in its pure state, by which one proposes to express – verbally, by means of the written word, or in any other manner – the actual functioning of thought. Dictation of thought, in the absence of any control exercised by reason, exempt from any aesthetic or moral concern. (Breton 1972: 26)

Moreover, when Buñuel concludes that the images produced 'are as mysterious and inexplicable to the two collaborators as they are to the spectator' (Mellen 1978: 153), he is echoing Breton's comment on *Les Champs magnétiques*: 'To you who write, these elements are, on the surface, *as strange to you as they are to anyone else*' (Breton 1972: 24).

Buñuel and Dalí's conscious and self-consciously mechanistic application of surrealist automatic techniques suggests a playful imitation of automatism. Their combination of spontaneity and lucidity approximates what Dalí was to develop as his 'paranoia-critical method', grounded on the simulation of paranoiac delirium, which replaces automatism's passivity with a more active writing process. The claim that the script was produced quite spontaneously is further called into question when we consider Buñuel and Dalí's extensive knowledge of the cinema, and their experience in film production (Buñuel) and painting (Dalí). Indeed the deliberate eschewing of rational discourse on the one hand, and the pastiche and playful quoting of 1920s' films on the other, suggest that the film was conceived in a dadaist spirit of pastiche and parody as much as a genuine surrealist engagement in the exploration of the unconscious. For surrealist Aldo Kyrou (1962: 16), the film is too ostentatiously automatic: '*Un chien andalou* is a perfectly "automatic" film (and probably the only one), but I believe automatism is necessary when it liberates the self and

not when it hides under sometimes flashy adornments. *Un chien andalou* is a crafted film, unlike Buñuel's other films, which are a continuous and uncontrolled outpouring of the "I" '. This would suggest that the script itself is a pastiche of automatism, just as the film, with its conscious and meticulous montage, mimics the fragmentation and absence of logic of dream language.

Dalí and Buñuel read the script to their friend Josep Puig Pujades, a journalist from Figueras, who wrote an article in the local newspaper, *La Veu de l'Empordà* (2 February 1929):

> The entire film is a series of normal events which give an impression of abnormality. They are not arbitrary events, since each has its *raison d'être*, but the way in which they are linked and cut is deeply disturbing […] You realize that either you must be amazed by everything, no matter how run-of-the-mill or commonplace, or by nothing at all. (trans. Gibson 1997: 192).

The title itself was a source of hilarity for the scriptwriters: 'The title of my present book is *The Andalusian Dog*, which made Dalí and me piss with laughter when we thought of it' (Aranda 1975: 59). It is an absurd title, since the viewer encounters neither a dog nor an Andalusian in the film. They had originally thought of other titles: *Vaya marista* / *Go Marist*, *El Marista en la Ballesta* / *The Marist in the Crossbow*, *Es peligroso asomarse al interior*/ *Dangereux de se pencher en dedans*/ *It's dangerous to lean inside* (a perversion of the notice on French trains: 'Dangereux de se pencher au-dehors/ Do not lean out of the window), and finally *Un perro andaluz*, the title of a collection of poems Buñuel had written in 1927 but never published. Fellow student and poet Federico García Lorca claimed he was the origin of the title: 'Buñuel's made a little film, just like that!' he used to say, snapping his fingers. 'It's called *An Andalusian Dog*, and I'm the dog!' (Buñuel 1984: 157). According to one critic, the term 'perros andaluces' was a term Buñuel and his fellow-students used disparagingly about a group of Andalusian poets at the Residencia, and the film is read as an account of their sexual ambivalence and their struggle to free themselves from their bourgeois milieu (Aranda 1975: 46). Whatever the truth, the presence of a complex contextual and intertextual network around the title alone suggests that Buñuel's claim that it was invented outside any cultural considerations is difficult to sustain.

The film was shot in just two weeks (2–17 April 1929), at the Paris Billancourt Studios and on location at Le Havre for the final beach sequence.[5] Pierre Batcheff (1901–1932) agreed to play the male lead part. A wellknown actor, the 'French James Dean of the 1920s' (Drummond 1977: 78), he had worked with French film directors Abel Gance, Jean Epstein and Marcel L'Herbier. Buñuel and Dalí were keen to obtain the collaboration of an established actor like Batcheff in order to attract funding.[6] Buñuel had met the actor when he was an assistant to Henri Etiévant and Mario Nalpas on *La Sirène des tropiques* / *The Siren of the Tropics* (1927). On the same set Buñuel had met Simone Mareuil (1903–1954), who played the principal female protagonist in his film. The other parts were played by non-professionals. The androgyne's role was played by Fano Mesan, with her bobbed hairstyle and men's clothes in the *garçonne* fashion of the time. Robert Hommet – 'the young, strong, blonde, square-jawed, German, oozing elegant health', writes Buñuel in a letter to Dali (22 March 1929) – played the part of the new lover on the beach. The Marist priests were played by Catalan anarchist publisher Jaime Miravilles and Dalí, who was replaced by the production manager Marval in the second shot. Buñuel appears in the prologue, then disappears from the set. In the park scene, Dalí and Jeanne Rucar, Buñuel's fiancée, are seen walking away from the camera. Extras for street scenes and the sequence in the park were coopted from a local café. The film's cameraman was Albert Duverger, who had worked on Epstein's *Mauprat* (1926) and *The Siren of the Tropics*, and was to work on the set for *L'Age d'or* the following year. Production designs were by Pierre Schildknecht, and Rucar was in charge of budget and costumes.

The property-man seems to have found the list of props needed for such a short film quite bizarre:

> These were some of the things we asked for: a nude model, for whom he had to find some way of wearing a live sea-urchin under each arm; makeup for Bacheff (sic) in which he would have no mouth, and a second one in which his mouth would be replaced by hairs which by their arrangement would recall as much as possible those of the underarms; four donkeys in a state of decomposition, each of which had to be placed on a grand piano; a cut-off hand, looking as natural as possible, a cow's eye, and three nests of ants. (Dalí 1968: 213)

In fact, Buñuel had written to Dalí in Figueras (22 March 1929) asking him to bring some ants back from Spain, with precise details for their transport, and adding: 'It depends on you whether I'll have to use caterpillars, flies or rabbits in the hole in the hand' (Gibson 1997: 201–2).

Batcheff's Paris apartment was used as the film-makers' base, where the film rushes were screened with a second-hand 35 mm projector (Tual 1978: 102). They followed the script closely, making only a few changes. The shooting script was typed in Spanish, with the precise focal length of lenses for many of the shots (Baxter 1994: 81). Shooting itself appears to have been quite haphazard, if one is to accept Buñuel's comments:

> The filming took two weeks; there were only five or six of us involved, and most of the time no one quite knew what he was doing.
> 'Stare out the window and look as if you're listening to Wagner,' I remember telling Batcheff. 'No, no – not like that. Sadder. Much sadder.'
> Batcheff never even knew what he was supposed to be looking at, but given the technical knowledge I'd managed to pick up, Duverger and I got along famously. (Buñuel 1984: 104)

Although Buñuel states he did not improvise, he did not show his actors the script, preferring to give them what seemed at times rather odd instructions:

> I would simply say to them: 'Now look through the window. An army is marching past.' Or else: 'Over there is a fight between two drunkards.' In fact it tied in well with the scene of the girl playing with the severed hand. The cameraman and technicians had no idea of the script […] No, I didn't say I was improvising. I left out things […] but I didn't improvise. I knew more or less what I was going to do. For me the script has always been used as a base. (Turrent and Colina 1993: 33)

While Buñuel is known to have claimed that he was sole responsible for the shooting of the film (Aub 1991: 32), elsewhere he acknowledged Dalí's role: 'The film was 50% of each of us […] I did the cutting of the eye and the ants in the hand, Dalí did the garden scene and the cocktail shaker bell' (Aranda 1975: 60). However Buñuel played down Dalí's contribution to the shooting, maintaining that Dalí arrived on location a few days before the end of the shoot – a photograph of the cast on the beach at Le Havre where the closing scenes were filmed is evidence that Dalí was indeed present on the set at that point – and that his main contribution was the preparation of the rotting donkeys and two brief appearances on screen

(Buñuel 1984: 104–5). Dalí himself acknowledged Buñuel's role as director and scriptwriter in 1929 (Dalí 1998: 100), but he would later make much of his own contribution, claiming he was a constant adviser throughout the shooting, albeit absent from the studio:

> [Buñuel] undertook, moreover, to take charge of the directing, the casting, the staging, etc […] But some time later I went to Paris myself and was able to keep in close touch with the progress of the film and take part in the directing through conversations we held every evening. Buñuel automatically and without question accepted the slightest of my suggestions; he knew by experience that I was never wrong in such matters. (Dalí 1968: 205–6)

Dalí (1968: 213) also describes his preparation of the dead donkeys' scene in full gory detail: he gouged out the donkeys' eyes, poured glue over them to give the effect of putrefaction, and exposed their teeth to rhyme with the piano keys.

The film is seventeen minutes long and has 300 shots, each lasting an average of three seconds.[7] Buñuel is credited with the montage, which was carried out with great precision. Brunius (1929: 231) notes 'the simplicity and the perfection at work in the *découpage*, the shooting and the montage, the visible control in the mise en scène'. Fast cutting, established by Griffith in 1913, had become standard film language by the mid-twenties. Several critics have claimed that Buñuel's model was Louis Feuillade's *Fantômas* or *Les Vampires*, whose editing was free from special effects, rather than avant-garde film directors with their technical complexities.[8] However, the film does have unusual camera angles (high-angle shots on the cyclist and androgyne) and special effects (slow-motion shots, dissolves, multiple exposure, superimposed shots), characteristic of 1920s' French avant-garde cinema. Buñuel and Dalí might well have wished to pastiche the elaborate technical effects used by avant-garde directors (see chapter 3 for a discussion of the film as pastiche). To save money, the special effects were achieved at the shooting rather than the editing stage. Dissolves were produced by rewinding the film and refilming on the exposed film (a technique Méliès had used), while fades were achieved by iris closing shots (Baxter 1994: 81). Credits were done in a rush, when Buñuel had already left for Madrid after completing the shooting and editing, which no doubt explains the names misspelt or left out. Actors Simone ('Simonne') Mareuil and Pierre Batcheff ('Batchef') are

credited, but neither Buñuel, Mesan, Hommet, Miravilles, Marval nor Dalí appear in the credits.

The debates and contradictions relating to the contributions of Buñuel and Dalí to the scenario, script, shooting and editing of *Un chien andalou* are not limited to the two main protagonists. A number of film historians and critics have downplayed or overrated the contribution of one or the other, a judgement often coloured by the later activities of Dalí or Buñuel. For example, Aranda (1975: 60) is clearly on the side of Buñuel when he claims that, if the film is compared with Buñuel and Dalí's later work, 'not only the cinematographic quality, but also all the positive values of the film are those of Buñuel'. Kyrou (1963: 9) makes a similarly categorical retrospective judgement when he writes passionately about Buñuel's input and scathingly about Dalí's: 'I am convinced that Buñuel and Dalí were aiming at different things. Buñuel sought to catch a glimpse of that incandescent world in which dream and reality mingle in a magnificent gesture of liberation; Dalí hoped to shock the bourgeoisie.' The latter's contribution is allegedly identified in the ostentation and exaggerated symbolism of certain scenes, elementary freudianism and window-display tricks. In contrast, Buñuel's scenes are characterized as 'real cries of revolt', an exploration of 'latent reality' beyond satire, aesthetics and jokes. Buñuel, according to Kyrou, wished to 'push his scalpel-camera into the open wound of real flesh'. Dalí's friend Jaime Miravilles, who played one of the Marist priests, perhaps best assessed the contribution of each when he stated that the original idea was without doubt Dalí's, while Buñuel was largely responsible for the execution of the film (Gibson 1997: 658). More important, however, is the fact that the film was the product not simply of two individuals, but of a cultural and social context, which the film quotes, parodies and subverts, as will be explored in chapter 3.

Première and reception of *Un chien andalou*

Even the film's première generated conflicting reports. Once it had been edited, Buñuel approached the surrealists Man Ray and Louis Aragon, claiming that *Un chien andalou* was 'perhaps a surrealist film' (Tual 1978:

103). Man Ray agreed to screen the film along with his own film *Les Mystères du château du Dé*, recently completed for the art patron the Vicomte Charles de Noailles, at a private screening at the left-bank art-cinema Studio des Ursulines on 6 June 1929 (Buñuel 1984: 105). According to Buñuel and others, the screening was attended by 'the *tout-Paris* – some aristocrats, a sprinkling of well-established artists […], the entire surrealist group in toto' (Buñuel 1984: 106). Surrealist Georges Sadoul, however, strongly denies the presence of the surrealists: 'One thing is certain. We were not present as a group to acclaim the film, but went individually and our meeting with Buñuel took place *after* the première which we did not attend' (Sadoul 1962: 14). The contradictions may be explained by some confusion between several screenings of the film in the course of summer 1929.[9] During the first screening, Buñuel stood behind the screen with a gramophone, alternating extracts of Wagner's *Liebestod* from *Tristan und Isolde* and two Argentinian tangos. Fearing hostile audience reaction, he kept stones in his pockets (Buñuel 1984: 106). Witnesses testify to the cool reception of Man Ray's film, contrasting with the prolonged applause after the screening of *Un chien andalou* (Tual 1978: 104).

The script, based on the shooting script, was published in *La Revue du cinéma* and the last issue of *La Révolution surréaliste* (December 1929). Photogrammes of the film were reproduced in July 1929 in *Variétés* and *Les Cahiers d'art*, and in August in *Bifur*. The Vicomte Charles and Marie-Laure de Noailles, to whom Buñuel was introduced through Christian Zervos, editor of *Cahiers d'art*, hosted several screenings in July 1929 in their private Paris cinema Place des Etats-Unis, attended by artistocrats and intellectuals, including Carl Dreyer, Michel Leiris and Léon Moussinac. The film was bought by Jean Mauclaire, director of Studio 28, a new Montmartre art-cinema, where it opened on 1 October 1929 for an eight-month run, in a double bill with a Donald Crisp thriller, *The Cop*, then with Harold Lloyd and Mack Sennett comedies (Baxter 1994: 93).[10] Buñuel received an advance of 1000 francs, and earned a total of about 8000 francs (Buñuel 1984: 108). Other screenings followed, at the International Congress of Independent Cinema held in September in La Sarraz in Switzerland, where, according to Dalí, it was praised by the film director

Sergei Eisenstein, who is alleged to have declared that the film exposed 'the extent of the disintegration of bourgeois consciousness' (Baxter 1994: 100). It was first screened in Spain on 24 October 1929 in a Barcelona film club and in Madrid at the Royalty Cinema. The film was acquired by Raymond Rohauer, one of the principal distributors of the silent cinema for Les Grands Films Classiques. A soundtrack was added in 1960 under Buñuel's supervision, corresponding to the original music played on a gramophone. In 1982, the composer Mauricio Kagel, commissioned by Swiss TV, created a soundtrack for stringed instruments and dog-barks.

Was the film an immediate *succès de scandale*, destroying 'in a single evening ten years of pseudo-intellectual post-war avant-gardism', as Dalí would later claim (1968: 212)? In answering this question it is important to distinguish reviews written when the film was first shown from later comments. The film acquired its reputation as a shocking film largely retrospectively, through association – and often confusion – with the greater scandal caused at the first showing of *L'Age d'or* in 1930 (also screened at Studio 28), and partly as a consequence of the surrealists' enthusiastic promotion of the film.

Several of the critics who viewed the film when it was first screened evoked the powerful assault on the senses. André Delons (1929: 22) for instance notes the violence of its images:

> It is the very first time that images, shot through with our horrific human gestures, act out desires to the full, cutting their way to their final goal through their predestined obstacles [...] We are in the presence of a prodigious example of humour, cruelty and innocence fused in one flesh, and along with them a tight sequence of chance events. We have the impression we are witnessing truth being turned inside out, truth being skinned alive.

In an article extensively reproduced by Dalí in *The Secret Life of Salvador Dalí* (1968: 212), Eugenio Montes, a fellow-student of Buñuel and Dalí at the Residencia de Estudiantes and a writer, links the film to the violence of Spanish culture:

> Barbarous, elementary beauty, the moon and the earth of the desert, where 'blood is sweeter than honey', reappear before the world. No! No! Do not look for the roses of France. Spain is not a garden, nor the Spaniard a gardener. Spain is a planet and the roses of the desert are rotten donkeys. Hence no wit, no decorativism. The Spaniard is essence, not refinement. Spain does not refine, it cannot falsify. Spain cannot paint turtles or disguise donkeys with

> crystals instead of their skin. The sculptured Christs in Spain bleed, and when they are brought out into the streets they march between two rows of Civil Guards. (Montes 1929)[11]

The rhetorical excesses of such comments indicate an enthusiastic poetic response to the excesses of the film rather than a measured critical assessment. Cyril Connolly, writing in 1934, reacts in a similarly dithyrambic mode:

> This contemptuous private world of jealousy and lust, of passion and aridity, whose beautiful occupants patter about like stoats in search of blood, produced an indescribable effect, a tremendous feeling of excitement and liberation. The Id has spoken and – through the obsolete medium of silent film – the spectators had been treated to their first glimpses of despair and frenzy which were smouldering beneath the complacent post-war world […] With the impression of having witnessed some infinitely ancient horror, Saturn swallowing his sons, we made our way out into the cold of February (sic) 1929, that unique and dazzling cold. (quoted in Baxter 1994: 93)

Connolly describes how the film was received with boos, and states that hats and sticks were thrown at the screen, while a woman shouted: 'Salopes, salopes, salopes!' / 'Bitches!'. He was clearly confusing *Un chien andalou* with the stormy reception of *L'Age d'or* the following year.

Other reactions were more muted, if not hostile, as testified for example in the critical review of *La Revue du cinéma* (1929). Although this journal had published the script in June 1929, it was less than enthusiastic about the film in its November issue. Its reviewer reproaches critics of the film for 'selling old stock of quite indigestible psychoanalytical jargon', and quotes Alexandre Arnoux (writing on the film for the *Nouvelles littéraires*): 'I assure you the film is fashionable Freudian matter. Repression, an endless outpouring of aborted acts, sexual perversion, libido, transfer and complexes.' The review also cites Jean Vincent Bréchignac (reviewing the film for the popular film journal *Pour vous*), who patronizingly dismisses the film as an adolescent prank: 'What could be more engaging than a young man carried away by his enthusiasm or a burst of passing rebellion?' Other reviewers were less than enthusiastic about the film. The philosopher Raymond Aron (1929) contrasts the films of Buster Keaton, which subvert social conventions from within, with Man Ray's *Mystère du château du Dé* and *Un chien andalou*, which he claims are situated in a void, outside social norms. He concludes that Keaton's revolt is more

'fecund' than the 'witticism and harmless onanism' of Man Ray or Buñuel. For J. Bouissounouse (1929), writing in *La Revue du cinéma*, the film was quite incomprehensible, 'absurd from beginning to end', and notes that the hysterical laughter of the women in the audience was matched by the boredom of male spectators. And a final example: in a particularly scathing review of the film published in the popular journal *Nouvel Age*, Edouard Peisson (1931), while conceding that the image of the slashed eye is indeed beautiful, states that 'it is also stupid and morbid, fit for the audience of a Punch and Judy show'. He concludes that if the great majority of spectators miss the main point, it's because the film is of interest to a few idle people who see themselves as intellectuals![12]

This cross-section of critical responses leads one to conclude that Dalí's claim regarding the impact of the film might well have been exaggerated, and that the film aquired its radical aura retrospectively. The surrealists accepted the scandal and rejected the success. They enthusiastically supported the film, which was immediately appropriated as a model of, and for, Surrealism. In a review published on 28 June 1929 in *Le Merle*, for instance, the surrealist Robert Desnos focuses on the impact of the eye-slitting scene, noting the film's mix of poetry and humour, essential ingredients of surrealist works:

> I do not know any film that affects the spectator so directly, and is made so specifically for him, engaging him in conversation, in an intimate rapport. But whether it's the eye sliced by a razor, whose crystalline liquid trickles viscously, or the assemblage of Spanish priests and grand pianos bearing its load of dead donkeys, there is nothing in it that does not draw on humour and poetry, which are intimately linked. (Desnos 1992: 187)

In his review of the film, the surrealist Jacques Brunius (1929: 230–1) compares the logic of the narrative to the 'absurd and implacable necessity of dreams' and claims that its association of ideas and images corresponds to surrealist automatism. He contrasts the purely technical acrobatics of 'pure cinema' (he is referring to 1920s avant-garde film) with the importance of the script in *Un chien andalou*. He imagines the opening scene as an assault on the complacent bourgeois aesthete: 'In the first minute of the film with a slash of his razor Buñuel rams back into their sockets the shining eyes of seekers of pretty shots, aesthetes, those easily offended by what they see. There can be no misunderstanding, the rest of the film is

totally lacking in harmony'. Brunius predicted, however, that the film would be appropriated by the cultured public: 'For those who are familiar with the habits of specialist cinemas and avant-garde spectators, who adore being violated, it is easy to predict for Buñuel a fine *succès de scandale*'. The film was indeed adopted by the cultured public, and was very soon the talk of fashionable salons. For communist film critic Léon Moussinac (1929), for example, the film expresses modish sadism, 'a decadent distraction of poor taste', rather than a critique of the bourgeoisie.

To counter the film's recuperation the surrealists reacted by elaborating a type of celebratory poetic criticism, as in this later overview of Buñuel's cinema by Benjamin Péret (1952: 27–8):

> For the first time, cinema, disdaining vain anecdote, tried to plunge into the abyss of the human soul in order to bring back to the surface the grimacing beasts that lead a life of caged lions about to devour their keeper. The spectator could only be irritated by this film which, coming from the depths, reveals to him what he stubbornly hid from himself. He suddenly felt naked in his own eyes and in the eyes of others, ready to see himself as he is, stripped of the fine sentiments he liked decking himself out in.

The poet thus mimics in his text the irrationality and excesses of the film. Such a poetic reading focuses on the effect of the film on the viewer rather than on its meaning. It is a subjective response largely internal to Surrealism, which elects to preserve the enigmatic qualities and poetic aura of the film by imitating its style, thereby displaying a refusal to retrieve the film through rational discourse. Creative misreadings also belong to this category of response to the film. For example, Oswell Blakeston (1929) reports that the female protagonist puts on lipstick while ants swarm out of the man's mouth; while the composer George Antheil puts together his own personal montage, several years after seeing the film:

> [...] The young man with the razor pursues the girl, who, as she runs from room to room in a building with apparently endless rooms in it, has her clothes alternately dissolve and materialise as she runs along. One moment she is nude. The next moment she is clothed. And so on, clothes, nudity, clothes, nudity, clothes. She runs through one room to the next, closing doors all the while. Sometimes the fellow gets his hands caught in the closing doors, and one sees a close-up of a clenched fist apparently decaying, with ants running all over it. None of this stops him, however; he keeps on going. The going gets harder twoards the end. The girl comes to the last room and is huddling, nude,

> in the furthest corner of the room while the fellow strains towards her with two big cables attached to his shoulders. (1945: 301)

Following the screening of the film, Dalí and Buñuel were enthusiastically adopted by the surrealist group. However, there are conflicting accounts of their first meetings with the group. Buñuel first met Louis Aragon and Man Ray, but was he introduced by Christian Zervos or the artist Fernand Léger? Was the first meeting at the café La Coupole or Le Dôme? Did Buñuel meet the surrealist group at the café Cyrano on Place Pigalle before the opening night of the film? Did André Breton, leader of the surrealist group, summon Buñuel and Dalí to the café Radio in Boulevard Clichy, after seeing the film at Studio 28 in October? Whatever the facts of their first encounter with the group, the film effectively opened the door to Surrealism for Dalí and Buñuel. After the première, they attended the surrealists' daily meetings at the Cyrano or at Breton's studio. As Georges Sadoul (1965: 19) recalls: 'Buñuel didn't need to say much for us to understand he was one of us […] He belonged body and soul to our group even before having met any one of us'.

Yet they had to cross Breton's hurdles before being fully accepted as surrealists. The main initiation was linked to the incident of the publication of the screenplay (Buñuel 1984: 108–10). Paul Eluard invited Buñuel to publish it in a special number on Surrealism of the Belgian journal *Variétés*, but it had already been promised to *La Revue du cinéma*, which belonged to the publisher Gallimard. Summoned by Breton to an inquisitorial meeting attended by the entire surrealist group, Buñuel was accused of collaborating in a bourgeois publication and producing a commercially successful film. 'How could such a scandalous film draw such an enormous public?' asked Aragon in his role as prosecutor, while Breton asked bluntly: 'The question is, are you with the police or with us?' Although Buñuel and Eluard were sent with hammers to the Gallimard printworks to smash up the type, the issue had already been printed. Letters of protest against Gallimard were sent to several Paris newspapers. Buñuel, it seems, was even prepared to ritualistically burn the negative on the place du Tertre in Montmartre!

By the end of 1929 Buñuel and Dalí were fully integrated into the surrealist group. Breton's enthusiastic preface to Dalí's first Paris

exhibition, held in November 1929 at the Galerie Goemans, gives the works the stamp of surrealist authenticity, focusing on their link to the unconscious and their hallucinatory qualities. The December issue of *La Révolution surréaliste* reproduced two of the paintings exhibited, *Illuminated Pleasures* and *The Accommodation of Desires* (which had been bought by Breton). It also reproduced a photomontage by Magritte of photobooth portraits of the entire surrealist group, including Buñuel and Dalí, eyes closed, framing the painting of a female nude figure by Magritte. The same issue published the script of *Un chien andalou*, with a short preface by Buñuel, expressing his passionate and unconditional allegiance to Surrealism:

> The publication of this screenplay in *La Révolution surréaliste is the only one I authorize*. It expresses unconditionally my complete identification with surrealist thought and activity. *Un chien andalou* would not exist if Surrealism did not exist.
>
> 'A successful film', that's what most of the people who have seen it think. But what can I do against those who adore novelty, even when novelty offends their deepest convictions, against a corrupt or insincere press, against that pack of imbeciles who finds *beautiful* and *poetic* what, in reality, is nothing less than a desperate, passionate call to murder. (Buñuel 1929)

Buñuel aligns himself with the surrealists when he describes the film not in aesthetic terms as *beautiful* or *poetic* – an allusion to the predominantly aesthetic qualities of avant-garde films – but as an anarchist gesture. By claiming that the film was a 'desperate, passionate call to murder' he sought to allay the surrealists' fears of its recuperation by the bourgeoisie, 'that pack of imbeciles' – although, ironically, his text takes up the very words used on the commercial poster for the Studio 28 screening of the film: 'Ce film est un appel au meurtre'! His text echoes Breton's statement in his *Second Manifesto of Surrealism*, published in the same issue of the journal: 'The simplest surrealist act consists of dashing down into the street, pistol in hand, and firing blindly, as fast as you can pull the trigger, into the crowd' (Breton 1972: 125). Dalí had already published a similar declaration in *Mirador* (24 October 1929), where he also rejected the success of the film, defending its irrecuperable violence:

> *Un chien andalou* had an unprecedented success in Paris; which provokes our indignation just like any other public success would. But we think that the audience which applauded *Un chien andalou* is an audience stupefied by

> avant-garde magazines and 'divulgences', an audience which applauds everything new and bizarre out of snobbery. This public did not understand the moral basis of the film which is aimed directly at it with total violence and cruelty. (Dalí 1998: 109)

Buñuel and Dalí were both active in the group in the early 1930s. They contributed texts to *Le Surréalisme au service de la révolution* (1930–33), which replaced *La Révolution surréaliste*. Max Ernst's 1931 photomontage of the surrealists, *Au rendez-vous des amis or Loplop Introduces the surrealist group*, reproduced in the fourth issue of the journal (1931), includes photographs of Dalí and Buñuel pasted over a display of knives, while a gigantic eyeball appears to the right of the two figures. Dalí worked on a scenario for a documentary on Surrealism, which was never made (Radford 1997: 102), and produced a frontispiece for Breton's *Second Manifesto of Surrealism* (June 1930). Breton would later recall that Dalí embodied the surrealist spirit at that time. The collaboration with the surrealist movement was, however, shortlived. By 1936, Dalí was excluded from the group for his support of Franco in the Spanish Civil War (against the Republican cause defended by the surrealists), as well as for the commercial exploitation of his art (which earned him the label 'Avida Dollars', an anagramme of his name). The fascist, monarchist and catholic Dalí no longer had anything in common with the leftwing ideals of the surrealist group. As for Buñuel, although he left the surrealist movement in 1932, he continued to identify with its principles, as testified in the importance of dream and the unconscious in his films. Many years later, in his memoirs, he noted the profound effect of Surrealism on his later work:

> I treasure that access to the depths of the self which I so yearned for, that call to the irrational, to the impulses that spring from the dark side of the soul. It was the surrealists who first launched this appeal with a sustained force and courage, with insolence and playfulness and an obstinate dedication to fight everything repressive in conventional wisdom. (Buñuel 1984: 123)

Dalí and Buñuel both continued to promote scandal and revolution, principles which were at the core of surrealist theory and practice. As Buñuel (1984:107) writes about their participation in Surrealism:

> All of us were supporters of a certain concept of revolution, and although the surrealists didn't consider themselves terrorists, they were constantly fighting a society they despised. Their principal weapon wasn't guns, of course: it was scandal. Scandal was a potent agent of revelation, capable of exposing such

> social crimes as the exploitation of one man by another, colonialist imperialism, religious tyranny – in sum, all the secret and odious underpinnings of a system that had to be destroyed. The real purpose of Surrealism was not to create a new literary, artistic, or even philosophical movement, but to explode the social order, to transform life itself.

They continued to refer to the film as quintessentially surrealist, in other words scandalous and revolutionary. The scandal lay above all in the moral 'passionate call to murder' enacted in the prologue, which corresponded to the surrealists' glorification of the unmotivated crime. When it was first screened in Studio 28, Buñuel is reported to have said that 'People fainted, there was an abortion, and more than thirty denunciations to the police' (Turrent and Colina 1993: 34). For Dalí also the aim was to provoke, scandalize and assault: '*Le Chien andalou* was the film of adolescence and death which I was going to plunge right into the heart of witty, elegant and intellectualized Paris with all the reality and all the weight of the Iberian dagger' (Dalí 1968: 212). The composer George Antheil (1945: 301) recalls a private screening of the film in Hollywood in 1937:

> Cecil B. DeMille, king of the surrealists (American branch), was a pale green when the lights went up. He got up and left without a word.
> So did the others, when they recovered.
> Dalí ran out to a phone immediately. He called his wife, Gala. 'Gala,' he said breathlessly, 'it was the *greatest* success imaginable. They were *speechless!*'

Likewise, in his introduction to the screening of the film in Madrid in 1929 Buñuel declared: 'I don't want the film to please you but to offend you. I would be sorry if you enjoyed it' (Aranda 1975: 64). Later, in 1947, he asserted that the aim of the film was 'to provoke in the spectator instinctive reactions of attraction and of repulsion' (Mellen 1978: 151). In 'The Cinema, instrument of poetry' (1958), he refers to the cinema as 'a marvelous and dangerous weapon if a free spirit wields it'. Paraphrasing the words of Octavio Paz he declares that 'it would suffice for the white eyelid of the screen to reflect the light proper to it to blow up the universe' (Hammond 2000: 114, 112).

A surrealist film?

Buñuel's enthusiasm for the cinema was shared, at least during the years of the silent cinema, by the surrealists themselves. The cinema was central to the surrealists, who were film-goers first and foremost, and script writers, film reviewers and film-makers only in second place.[13] Their childhood coincided with the invention of cinema – Breton was born in 1896, the year of the Lumière brothers' first films – and their adolescence with the highly popular serials such as Louis Feuillade's crime thrillers *Fantômas* (1913–14) and *Les Vampires* (1915–16) with their mix of violence, eroticism and unmotivated crimes.[14] They saw in mass culture, and the silent cinema in particular, a new revolutionary language capable of expressing both social revolt and sexual fantasies. Cinema was linked to the modernist aesthetic: 'it is there that the only *absolutely modern* mystery is celebrated', writes Breton (Hammond 2000: 74). His position is echoed by Dalí, who declares: 'Modernity does not mean the canvases painted by Sonia Delaunay, nor Fritz Lang's *Metropolis*, but hockey sweaters manufactured anonymously in England; it means B-grade movies with the world's oldest jokes which make you laugh' (Dalí 1998: 44–5). He lists film as an example of modernity alongside gin cocktails and sports cars, boxing, electric light, jazz and the gramophone!

The surrealists rejected the formal experimentation of 1920s' avant-garde films in favour of a form of cinema allegedly free from a stylistic tradition. They admired horror films such as Robert Wiene's *Das Kabinett des Dr Caligari* (1919), American comedy (Chaplin, Keaton, Langdon, Sennett) and romantic melodrama (Hathaway's 1935 film *Peter Ibbetson* was considered by Breton 'a triumph of surrealist thought'). The very absence of artistry in films enhanced for the surrealists their lyrical qualities. Thus Desnos (1922: 111) expresses his passion for Murnau's *Nosferatu (*1922), 'where no innovation was arbitrary, and all was sacrificed to poetry and nothing to art'. *Un chien andalou*, with its few technical effects, clearly shares with these films a simplicity and disdain for technical virtuosity.

The surrealists were fascinated by the surreal qualities of commercial films, not so much as a storytelling medium (they rejected literary qualities

in film and painting) but for the power of the cinematic image to fascinate, shock, and create the marvelous out of the real. Above all, the surrealists appreciated the film medium because it creates an illusory space, abolishing the spatio-temporal laws which order reality. Hence it is a privileged means for the expression of desires and dreams, as Philippe Soupault recalled with enthusiasm:

> The cinema was for us a great discovery in the early days of Surrealism […] At that time we considered film as a marvellous means for expressing dreams. We thought that film would offer extraordinary possibilities for expressing, transfiguring and realizing dreams. For me, film, even more than literature or theatre, conferred on men a superior power. *Everything was permitted in the cinema*. (Mabire 1965: 29)

Surrealists saw the 'salles obscures' of cinema as a space conducive to the creation of the surreal defined as a transformation of the real. As Michel Leiris states: 'In order to have surrealism, you must first have realism, you must have a reality to manipulate' (Leiris 1992: 16). For Dalí film has the potential to transform the raw material of reality: 'The tree, the street, the rugby match, are transsubstantiated in a disturbing way in film' (Dalí 1998: 23). As a result, in film, as in Surrealism in general, 'the real and the imagined, past and future […] cease to be perceived as contradictions' (Breton 1972: 123), they have the same ontological reality, combining fantasy and everyday reality seamlessly.

Surrealist viewing practices promoted the active engagement of the viewer's imagination. In 'As in a Wood' (1951), Breton's celebration of the silent cinema, he recalled the times when, in wartime Nantes, he would enter a cinema at random with fellow dadaist Jacques Vaché, view a sequence or two – sometimes opening cans, cutting up bread and uncorking bottles, all the while conversing loudly as if at table! – then leave, repeating the process in another cinema. Refusing predictable storylines they would assemble the sequences into an incongruous montage which they found *magnetizing* (Hammond 2000: 73–5). The cinema was thus for the surrealists analogous to the space of the Paris streets or the flea-market, a site of chance encounters with objects or images taken out of their original context and refashioned and collaged in line with their fantasies.

However passionate the surrealists were about the silent cinema, their enthusiasm waned with the arrival of the talkies. Their disappointment

was expressed in the group's 'Manifesto of the surrealists concerning *L'Age d'or*', published for the launch of the film in 1930, where they stated that only a few fragments could be salvaged from the mediocre production of the contemporary cinema. In spite of the surrealists' fascination for the film medium and their important contribution to film discourse of the 1920s, they actually produced many scenarios (Artaud, Desnos, Péret) but few films. Their own listings varied over the years, in relation to ideological disputes and shifting political agendas. The *Dictionnaire abrégé du surréalisme* / *Short Dictionary of Surrealism* (1938) lists Man Ray's *Emak Bakia* (1926) and *L'Etoile de mer* (1928), Duchamp's *Anemic cinema* (1925), Hugnet's *La Perle* (1929) as well as *Un chien andalou* and *L'Age d'or*.

Un chien andalou was enthusiastically received at a time when the first 'heroic' phase of Surrealism – and the silent cinema – were coming to an end. Breton had evicted a number of the early members from the movement, which was in need of renewal. For the surrealist group *Un chien andalou* was a revolutionary film, insofar as it sought to destroy oppressive bourgeois institutions – politics, marriage, religion, art, morality. It was seen by them as a transgressive film, hence liberatory. For Desnos, '[o]nly candour is revolutionary […] It's this candour that enables us today to equate the real revolutionary films, *Potemkin, The Gold Rush, The Wedding March* and *Un chien andalou*' (Hammond 1978: 37).

Yet, in spite of Buñuel and Dalí's enthusiastic peddling of the film as surrealist, and the surrealists' own passionate and poetic appropriation of the film, is this a surrealist film? It is true that *Un chien andalou* appears to have been cast in a deliberately surrealist mould, and can be considered surrealist for its alleged automatism and free association, its dreamlike elements, its violent images, its radical montage structure, its assault on the spectator. 'In many ways *Un chien andalou* is André Breton's *Manifeste du surréalisme* put into practice', claim one critic (Edwards 2004: 143). Moreover, although Buñuel later maintained that the film, unlike *L'Age d'or*, does not contain any social critique, the film can also be read as an indictment of oppressive bourgeois institutions, in keeping with Surrealism's revolutionary aim, inherited from Marx and Rimbaud, to 'transform the world' and 'change life'. Its symbols of repression and

inhibition (pianos and Marists, the policeman reprimanding the androgyne, the B-cop dad reprimanding his son, stultifying bourgeois marriage) testify to its impact as a powerful social drama (see chapter 3). Denise Tual considers it 'a piercing cry never heard before, which sounds the death knoll of certain bourgeois beliefs' (Tual 1978: 104). But what exactly is a surrealist film? Certainly *Un chien andalou* is quite unlike Man Ray's or Duchamp's films, and seems to share features with American comedy films (Langdon, Sennett, Keaton) which, according to the surrealists, have 'surreal' qualities. It could equally well be considered a dada film for its non-narrative elements, disjunctive images, playful montage and irreverential parodies. Alternately – apart from the prologue which could be bracketed off as a dream or fantasy sequence – it could be considered as a realistic film (contrasting with the abstraction of avant-garde cinema).

'There is no surrealist painting', declared Pierre Naville in 1925, contending that there is no single pictorial style in Surrealism. Similarly, in 1929 there was no one model for surrealist film and subsequent 'surrealist' films were too diverse to fit into one style. Indeed, the surrealists did not privilege the film medium above painting, poetry or photography. In fact they expressed a cavalier indifference, even disdain, for the filmic medium – as they did for painting, 'that lamentable expedient'. The cinema, like painting or poetry, was simply a means to create the surreal.

Un chien andalou did not fit the canon; it produced it. Within Surrealism itself, however, it was to function less as a model for making further surrealist films than as a yardstick for assessing the violence and sadism of other surrealist works. For example, Georges Bataille (1985: 28) interprets Dalí's paintings through the lens of the opening images of the film: 'Dalí's razors carve into our faces the grimaces of horror that probably risk making us vomit like drunkards this servile nobility, this idiotic idealism that leaves us under the spell of a few comical prison bosses'. His reading of the paintings is filtered through the film's violent imagery as well as de Sade's images of mutilation and violence. The surrealist Georges Hugnet (1931: 338) also alludes to the film when writing about Miró's 1930 paintings:

> We find once again a Spanish legacy of cruelty, insolence and pride, in this taste for blood and atrocious symbolic realism. There is also 'a desperate call to murder' in these torture instruments for the new Inquisition. Art at the foot of the fetish, at the foot of taboos, is carrying the rope, is pierced by nails, strangled and crucified by material images. Dalí's sadism has its own torture chamber.

The shared imagery of Miró's paintings and *Un chien andalou* – realism and symbolism combined, fetish and taboo images, the rope, the pierced hands, symbols of the Catholic church – is fused in Hugnet's text with an hallucinatory vision of the Spanish Inquisition. These references suggest that the example of *Un chien andalou* provided a model which helped formulate comments on other limit-forms of expression, such as the violent images of the unconscious in Dalí and Miró's paintings.

However, to reduce the import of this film to an account of the directors' intentions or the (conflicting) myths of its production, to the enthusiastic or scandalized reception of its viewers or its recuperation by the bourgeois public, to an illustration of surrealist theory or an exemplar of surrealist practice, would be to foreclose the complexity of reactions and meanings produced by the film. Once it entered the public domain, the film gave rise to a complex network of diverse and often divergent comments and interpretations. It is this complexity and diversity which will be explored in the following chapters.

Notes

1 For production details see Aranda (1975), Conrad (1976), Buñuel (1984), Talens (1993), Baxter (1994), Drummond (1994). For the collaboration between Buñuel and Dalí see Sánchez Vidal (1994), Finkelstein (1996).
2 See also Turrent (1992: 30), Aub (1991: 51).
3 The original typescript, titled 'Vaya Marista!', was published by Alfonso Puyal (1999).
4 See also Aub (1991: 48– 9).
5 For shooting details see Baxter (1994).
6 When the money provided by Buñuel's mother ran out, a rich Spaniard, Ricardo Soriano, seems to have provided more funding (Tual 1987: 100–1).
7 The film is usually shown at 24 frames per second. However, silent films were normally shot at 16 frames per second. Ferrán Alberich's recent restored version (Filmoteca Española 2003) is 24 minutes long.
8 See for example Drouzy (1978: 40–1), Edwards (1982: 56).
9 A large number of critics mistakenly state the film was first shown in 1928.

10 The producer and theatre-director Pierre Braunberger bought the theatrical rights to the film for his company Studio-Film (Baxter 1994: 88).
11 See chapter 3 for a discussion of references to Spanish culture in the film.
12 Other reviews of the film after its first screening include: (in Paris) Comtesse de Beaumont (1929), Ghéon (1929), Lenauer (1929); (in Barcelona) Artigas (1929), Masoliver (1929), Piqueras (1929); (in London) Blakeston (1929).
13 For studies of Surrealism and the cinema see Kyrou (1963), Matthews (1971), Short (2002), Richardson (2006).
14 On the importance of Fantômas for the surrealists, see Walz (2000), Eburne (2008).