THE INTERRELATIONSHIPS BETWEEN MEANING(S), FORM, CINEMATIC TECHNOLOGY AND SURREALIST IDEOLOGY IN LUIS BUÑUEL’S, *UN CHIEN ANDALOU* (1929)

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2012
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DECEMBER 2012

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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I would like to thank my supervisors Glenn Meyer and Dr. Heidi Saayman- Hattingh for their insight and dedication to this project.

To the Research Capacity Development at NMMU for the financial assistance.

Amy Shelver for her patience, support, advice and debates over the last two years as well as her tireless commitment to helping make *Facebrick* (2012) a realisation.

To everyone who attributed to the (no budget) film, *Facebrick* (2012). The cast for donating their time and talent to this project: Jean Kroucamp, Bulelwa Johnson, Sipho G. Manzini and Moki Cekisani.

The jazz band, Vudu, for the use of their music track.

Gavin Sterley for the design work

Also, I would like to thank Stiaan Kritzinger for the motivational phone calls, advice and support over the course of this journey.

Finally to Alba Kritzinger, for reasons not necessary to be mentioned here.

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ABSTRACT

This study sets out to determine the interrelationship between meaning(s), form (specifically framing and composition), cinematic technology and the surrealist ideology with specific reference to Luis Buñuel’s film, *Un Chien Andalou* (1929). The study utilises a semiotic framework to analyse the seminal film, as well as the researcher’s short film *Facebrick* (2012). The semiotic reading is conducted according to key surrealist tenets namely, spatio-temporal disruption, the use of free-association and the inclusion of cultural, religious and sexual symbols as a revolutionary tool. Gillian Rose’s (2007) semiotic framework underpinned by James Monaco’s (1977) schema for analysing the moving image, was utilised to read the selected film texts. A comparative analysis reveals that although the researcher employed different cinematic technology to construct the short film than that available to Buñuel in the 1920s; similar cinematic techniques could be recreated, as the analysis shows, through the use of key surrealist characteristics. Not only did this allow mere reproduction of these techniques, but rather a full appropriation of these techniques within a contemporary context. Thus the techniques, communicate the surreal, both aesthetically and intellectually.

The theoretical study provides the foundation for the practical output, creating a conceptual framework that guides the creation of a short film. The practical research component relies on the parameters identified in the semiotic reading. This was facilitated by the characteristics of Surrealism: the disruption of time and space, the inclusion of archetypal symbols and the use of free association. The short film, *Facebrick* (2012), follows a voyeur obsessed with gazing at three characters. The film explores the human condition in an urban environment drawing from themes such as Jean-Paul Sartre’s gaze theory as well as Freudian themes of identity and sexuality.

KEYWORDS: Cinematic techniques, disorientation, framing and composition, free association, Luis Buñuel, metaphorical transition, myth, Surrealism, semiotics, spatio-temporal disruption, *Un Chien Andalou* (1929).
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CHAPTER 1

1. INTRODUCTION

Henri Peyre (1948: 34) describes the legacy of Surrealism as "likely to occupy a very considerable place in the intellectual history of the Western World in our century. Its significance as a literary phenomenon during the years 1920-1940 is unequalled". The following study explores the techniques and practices of a later entrant to the field of Surrealism, Luis Buñuel, whose ground-breaking film and subversive masterpiece *Un Chien Andalou* [An Andalusian Dog] (1929) – co-written with fellow Spaniard Salvador Dali – inspired, shocked and baffled audiences for the last eighty three years.

*Un Chien Andalou* (1929), inspiring a schism in time and space, defies conventional narrative and instructs the viewer to see the film with a different eye, unconstrained by traditional cinematic storyline. Ado Kyro notes that, "for the first time in the history of the cinema a director tries not to please but rather to alienate nearly all potential spectators" (in Ebert, 2000). The role that *Un Chien Andalou* (1929) played within Surrealism at large was fundamental. For the first time a film could successfully communicate surrealist ideals. Matthews (1971: 91) explains:

*Un Chien Andalou* had fought the commercial and vanguard cinematic modes on their own terms. While it had seemed essential to begin by doing this, it was imperative, next, to make sure to erase from the public's thoughts misconceptions about Surrealism's reason for treating the movies as it elected to do.

Although *Un Chien Andalou* (1929) was created before Buñuel and Dali's formal acceptance within the Surrealist group, it was instrumental to their recognition as Surrealists. The film's visual aesthetic "affirmed the language and the visualisation of the subconscious and of dreams, laying them out almost didactically" (Aranda, 1975: 82). The film can thus be seen as a visual utterance within the vast surrealist vocabulary.

The following study critiques the cinematic techniques, particularly the framing and composition of the film by exploring the fit between a technical cinematographic analysis and a theoretical semiotic analysis of the complex and multiple meanings of *Un Chien Andalou* (1929). The analysis will be placed within the relevant socio-historical and political contexts of the era in which the film was created. The theoretical aspect of
the study sets out to determine the relationship between the technical language employed by the makers of surrealist film and the ideology of Surrealism. The document investigates relevant sources that explicated Surrealism as a (political) movement, such as the manifestos of André Breton and the general perceptions of those involved within the surrealist movement. The socio-historical and political climate of the era yields insights in this regard. The theoretical knowledge gained is applied to the practical aspect of the study, the production of a short film, Facebrick (2012).

Facebrick (2012) aims to provide commentary on the current socio-political climate in South Africa. The development of the film is underpinned by research into the ideology of Surrealism in general and informed by Buñuel’s film Un Chien Andalou (1929). The research on Buñuel’s film focuses specifically on the cinematic techniques (framing and composition) employed by Buñuel and how these techniques add to the reading of this seminal work. Un Chien Andalou (1929) will be analysed and it is proposed that the findings of the analyses will be implemented in the practical development of Facebrick (2012).

1.1 BACKGROUND TO THE STUDY
Surrealism was a literary phenomenon of the period 1920-1940 but it was always more than merely a literary movement and, as some critics believe, more than an artistic movement. Regardless of perceptions, the movement’s influence is undeniable, even today, as Henri Peyre (1948: 35) explains:

It influenced interior decoration and the film, our sensibility, our imagination, even perhaps our dreams. It left an imprint upon psychology and metaphysics; it spread to five or six European countries and other continents. It may be that the adjective Surrealist will remain affixed to the whole era between the two World Wars as best describing its boldest ambition.

Amos Vogel (2005: 45) believes that Surrealism, alongside Expressionism and Dadaism, displayed the most “subversive aesthetic tendencies” in the last century. Yet he argues that Surrealism was more an “instrument of cognition than an aesthetic movement” (ibid). The movement’s primary concern, regardless of how complex and evolved it

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1 Metz proposed, in a self-posed question, that cinema is indeed a language (langage) and not a language system (langue) (see Stam, 1988: 38).

2 Durozoi (2002: 189) describes the surrealist movement to be “a dogma of absolute rebellion, total insubordination, and outright sabotage”.

---

2
would become, was to change life. It remained focused on the fickleness of the human condition. Peyre (1948: 38) describes his understanding of Surrealism:

Eccentricities, excesses, childish mysticism, an obsession with fortuitous coincidences in life, and sheer mediocrity in paintings, films, and poems are to be found in abundance in Surrealism...

Peyre portrays the surrealists to primarily be logicians and moralists. Their rebellion, Peyre (1948: 38) adds, “appeared undiscriminating and universal, [and] differed in fact from the nihilism of Dada. It concentrated on three targets which we may define as ethics and religion, the social and political realm, and literary conventions”.

André Breton gave Surrealism gravitas in 1924 in his publication, *Le Manifeste du Surréalisme* [First Surrealist Manifesto] in which he defined the term and stipulated the movement’s intentions (See Chapter Two).

Paying homage to Sigmund Freud, Breton conveyed the prominent importance of dreams within the movement, with the intention to awaken the dream from the confines of logic:

If the depths of our minds conceal strange forces capable of augmenting or conquering those on the surface, it is our greatest interest to capture them... and later to submit them, should the occasion arise, to the control of reason (in Waldberg, 1965: 66).

The exploration of cinema as an extension of surrealist thought only manifested later within the movement, yet the fascination with the cinema had always been there. Robert Stam (2000: 56) states that the cinema, for the surrealists, enjoyed the “capacity to liberate what was conventionally repressed, to mingle the known and the unknown, the mundane and the oneiric, the quotidian and the marvellous”. Michael Richardson (2006: 1) observes the conjunction between Surrealism and cinema by characterising the relationship as “a seductive one”. He continues:

It evokes an undefined relation, a meeting point between the opposites of light and dark, presence and absence, actuality and imagination which suggests the actualisation of the supreme point which André Breton identified as the aim of Surrealism (Richardson, 2006: 1).

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3 Breton defined the *marvellous* in the *First Surrealist Manifesto* (1924) as beautiful: “the marvellous is always beautiful, anything marvellous is beautiful, in fact only the *marvellous* is beautiful” (in Waldberg, 1965: 70). Provoking an involuntary shudder in the reader or viewer, the *marvellous* mirrored the perpetual anxiety underlying human experience.
In his book, *Surrealism and Cinema*, Richardson (2006: 8) quotes Ado Kyrou: “it is not film as such that is surrealist, but cinema: the experience of seeing a film in a darkened room”. It was the environment in which films were seen, and the experience of seeing film in a darkened space that provided the encounter with the “marvellous” (see Richardson, 2006: 8). This cinematic experience simulated the dream state for the surrealists, an experience that “was contained within the individual but was also projected onto the collective” (Richardson, 2006; 9). This projected quality, as much as providing an environment simulating the dream-state is why the cinema enjoyed the attention it did from the surrealists.

The following theoretical research however concentrates on the analysis of Buñuel’s surrealist film as text and not as cinema, and does not attempt to reconstruct an audience reception analysis to approximate the cinematic experience of the time. It is the intention however, for the viewer to experience the dissertation short film, *Facebrick* (2012), within the cinematic environment, projected in a darkened room, to attempt to simulate the surrealist experience of the cinematic space.

The understanding of semiotic theory is vital to any attempt at film analysis. Semiotic theory enables a film text to be critically dissected the better to understand how film communicates on various semiotic orders. The language of film foregrounds iconic images as an important component of its way of signification. These images must then contain certain elements that can be described. Therefore, it can be argued that images can simultaneously operate on the iconic, indexical and symbolic levels.

A study of semiotics in relation to surrealist film will form part of the study, as this aids the translation of the analyses. Language and literacy are the primary means by which a society grapples with the essence of its existence. It is also important to clarify the meaning of language in terms of its content and the context in which it applies to this discussion. In conventional linguistics, *langue* [language systems] are considered to consist of a system of signs and codes that are culturally determined. Christian Metz (1974) proposed that cinema similarly has its own language. This language can be non-verbal and can act outside, or separate from, a language system. This would explain language within the context of cinema, but language also includes the language of music, clothing and gestures based on an individual’s frame of reference. Jean Mitry further states that cinema could never be a language if it meant that it engages by means of exchanging conversation. However, if the images are used in the context of the expression of ideas by means of logical and meaningful relationships, and not simply as
a representation of reality, then clearly it is a language (see Mitry, 2000: ix). This ‘cinematic language’ is expressed by means of the image4, which in turn takes on the role of the “verb and subject, noun and predicate through its symbol structure and potential qualities as sign” (Mitry, 2000: ix). Mitry (ibid.) adds that reality is not being “represented by some graphic or symbolic substitute” but rather “presented as an image and this image is used to signify”.

1.2 THE AIMS AND THE OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

The main research objective of the study was to determine the interrelationships between meaning(s), form, cinematic technology and surrealist ideology in Buñuel’s, Un Chien Andalou (1929).

Furthermore, the study aimed to:

Determine the key cinematic techniques and technology employed by Buñuel in order to provide a basis for the analysis of Un Chien Andalou (1929).

Reflect on how the cinematic techniques employed by Buñuel impact on the reading (in the Barthian sense) of surrealist film in order to comment on disruption of time and space, the use of archetypal symbols and free association, which contribute to the characteristics of the surreal image.

Reflect on the possible ‘transgression’ and ‘alienation’ of Buñuel’s surrealist film as being directly attributable to the technology itself in order to better understand the relationship between technical limitations of filmmaking of the period and surrealist ideology.

1.3 THE AIM OF THE PROPOSED PRACTICAL COMPONENT

The theoretical study provides the foundation for the practical output, creating a conceptual framework that guides the creation of a short film.

4 It is noted that the language of cinema is not only governed or defined by the image itself, but a combination of various elements such as sound, narration, graphics and the score. However, it is evident that if a film consists only of a series of images, these images can communicate outside the construct of a language system, as seen in the silent cinema era. This study will only focus on the image, as it will conduct an analysis specifically examining the framing and composition of the image. It must be noted that the other elements concerning cinema, as mentioned above, will not be examined nor will the study conclude that the image is the only element to express an idea of communication.
The practical research component relies on the parameters identified in the semiotic reading, facilitated by the characteristics of Surrealism: the disruption of time and space, the inclusion of archetypal symbols and the use of free association; also using these characteristics to analyse how they contribute to the surreal image.

The researcher's approach, in contrast to Buñuel, who produced *Un Chien Andalou* (1929) using analogue technologies, is to make use of current digital technologies to produce a short film. The short film, *Facebrick* (2012), follows a voyeur obsessed with gazing at three characters. The film explores the human condition in an urban environment drawing from themes such as Jean-Paul Sartre's gaze theory as well as Freudian themes of identity and sexuality.

1.4 SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY
The significance of engaging in an intensive film study, and more specifically looking at surrealist film as a subversive movement, opens the door of understanding to how a specific art movement simultaneously breaks with convention (in this instance conventional film of the period), but at the same time exploits these very same conventions. It further sheds light on the relationship between art and technology, by posing, and attempting to answer the following problem: Reflection on the possible 'transgression' and 'alienation' of Buñuel's surrealist film as being directly attributable to the technology itself and how much of it is achieved in spite of the technology available at the time.

Thus, the study acts as a translation as well as interpretation and evaluation of an iconic surrealist film text, conducted from both a theoretical and practical perspective.

This document is aimed at an analysis and interpretation of the cinematic techniques peculiar to surrealist film, and will focus on the way cinematic techniques are used to invest filmic images with multiple meanings operating at different levels. These cinematographic techniques are devices that are used to influence the audience’s perception.

The outcome of the analysis of *Un Chien Andalou* (1929) acts as the foundation on which *Facebrick* (2012) can be produced and reflected on as a film.

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5It must be noted that symbols do not contain a direct relationship with that which is signified. According to Barthes, “a system which takes over the signs of another system in order to make them its own signifiers is a system of connotation” (1990: 37). This results in the literal image being denoted and the symbolic image connoted.
1.5 METHODOLOGICAL APPROACH AND CHAPTER DIVISION

The methodological approach for the treatise is qualitative in nature, focussing primarily on a literature study. The study focuses on the cinematic techniques Buñuel employed to better understand the surrealist tendencies of *Un Chien Andalou* (1929).

The practical component consists of a short film, while the theoretical component of the study is divided into seven chapters, which are briefly summarised below.

Chapter Two underpins Surrealism as a movement and examines the movement’s strong relations with the cinema through a literature study. It briefly discusses the inception of Surrealism and the aims of the movement in order to identify key tenets and characteristics that define the movement. Furthermore, the role played by cinema in communicating surrealist ideals is examined to create a theoretical backdrop to support the analysis of Buñuel’s *Un Chien Andalou* (1929).

In Chapter Three, the research methodology is outlined, highlighting the significance of cinematic language within the study as well as describing the approach to the film analysis. The research methodology draws on Gillian Rose’s semiotic framework and focuses, more specifically on James Monaco’s schema for analysing the moving image. The framework in this study context only focuses on the image, particularly its framing and composition, therefore the researcher does not focus on other elements concerning cinema (inter alia graphics, music, sound effects and ambient sound). These elements will not be examined nor will the study conclude that the image is the only element to express an idea or communication.

The fourth chapter discusses the inauguration of Buñuel and Dali to the surrealist movement and situates the conception of *Un Chien Andalou* (1929). Furthermore, this chapter will review the reaction to the film among the surrealists and highlight the film’s importance as a milestone within the surrealist movement.

Following the placement of *Un Chien Andalou* (1929) within the surrealist context, the analysis aims to uncover and highlight the surrealist tendencies within the film. The film is measured against the key characteristics (spatio-temporal disruptions, the use free association and the inclusion of archetypal symbols) of Surrealism as developed in the literature study and analysed using the proposed methodology in order to determine the interrelationships between meaning(s), form, cinematic technology and surrealist ideology. Buñuel famously declared *Un Chien Andalou* (1929) “would not have existed if the movement called Surrealism had not existed” (Mellen 1978: 151).
The sixth chapter then examines the application of the cinematic techniques found in the analysis and discusses how these surrealist tendencies were applied to the practical aspect of the study in *Facebrick* (2012). Chapter Seven is the concluding chapter.
CHAPTER 2

2.1 INTRODUCTION

The literature survey that follows looks at a number of factors, which inform the discussion on the interrelationship between meaning(s), form, cinematic technology and the ideology of Surrealism. It aims to explore the history of Surrealism as a movement and to contextualise Surrealism within the cinema as a means of ideological expression. Furthermore, it highlights particular key characteristics of cinema – inter alia, how cinematic techniques and contemporary technologies were employed the better to promote ideological expression.

The key themes discussed in this review are as follows: Surrealism in general and its relation to cinema, cinematic techniques and technology.

2.2 INTRODUCTION TO SURREALISM 1924-1930

The intention of Surrealism has never been to be seen as a purely aesthetic movement; in fact it is quite the opposite. Waldberg (1965: 7) argues that Surrealism can "be defined as not a matter of aesthetics but as a way of knowing and a kind of ethics". The surrealists devoted their energy to change life, no matter how complex and evolved the movement became; it always retained its focus on the fickleness of the human condition. Conversely, Rosemont (1978: 1) seems to have a more cynical outlook:

It is an unrelenting revolt against civilization that reduces all human aspirations to market values, religious impostures, universal boredom and misery.

There were, however, a number of artists, who associated themselves with poets identified with the surrealist movement, and subsequently expressed those ideas visually. The dream and the unconscious had such an effect on the painters, those directly affiliated to the movement as well as those outside of it, that it “is not incorrect today to speak of surrealist painting or art, always bearing in mind that it is not a question of a school or formal movement, but of a spiritual orientation” (Waldberg, 1965: 7).

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6 Spiritual orientation implies the disregard for material possession and does not relate to religious beliefs. Breton insists, "every means must be worth trying, in order to devastate the ideas of family, fatherland, religion". He adds, "no matter how well the surrealist position may be in this regard, still it must be stressed that on this point there is no room for compromise" (in Rosemont, 1978: 43).
Arguably however the surrealist intention – although not aesthetic – is, in retrospect, ideological. John B. Thompson (quoted by Howells, 2003: 71) notes the following on ideology:

The study of ideology requires us to investigate the ways in which meaning is constructed and conveyed by symbolic forms of various kinds, from everyday linguistic utterances to complex images and texts.

Surrealism, reviewed as a historical movement, certainly possesses ideological qualities. Manifestos, text, images, all set within the constraints of the surrealist epoch, pointed to a system of ideals. These ideals might not have been based on economic or political theory at first; however, they were a collective set of ideals of a group, which had a belief doctrine. Surrealism is however, more than an ideology, as Rosemont (1978: 5) suggests, “it is the most exhilarating adventure of the mind, an unparalleled means of pursuing the fervent quest for freedom and true life beyond the veil of ideological appearances”.

According to Amos Vogel (see 2005: 45), Surrealism is considered more an instrument of thought rather than an artistic movement to the degree that it aimed to obliterate aestheticism. Its aim was to liberate man’s subconscious mind from the constraints of powerful structures such as church and state, as well as from bourgeois art and concepts such as patriotism. The intention was to reveal the supreme point, the marvellous. André Breton informs this ideal, in his Second Surrealist Manifesto (1929):

Everything leads us to believe that there exists a certain point of the mind which life and death, the real and the imaginary, past and future, the communicable and the incommunicable, the high and the low, cease to be perceived as contradictions. It would be in vain to see in surrealist activity any other motive than the hope of determining this point (as cited by Rosemont, 1978: 43).

It was clear in Breton’s intent that Surrealism would exist outside a strictly artistic or literary practice, and rather as “a dogma of absolute rebellion, total insubordination, and outright sabotage” (in Durozoï, 2002: 189). The belief in the supreme point could not exist without, as Durozoï (ibid) puts it, sharing complete despair, hence Breton’s expression: “The simplest surrealist act consists in going, pistol in hand, down into the street and shooting at random, for as long as one can, into the crowd”.
The term *Surrealism* first appeared in Paris in 1917, an idea developed by the poet Guillaume Apollinaire, yet it was not until 1922 when the poet André Breton wrote the following:

> Up to a certain point, one knows what my friends and I mean by Surrealism. This word, which is not our invention and which we could have abandoned to the most vague critical vocabulary, is used by us in a precise sense. By it, we mean to designate a certain psychic automatism that corresponds rather closely to the state of dreaming, a state that is today extremely difficult to delimit (in Rubin, 1968: 64).

After meeting Sigmund Freud in Vienna 1921, Breton experimented with Freud’s methods of free association. Breton aimed to produce “a body of material that might confirm (and even extend) Freud’s ideas” (Rubin, 1969: 116). Breton believed that this course could change poetic structure and open up new ways of poetic expression.

Free association had already been part of the Dada movement; however, Breton later described his published text *Les Champs Magnétiques* [The Magnetic Fields] (1919), in collaboration with Philippe Soupault, using free-associated writing, as “incontestably the first surrealist works (in no way Dada), since they were the fruit of the first systematic applications of automatic writing” (in Rubin, 1969: 116).

The surrealists later developed word games based on free association, finding hypnotic trances to induce the flow of ideas to be more effective. In 1922-23, known as the period of trances, the surrealists conducted experiments, the results of which were published in 1924, in Aragon’s summary *Une Vague de Rêves* [A Wave of Dreams] (see Rubin, 1969: 121). The hypnotic experiments were the result of their understanding of what Surrealism meant. It enabled the group to explore the possibilities of automatism and through the data they obtained, find the key that defined Surrealism (see Rubin, 1968: 64).

In 1924, Breton wrote the *First Surrealist Manifesto*, publicly announcing the existence of a surrealist movement and defining its principles. At the time of publication very little of the role of plastic arts within the movement had been published, except by way of a lengthy footnote in which a number of artists were mentioned. Breton (in Rubin

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7 Rubin (1968: 63) comments Apollinaire used the “word ‘Surrealism’ in a context that combined avant-garde art with technological advancements yet his neologism possessed none of the psychological implications that the word later took on”.

8 These artists included Max Ernst, André Masson, Man Ray, Giorgio de Chirico, Marcel Duchamp, Francis Picabia, Paul Klee, Pablo Picasso, Henri Matisse, André Derain, Georges Seurat, and Paolo Uccello.
1969:121) remarked that is was very trivial for anyone to "contest our right to use this word Surrealism in the particular sense in which we understand it, because it is clear that before us this word had not made its fortune". Breton (ibid) added: "I [shall] now define it for once and for all:"

Surrealism, noun, masculine. Pure psychic automatism, by which one intends to express verbally, in writing or by any other method, the real functioning of the mind. Dictation by thought, in the absence of any control exercised by reason, and beyond any aesthetic or moral preoccupation.

Encyclopedia. Philosophy. Surrealism is based on the belief in the superior reality of certain forms of association heretofore neglected, in the omnipotence of dreams, in the undirected play of thought... (ibid).

The first manifesto paid special homage to the dream and the imagination. It was clear that Freud influenced Breton greatly. Breton (in Waldberg, 1965: 66) wrote:

We are still living under the reign of logic, but the logical processes of our time apply only to the solution of problems of secondary interest. The absolute rationalism, which remains in fashion, allows for the consideration of only those facts narrowly relevant to our experience. Logical conclusions on the other hand, escape us.

He continued (ibid):

In the guise of civilisation, under the pretext of progress, we have succeeded in dismissing from our minds anything that, rightly or wrongly, could be regarded as superstition or myth9; and we have proscribed every way of seeking the truth, which does not conform to convention. It would appear that it is by sheer chance that an aspect of intellectual life – and by far the most important in my opinion – about which no one was supposed to be concerned any longer has, recently, been bought back to light. Credit for this must go to Freud.

It was clear that Breton intended to awaken the dream from the confines of logic, instating it as a prominent aspect of the movement.

If the depths of our minds conceal strange forces capable of augmenting or conquering those on the surface, it is our greatest interest to capture them; first to capture them and later to submit them, should the occasion arise, to the control of reason (ibid).

Spector (1997: 72) critiques the first manifesto as a "quixotically romantic quest for the marvellous in the ordinary (a psychoanalyst would see this as a morbid pursuit of poetry in the psychopathological pursuit of artistic symbols in symptoms) – an absolute reality

9The word myth here, as Howells (2003: 100) explains does not relate to the Barthes’ myth, but (as we often do in the vernacular) a “common misconception”.

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born in dross but untainted by it, embedded in time but out of it – all of whose contradictions could be realised, condensed and over determined, in a concrete image”. He adds (ibid: 74):

This generalised approach to revolution suggest a vague and romantic resistance to institutional orthodoxy, and even smacks of anarchism, a viewpoint that in fact coloured all the phases of Surrealism.

In December 1924, the first issue of *La Révolution Surréaliste* [The Surrealist Revolution] was published, further insisting on the importance of the dream as a revolutionary tool.

Freud developed his theories on the unconscious, pre-conscious and conscious around the turn of the 20th century. His *Interpretation of Dreams* (1900) played a major role in the understanding of dreams and served as muse-like inspiration for the surrealists.

Waldberg (1965:16) explains:

The dream and recognition of the omnipotence of the dream will comprise one of the strongholds of the surrealist position. And homage will be paid to Freud, who was the first to lift the veil of consciousness and to systematise the analysis of dreams as a means of knowing man. The Freudian dynamic will become an article of faith for the surrealists.

Breton paid homage to the dream in the first surrealist manifesto:

From the moment when...we will succeed in realising the dream in its integrity... when its contour will develop with unequalled regularity and breadth, we can hope that mysteries – which are not really mysteries – will yield to the great Mystery. I believe in the future resolution of those two states, so contradictory in appearance – dream and reality – into a kind of absolute reality, of 'surreality', if one may call it so (as cited by Waldberg, 1965: 16).

The surrealists were not the first to put the dream to literary use, but theirs was the first movement to use the dream as a central point for their artistic and political goals. The importance of dreams was “emphasised, because they reinforced the idea that thought, in humankind, had a much wider scope than the dominant tradition” (Durozoi, 2002: 67).

At the beginning Surrealism mainly attracted the full attention of poets. As a result the role of the plastic arts remained unclear and if one had to interpret the first manifesto at face value, the movement would have produced none. However, it became increasingly difficult for Breton to ignore painting as surrealist practice. The automatic drawings of André Masson and the dream images of Max Ernst were surrealist in intent, yet undoubtedly art. In 1927 Breton cleared the air in *Le Surréalisme et la Peinture* [Surrealism and Painting]:

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Surrealist identity would hinge on the methodological and iconographic relevance of the picture to the main ideas of the movement, that is, automatism and the “dream image” (in Rubin, 1968: 64).

William Rubin (1968: 64) notes, “it was generally agreed that the mere presence of form did not prevent paintings from being surrealist. Art would be a means of expression, an instrument of self-discovery, not an end to be savoured”. Two Freudian principles created two poles within the surrealist movement. The first pole, using free association as method, was cited in the abstract. The works of Joan Miró and André Masson resembled that of peintres [typical painters] as defined by the modernist understanding of the practise, who “worked improvisationally with primarily biomorphic shapes in a shallow, Cubist-derived space” (ibid).

Automatic writing is a process involving writing without conscious interference, prompted by the immediate consciousness or pre-consciousness. These promptings “take the form of critical, aesthetic or moral preoccupations” (Rosemont, 1978: 20).

Psychic automatism, a key to the surrealist adventure, plunged deeper than the pre-conscious. Dada made use of automatic writing, however, only to dislocate language from context, “an enterprise of primitive destruction that did not actually depart from the conscious domain” (ibid). Surrealist automatism, in contrast was what Breton called “a true photography of thought” (ibid). The aim, as Rosemont (ibid: 21) suggests:

‘...is not only to overcome the constraints of logic and morality by penetrating to the deepest recesses of the mind but also, in so doing, to clear up the problem of knowledge – and above all to liberate humanity from the ideological shackles that enforce the contradiction between dream and waking life.

Breton wrote in his Genesis and Perspective of Surrealism in the Plastic Arts [1948]:

The Surrealism in a work is in direct proportion to the efforts the artist has made to embrace the whole psychophysical field, of which consciousness is only a small fraction. In those unfathomable depths there prevails, according to Freud, a total absence of contradiction, a release from emotional fetters caused by repression, a lack of temporality, and the substitution of external reality by psychic reality obedient to the pleasure principle and no other. Automatism leads us straight to these regions (in ibid).

The surrealists engaged with automatism to explore the endless planes of the mind. They did so using hypnosis to induce a trance state where they were able to tap into the unconscious directly. Freudian theory demystified the spiritual plane of the mind, and
enabled those who practiced automatic writing to rediscover poetry and subsequently the 'self'. It also opened new linguistic possibilities.

The second pole saw the *imagiers* [image-makers] such as René Magritte, Yves Tanguy and Salvador Dali emerge. Rubin (ibid) describes their influence as “the ‘fixing’ of dream-inspired images”, giving the work a “more academic illusionism” (ibid). All surrealist painting can be defined between these two poles, and was practiced throughout the movement. The automatist style did however dominate the early years and during the Second World War, in between “the oneiric illusionism held sway” (ibid).

The common denominator of all this painting was a commitment to subjects of a visionary, poetic, and hence, metaphoric order, thus the collective appellation, *peinture-poésie* [poetic painting], as opposed to *peinture-pure* [pure painting], by which advanced abstraction was sometimes known in France. Surrealists never made non-figurative pictures (see ibid).

Key to Rubin’s observation is the surrealists’ use of a subject, regardless of how abstract the work may seem. The surrealists worked, perpetually towards an interior image, “whether this was conjured improvisationally through automatism or recorded illusionistically from the screen of the mind’s eye” (Rubin, 1968: 64). Regardless the degree of abstraction, the surrealist image always contained the irrational juxtapositions, as it would manifest through dreams and free association.

This visionary iconography, which was intended to reveal unconscious truths that were heretofore assumed to be inaccessible, was sometimes inspired by the literature that interested Surrealism, but was more often of an entirely personal order. Nevertheless, certain psychological constants in human nature – and their concomitant symbols – naturally tended to manifest themselves (see ibid.).

This characteristic indicates the surrealist position in terms of the plastic arts, and hence informs a pre-disposition towards the nature of cinema. It was, however, only after Buñuel completed *Un Chien Andalou* (1929) that this approach would become clearer.

In 1928, Breton wrote the *Second Surrealist Manifesto*, and reaffirmed the movement within artistic and literary circles:

> It is also clear that Surrealism is not interested in taking much account of what is peripherally under the pretext of art – which is really anti-art philosophy or anti-philosophy, in short, everything does not conclude...
in the annihilation of being into a blind, inner splendour which would be no more the essence of ice than of fire (in Waldberg, 1965: 78).

Apart from the surrealists’ disinterest of being artists\(^\text{10}\), the movement was set upon revolution, as Breton suggests in his second manifesto:

> With all due respect to certain narrow-minded revolutionaries, I really do not see why we should abstain from raising problems of love, dream, madness, art and religion, provided that we consider them in the same light in which they, and we too, consider Revolution (in Waldberg, 1965: 78).

Indeed, the surrealists intended to be revolutionary from the start of the movement, and often affirmed their revolutionary intent in various publications. They had two passwords: “To change life (Rimbaud) and; To transform the world (Marx)” (as cited by Waldberg 1965: 18). Waldberg (ibid.) explains these concepts:

> To change life meant to modify feeling, to guide the spirit in new directions, to wean the individual away from a rational view of the world. To this poetic requirement was added that of transforming the world on the social and moral level.

In the first edition of the *La Révolution Surréaliste* [The Surrealist Revolution] (1924), a publication that existed between 1924 and 1929, and subsequently an organ of the movement, they write: “Revolution... Revolution... Realism is the pruning of trees, Surrealism the pruning of life” (in Waldberg, 1965: 48). In January 1925, they again clarified their position:

1. We have nothing to do with literature; but we are quite capable, if need be, of using it for our own ends.

2. Surrealism is not a new or better means of expression, nor even a metaphysic of poetry; it means a total liberation of the mind and everything resembling it.

3. We are absolutely set upon Revolution.

4. We have joined the words Surrealism and Revolution purely in order to demonstrate the disinterested, detached, and altogether despairing nature of this revolution’ (in Brandon, 1999:233).

The surrealists slowly moved their political stance away from anarchistic\(^\text{11}\) tendencies, towards the left wing of Communism. By 1927, an alliance was formed with the

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10 Artist in the sense of actively contributing to the avant-garde notion of art.

11 With regards to the more organised political realm, Breton and his comrades deliberately caused outrage, especially among the bourgeoisie by, amongst other things, sending insulting letters to politicians, and celebrities, and by organising demonstrations that would end violently. Furthermore, they demanded the opening of prisons and the disbanding of the army (see Waldberg, 1965: 18).
Communist Party, however it was very short lived. Breton considered the Party as a “totalitarian discipline and reactionary spirit (as to thought and its expression)” (Waldberg, 1965: 18).

The idea of the surrealists being active within the political realm seems paradoxical, if not far-fetched. At face value, the very idea of Marxism, founded on reason, contradicted the priority of the dream and the irrational. Furthermore, as Waldberg (ibid) comments, the workers’ union did not trust the poets, “who were all of bourgeois origin and whose zeal and verbal excess exasperated them”. Ironically, Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels had noted the following regarding class and revolution in the *Communist Manifesto* (1848) (in Rosemont, 1978: 31):

The class struggle produces a process of dissolution...within the ruling class, so that a small section of the ruling class cuts itself adrift and joins the revolutionary class, the class that holds the future in its hands. Just as, a section of the nobility went over at an earlier period, so now a portion of the bourgeoisie goes over to the proletariat, and, in particular, a portion of the bourgeois ideologists, who have raised themselves to the level of comprehending theoretically the historical movement as a whole.

Jack Spector (1997: 73) notes that a critical issue within the surrealist paradigm and their engagement with the Marxist revolution: “how can the image, apart from its rhetorical impact, produce revolutionary effects?”

Despite Breton’s revolutionary instincts one can state with confidence that the surrealists were rather ineffective with their political agenda. However, it did possess the power to influence some young intellectuals. But as Waldberg (1965: 18) comments:

Politics was one of the principal sources of discord in the surrealist movement, the entire history of which was marked by conflicts, self-contradictions, denunciations and exclusions.

Ironically, the painters ensured the legacy of Surrealism as a movement beyond a literary practice. Through the work of artists such as Max Ernst, René Magritte, Yves Tanguy and Salvador Dali the world was entertained by the idea of Surrealism, whilst the audience of the poets and writers was largely restricted to France, and on a far smaller scale than that of the visual artists.

2.3 INTRODUCTION TO SURREALISM IN CINEMA 1924-1930

The relation between the surrealists and cinema is effectively a far stronger bond than the practice of producing films. When Breton cried, “Three cheers for the darkened room” (as cited by Richardson, 2006: 8) in his manifesto, it is clear that the surrealists
preferred the experience of the cinema rather than the simple notion of watching a film. It is clear that the darkened room played a significant role in the conceptualisation and expression of surrealist film.

Effectively one could argue that film is a realist medium, in the sense that it mostly represents some concrete reality. Cinema broke the notion of such a realist medium, as it was the environment in which films were seen, that provided the space in which “the marvellous may be encountered” (Richardson, 2006: 8). This cinematic experience simulated the dream state for the surrealists as they experienced the cinema as an unknown experience individually and collectively.

Cinema acted as a catalyst between waking life and the dream state. The perception of watching films was in no way a means to escape reality, but rather to intensify the experience of reality. Philippe Soupault recalled:

> The cinema was for us an immense discovery at the moment when we were elaborating Surrealism [...] we then considered film as a marvellous mode for expressing dreams [...] we thought the film would propose extraordinary possibilities for expressing, transfiguring, and realising dreams. One can think that, from the birth of Surrealism, we sought to discover, thanks to the cinema, the means for expressing the immense power of the dream (see Matthews, 1971: 10).

This projected quality, as much as providing an environment simulating the dream state, is why the cinema enjoyed so much attention from the surrealists. Wendy Everet (see King, 2007: 19) explains the power of cinema:

> The only truly modern art form, it was unhampered by tradition; its immediacy and emotive power offered fertile ground for the surrealist metaphor; its condemnation by the establishment as immoral and corrupting clearly enhanced its potential for social revolt and the expression of sexual fantasy; its perceived similarities to the state of dreaming seemed ready-made for the surrealists’ own exploration of dreams and subconscious desire.

As the group’s fascination with cinema grew so did the desire to create films that would embody the surrealist ideology. Their love for attending the cinema was already clear. André Breton and his friend Jacques Vaché would often wander from one theatre to another, watching whatever was showing and leaving half way through the film, thus “relishing the visual collage ....put together in their heads as if it was a single film” (in King, 2007: 19). Breton recollects his encounters with the cinema:

> When I was at the ‘age of cinema’ [...] I never began by consulting the amusements page to know what film seemed likely to be the best. Nor
did I inquire about the time when the film began. I agreed particularly well with Jacques Vaché in appreciating nothing so much as dropping in at a movie house when what was playing was playing, at any point in the show. And we could leave at the first sign of boredom – of surfeit – to rush off to another movie house where we behaved in the same way, and so on [...] (as cited by Matthews, 1971: 1).

Breton and Vaché would ensure that they are constantly confronted by visual imagery, and more importantly, these images would be juxtaposed by the next film they would see somewhere else, a characteristic that would become apparent in Buñuel’s films. Effectively they liberated themselves from the formal arrangement of images as intended by the filmmakers. Their method ensured that they would constantly be confronted by images, yet interpret them out of the intended context, and later juxtapose them with another film’s imagery – simulating the dream state.

Breton remarks, referring to the cinema, “I think what we valued most in it, to the point of taking no interest in anything else, was its son pouvoir de dépaysement [power to disorient]” (as cited by Matthews, 1971: 2). Disorientation, here, suggests that the power of cinema can remove anyone from his natural surroundings, whether these are “material, mental or emotional” (ibid). Thus referring to the marvellous, a privilege, as Breton assures us, of no one in particular, to “abstract ourselves from our own lives when we feel like it” (ibid). It is by means of this privilege, where one encounters the critical point of where the waking state converges with the dream – the marvellous.

Elizabeth Lyon (1973: 45) argues that the process of dissociation “is perhaps the most important formal innovation to emerge from the surrealist movement”. The process of dissociation, or principle of displacement, is as Breton refers to it in the First Surrealist Manifesto (1924), the “fortuitous juxtaposition” (as cited by Lyon, 1975: 45) of two contrasting realities in order to cause surprise and shock. In order to eliminate a mere random assemblage of juxtaposed images, the juxtaposition “must produce a transformation in the relationship between the elements within the image and between the beholder of the object” (Lyon, 1975: 45). This displacement of elements is the catalyst to cause the desired surprise or shock within the viewer.

The surrealists’ devotion to and passion for the cinema is embedded in the notion of the marvellous. Robert Desnos defined the marvellous in Journal littéraire [Literary Journal] on April 18, 1925, as “the supreme aim of the human mind since it gained obsession of the creative power conferred upon it by poetry and imagination”. He proceeded to say that the marvellous is the “admirable passport [...] for access to those regions where heart and mind liberate themselves at last from the critical and descriptive spirit that
pins them to the ground” (as cited by Matthews, 1971: 9). The cinema, in contrast to the theatre, would prove itself far less restrictive and became a means of expression with immense poetic energy.

However, the surrealists had some clear demands of what they expected from the cinema in return for their devotion. Desnos points out when discussing Mystères du Cinéma [The Mysteries of Cinema] in Le Soir [Evening] on April 2, 1927:

What we want from cinema is the impossible, the unexpected, dreams, surprise which efface the baseness in souls and rush them enthusiastically to the barricades and into adventures; we ask of the cinema what love and life deny us, that is mystery, miracles (as cited by Matthews, 1971: 3).

The cinema as a medium has the ability, more than any other medium, to meet the demands of surrealists. Images unexpectedly juxtaposed; visual images of concrete reality can be arranged in such a manner alien to spatial and temporal reality. The surrealists saw the cinema as poetry, more than any other medium to the same degree, to “complete and enlarge tangible reality”, as Buñuel puts it (as cited by Matthews, 1971: 3).

In Breton’s Second Manifesto (1929), he assures readers that the general question Surrealism attempts to raise is “that of human expression in all its forms” (as cited by Matthews, 1971: 4). As a result, Breton’s statement reveals what the surrealist film script should be. Matthews (1971: 4) explains:

[...], a sign of confidence in the adaptability of cinematographic language to Surrealism’s requirements. As in verbal poetry, the visual poetic effect foreseen results from the collision, to use Antonin Artaud’s word, of elements uprooted from their normal environment and presented in uncustomary relationship to other elements, equally displaced. Through such a presentation, Artaud contends, one may hope to replace the ‘worn-out language’, which is no longer pertinent to man’s need to communicate with his fellows.

The first attempts of surrealist films to communicate “the mystery and beauty of life” failed, largely because they attempted to “to translate or find equivalencies for written language in images or visual language” (Lyon, 1973: 45).

Antonin Artaud had the vision of what surrealist cinema should be like but, “lacked the means to implement it” (Lyon, 1973: 45). Artaud (as cited by Lyon, 1973: 45) explains in the Preface of his scenario La Coquille et le Clergyman [The Seashell and the Clergyman] (1928):
It is futile to look for an equivalent of written language in visual language – such a translation from one idiom to another is foredoomed to failure. The essence of the visual language should be so presented, and the action should be such that any translation would be out of the question; the visual action should operate on the mind as an immediate intuition.

He proceeds to state that “dreams have a logic of their own; more, they have a life of their own, infused with darkly rational truth” (as cited by Caws, 2001: 96).

Federico Fellini (in Pettigrew, 2003: 58) suggests that the relation between the cinema and the dream state effectively becomes a singular concept:

The language of dreams is that of film and film is a dream. You can dilate space, create ellipses in time, make people appear and disappear for no apparent reason, you remember bizarre perspectives and characters but above all, a quality of light impossible to describe, the kind associated with free conscience.

Regarding the surrealist ideology, the above statement would seem to flatter the surrealists’ views regarding cinema, however, it could have a far greater effect on the relation between cinema and Surrealism. Everything would seem to lead to this conclusion that cinema acts as a dream. Even Freud could conveniently be appropriated to support such a statement. But the apparent validity must be measured against Buñuel’s strong objection to criticism that Un Chien Andalou’s (1929) narrative simulated the dream-state very closely. In the greater context, it would seem so.

From the early days of cinema surrealists were captivated by its dream-like characteristics and potential. The darkened room has yielded the physical space in which the marvellous is experienced. Conveniently enough, Freud’s publication of Interpretation of Dreams (1900) provided a first stepping-stone to the exploration of the dream. As a result, surrealists embraced his theories, and to a great degree incorporated his findings in their own work. The cinema became a metaphor for the dream.

The dream has enabled the surrealists to explore the unknown, the oneiric state that resulted in an expression of visual imagery engulfed with symbolism. As Fellini (in Pettigrew, 2003: 58) notes, the language of dreams is “a complicated business because the language of dreams, whether on the narrative or figurative level is basically an impossible language”. He suggests that the language of dreams demands a different method of decoding because “it belongs to another dimension where reason and intellect are totally excluded”.

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Fellini reaches the conclusion that oneiric expression is done by means of symbols. He states, “the symbol thus becomes the most inclusive of languages” (as quoted by Pettigrew, 2003: 58). Yet, these symbols cannot simply be ignored or marked as unimportant, especially concerning the surrealists’ extremely militant-like outlook. Freud (2010: 147) explains:

Dreams are not to be linked to the unrelated sounds that rise from a musical instrument struck by the blow of some external force instead of by a player’s hand; they are not meaningless, they are not absurd, they do not imply that one portion of our store of ideas is asleep while another portion is beginning to wake. On the contrary, they are physical phenomena of complete validity – fulfillments of wishes; they can be inserted into the chain of intelligible waking mental acts; they are constructed by a highly complicated activity of the mind.

Furthermore, Freud (2010: 130) sheds some light on how the analysis of dream symbols can manifest various meaning in different dreamers:

My procedure is not so convenient as the popular decoding method, which translates any given piece of a dream’s content by a fixed key. I, on the contrary, am prepared to find that the same piece of content may conceal a different meaning when it occurs in various people or various contexts.

If the cinema is a metaphor for the dream-state, where does film fit into this equation? One would assume that the film, as an artefact, would carry far more weight than what it is given here, and rightly, so, it does. The film is the vehicle to the cinematic experience, without it, the cinematic space would simply be a dark room. The German poet Novalis (as quoted by Richardson, 2006: 1) notes:

Dark memories hovering below the transparent screen of the present will present images of reality in sharp silhouette to create the pleasurable effect of a double world. The outer world becomes so transparent and the inner world so diverse and full of meaning that one finds oneself in a state of nervous animation between the two.

The film, as the finished product, would seem to be the vehicle that represents the content for the dream. The film-maker creates the film in order to communicate an idea, express an emotion or simply to entertain the most basic of human needs, much like the unconscious communicates to the conscious mind the deep mysteries of the human psyche. It is this thought which is projected in the darkened room. The film would represent thought, the cinema the dream-state.
2.4 AN UNDERSTANDING OF GENERAL CINEMATIC TECHNIQUES 1920-1930

2.4.1 FORM (FRAMING AND COMPOSITION WITHIN THE MOVING IMAGE)

The filmmaker’s choice of mise en scène [putting on stage] informs the projected image. The image contains certain visual clues or signs depending on the intended message. These visual clues are, as explained above, elements of signification and can simultaneously operate on the iconic, indexical and symbolic levels. The execution of the shot, and the meaning invested in the image is determined by the specific cinematic techniques employed by the filmmaker. These techniques, as mentioned earlier, invest meaning in the shot, or at the very least direct the viewer to read the image in a specific manner. Cinematic techniques are tools available to the filmmaker to inform not only the image, on all levels of signification, but all the elements of expression\textsuperscript{12} in cinema.

A particular characteristic of the cinema is framing. The cinema’s method of expression is based on the linking of frames, whether these are still photographs being exposed at a specific frame rate, or the splicing of various frames to create narrative.

Furthermore, these frames are constantly shifting in time and space. They are uncontained, unlike a photo, which has been framed, or the arch in the theatre. The film frame acts as an active signifier. As the frame changes the content within it shifts too, with the result that the signification constantly shifts. Here it becomes evident how the signification of the frame is directly dependent on the cinematic techniques employed by the filmmaker, and how the form’s reading is informed by the frame’s position.

As the film frame shifts, it affects the composition of the image directly. The composition is the formal arrangement of different elements within the frame. Therefore, change of frame, affects the signification of the image which is directly informed by the composition.

Apart from the constant changing of signification within the shifting frame, a different signification manifests outside of the image frame. However, the signification does not solely operate outside the image frame, on the contrary, the signification outside the frame informs the meaning of the image equally. Mitry (2000: 78) refers to Pascal Bonitzer’s statement to be a cliché but it does bare some truth:

\textsuperscript{12}These elements refer to the five tracks of cinematic expression; the moving image, recorded sound, recorded noises, recorded musical sound and the graphics.
The cinema utilises as much what it does not show as what it does show [and] cinematic space is made up of a space-inside-the-field and a space-outside-the-field, of what is seen and what is not seen.

As obvious as this would seem, the manipulation of the space around the frame could indeed act as a powerful signifier. The use of sound for example could be used to inform the narrative, or be used to inform the present. Béla Balázs referred to this as “indirect vision” (as cited by Mitry, 2000: 78); information that happens outside the frame, which informs that which is seen, and make it, appear to be more meaningful.

Furthermore, Bonitzer suggested that the space outside the frame is not imaginary but rather imagined. A character leaving the frame does not cease to exist, a dog barking outside the frame is imagined, as the sound signifies the presence of a dog, even though it is not shown. Mitry (ibid: 82) suggests that this course is only to be considered “at the level of fiction”. It must be noted that in a few instances a filmmaker would deliberately manipulate the space around the frame to signify the imaginary, however this is merely to drive narrative.

In agreement, Noël Burch (as cited by Mitry, 2000: 82) concludes: “it is obvious that any camera movement involves the space outside the field changing into the space of the frame, and vice versa”.

James Monaco (1977: 153), refers to the signification outside the frame as an “open form”, hence the viewer is aware of events happening outside the frame. Conversely, if the shot is composed in such a manner that the content is self-contained within the frame, the frame is referred to a “closed form” (ibid). Monaco (ibid) explains:

Open and closed forms are closely associated with the elements of the movement in the frame. If the camera tends to follow the subject faithfully, the form tends to be closed; if on the other hand, the filmmaker allows – even encourages – the subject to leave the frame and re-enter, the form is obviously open.

*Mise en scène* relate to the formal arrangement of all the elements in the frame that the viewer sees. These include the setting, the human figure, lighting and composition. All the elements are used to influence the viewer’s experience, and hence act as powerful signifiers.

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13 Buñuel made use of this technique especially in his second film *L’Age D’Or* (1930) in which he purposefully manipulated the signification outside the frame with sound, which he made more prominent than what it would be normally. He masterfully used this to create dissolution between time and space, informing the surrealist ideology in cinema.
Federico Fellini (as cited by Pramaggiore and Wallis, 2011: 91) made the following commentary regarding the *mise en scène*:

> What matters is the way space is cut up, the precision of what happens within the magical space of the frame, where I refuse to allow the smallest clumsiness.

Composition is also critical as a technique of semiotic communication. The definition of composition is simply the formal arrangement of objects, actors and space within the image frame and may “reiterate underlying themes and ideas” (ibid: 114).

The filmmaker composes the image in three dimensions, by using three sets of interconnected compositional codes. Generally the decision in composing a shot is determined by focusing “attention on pairs of planes” (Monaco, 1977: 155). These planes of composition are, as James Monaco (1977: 155) explains, the plane of the image; the geographical spatial plane, and lastly; the plane of depth perception, which occurs perpendicular to the image and geographical spatial plane.

Naturally the image plane is the principal plane as it is the only plane that exists once the image is projected onto the screen. However, Monaco (1977: 155) notes that the “composition for this plane is often influenced by factors in the geographical plane since, unless we are dealing with animation, a photographer or cinematographer must compose for the frame plane in the geographical plane”.

Furthermore, the geographical plane and the plane of depth perception liaise because “much of our ability to perceive depth in two-dimensional representations as well as three-dimensional reality depends upon phenomena in the geographical plane” (Monaco, 1977: 155).

The elements informing composition include much as in painting or photography – balance, line, space (foreground and background), light and dark lighting effects, and colour. It is the arrangement of the elements, specifically on the geographical and depth perception planes, that informs the compositional codes of the image plane.

The key factors influencing depth perception on the geographical plane are convergence, relative size and density gradient. As Monaco suggests, overlapping occurs on the image plane.

The cinematographer makes use of specific lenses, each with its own characteristics, to distort, suppress or manipulate the depth perception. The lens choice will affect the
composition of the image within the frame by means of modification, suppression and reinforcement.

In contrast to the framed still image codes (such as the frame, the compositional planes, line, form, colour, lighting amongst others), the diachronic shot’s codes include distance, focus, angle, movement and point of view. These codes inform how the composition is read as a text and, depending on the combination of these codes, will signify the composition differently. Many of the elements exist within the still frame, however, as Monaco suggests these are “more appropriately discussed as dynamic qualities” (1977: 166).

2.4.2 THE SHOT
The shot, described by Bernard Dick (1998: 36), is simply the portrayal of the scene as viewed through the viewfinder and is defined in terms of distance. The word shot will then contain the same meaning as mise en scène. In context with cinema, mise en scène describes internal structure of the image therefore informing the cinematic techniques.

Jean Luc Goddard was fond of saying that the close-up was invented for tragedy and the long shot for comedy (Dick, 1998: 37). This might, as Dick comments, be an oversimplification as Westerns made use of long shots and extreme long shots to the degree that these shots became the staple of the genre. Goddard, however, was suggesting that filmmakers choose to use one shot in preference to another in order to communicate a specific idea in that scene.

If the camera appears to be close to a face, in terms of the human anatomy, one would call it a close-up, as shown in figure 2.1. If a specific area of the human anatomy is isolated, for example the eye (figure 2.2), one would refer to this as an extreme close-up. Close-up shots and extreme close-up shots can be an intricate part in the visual narrative of a filmic sequence. Close-ups (and the extreme close-ups, in particular) are the only shots that can contain an isolated signifier which is used to place emphasis on a particular important detail of the visual narrative. Mitry suggests that close-ups have a “symbolic quality which distinguishes them from all other shots whose quality are mostly allusive, suggestive or simply descriptive” (2000: 67). These shots must be used sparingly as their direct bearing on the plot creates an imbalance in the film much like in the spoken discourse if each letter is emphasised in pronunciation.

The close-up, for Germaine Dulluc, provided the viewer with “impressions of evanescent eternal beauty... something beyond art, that is life itself” (in Stam, 2000: 35).
At the other end of the spatial scale, shots including the full length of a human figure with some background visible are termed long shots (figure 2.3). These shots should not get confused with extreme long shots. They appear to be same in principle, yet the spatial scale differs significantly as illustrated in figure 2.4.

Long shots, and extreme long shots, in contrast to close-ups and extreme close-ups, differ completely regarding meaning. Long shots remove the viewer from the direct action and as a result, seem less emotive and more descriptive. Acts of violence will seem far less painful to watch in a long shot as opposed to a close-up. Had Buñuel used a long shot to capture the razor cutting through the eyeball in *Un Chien Andalou* (1929) as illustrated in figure 2.2, the sequence would have had not the same impact on the viewer that it made. This is not to say that long shots and extreme long shots cannot be used effectively for emotive purposes. They can describe the environment in which the character is situated and convey the vastness of the space. Yet the interpretation of death, for example, could be poetic in a vast setting as illustrated in figures 2.3 and 2.4. In a battle sequence, for example, a long shot or extreme long shot can effectively amplify the scale of the onslaught.
Figure 2.5 clearly indicates the descriptive nature of a long shot, by defining the space, in this case a room. Here a long shot is used purely to establish the scene but by careful analysis the viewer is able to read the shot in terms of the image's signs and as a result compose a character profile, by means of semiotic analysis. The establishing shot enables the filmmaker to establish the scene or sequence's tone.

A shot that cannot be classified as a close-up or a long shot is referred to as a medium shot (figure 2.6). In relation to the human anatomy medium shots are from the waist to the head or from the waist to feet. A similar shot in terms of possible problematic spatial definition would be the close shot. Close shots are generally referred to as head and shoulder shots, and are very common in sequences where dialogue occurs between characters as illustrated in figure 2.7.

Shots may also be described by what they contain. A two-shot would contain two characters and a three-shot would contain three. Arguments have arisen between film
theorists regarding these types of shots. The two-shot, for example, may contain a close-up of one character on the left and a mid-shot or even long shot of the other character in the background. The question posed here is what type of shot is it? Would it be a close-up shot on the character in front or a long shot of the character in the background? It would be both without a doubt, as illustrated in figure 2.7. Mitry argues that the “image is made up of one shot, created for the purpose, in rhythmic opposition to and harmony with the shots immediately before and after it” (Mitry, 2000: 64).

Other than the shot’s focal length, a shot can be characterised by the angle of the camera in relation to the subject. A change in camera angle can alter the signification of the image appreciably. The two commonly referred to angles in cinematography are the low angle shot and the high angle shot. Although these shots refer to the camera position on a vertical axis in relation to the subject it is important to state that the angle also operates on the horizontal axis of the image. As a result, a change of the camera angle, in a still shot, directly changes the framing of the shot and consequently alters the composition and how a scene is viewed. This change of camera angle becomes more apparent in the moving\textsuperscript{14} shot.

The camera angle is important in cinema in that it can be used on both the first and second order of signification by simply changing the camera position. A low angle shot (figure 2.8) makes the subject loom over the camera and distorts the perspective in such a manner that the subject appears much larger than it is. In this context the camera angle acts as a signifier on the second order of signification.

![Figure 2.8: Low angle shot. Un Chien Andalou](image)

Contrary to the use of camera angle on second order of signification, camera angle can be used to signify on the first order of signification to determine geographical positions.

\textsuperscript{14}The moving shot refers to the physical movement of the camera, whether this may be as basic movement such as panning, or more complex movements such as tracking shots.
In Figure 2.9 a combination of an extreme long shot and a very high angle is used to amplify the low geographical position of the subject on the ground. The combination of these two specific techniques signify the subject to be far from the position of the camera, in this case a point-of-view shot from two characters looking down from a maisonette. The actual geographical position of the maisonette may not be that high however; Buñuel uses these two techniques effectively to give the illusion that the maisonette is geographically much higher from the character than what it could be in reality.

2.4.3 CAMERA MOVEMENT
Apart from the physical movement of the film through the camera, camera movements add a dynamic quality to the shot. In addition to the camera position in terms of angle and height, as well as shot distance, camera movement allows for changing the meaning of shots and scenes. Monaco (1977: 170) explains

Camera movement is determined by three axes, the pan axis (vertical), the tilt axis (horizontal from left to right) and the roll, that pivots around the last axis, the horizontal that parallels the axis of the lens.

Furthermore, the camera is not just limited to the three axes for movement, but can be moved from one point to another, by means of a dollies or cranes, hence the term tracking shots. Maria Pramaggiore and Tom Wallis (2011: 147) state that camera movement can function, in a broad sense, in five ways. These are as follows:

Reveal information in a dramatic fashion, establish a character’s perspective, convey a sense of space, suggest mood, and emphasise the continuity of time and space.

Camera movement was considered to be a fundamental element in the artistic development of early silent cinema, along with composition and montage (see Pramaggiore and Wallis, 2011: 230). The tracking shot, as opposed to the other camera movements that move around an axis, physically moves in a scene, hence the spatial relationship between objects shift, resulting in a shift in the viewer’s perspective. The tracking shot informs and alters the viewer’s perception of depth significantly, however, more importantly, there is a strong intrinsically ethical dimension attached and is able to manifest in two manners, the first to place emphasis on the subject, the second emphasising the camera or filmmaker. Monaco (1977: 171) elaborates:

The first alternative strongly emphasise the centrality of the subject of the film; the second shifts interest from subject to camera, from object to filmmaker. As André Bazin has pointed out, these are ethical
questions, since they determine the human relationships between and among artists, subject, and observer.

Perhaps the ethical question concerns not only the use of camera movement, but also the use of cinematographic techniques as a whole. The moving camera merely highlights these changes in relationship.

2.4.4 MONTAGE

The editing process is simply the linking of frames. As these frames are linked a narrative is formed, the signifiers and the signified (regardless of the level of signification) of each frame is informed by the previous frame and subsequently informs the next frame. Furthermore, the editing process, at its core, is the manipulation of three elements namely: “the graphic qualities of two or more shots, the tempo at which these shots change and the timing of each shot in relationship to other elements of the film” (Pramaggiore and Wallis 2011: 193).

Vsevolod Pudovkin noted that editing is, in actual fact, “a compulsory and deliberate guidance of the thoughts and associations of the spectator” (as cited by Pramaggiore and Wallis, 2011: 191). *Mise en scène*, as Monaco (1977: 184) suggests, “is marked by a fusion of complexities” whereas montage is uncomplicated, “at least on the physical level”. One must however, not mistake the complexities of montage since it is used as a “dialectical process that creates a third meaning out of the original two meanings of the adjacent shot” (Monaco, 1977: 184). Hence, montage is used to denote two shots in order to connote a new meaning. Maria Pramaggoire and Tom Wallis (2011: 220) inform that montage “synthesises the cinematography and *mise en scène* of individual shots into a series of images that, when taken as a whole, transcend the limitations of any one of the images in isolation”.

Montage theory dominated classic film theory until the 1940s and has never disappeared entirely from cinema. Montage still appears in contemporary cinema, even if it is simply appropriated for aesthetic purposes. Early montage theory was characterised as a process of unification, and in contrast to the early Hollywood method of cutting or editing raw material in order to tell a story, montage theory suggests the building of an idea using the raw material.

In the original context, the Soviet montage theorists and filmmakers, most of them state funded, worked to promote the socialist ideological practises of the Soviet Union in the 1920s, against the backdrop “of the remarkable flowering of diverse avant-garde tendencies in theatre, painting, literature and cinema” (Stam, 2000: 37).
The political leadership of the Soviet Union saw cinema as a powerful political tool. Filmmakers knew that editing was pivotal in advancing political and intellectual ideas. Drawing from the Kuleshov effect, an editing technique developed by Soviet filmmaker Lev Kuleshov, which illustrates "that the meaning of a shot was determined not only by the material content of the shot, but also by its association with the preceding and succeeding shots" (in Pramaggiore and Wallis, 2011: 192). Three major Soviet filmmakers of the 1920s, V. I Pudovkin, Dziga Vertov and Sergei Eisenstein, experimented with the notion that audiences could grasp abstract political ideas by means of juxtaposing two completely unrelated shots.

Influenced greatly by Japanese woodcuts, Sergei Eisenstein used juxtaposition of shots (the part) to give meaning or to communicate a theme (the whole). In his book, Film Sense, Eisenstein (1986: 60), gives this definition of montage:

Piece A, derived from the elements of the theme being developed, and piece B, derived from the same source, in juxtaposition to give birth to the image in which the thematic matter is most clearly embodied.

Eisenstein implied that use of shot A and shot B, the representation of the overall theme, must be selected and placed in such a way, by means of juxtaposition, that those elements of A and B, "shall evoke in the perception and feelings of the spectator the most complete image of the theme itself" (Eisenstein, 1986: 60).

Eisenstein interpreted the frame, as the boundary of the image, and the depicted object, the composition within the frame, to be in a "productive tension with each other" (Elsaesser and Hagener, 2010: 23). Eisenstein (in ibid) writes:

The position of the camera represents the materialisation of the conflict between the organising logic of the director and the inert logic of the phenomenon in collision, producing the dialectic of the camera angle.

Eisenstein rejected the Western filmmakers approach to a picturesque method of depicting reality, which to him left the audience with an image that appeared artificial and given. Instead, he drew his influence from the Japanese method of framing by depicting details from the whole "allowing the camera to appropriate the world by setting up a part-whole relationship" (Elsaesser and Hagener, 2010: 23). What Eisenstein suggests is that the important elements must remain implied, not always plainly expressed, especially if the spectator becomes an active participant, hence each shot, which is a part of the whole, must be able to capture the whole and all its intricacies. Kurt Koffka explains:
It has been said: The whole is more than the sum of its parts. It is more correct to say that the whole is something else than the sum of its parts, because summing is a meaningless procedure, whereas the whole-part relationship is meaningful (in Eisenstein, 1986: 17).

Furthermore, Eisenstein saw each shot as a montage cell, rather than a montage element, as each shot is a self-contained part that fulfils a specific function within the larger whole. It is within the conflict between two montage cells where we find meaning, the syntax. It is within the difference between two shots in which meaning is derived.

The shot is a montage cell. [...] What then characterises montage and, consequently, its embryo, the shot? Collision. Conflict between two neighbouring fragments (in Elsaesser and Hagener, 2010: 23).

Eisenstein notes that the juxtaposition of two shots does not translate to the sum of one shot plus another, as it does a creation.

It resembles a creation rather than a sum of its parts; from the circumstance that every such juxtaposition the result is qualitatively distinguishable from each component element viewed separately. (Eisenstein, 1986: 17).

Montage theory, enabled the surrealist filmmakers to explore the possibilities of using juxtaposition to cause disorientation yet still allowed them keep an internal logic within the narrative.

2.5 A BASIC INTRODUCTION TO CINEMATIC TECHNOLOGY

Walter Benjamin (2005: 111) argues that the age of mechanical reproduction has caused that the function of “art transcended the perspective of the century; for a long time it even escaped that of the twentieth century, which experienced the development of film”.

An interesting development in film theory emerged in the 1940s that would place the frame under a new critical light. This evolution can, to a great extent, be attributed to technological developments such as of faster film stock (mainly of panchromatic film), faster lenses and more powerful lighting units. All had a significant influence on cinematography, not least on the art of framing. Before the new technologies filmmakers had to rely on the edit to drive narrative. Now they could make use of the frame in a more economical manner. The faster film stock and powerful lighting units enabled them to stop the lenses down to a smaller aperture whilst shooting indoors. This allowed that the image contained sharper focus throughout the frame; hence deep focus.

The filmmaker needed to frame the shot and arrange the elements within the frame in such a way that the frame conveyed meaning without the use of montage cuts.
The theory and practice of deep focus gave American filmmakers an alternative to montage, the dominant Russian editing-centred theories of Eisenstein, Pudovkin and Kuleshov. It allowed for the individual shot and framing to be of primary importance, in contrast to the Russian editing-centred theory, where the content was "subordinate to the feelings generated by its juxtaposition with those [frames] preceding and succeeding it" (Ogle, 1985: 59).

Bazin suggests that the cinema has the ability to convey meaning within the frame, and not just through the linking of frames (in Mast, 1984: 86). Here, he seems to suggest the obvious, that the cinema communicates regardless. However, communicating the same idea without the use of montage can become more complicated. As Mast (1984: 87) suggests:

Eisenstein was somehow absolutely right "in his day" and that the first task that cinema artists needed to learn was to edit – how to link frames – and only then, when the technology permitted it, could they learn how to frame – how to make meaning without linking images but within the frame itself.

Mast seems to imply that the technology limited the early filmmakers to use only the frame to invest meaning, and had to use the edit to achieve meaning. He also makes a bold insinuation that the new technology allowed the filmmaker to learn how to frame. However he is not taking into account that the use of montage could easily result in the same idea as that driving a single framed image. He makes the interesting point that the limitations of the inferior technology had given filmmakers the skills to edit. It was the application of these editing skills that gave Buñuel’s films their surrealist qualities to the extent that one could safely say that the dream image relies on the cut. Thus, in the case of Surrealism, juxtaposition was appropriated to inform the ideology of Surrealism. However, one cannot definitely conclude that the juxtaposition was a direct result of technological limitations. It may have played a role, however, it would seem that it was simply coincidental or convenient, as the surrealists employed juxtaposition and disassociation as an expression, prior to their use of cinema as genre.

Sound technology arrived in 1927, by which time cinema was already established as a very sophisticated visual medium. Sound brought challenges and limitations. The cameras needed to be placed in soundproof booths to prevent microphones recording the sounds of their motors working. Suddenly cinematographers found they were restricted, as they could only pan the cameras 30 degrees from left to right. Marsha Kinder and Beverle Houston write: "...the three elements that had been so crucial to the
Artistic development of the silent cinema - visual composition, camera movement, and editing - were severely restricted" (in Pramaggiore and Wallis, 2011: 230).

Not everyone received the new technology without reservation. The French director René Clair argued: “The screen has lost more than what it gained. It has conquered the world of voices, but it has lost the world of dreams” (ibid: 231). Soviet filmmakers and montage theorists “feared that the use of sound technology would proceed along the line of least resistance, i.e. along the line of satisfying simple curiosity” (ibid).

The film industry had shaped visual technology to an art form. Directors and cinematographers had educated themselves regarding the elements that make up a good film. Rudolph Arnheim (1933: 201) states:

Selection, camera angle, illumination, were no longer matters of chance and sheer necessity, but everything contained in a good film, down to the least details, showed that inevitableness of molding, on the one hand acquired from the laws of pictorial composition, and on the other dictated by the notional content without which no great work of art can exist.

At first, the new technology was seen as the death knell of the silent era. Silent films had often been accompanied by a musical score. Now the introduction of sound in the form of sound effects and dialogue caused consternation amongst some film purists. Arnheim, a proponent of the silent film, argues against sound in the cinema because it transforms the two-dimensional image into a projected three-dimensional reality (see Elsaesser and Hagener, 2010: 134):

Acoustics preform the illusion to perfection. The edge of the screen is no longer a frame, but the margin to the whole, of a theatrical space: sound transforms the screen into a spatial stage. One of cinema's main and special appeals is the fact that every scene poses a competition: the fragmentation of images and motion on the surface versus plastics bodies and motion in space. Sound film suspends this aesthetically important double game almost completely (ibid).

Furthermore, Arnheim suggested that the introduction of sound to film resulted in the marriage between two incompatible systems of artistic expression - “the image track as silent film and the sound track as radio play” (as cited by Elsaesser and Hagener, 2010: 135). For many film critics the addition of sound was merely adding another track to the image that did not represent the “perfection of film as an art form” (ibid).

The new technology, however, became well integrated within the film industry. Even sound technology’s harshest critics saw the potential of sound in films. Film theorists
such as Eisenstein, Pudovkin and Alexandrov in their famous *Manifesto on Cinema Sound* (1928) proposed the use of image-sound from a theoretical standpoint. Despite their initial objections, all three Soviet directors made use of the technology of sound as early as 1930.

The most attractive quality of sound is the persuasive power that can “act to realise both time and space” (Monaco, 1975: 181). Sound cannot easily be divorced from the image, so intricate is the relationship. Monaco (1975: 182) notes that “much of the language we employ to discuss the codes of soundtracks treats of the relationship between sound and image”.

Elsaesser and Hagener (2010: 136) state that the analysis of sound is often framed “in terms of a power struggle with the image over dominance dependency, in which terms such as illustration and accompaniment or counterpoint and conflict prevail”. In classical cinema sound is usually analysed in relation to, and dependant on, the image. One would investigate whether sound is on screen or off screen (if the sound source can be seen in the shot or not), diegetic or non-diegetic (if the source of the sound exists in the narrative film world or not) and lastly whether the sound is synchronous or non-synchronous (if the sound is uniform in time with the image representation on-screen), see Elsaesser and Hagener (2010: 135).

The importance of sound, although initially rejected, became more apparent as a powerful signifier within the cinema. Metz’s model of the five tracks of the cinema’s expression bears testimony to the significance of sound in the cinema.

2.6 CHAPTER SUMMARY
The above literature review has sought to extract key information to contextualise Surrealism as a movement, the relation to the cinema, as well as the role technology plays as a means of conveying an overall ideological viewpoint. Furthermore it highlights key concepts from each theme that act as criteria for the film analysis in the next chapter. These key concepts are important characteristics that will inform the reading of the film text.

Key criteria that are paramount to the completion of this study have been singled out. Each theme discussed in the above chapter highlighted particular criteria that the researcher found relevant. These criteria, grouped under each theme are as follows:

Under Surrealism the key criteria highlighted were free association as well as the importance of the dream within the movement as directly influenced by Freud.
Furthermore, the two poles found within the movement regarding the plastic arts, particularly the image-makers, contributes directly to the study, in the sense that characteristics of the former pole are found in Buñuel’s *Un Chien Andalou* (1929). Lastly the revolutionary intent of the surrealists acts as a key criterion that underpins the intentions of Luis Buñuel’s *Un Chien Andalou* (1929).

The second theme, the relation between Surrealism and the cinema, highlighted criteria specific to the cinema, and as a result can be paralleled to Buñuel’s work. These criteria include the cinematic experience, by means of watching the film in a darkened space paying particular attention to the iteration of the marvellous, the juxtaposition of images in order to simulate a dream narrative, the displacement of objects that ensure disorientation by way of shock or surprise in the viewer.

The final two themes highlight and explore cinematic techniques (framing and composition, the shot, camera movement and montage) and cinematic technology.

The afore-mentioned criteria inform the overall methodology in Chapter Three and will assist in the analysis of Buñuel’s *Un Chien Andalou* (1929) in Chapter Four. The next chapter will discuss the communication quality of the cinema as a language by examining specifically Barthes’ theory of the myth, and will also discuss the proposed methodological approach to the film analysis in Chapter Five.
CHAPTER 3

3.1 INTRODUCTION

This chapter describes a methodology employed to explore the fit between a technical cinematographic analysis and a theoretical semiotic analysis of the complex and multiple meanings of Buñuel’s Un Chien Andalou (1929). In essence, the research uses an interpretative paradigm, based on semiotic theory and the compositional interpretation of moving images (Rose, 2007: 51), focussing on technological, compositional and social modalities (Rose, 2007: 105). The research’s ontological standpoint is based on a belief in the validity of the semiotic interpretation, which focuses on compositional and social modalities; and a belief that film texts can be studied and better understood through highlighting these modalities. Furthermore, the notion of compositional interpretation is used as a secondary method to further support the semiotic reading. The findings herein have embraced these paradigms and standpoints to inform the research design, methodology, and analysis when investigating the preselected film texts. The aim in analysing Un Chien Andalou (1929) is to determine to what extent the elements of framing and composition reflect, reinforce and comment on the ideology of Surrealism, and whether it is a surrealist filmic style.

This study will not attempt to generalise its findings from a study of Un Chien Andalou (1929) to surrealist film’s collective œuvre. The focus will be on textual analysis within the social and political context of the era, and will not attempt to gauge, or explain, the possible sociological and cultural impact of the film on the capitalist ideology of the time. No audience analyses will be attempted, although the study will briefly refer to the societal reception of the film. This will be done by means of a literature study of pertinent texts.

It is clearly impossible to interpret a text produced within a specific historical era in the “same way” as contemporary readers. An attempt will be made to read the scenes of Un Chien Andalou (1929) within the social context in which they were created, but this will remain the interpretation of someone with a different frame of reference to the “ideal” or intended reader of the time. Danie Jordaan (2004: 119) suggests the following research assumptions that will inform this study:

The “meaning” of any text is neither finite nor stable, but an interpretative construct;
At the same time, such an interpretative construct is not random, but based on codes and conventions associated with the text genre as well as with the society in which it is produced;

These codes and conventions are frequently culture-specific, although some are “universal” in the sense that they span cultures and are not limited to a particular time in history;

Since conventions are social agreements and as such reflect aspects of the political, economic, belief, value and other systems of particular societies at given points in time, they reflect aspects of ideology;

The author of a text uses codes and conventions both consciously and unconsciously, and his/her use of such codes invariably causes points of *aporia* [contradiction], those gaps, fissures or contradictions that deconstruct the text in the sense that it affords alternatives to the *obvious* reading/interpretation/meaning of the text.

3.2 FILM ANALYSIS

Film analysis for the purpose of this study is the analysis of the different elements that make up the film, the relationship between these elements, as well as the context in which the film is placed. Gunther Kress and Theo Van Leeuwen (1996: 33) emphasises the need for critical visual analysis:

> Given the importance of visually displayed information in so many significant social contexts, there is an urgent need for developing adequate ways of talking and thinking about the visual.

Leon Van Nierop (1998: i) informs that cinema literacy is the understanding of the relationship between these main and other elements; among others photography, the script, editing, sound, subtext. Furthermore, it involves “examining each of these elements separately and how each contributes to the whole” (ibid). Bert Olivier (1996: vii) states the following:

> A critical viewing ability implies an understanding of the significance of the different relationships between film images...It also means the increasing ability to recognise inter-filmic (or inter-textual) references that enhances one’s understanding of a film (a fact which is not that different from critical literary or philosophical awareness). It is therefore important to remember that, just as words and sentences in a novel constitute a meaningful text, so images, image sequences, scenes and scene sequences constitute meaningful semiotic complexes in film or television.

Film analysis is generally set against a particular film theory that informs the analysis according to certain theoretical methodologies. These film theories are endowed within a particular school of thought or practices, such as Feminism or Psychoanalysis. Jordaan (as quoted by Brandt, 2010: 4) suggests that film theory draws from many other
theories. These theories are from literary theories, ranging from narratology (Vladimir Propp, Tzvetan Todorov), reception aesthetics (Wolfgang Iser, H. R. Strauss), psychoanalysis (based on Freudian and Lacanian thought), and feminism theories (Constance Penley, Joan Copjec).

3.3 SEMIOTIC FILM THEORY

3.3.1 A BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF SEMIOTICS

The two critical figures behind the development of contemporary semiotics were the Swiss linguist Ferdinand de Saussure (1857-1913) and the American pragmatic philosopher Charles Sanders Peirce (1839-1914). These two thinkers developed their research independently around the same time and gave light to semiology and semiotics respectively. In his book *Course in General Linguistics* (1915), compiled posthumously by his students based on lecture notes, we find Saussure’s definition of semiology:

A science that studies the life of signs within society is conceivable; it would be part of social psychology; I shall call it ‘semiology’ (from Greek semeion [sign]). Semiology would show what constitutes signs, what laws govern them. Since the science does not yet exist, no one can say what it be; but it has the right to existence, a place staked out in advance (as cited by Stam, Burgoyne, Flitterman-Lewis, 2002: 4).

Saussure believed that language, one of many semiotic systems, enjoyed the role of being the most complex and universal means of expression and consequently provided the “master-pattern for all branches of semiotics” (Stam et al, 2002: 4).

Peirce’s philosophical findings lead him to the study of ‘semiotic’ a study preoccupied with symbols which he “regarded as the ‘woof and warp’ of all thought and scientific research” (ibid) which was closely related to Logic.

Peirce defined the sign as “something, which stands to somebody for something in some respect or capacity. It addresses somebody, that is, creates in the mind of that person an equivalent sign, or perhaps a more developed sign” (in ibid).

That the terms ‘semiotics’ and ‘semiology’ coexist to describe what is in essence a single science has much to do with the binary theories of the Saussurian and Peircean traditions. However, ‘semiotics’ has become the preferred term over time as it is seen as “connoting a discipline less static and taxonomic than semiology” (ibid).

It was, however, Saussure’s structural approach to linguistics that constitutes to structuralism and semiotics and largely to film semiotics. Saussure contributed the most influential description of the sign. He defined the sign as a union between the form,
which signifies – the signifier and the idea expressed – the signified. Stam et al. (2002: 8) explains the sign:

The signifier is the sensible, material acoustic or visual signal, which triggers a mental concept, the signified. The perceptible aspect of the sign is the signifier; the absent mental representation evoked by it is the signified, and the relationship between the two is the signification. The signified is not a ‘thing’, an image or a sound, but rather a mental representation.

In the English language, the signifier ‘dog’ is written with the three letters D- O- G. The signified would be the mental representation of a four-legged mammal belonging to the *Canis lupis familiaris* family. In French, however, dog is written as C- H- I- E- N as opposed to D- O- G. In Spanish speaking cultures it would be P- E- R- R- O. This brings us to a key point in the semiotic enterprise. In all three above-mentioned languages the signified remains the same even though the signifiers are completely different. Therefore if there are many signifiers for the same idea (signified), it is clear that there is no direct inherent relationship between word and object. The relationship between the word and object is then culturally determined or consensual, and therefore the sign is arbitrary.

3.3.2 THE BARTHIAN MYTH

Roland Barthes, who believed that everything can be encoded as text and decoded using semiotics, developed his theory of ‘myth’ based on the Saussurean model. However, he took it well beyond Saussure’s initial intent. Barthes believed that everything could be “treated as text and decoded semiotically” (Howells, 2003:100). Semiotics is not limited to oral speech or written discourse but extends into disciplines such as “photography, cinema, reporting, shows, publicity” (as cited by Howells, 2003:100). Barthes argued that everything can be “arbitrarily endowed with meaning” (in Howells, 2003:100), and that semiotic communication extends beyond the visual and written discourse.

Fundamental to his argument is that meaning is consensual or culturally determined. It is from this perspective that Barthes notes “every object in the world can pass from a closed, silent existence to an oral state” (Howells, 2003: 100), as determined by a particular society.

The myth, for Barthes, operates on the second semiotic system order, or mythical system. He agreed that the signification of signifier and signified formed the sign, as theorised by Saussure, however Barthes believed that the signification of the first order can act as the signifier on the second order. According to Saussure, the written or spoken signifier ‘dog’ signifies the mental representation of a ‘dog’. On the mythical
system, the sign ‘dog’ can now act as the mythical signifier, for fidelity, for example. Fidelity, in return, forms the mythical signified and the union of the two forms the mythical sign (see Howells, 2003: 101).

The myth is "a sum of signs" and forms a "metalanguage" that comprises of various linguistic components (as cited by Howells, 2003: 101). Barthes' famous example was that of a Paris Match (Image 3.1) magazine cover of a black child soldier saluting, eyes uplifted “probably on a fold of the tricolour” (1991: 115). Barthes argued that this image connotes French imperialism and colonialism. The image itself is compiled of various signifiers (photography, text and the soldier) therefore the viewer is presented with a myth:

I see very well what it signifies to me: that France is a great Empire, that all her sons, without any colour discrimination, faithfully serve under her flag, and that there is no better answer to the detractors of an alleged colonialism than the zeal shown by this Negro in serving his so-called oppressors (Barthes, 1991: 115).

Barthes goes on to explain some characteristics of the myth. He states that the form of the myth, in this case the soldier, will always be unequal to the concept French imperialism and the relation between the form and concept is never permanent. Barthes stated that he could have found "a thousand images" to signify the same concept (as cited by Howells, 2003: 101).

Figure 3.1: Paris Match Magazine Cover

Secondly, the form merely acts as a tool for communication. The soldier in this regard, loses his individuality as a person, in order to signify (with other signs) the concept of
French imperialism. The literal image of the soldier is denoted in order to connote the concept. The myth disregards the history of the form in order to use the form as a signifier, resulting in the intention of the form being more important than the form itself. This means that the relation between the mythical signifier and signified is unlike the arbitrary linguistic sign that is motivated. According to Barthes “a system which takes over the signs of another system in order to make them its own signifiers is a system of connotation” (1990: 37). This then results in the literal image being denoted and the symbolic image connoted.

Mitry proceeds to explain that the filmic image is a complex signifier and is always “individualised, personalized, and differentiated” (2000: 17). The image of a dog is always of that specific dog, in a specific space, shot at a specific angle. It is not, as in linguistics, a dog in general. He goes on by explaining the shot:

Shots do not just present a difference of scale or a more or less extended spatial field. Using the represented objects to compose a suitable form, a ‘specific quality’, each of them acts differently on the percept and therefore, the consciousness, the emotions, the intellect (2000: 68).

Mitry is suggesting that the techniques used to create the image, in this case the shot focal length, along with the content do have a specific communicative characteristic. The interpretation then, of each shot differs according to the arrangement of the objects in the frame and the techniques used to compose the form.

Furthermore, Mitry is implying that the techniques can signify and much like the connotation of form in the myth; these techniques can signify a concept on the second semiotic system. He explains:

Each shot is in effect a more or less complex series of signifiers and signifieds whose associations with previous significations give rise to ideas or feelings, which explains the events being described (2000: 66).

If the internal structure of the image generate meaning, as Mitry suggests, it is possible to argue that the cinematic techniques, which constitutes the internal structure, can also operate on the mythical level. If the internal structure of the image had to change, the form would signify differently. It is important to note that the internal structure of the image cannot invest meaning in itself; it is entirely based on the form of the content, and therefore cannot act as a sign. Thus, the internal structure can only act as a signifier in union with the form of the content, and reciprocally the expression of the form is, in part, directly dependent on the internal structure of the image.
As mentioned above, the form generates meaning on the mythical order as it is connoted with another signifier in order to express a concept. As the internal structure of the image changes, so does the signification of the form. Thus the relation between the form and the internal structure is, as with the mythical signifier/signified relation, motivated. Daniel Chandler explains:

> Changing the form of the signifier while keeping the same signified can generate different connotations. Changes of styles or tone may involve different connotations, such as when using different typefaces for exactly the same text, or changing from sharp focus to soft focus when taking a photograph (2009: 5).

Barthes (1977: 44) notes that man's mediation in the process of taking a photograph, the techniques used to produce the image such as framing, focus, distance “all belong to the plane of connotation”. Furthermore, with aid of various techniques, the signs within the image are drawn from a cultural code. From this one can conclude that the techniques employed by the image-maker (photographer, filmmaker, painter et cetera) perpetuate cultural codes. These cultural codes then, in return, perpetuate ideology, and as a result, the ideology appropriates the techniques as a type of ideological language.

### 3.3.3 THE LANGUAGE OF CINEMA

Through the work of theorists such as Christian Metz and Roland Barthes film has developed a language of its own. Metz proposed that cinema is indeed a *langage* [language\(^{15}\)] and not a *langue* [language system]. He argued that cinema lacks the equivalent of an arbitrary sign, with the result that the relationship between the signifier and signified is motivated. In suggesting this, Metz was not implying that the signifier/signified relationship was irrelevant to cinema. It is merely the relation between the signifier and the signified that differs – one relation being arbitrary and the other being motivated. Stam et al. explains:

> Produced through a process of mechanical reproduction, film installs a different relationship between signifier and signified. The perceptual similarity between the filmic image of a dog and the actual pro-filmic dog, or between the recorded sound of a dog’s barking and the actual bark, suggests that the relation between signifier and signified is not arbitrary but motivated (2002: 35).

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\(^{15}\) Stam (1989: 38) explains that because the “cinema lacks an arbitrary sign, minimal units, and double articulation, film texts cannot be conceived of as being generated by an underlying language system, but they do manifest a language like systematicity”. Stam continues to say that cinema, for Metz, is a “language in a double sense: first, as a ‘technico-sensorial unity’ grounded in a given matter of expression; and second, as a discourse or signifying practice with specific codifications and recognizable ordering procedures”.

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Metz argues that language can be any “unity defined in terms of its matter of expression designed to designate the material in which signification manifests itself” (Stam et al., 2002: 37). Mitry agrees by stating that cinema could never be a language if it meant that it engages by means of exchanging conversation. However, if the images are used in the context of the expression of ideas by means of logical and meaningful relationships, and not simply as a representation of reality, then clearly it is a language (see Mitry, 2000: ix). This cinematic language is expressed by means of the image, which in turn takes on the role of the “verb and subject, noun and predicate through its symbol structure and potential qualities as sign” (Mitry, 2000: ix). It is noted that the *language* of cinema is not only governed or defined by the image itself, but a combination of various elements such as sound, narration, graphics and the score. Cinema’s matter of expression can be defined by five tracks: the moving image, recorded sound, recorded noises, recorded musical sound and the graphics.

Thus, cinema is a language, in sum, in both a metaphorical sense and a series of “messages with a given matter of expression, and as an artistic language, a discourse or signifying practice characterised by specific codifications and ordering procedures” (Stam et al., 2002: 37).

Referring back to the cinematic language and the vague suggested meaning it has been invested with by the filmmaker and later by the viewer, is it possible to argue that the film’s meaning is endowed within ideology and that the internal structure of the image does not determine the genre of the film per se? In other words, the creator of the film’s arbitrary relation to a culture or ideology pre-determines the invested meaning of the images and consequently the viewer’s cultural or ideological framework pre-determines the interpretation of that suggested meaning.

The internal structure of the image does indeed contribute to the reading of that image, however, especially in the case of cinematic techniques, the internal structure cannot invest meaning in itself, as it is directly dependant on the form of the content.

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16 It is evident that if a film consists only of a series of images, these images can communicate outside the construct of a language system, such as seen in the silent cinema era. This study will only focus on the image, as it will conduct an analysis specifically examining the framing and composition of the image. It must be noted that the other elements concerning cinema, as mentioned above, will not be examined nor will the study infer that the image is the only element to express an idea of communication.
The filmmaker invested meaning by consciously manipulating the internal structure of the image, also, choosing a specific form in order to communicate an intended pre-determined message.

The product is then an artistic opus enriched with pre-determined meaning. This product, in the instance of *Un Chien Andalou* (1929), was created within the ideology of Surrealism. Hence, two different ideologies, one cultural and the other ‘artistic’ constructs the underlying support framework in which the film, as text, communicates. The interpretation of the myth by its creator is culturally determined as the motivation is directly influenced by the creator’s interpretation of his own ideas. The product is in turn created within a specific ideology, in this case Surrealism; therefore the film is arbitrary in relation to the ideology, with the result that the myth is arbitrary to the ideology.

The arbitrary relation of film does possess a generative quality too. This occurs in the fusion of two ideologies, in this case between a cultural and an ‘artistic’ ideology which are introduced to one another. It becomes apparent when the traditional Spanish artists infused their cultural background with concepts from the newly developed surrealist movement, hence the literal cultural form gets denoted, and so loses its history, and connotated with the concept, Surrealism, to form a new symbolic form.

During the viewing of the artwork, the generative quality becomes apparent. The symbolic surrealist form fuses with the dominant cultural ideology, in this instance post-war French culture. Here, the new surrealist symbolic form gets denoted and connotated with French cultural thinking. The result is generative to new ideological thinking. It then becomes apparent that the internal structure of the image is merely the vehicle to communicate a pre-determined message, an ideological language, and regardless of what the internal structure signifies, it is still subject to the ideology in which it was created, as the film text is arbitrary to the ideology.

Also the cinematic techniques do not only operate on the first level of signification to describe, but can operate on the second level of signification and change the signification between the form and concept.

3.4 PROPOSED FRAMEWORK

In *Visual Methodologies: An Introduction to the Interpretation of Visual Materials*, Gillian Rose (2007: 26) noted that visual images are always endowed with meaning that is “constructed through various practices, technologies and knowledges”. Furthermore she
proposed a methodology specifically aimed at the visual language. She developed three sites at which meaning of an image is derived. They are: “The site(s) of production of an image, the site of the image itself, and the site(s) where it is seen by various audiences” (2007: 13). Also, she proposes that each of the above sites have three different aspects that she terms modalities. These modalities aim to generate a greater, critical understanding of images. Rose (ibid) explained:

**Technological.** Mirzoeff (1998: 1) defines visual technology as: “Any form of apparatus designed either to be looked at or to enhance natural vision, from oil paintings to television and the Internet”.

**Compositional.** Compositionality refers to the specific material qualities of an image of visual object. When an image is made it draws on a number of formal strategies: content, colour and spatial organisation for example.

**Social.** This is very much a shorthand term. What I mean it to refer to are the range of economic, social and political relations, institutions and practices that surround an image and through which it is seen and used.

The sites and modalities are used to inform the method of analysis that follows a specific school of thought. A breakdown of these modalities follows.

Rose (2007) presents the site of the image itself as the second site at which images generate meaning. Each image is comprised from various formal elements that act as signifiers that generate meaning. She notes that some of these elements will be determined by the technological modality. For example the black and white tonal qualities in *Un Chien Andalou* (1929) is determined by the film stock and processing techniques. Hence, the technological production of images refers to the different physical apparatus implemented to create an image (i.e., equipment or tools).

The second modality is the compositional modality. This modality informs the analysis according to the elements that make up the image within the frame. In the case of the moving image one would refer to the *mise en scène*. Taylor (2012: 96) notes that this modality illustrates “how the compositional elements are used in the denotation of visual content within the image frame”. Also, the compositional modality is further informed by the Surrealist techniques that, along with the cinematic techniques, inform the reading of the texts.

Lastly, the social modality concerns “the social, economic, political and institutional practices and relations that produce, saturate and interpret an image” (Rose, 2007: 258). The social modality is the “plane where connotation resides, such as social or
political ideologies” (Ownby, 2012: 96). In relation to this study, Surrealism informs this modality.

Rose (2007: 258) proposes the following questions to be asked when dealing with the site of an image itself. She notes that the list of proposed questions is not definitive of the site and can be used as a starting point. A selection of particular questions that informs the study from Rose's suggested questions is as follows (2007:258):

- What is being shown? What are the components of the image? How are they arranged?
- What relationships are established between the components of the image visually?
- How has its technology affected the text?
- To what extent does this image draw on the characteristics of its genre?
- Does this image comment critically on the characteristics of its genre?
- What do the different components of the image signify?

It must be noted that Rose looks at the site(s) of production, the image itself as well as the audience reception. However, this treatise will focus specifically on the image itself, thus the methodology is appropriated in order to meet the criteria of the research question. Hence the discussion will focus predominantly on the modalities found in the site of the image itself. However, this study will encompass the possible influence of production and will briefly refer to the audience reception of the film by means of a literature study.

3.5 METHOD OF FILM TEXT ANALYSIS

The researcher identified semiotic theory as the primary methodology to conduct the analysis. The site of the image and the compositional and social modalities (Rose, 2007: 105) informed the semiotic method.

The secondary methodology was identified as the compositional interpretation of the image. This method concerns itself with the technical elements found within the visual image, and is mostly concerned with the image itself in its compositional modality. However, compositional interpretation does pay some attention to the production of images especially regarding to the technological modality.
The semiotic approach concerns itself with the image as the most important site of its meaning. Also it tends to focus specifically on compositional modality of that site. However the social effects of an image plays a vital role in the analysis meaning that attention is paid to the social modalities in the site of the image.

The secondary methodology employed to analyse the film texts was the compositional interpretation of moving images. The compositional interpretation is not necessarily a critical methodology but it does offer ways of describing the various compositional elements found in the moving image. This method is primarily concerned with the image itself, paying close attention to the compositional modality. However, it does tend to focus on the production of images in some instances. Monaco (1977) developed a particularly detailed schema for analysing the moving image using compositional interpretation as a method (in Rose, 2007: 56):

**FRAME:**
- Screen ratio
- Screen frame: open or closed
- Screen planes: frame plane, geographical plane and depth plane
- Multiple images
- Superimpositions

**SHOTS:**
- Shot distance: extreme long shot, long shot, full, three-quarters, medium, head and shoulders, close-up
- Shot focus: deep or shallow, sharp or soft
- Shot angle: angle of approach, angle of elevation, angle of roll
- Point of view: character, third person, establishing reverse angle
- Pans, tilts, zooms and rolls, when the camera remains in one position
- Tracking and crane shots, when the camera itself moves

The montage of a moving image can be described with reference to its:

**CUTS:**
- Type of cut: unmarked, fade, dissolve, iris, jump
- Rhythm

The sounds of moving images can be described by considering their:
• Type: music, environmental sound, speech
• Relation to the image: source, parallel, contrapuntal

The combination of the semiotic method along with the compositional interpretation gave this researcher the necessary tools to conduct the analysis, to best address the aims of the research. It raised certain challenges that only became apparent after the completion of the initial proposed research intent. These issues are discussed below.

3.6. QUALITY OF THE ANALYSIS

Semiotic theory directly confronts the question of how images generate meaning. It offers a range of tools for image analysis “and tracing how it works in relation to broader systems of meaning” (Rose, 2007: 74). Barthes (1973: 127) notes that “the meaning is already complete, it postulates a kind of knowledge, a past, a memory, a comparative order of facts, ideas, decisions”. However, the semiotic method has been criticised regarding the “representativeness and replicability of the analysis” (Rose, 2007: 103).

Compositional interpretation does not encourage discussion about the production of an image (other than the technological and compositional modalities). Nor does it contextualise the image in critical discussion on its use, interpretation and social relevance. Rose suggests using compositional interpretation along with other modes of methodologies to address these issues. As a result the researcher used compositional interpretation along with semiotic theory. Also, only selected aspects, predominantly from Rose’s methodology of critical visual analysis, were used as required by the study.

The researcher acknowledges that the analysis is subjective and did not attempt to generalise the findings of the analysis to the Surrealist movement as a whole. The researcher further wishes to acknowledge that these findings are purely interpretational and do not attempt to make a definitive statement regarding the meaning of the signs within the selected film texts.

A key issue that came to light involved the use of technology as employed by Buñuel. The researcher could not find any literature regarding the technological aspect of the study, except for a broad reference to technology. In order to determine the “alienation” and “transgression” caused by the technology, the researcher had to make use of literature that commented broadly on the technological discourses and its inception into the film industry.
3.7 CHAPTER SUMMARY

The above chapter aimed to explain the design of the research and also the methods employed for the analysis of Buñuel's *Un Chien Andalou* (1929). It has highlighted the dynamics of the research – both from the perspective of Surrealism and the method of film analysis. It also aimed to outline some of the shortfalls of the research and limitations of the analysis findings.

This study uses Rose's visual methodology, to underpin the approach of the analysis in conjunction with Monaco's schema for analysing the moving image in order to conduct a reading of the selected film by Luis Buñuel. The semiotic reading is discussed according to the characteristics of cinematic language, and informed by the cinematic techniques as developed by means of the grounded literary study in Chapter Two. As such, the reading of the selected film constructed by Buñuel provide a foundation for the possible understanding of the 'fit' between a technical cinematographic analysis and a theoretical semiotic analysis of the complex and multiple 'meanings' of Buñuel's *Un Chien Andalou* (1929).
CHAPTER 4

4.1 INTRODUCTION
This chapter introduces Luis Buñuel as a Surrealist filmmaker. A short background to Buñuel and Salvador Dali will be given in order to understand the context of the work they created in collaboration.

The researcher wishes to note that the director in any film situation is the central author of the creative direction of a film; therefore, this chapter focuses almost exclusively on the role of Luis Buñuel. However, it cannot be denied that Buñuel worked closely with and was greatly influenced by Dali during the production of *Un Chien Andalou* (1929) screenplay; hence, less attention will be paid to Dali’s role.

Furthermore, the chapter aims to highlight key events and influences on Buñuel that can be found as themes in *Un Chien Andalou* (1929). These influences include Buñuel’s inherent struggle with religion and the guilt associated by breaking away from the religious institute, his fascination with the unconscious as well as the role of his Spanish decent that he undoubtedly references in the film.

Lastly, this chapter will discuss the production and reception of *Un Chien Andalou* (1929), the film that granted Buñuel and Dali acceptance within the movement.

The next chapter will concentrate on the analysis of *Un Chien Andalou* (1929) using Rose’s methodology as a framework. The outcome of the analysis will be incorporated into the practical application of techniques in, *Facebrick* (2012).

4.2 BACKGROUND TO BUÑUEL
Breton needed new faces, new ideas and new life in his surrealist movement, as Surrealism’s early heroes, in his eyes, “squeezed lemons” (Brandon, 1999: 289). In 1929 all three of his wishes were fulfilled. The front cover of the 12th and final issue of *La Révolution Surréaliste* [The Surrealist Revolution] (1929) featured a Magritte nude captioned *Je ne vois pas la cachée dans la forêt* [I see no women hidden in the forest]. Bordering the nude were photographs of the twelve surrealists, eyes closed, among them two newcomers, the new arrivals Breton had been hoping for. Second from right in the top row is Buñuel. His fellow Spaniard Dali is in the second row from the top, on the left.
Buñuel was born in February 1900 in Calanda and his early life would greatly influence his development as a filmmaker. He would disconnect from his religious upbringing and rebel against the bourgeois status of his family, associated with Spain’s liberal and intellectual urban culture. Buñuel’s early work as a filmmaker was an unforgiving exploration of his childhood; filled with aesthetic reminders of a life so many dreamed of.

Buñuel studied agronomy. Dali, by contrast, enrolled at the Royal Academy of San Fernando to study painting. Jimenez Fraud, the warden, liked to expose the students to the cutting edge of contemporary thinking. Intellectuals such as Albert Einstein, Walter Gropius and Louis Aragon shared their knowledge here. Aragon’s lectures were warmly received, as the students were enthusiastic followers of the early surrealists. Furthermore, the literary work of Guillaume Apollinaire, Jean Cocteau and Comte de Lautréamont were translated from French to Spanish around 1922 and were widely read and discussed by students. The theories of Sigmund Freud were translated into Spanish at this time and both Buñuel and Dali were smitten. Buñuel would recall: “My discovery of Freud, and particularly his theory of the unconscious, was crucial for me” (as cited by Brandon, 1999: 291). Later Buñuel famously said that if he were told he had twenty years to live and was asked how he wanted to live them, his reply would be: “Give me two hours a day of activity, and I’ll take the other 22 in dreams – provided I can
remember them" (in Ebert, 2000). For Dali, Freud’s Interpretation of Dreams presented itself “as one of the capital discoveries [of his] life” (as cited by Brandon, 1999: 291).

Dali was born on May 11, 1904, in Figueres, in Catalonia, Spain. His father, Salvador Dali y Cusi, was a middle class barrister and a strict disciplinarian with his children. By contrast his mother, Felipa Domenech Ferres indulged young Salvador in his art and early eccentricities. In 1922, Dali enrolled in the Academia de San Fernando in Madrid. He met his future collaborator, Buñuel, at the student residence.

Buñuel left Spain for Paris in January 1925, where he was introduced to films such as Sergei Eisenstein’s The Battleship Potemkin (1925) and Fritz Lang’s Destiny (1921). Buñuel later recalled how Lang’s work inspired him:

> When I saw Destiny, I suddenly knew that I too wanted to make movies... something about this film spoke to something deep in me; it clarified my life and my vision of the world (in Brandon 301: 1999)

Soon he was assisting director Jean Epstein on Mauprat (1926). There he met Albert Duverger and was fascinated to see that he worked without an assistant, changed his own film reels, and developed his own prints. Duverger would later work as the cinematographer on both Un Chien Andalou (1929) and L’Age D’Or (1930). Buñuel and Epstein’s collaboration continued into the next production, The Fall of the House of Usher (1928), a screen adaptation of Edgar Allan Poe’s novel. Buñuel worked as an assistant director. The collaboration would soon end. One day Epstein asked Buñuel to assist the cameraman, Able Gance, as Gance had to audition two girls. Buñuel however refused, and would later recall:

> With my usual abruptness, I replied that I was his assistant and not Gance’s, that I didn’t much liked Gance’s movies (except for Napoléon), and that I found Gance himself very pretentious.

> How can an insignificant asshole like you dare talk that way about a great director! Epstein exploded...adding that, as far as he was concerned, our collaboration had just come to an end...’You be careful’, he said. ‘I see Surrealistic tendencies in you’ (as cited by Brandon, 1999: 302).

Epstein was not the only one who identified Buñuel’s surrealistic inclinations. Commenting on Buñuel’s work, André Breton and Benjamin Péret similarly expressed the continuous surrealist themes found in Buñuel’s films. Breton spoke of “Buñuel’s spirit which, like it or not, is a constituent part of Surrealism”, whilst Péret noted that “a remarkable continuity, because Buñuel’s fixed idea in all of his films, is the denunciation of a world of ignorance and poverty” (cited by Richardson, 2006:27).
Ruth Brandon (1999: 292) noted that Buñuel’s Spanish heritage “bought new qualities to Surrealism, among them an emotional force not seen since the early Dada days in Zurich”. The Spanish were assumed to possess an engrained sense of regional identity, and a religious embedment deep in their psyche that informed everything they thought, wrote and painted. Brandon (1999: 365) explained:

The Spaniards possessed one great quality unique among Surrealists: their work was filled with passion. Nothing – not even Breton – could edge them into bloodlessness. Their fault lay rather in the other direction. Endowed with a cultural excess of turmoil, thunder and repressed emotion, Surrealism showed them how this might be accessed, controlled, and sublimated into art. In Dali’s case this was often bordered on the psycho-therapeutic, a fact, as we shall see, that he both recognised and exploited (Brandon, 1999: 365).

The qualities Spaniards brought to their work were shaped by their regional identity and by the pivotal role of religion. The result was work shaded by emotion in contrast to that produced by their French contemporaries for whom, by way of example, the writings of Freud and Lautréamont spoke to the intellect rather than the heart.

For the Spaniards they were tinged in with the guilty and deep-rooted delights of subversion and sin. Religion, for them, was a live issue, anticlericalism one of Surrealism’s chief pleasures (Brandon, 1999: 292).

Anticlericalism was nothing new for the French in post-revolutionary France. Even if individuals were pious, they were “products of the of the most consciously secular education system in Europe” (Brandon, 1999: 292). The Spaniards’ rise against religion held a far more personal entrenched distaste, especially towards Spanish Catholicism, as both were products of this ideology. Buñuel especially reacted to the Marists and Christian Brothers in a very subversive manner, as he was deeply religious up to the age of 16 years. He became disgusted with what he perceived as the Church’s wealth and power.

The mingling of sin, sex and death became a potent brew in Buñuel’s work. Dali later commented on seeing Buñuel’s La Voie Lactée [The Milky Way] (1969) that even though Buñuel engaged in blasphemous and anticlerical expression he “will end up in holy orders” (Brandon, 1999:293).

Buñuel took to visiting the Café Cyrano; a favourite meeting place for surrealist. His surrealist tendencies would soon become ideological. The time was now right for Buñuel to pursue his own film career. All he needed was a script.
Dali, an old friend, had recently written a very short scene on a shoebox lid, after purchasing a new pair of shoes. Dali claimed that the scene “had the touch of a genius, and which was completely counter to the contemporary cinema” (as cited by Brandon, 1999: 317). This was all Buñuel needed to realise his film career.

4.3 BACKGROUND TO UN CHIEN ANDALOU (1929)
Buñuel made plans to travel to Figueres in February 1929 having already acquired 25 000 pesetas in order to develop the as yet untitled shoebox script of Dali, unaware that it would become one of the most celebrated of film texts. Buñuel later recalled:

> The aim is to produce something absolutely new in the history of cinema… We hope to make visible certain subconscious states, which we believe can only be expressed by the cinema (as cited by King, 2007: 20).

The formulation of the script took six days, and both Buñuel and Dali experienced the process as a joyful and quick collaboration. They approached the writing of the script in a similar fashion to that of automatic writing, a technique already well established amongst surrealist writers and poets. They entertained wild fantasies dismissed of any form of reason, rational storytelling, culture or upbringing. Buñuel recalled the script writing process:

> We wrote with minds open to the first ideas that came into them and at the same time systematically rejecting everything that arose from our culture and education. They had to be images that would surprise us and that we would both accept without discussion. Nothing else. For example: The woman seizes a racket to defend herself from the man who is about to attack her. And then he looks for something to counter-attack with and (now I’m speaking to Dali) ‘What does he see?’ ‘A flying toad.’ ‘No good.’ ‘A bottle of brandy.’ ‘No good.’ ‘Well, he sees two ropes.’ ‘Good, but what’s on the end of the ropes?’ ‘The chap pulls on them and falls because he is dragging something very heavy.’ ‘Well it’s good that he falls down.’ ‘Attached to them are two dried gourds.’ ‘What else?’ ‘Two Marist brothers.’ ‘That’s it! Two Marists. And then?’ ‘A cannon.’ ‘No good.’ ‘Let’s have a luxury armchair.’ ‘No, a grand piano.’ ‘Very good, and on top of the grand piano a donkey - no, two donkeys.’ ‘Wonderful.’ Well, maybe we just drew our irrational representations with no explication… (in King, 2007: 20).

It is impossible to determine exactly who was responsible for what images in the film, and the collaborative effort between the two could suggest that it was intended to be undefined. However, after the disagreement, Buñuel and Dali encountered after their second collaborative effort, L’Age D’Or (1930), each would claim the best scenes from the film for themselves and blame the worst on the other. It is not known for certain whether Dali actually did write the scene on the shoebox lid, as no evidence of it exists.
Buñuel later claimed that they simply told one another the dreams they had the previous night, and decided that these could form the basis of the film. Brandon quotes Buñuel:

> We needed to find a plot. Dali said, ‘Last night I dreamed that my hands were swarming with ants.’ I said, ‘And last night I dreamed that I cut someone’s eye in half.’ ‘There’s our film, let’s do it’ (1999: 317).

Buñuel told François Truffaut, and who also quotes him in the magazine publication *Arts* in 1955, “Dali and I would choose gags and objects that would come to our minds and we reject without pity anything that could signify something” (as cited by Matthews, 1971: 90).

Buñuel returned to Paris by February 1929 after a very successful visit to Spain. In April 1929 Dali convinced his father to give him money to travel to Paris in order to assist Buñuel with the film. Filming began in July 1929 and took a total of fifteen days to complete, of which Dali was only present for one of the last days. Dali allegedly spent most of his time preparing the rotten donkeys. Buñuel hired a studio at Billiancourt, a cameraman, Duverger, and two professional actors, Simone Mareuil and Pierre Batcheff. Buñuel was renowned for the speed at which he worked.

_*Un Chien Andalou* (1929) was critically acclaimed much to Buñuel and Dali’s surprise, at the first screening at *Studio des Ursulines* [Studio on Ursulines], on the same bill as Man Ray's *Le Mystères du Château du Dé* [The Mysteries of the Chateau de De] (1929), which was also making its premiere. However, Breton, who was very sceptical of the two newcomers, had not seen the film that everyone was claiming to be surrealist. Tallier, owner of *Studio des Ursulines*, arranged a private screening. Breton, who initially intended to initiate a riot in true surrealist fashion, decided to view the film instead of destroying it, and emerged eager and approving. It seemed that a link between Surrealism and cinema was destined. The relationship between Buñuel, Dali and Surrealism was officially forged.

The distribution rights to *Un Chien Andalou* (1929) were bought by Pierre Braunberger, who owned Studio-Film, a company specialising in experimental work. He proposed to screen the film at Montmartre’s Studio 28. *Un Chien Andalou* (1929) enjoyed eight months on circuit yet Buñuel had a greater challenge ahead of him. He needed to produce something far more subversive than *Un Chien Andalou* (1929) as it had not shocked the bourgeoisie the way they intended.
The screenplay of *Un Chien Andalou* (1929) was published in the aforementioned surrealist text, *La Révolution Surréaliste* (1929) [*The Surrealist Revolution*] and Buñuel confirmed the interrelationship between *Un Chien Andalou* (1929) and the ideology of Surrealism. He stated the following:

> The publication of this scenario in *La Révolution Surréaliste* is the only one I authorise. It expresses without any sort of reserve my complete adherence to surrealist thought and activity. An Andalusian Dog would not exist, if Surrealism did not exist (as cited by Matthews, 1971: 91).

Buñuel’s debut film was a great success. Ironically, the bourgeois culture was delighted with the artistic endeavour while the surrealists welcomed both Buñuel and Dali with open arms to the movement.

### 4.4 CHAPTER SUMMARY

This chapter briefly highlighted Buñuel’s background, how he became a filmmaker as well as some of the influences on him as a filmmaker. His religious upbringing within the Spanish bourgeoisie culture, and his rebellion against it greatly influenced his work. Furthermore, it was his rebellion against religion, culture and class and his love for the dream-state that gave his work the foundation of theoretical discourse that aligned so perfectly with the Surrealist paradigm.

The next chapter will analyse *Un Chien Andalou* (1929) using the methodology proposed in Chapter Three.
CHAPTER 5

5.1 INTRODUCTION
This study uses Rose’s visual methodology to underpin an analysis done in conjunction with Monaco’s schema for analysing the moving image to conduct a reading of the selected film by Luis Buñuel. The technological and social modalities developed by Rose are discussed in Chapter Three and will support the reading of the film text in this chapter.

The semiotic reading is discussed according to the characteristics of cinematic language and informed by the cinematic techniques as developed by means of the grounded literary study in Chapter Two.

This reading provides a foundation to understand the ‘fit’ between a technical cinematographic analysis and a theoretical semiotic analysis of the complex and multiple ‘meanings’ of Un Chien Andalou (1929).

The intention is to determine whether a clear interrelationship between form (specifically moving image framing and composition), the cinematic technology available to Buñuel and surrealist ideology exists in the film, and whether it can be described as a distinctive surrealist filmic style.

Selected images, sequences and scenes have been digitally captured enabling accurate textual analysis of the framing and composition employed. It has permitted the determination of editing points with greater accuracy and has allowed the editing of scenes and sequences to be better evaluated.

This chapter will also discuss the themes and techniques involved in each of the scenes according to the characteristics developed in Chapter Two in order to answer the research question. This study complements the practical or applied component of the qualification, which consists of the production of a short film. Although it might have relevance for the production of this film, the following two sections are not interdependent. The practical component will be discussed in the next chapter.

5.2 ANALYSIS OF UN CHIEN ANDALOU (1929)
Un Chien Andalou (1929) consists of five main scenes dividing the film’s narrative through the use of interstitial\textsuperscript{17} title boards as a means of disjunction in time. They are

\textsuperscript{17} Inter-title
as follows: *Il était une fois* [Once upon a time], *Huit ans après* [Eight years later], *Vers trois heures du matin* [Around 3 o’clock in the morning], *Seize ans avant* [Sixteen years ago] and finally, *Au printemps* [In Spring]. Drummond (1994: xix) suggests that the flexibility of the narrative structure, “in which psychological and conventional dramatic logic have been displaced, predictably affects the temporal and spatial organisation of the text”. Buñuel deconstructed narrative time, by the simple use of title cards, in “favour of the textual unfolding” (Williams, 1992: 13). Essentially the film united “the spatial elements of the image and the temporal elements of the narrative in a discourse that deconstructs the function of each” (ibid). This action of deconstruction of time and space is a similar experience to the concept of time and space in the dream.

Furthermore, Adamowicz (2010: 34) reminds us that the role of interstitial titles, a key feature of silent cinema, is to “anchor the narrative and orient the spectator”. Yet in *Un Chien Andalou* (1929), the function of these interstitial titles act as “mock announcements of a classic five-act story, presenting precise yet jumbled temporal markers” (ibid).

The analysis concentrates on the five main scenes of the film, highlighting key images or sequences from each. Buñuel made use of the academy standard screen ratio of the time: 1.33: 1. He also used a spherical cinematographic process. This process relates to the type of lenses used: A spherical case, as opposed to the later use of anamorphic lenses that compress the image to a wider screen ratio of 1.85: 1. The film format for the film is a 35mm black and white film stock and this applies for both the original negative and the final print, however the precise film stock and developing times remain unknown. *Un Chien Andalou* (1929) has a running time of 16 minutes, consisting of 300 shots, each image lasting an average of three seconds.

**SCENE 1: ONCE UPON A TIME**

The first sequence to be analysed is the prologue. This sequence runs for forty seconds and twenty three frames. The prologue opens with *Once upon a time* (figure 5.1), the opening line for almost every fairy tale, however what follows resembles a nightmare of brutal violence (figures 5.6 to 5.18). David Grant (2009) notes that the prologue is not

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18 This concept of the deconstruction of time and space in the image derived from Breton’s publication titled *Le poisson soluble* [The Soluble Fish] in which he defends the theoretical defence of Surrealism in the first manifesto. Soluble Fish begins: “The park, at this time of day, stretched its blonde hands over the fountain. A meaningless castle rolled along the surface of the earth, close to God the register of this chateau was open at a drawing of shadows” (in Williams, 1992: 13).
only a visual assault on our “good taste but on our vision and the way we watch film” (Grant, 2009). Richardson notes that although the film assaults the viewer, “it does so in such a way as to flatter the spectator’s masochism” (2006: 30).

A man (Buñuel) stands at a window sharpening a razor on a whetstone whilst looking at the moon. As a cloud crosses the moon, a razor slices the eyeball of the young woman (Simone Mareuil), in a similar rhythm.

The film’s opening image, figure 5.1, breaks the tradition of narrative in the sense that it does not establish the scene by means of a traditional establishing shot, thereby disorienting the viewer by depriving him or her of information about the setting (see Monaco, 1977: 167). Instead the viewer is presented with a high angle close-up of a razor being sharpened. The interstitial title merely suggests that the film depicts events that happened some time ago. Buñuel offers no solutions as where and when this film can be placed but there are clues that contextualise the scene to the 1920’s, notably the razor and the wristwatch, the latter being a product of World War One and coming into fashion thereafter.

The angle would suggest a point of view shot from the character’s perspective. The screen frame is closed, and a strong triangular arrangement of elements is seen in the image. The whetstone on which the blade is sharpened rests on the door handle right angles to the windowpanes. A precise forwards and backward movement of the razor creates tension.

The image itself offers little depth; geographical and depth planes appear very close to the image plane. The distance between the hands and the doorframe is short, and the dark background, indicating that it is night, further limits perceptions of depth. The four dominant elements are therefore: the hands, the whetstone surface, the razor and the doorframe. The image is interrupted by a straight cut to the next image (figure 5.2).
Here, the man who is sharpening the razor with a cigarette in the corner of his mouth, identified as Buñuel, is introduced in a medium close-up. The frame is open, in contrast to figure 5.1, as the man is concentrating on sharpening the razor. The man is standing alongside a curtain. The image is composed in such a way that the curtains and the man equally divide and occupy the screen frame. The compositional arrangement of these two dominant elements on the geographical plane result in the frame plane being filled, the image again stunting depth perception.

Figure 5.3: *Un Chien Andalou*  
Figure 5.4: *Un Chien Andalou*

Figure 5.2 cuts back to the same high angle image of his hands. He continues sharpening the razor, then stops to test the cutting edge on his thumb as seen in figure 5.3. Here Buñuel starts the psychological assault on the viewer, creating a sense of unease. In the opening four images of the film Buñuel cuts between a closed frame (that indicates the action) and an open frame (that indicates an action being performed.). The composition of the closed frames (figures 5.1 and 5.3) and the open frames (figures 5.2 and 5.4) does not change.

Figure 5.5: *Un Chien Andalou*  
Figure 5.6: *Un Chien Andalou*

The image is cut to a medium shot vignette of the man (figure 5.5), who on finishing sharpening the razor opens the door to go outside. The vignette strongly focuses attention to the centre of the frame. The frame remains closed, however the lighting is considerably more moody in relation to the lower contrast in tonal values of the
previous images. The shadow on the curtain suggests that a single light source comes from within the room, whereas the previous lighting setup indicated at least two lights (one main light source and a second fill light). Furthermore, the door he made use of in sharpening the razor is now covered with a curtain, where previously there was only the window frame. Whether this was intentional is moot. Aranda suggests an explanation. He comments:

> When he [Buñuel] neglects some element of polish... he does so in the knowledge that it will affect neither the story nor the content, but only the technical correctness of the film. Technical correctness in inessential aspects leaves Buñuel quite indifferent (1975: 66).

Strong overhead lighting “falls merciless on the actors’ faces” (Aranda, 1975: 83). This technical negligence is however, supported in theory at least, by Buñuel and Surrealism’s ideological anti-art paradigm. Aranda (1975: 83) notes:

> The theme and impudence of its treatment preclude the possibility either of enjoying or being repelled by the technique. The deliberately intellectual intention of ‘not making art’ exculpates or justifies the technical deficiencies.

Moreover, as Matthews (1971: 18) notes, the measure of value of a surrealist film is not “the technical competence of the director. Nor is it what we customarily call his integrity”. The true measure of value lies in the openness of the film, so that the film can act as a catalyst in “helping them transforms man’s awareness of reality” (ibid).

Regardless of Buñuel’s technical deficiencies, his cinematic techniques – *mise en scène*, montage, sound –were those employed by his contemporaries. Even at closer analysis his use of cinematic techniques does not comprehend a purely Surrealist paradigm. It is the manipulation of these standard techniques accompanied by his use of symbolism that speak to surrealist tendencies.

Figure 5.5 cuts to figure 5.6 as the man steps outside onto the balcony. The long shot shows him on the balcony, but the camera position and angle does not indicate the height of his position. Two light sources illuminate the scene; a key light from above, suggests the moon as the primary light source, and there is a fill light situated below the left hand corner of the frame. The fill light illuminates the balcony railing on the lower left hand side of the frame and it throws a shadow of the man on the wall. This would indicate that the balcony is not at ground level, as the fill light could represent a streetlight. The compositional arrangement of graphical elements suggests a strong grid system, reinforcing the graphical presence of the frame. Strong rectangular elements
divide the frame, causing the frame to be very stable in contrast with the earlier
dynamic triangular arrangement of elements as seen in figure 5.3.

A straight cut to a medium close-up shows the man looking skyward (figure 5.7). The
lighting has changed dramatically from figure 5.6. A strong short light illuminates his
face, and the loss of the fill light creates a strong contrast in the image. The
compositional arrangement of the man is to the right of the image very close to the
frame’s edge. However, the open frame allows for this composition as he looks up at the
sky, furthermore it gives the effect that he is standing on the edge of the balcony. The
strong rectangular lines of the window frame behind him balance the image. The
following image is of the moon (figure 5.8), composed in the far left of the frame. Figure
5.8’s composition confirms the strong short lighting on the man’s face, suggesting that
the moon illuminates him from the side. Also the vast amount of negative space balances
the image, isolating the solitary sphere.

The camera cuts back to the medium close-up of the man (figure 5.9), however the
framing of the image has changed as seen in figure 5.7. Here the man is more centrally
placed in the image. He continues to look skyward and repeatedly exhales smoke. The
slight change in composition allows for the smoke to become more prominent in the
image. Throughout this sequence the man never removes the cigarette from his mouth.
Freudian thought would suggest an oral fixation in the man's unconscious; hence the mouth acts as the predominant sexual stimulant. Whitney Torres (2003) suggests that smoking "is very pleasurable and relaxing, just as thumb sucking relaxes young children, just as breastfeeding soothes a hungry infant".

Buñuel uses a succession of montage editing techniques in the next few images. The image cuts to a close-up of the heroine gazing directly into the camera and looking content. Her left eye is held open by a man's forefinger and thumb and the same razor blade is held next to her eye. Buñuel uses a very unconventional technique here; he places the female actress in the centre of the frame, and directs her to look straight at the camera, engaging directly with the audience, an intimate communication that involves viewers and denies them an escape. Adamowicz (2010: 41) explains:

In the film the direct confrontation with the spectator brutally or subtly disrupts diegetic absorption, undermining the conventional voyeuristic relation between the spectator and the classic film text, based on the unfolding of a coherent story. Further, disruptions on the diegetic level foreground the work of the signifier, preventing passive consumption of the film. Thus the film stages a tension between two distinct temporal structures, linear and non-linear, as well as two distinct modes of reading, absorption and display.

The strong central position of the woman draws the focus. The side lighting illuminates the left half of her face, reinforcing an emphasis on her left eye. The tonal value of the image becomes uniform in contrast, similar to the tonal values in figures 5.1 to 5.4. The even tonal value of the image creates the sense that the image becomes less emotive and more informative. One could even argue that this image takes on a particular truth. The placement of the actors is crucial here, the woman is seated and the man standing very close by. He exercises dominance over her by pressing her head to his side whilst holding her face with his left hand. She cannot move her head away nor does she try to. She seems completely at ease with her situation.

An important element of signification in this particular image is the striped tie. The tie occurs throughout the film, and a striped box makes a later appearance. In the previous images the man sharpening the razor did not wear a tie, however in this image the man holding the razor is wearing one. Also, the man sharpening the razor had a wristwatch, again an element missing during the eye-cutting scene. The nature of the story-telling will allow the viewer to assume that the man sharpening the razor and the man now holding it next to the woman's face are one and the same, but are they?
The image cuts back to the moon as seen in figure 5.11, and a sliver of cloud dissects it. Here Buñuel appropriates the movement of the cloud to parallel the movement of the razor approaching the eye, suggesting that the blade will follow the same trajectory. Williams (1992: 68) notes that Buñuel makes use of the same alternating two shot syntagma, the relationship between the two forms is very similar, therefore this “new element of the eye cutting seems consistent with the diegesis in the rest of the prologue”. Hence the viewer assumes that the eye cutting action and the balcony scene occur in the same time and space continuum, yet no such evidence exists. Williams (1992: 68) makes an important observation:

Our tendency to want to absorb a non-diegetic element that ultimately cannot be absorbed into the diegesis is an important feature of both this prologue and the film in general. The result is a subtle tension that seems to emanate from within the diegesis without allowing us to point to clear-cut instances of a total rupture with this apparent realism.

Matthews (1971: 84) suggests that, “since the cloud obscuring the moon is anything but equivalent of an open razor slicing the eyeball, this movement is not limited in value to creating a simple formalistic equation”. The image cuts to an extreme close-up of an eye, and mimicking the cloud’s movement, slices through the eye. Matthews (1971: 85) notes that the “elementary aesthetic pleasure which seems to be promised by the parallelism of similar forms and movements is exploded”. The cloud shutting out moonlight liberates physical revulsion as the razor shuts out sight (see Matthews, 1971: 85). The composition in figure 5.11 suddenly becomes more revealing than initially suggested, the amount of negative space starts to consume the light source, light is shut out, an outcome mimicked in the following image. The tight framing of the image avoids any escape for the viewer; there are no other signifiers that could detract from what is happening on the screen.

Jean Vigo (in Koller, 2001b) states: “Can there be any spectacle more terrible than the sight of a cloud obscuring the moon at its full? The prologue can hardly leave one
indifferent. It tells us that in this film we must see with a different eye”. Vigo implies the notion that the film must be interpreted differently. Buñuel explains (in Aranda, 1975: 66) his intentions regarding the mutilation and gives premises to Vigo’s statement:

To permit in the spectator a state, which could permit the free association of ideas, it was necessary to produce a near traumatic shock at the very beginning of the film; hence, we began it with a shot of an eye being efficiently cut open. The spectator entered into the cathartic state necessary to accept the subsequent events of the film.

The opening scene of Un Chien Andalou (1929), has received many interpretations by various scholars and critics over the years. Richardson (see 2006: 28), however, warns that Un Chien Andalou (1929) is probably one of the most analysed films in cinema history, and one should be reluctant to add more critical interpretation to it. He continues by saying that “in order to see it with fresh eyes, it is probably more necessary to remove some of the critical grime that has adhered to it” (ibid). Adamowicz (2010: 70) notes that the motif of the eye constantly appears in surrealist iconography revealing “an intricate network of intertextual links between verbal and visual texts”.

Aside from the overall metaphorical interpretation regarding how Buñuel entices the viewer to gaze at the film differently, as suggested by Vigo (in Koller, 2001b) and Adamowicz, Raymond Durgnat (1990: 36), highlights a particularly interesting aspect of the film’s prologue; namely the continuity disruptions.

Notably, Buñuel, after sharpening a razor, steps out onto a balcony, and, according to most pre-analysis accounts, slits a girl's eye. But the fine detail says he can’t have. For his shirt was open-neck, but the shirt behind the girl has a tie; the wrist has no watch; the balcony had neither girl nor chair; and after the moonlight chiaroscuro, the light is flat as if artificial. This last discrepancy suggests that the moon, though intercut with the razor blade opening the lady’s eye, isn’t there either; and if you look closely, the eye has animal hairs.

Durgnat makes a very valid point, by questioning who is ultimately responsible for cutting the woman’s eye, an act that contains various mythical meaning in itself.

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19 Durgnat (1990: 36) also warns against close reading, saying it “doesn’t eliminate ambiguities; often, indeed, it reveals, or multiplies them. Multi-viewing encourages multi-reading”.

20 Adamowicz (2010) states that “the recurrent motif of the eye in Surrealism can also be read as a metonymy for a new vision, and the idea of the cinema as the ‘new eye of man’ (Soupault) was thematised in the opening shots of several Dada and surrealist films of the 1920s”.

21 Williams’ interpretation delves into the act of castration (see 1992: 83). Joel Farges draws a parallel between the woman’s vacant stare and the viewer’s own voyeuristic stare, “which through this connection feels the violence of the razor as a blinding assault on its own vision” (in Williams, 1992: 73). Durgnat (1977: 24) also comments in an earlier publication that the “razor blade and the eye are fairly obvious symbols for the male and female organ, and cutting for sexuality viewed as a destructive activity”.

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However, regarding the location of the mutilation one could argue that it happened indoors, possibly in the same room where Buñuel is seen sharpening the razor, as the tonalities of the images are the same level of contrast. Furthermore, the background in the close-up image of the woman suggests an evenly lit wall, similar to the interior of the room (as seen in various shots later in the film). Also, Buñuel makes use of montage editing, manipulating the filmic time-space continuum, in order to disorientate the viewer, a key characteristic of Surrealism.

Durgnat pays close attention to contradiction as a point of departure for his argument to comprehend Buñuel’s intentions behind the continuity errors in the prologue. Effectively, he argues that it is these contradictions that appear not only in the dream state but also in everyday waking stream-of-consciousness that “has less, rather than more, narrative or rational coherence than the dreams we remember” (Durgnat, 1990: 38). He goes on to say that the film is “situated at a convergence of ‘stream-of-consciousness’ movements: Surrealism (from Symbolism), the French ‘impressionist’ avant-garde (so named for Impressionism, a mosaic-of-perceptions movement), Bergson, and Freud” (ibid).

Durgnat (1990: 38) refers to Sandro who cites Williams’ interesting distinction between “representing dreams in film” and “imitating the mechanics of dream through film”. Furthermore, he adds that the distinction “wouldn’t rule out the dream-analogy, for ‘representation’ and ‘imitation’ overlap, and similar mechanics would assemble similar continuities” (ibid). It is precisely this dream-analogy that caused Buñuel to realise that *Un Chien Andalou* (1929) represented the dream state too closely.

Freud however, suggested that the unconscious contains no contradictions. In his 1932 lecture, *The Anatomy of the Mental Personality*, Freud (2001: 03) described the id22 as the unknown and insular part of the human personality, and can only be described “as being all that the ego is not”. He continued to say that:

> We can come nearer to the id with images, and call it chaos, a cauldron of seething excitement... The laws of logic – above all, the law of contradiction – does not hold processes in the Id. Contradictory impulses exist side by side without neutralizing each other or drawing apart; at most they combine in compromise – formations under the overpowering economic pressure towards discharging their energy...In the Id there is nothing corresponding to the idea of time, no recognition

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22 Freud developed three structural elements, the *id*, the *ego* and the *super ego*, which is integrated alongside the conscious (*Cs*), perception conscious (*Pcs*) and the unconscious (*Ucs*) in the mental apparatus.
of the passage of time, and no alteration of mental processes by the passage of time.

Similarly Breton substantiates contradiction, in his *Second Surrealist Manifesto* (1929):

> Everything leads us to believe that there exists a certain point of the mind which life and death, the real and the imaginary, past and future, the communicable and the incommunicable, the high and the low, cease to be perceived as contradictions. It would be in vain to see in surrealist activity any other motive than the hope of determining this point (as cited by Rosemont, 1978: 43)

Hence arguably the continuity disruptions can act as an inter-textual reference to Freudian theory that got applied to the film’s prologue, and subsequently aligned directly with the surrealist paradigm, as noted in Breton’s second manifesto.

**SCENE 2: *EIGHT YEARS LATER***

The second sequence of the film begins with the interstitial titles, *Eight years later*. This sequence is the longest of the film and runs for seven minutes and twenty five seconds, clearly establishing its narrative significance. The male protagonist, now Pierre Batcheff, is introduced for the first time.

The following sequence indicates how Buñuel used free association, a prominent surrealist characteristic, to cut between the interior, where majority of the scene takes place, and the exterior where a woman is standing in the road surrounded by a crowd. Buñuel fuses a pair of images by means of cross-dissolves and as Williams (1992: 79) notes, forms a metaphoric series “progression of similar shapes deviously [that] links the contiguous space between apartment and street, leading first away from and then back to the diegesis”. Drummond (1994: xxi) comments, “these are images that the film has not prepared us for, and which introduce a geographic location which is difficult to construe (the seashore?)”. The images can be re-contextualised in the later beach scene, however these “anticipations themselves do not reappear” (ibid). Aranda (1975: 64) quotes Dali:

> The reconstructed dream arises from the critical paranoia (which)...is based in the critical and systematic objectivization of mad associations and interpretations.

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23 Ezra (2000: 30) notes that dissolves in early cinema bears strong connections with “magic lantern displays, where they were used for their trick effect to ensure the smooth transition between images”. These early techniques where adopted from the early nineteenth century theatrical strategies theatrical strategies, “illusionistic devices such as multiple or conflicting perspectives or the doubling of the actor” (Adamowicz, 2010: 40).
Adamowicz (2010: 42) expands regarding Dali’s critical paranoia, contextualising the spectator with the film:

This ambivalence of the viewer can be linked to Dali’s paranoia-criticism, in which the viewer is simultaneously actor and spectator, both involved in the events and critically detached from the narrative.

At first the images appear to have nothing in common with one another, however on closer inspection – and by paying special attention to the composition of the images in this particular sequence – a possible interpretation of intent can be drawn. Buñuel introduces two images (figure 5.19 and 5.20) to act as the bridge between the interior and the exterior scenes. The form of these images is stripped from their history, in the Barthian sense, in order to signify a different concept by means of particular cinematic techniques. Eisenstein (1986: 19) notes that the understanding of montage involves the understanding that “each piece of montage exists no longer as something unrelated, but as a given particular representation of the general theme that in equal measure penetrates all the shot-pieces”.

In the case of this sequence, figure 5.13, is mimicked by the form of figure 5.14. Conversely the form of figure 5.15 mimics figure 5.14 and finally the form of figure 5.15 introduce the sequence as seen in figure 5.16.

Buñuel makes use of very similar cinematic techniques in this sequence, and all four images share the same qualities, except in the case of figure 5.16. The frames in all the images are closed by means of shot distance. Figure 5.13 through to 5.15 are represented by means of close-up shots. Hence the signification of the images is bound

24 This particular image bears strong reference to a poem Dali wrote in 1929: “Why, after going around picking up cork crumbs from the ground, did I end up with a hole in the middle of my hand, filled with a compact and teeming anthill that I try to scoop out with a spoon?” (Dali 1998: 81).
to the frame, their form re-contextualised by means of juxtaposition and displacement, which is enforced by the use of cross-dissolves.

Figures 5.13 and 5.14 share similar qualities regarding the use of line, shot length and angle. Both images are composed in such a manner that strong diagonal lines are created from the top left hand corner to the bottom right hand corner of the frame. Also the form of the ants crawling in the male protagonist’s hand (figure 5.13) is mimicked by the sunbather’s armpit (figure 5.14). The similarities in the composition and the cross-dissolve between these images are reiterated throughout this sequence, binding the sequence as a singular unit to signify a transition in space.

![Figure 5.15: Un Chien Andalou](image1)

![Figure 5.16: Un Chien Andalou](image2)

The relationship between figure 5.14 and 5.15 is a little more abstract in comparison to the previous relationship (figure 5.13 and 5.14). Again both images share the same compositional qualities, however the semiotic relationship is harder to interpret. The position of the sea urchin in figure 5.15 is almost identical to the position of the sunbather’s armpit in the frame. The shape and position of a single footprint in figure 5.15 resembles the sunbather’s face seen in figure 5.14. Both images are divided into two dominant parts; the armpit and the sunbather’s face in figure 5.14 and the sea urchin and the footprint in figure 5.15. Looking at these two images side by side, it becomes clear that figure 5.15 connotes figure 5.14.

The relationship between figure 5.15 and 5.16 is similar to the relationship of figures 5.13 and 5.14 in the sense that the form in the images share similar qualities. The circular form of the sea urchin and the image of the woman within the circular vignette create a strong correspondence between the two images. The spatial arrangement of the elements in the two images is exactly the same. The urchin’s position and the image of the woman are both placed slightly off centre towards the left. The contrast between the two images is quite interesting; it appears that figure 5.16 is the negative image of 5.15.
Figure 5.16 is the only image that is a long shot and the use of a high angle is constant throughout the sequence. Furthermore, image 5.16 is the only image that has a very strong vignette that masks the rest of the frame, emphasising the circular shape of the sea urchin.

Typically the use of a mask around the image, named an iris shot, is used to promote narrative. Dick (2010: 78) comments that, “the iris and the fade imply finality in different ways – the iris gradually and poetically; the fade, irrevocably”. The opening of the iris then, as seen in figure 5.16, implies the gradual start of a new sequence. Also Buñuel makes use of the mask to further emphasise the woman and the severed hand. Arguably one could state that figures 5.14 and 5.15 acts as a transition between the interior and the exterior scenes, by means of free association.

Figure 5.17: *Un Chien Andalou*

The rest of the sequence will not be analysed but a quick parallel will be drawn to a later image in the street sequence, as seen in figure 5.17. Here Buñuel reintroduces the circular placement of elements in the frame as used in figure 5.16, and to some extent re-contextualises figure 5.15. Buñuel continues to use the circular compositional arrangement of elements in figure 5.17. Again, the high angle is used, however with the combination of a long shot, the elements start to signify on two orders of signification.

The first order denotes the image as a group of onlookers standing around the woman in the street. Here Buñuel filmed it from this angle to convey the idea that the two main characters are overlooking this scene from above.
Secondly, the choice of focal length and camera angle allows for the image to signify on the second order of signification. Here the form of the elements gets connoted with the ideological characteristics of Surrealism. Aranda (1975: 65) notes:

The high angle shot in which we see the young androgyne in the street, prodding the severed hand with a stick and surrounded by a circle of onlookers, might recall the recherché [sought] plastic effects of German Expressionism and is certainly a Surrealist image of anal fixation; yet it is shot in this way because it [is] justified and called for by the preceding shot in which the antagonists look down out of the window, seeing the scene from exactly the camera’s point of view.

Buñuel made use of free association, a characteristic of surrealist painting known as peintres [typical painters] as defined by the modernist understanding of the practise, who “worked improvisationally with primarily biomorphic shapes in a shallow, Cubist-derived space” (Rubin, 1968: 64). Furthermore, this leads to a disruption within the narrative as these images where used to act as a metaphoric bridge between two spaces. Adamowicz (2010: 37) comments:

Repetition and serialization are examples of associative play, which impede or displace diegetic development by introducing circular or lateral associations (as in Benjamin Péret’s poetry, much admired by Buñuel and Dali). Rather than matches on action which ensure a coherent narrative development between shots, graphic matches dominate in these associations, linking the images formally rather than diegetically, through cuts (moon to eye) or dissolves (body hair to sea-urchin), suggesting a poetic structure in which visual rhyming conflicts with the development of a linear narrative.

The use of objects away from their customary environments and recombined with other objects by means of montage in order to form new relationships (as in the prologue), deliberately disrupt the continuity, to cause narrative disorientation. Disorientation was developed as a surrealist game called, “research on the irrational knowledge of the object” (in Williams, 1992: 12). The aim was to separate an object from its “functional connection to a context in order to create new associations emanating from the concrete identity of the thing itself” (Williams, 1992: 12) resulting in the deconstruction of space. In the case of this sequence, the new associations are made with metaphoric intention to link two spaces by means of free associated images, instead of merely using a cut. Max Aub (in Adamowicz, 2010: 43) quotes Buñuel:

It doesn’t make sense to refer to a lack of logical links in Un Chien Andalou [...] It’s simply a surrealist film in which images, sequences, follow on from each other according to a logical order, whose expression depends on the unconscious, which has naturally got its own order.
Buñuel comments that the narrative of the film follows the logic of dreams, hence in the case of scene two, the insertion of the metaphoric transition allows for the logic of dreams to take over where overt coherent narrative fails.

**SCENE 3: AROUND 3 O’CLOCK**

The third sequence is indicated with the interstitial title, *Around 3 o’clock in the morning*, and has a short running time of one minute and twenty three seconds. Buñuel introduces a new character, referred to by scholars as ‘the stranger’, who assumes the role of the antagonist. Throughout the sequence the stranger’s back is turned to the camera; the audience never sees his face. However his actions indicate an authoritarian role, either father or teacher. Williams (1992: 92) suggests that the stranger’s actions correspond with Freud’s concept of the super-ego, “a censuring agent of self-observation that measure the self against a social ideal”. However this interpretation only becomes apparent in the next scene when Buñuel reveals the stranger’s identity as the protagonist’s double.

![Figure 5.18: Un Chien Andalou](image1)

![Figure 5.19: Un Chien Andalou](image2)

Furthermore, as figures 5.18 and 5.19 indicate, the stranger’s role in the scene, as Williams (1992: 94) suggests becomes “a threat to the cyclist’s tenuous sexual equilibrium”, as he rips the fetish garments from the cyclist and hurls them out the window (figures 5.20 and 5.21). Furthermore, Williams (ibid) notes that “it is as if the cyclist has retreated to this infantile stage to protect himself from the stranger’s feared punishment: castration”, seen in figures 5.18 and 5.19. Buñuel makes use of predominantly medium close-up and medium shots to indicate the stranger’s authority, indicated in figures 5.20 and 5.21.

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25 For the sake of clarity, the researcher must note that the male protagonist may also be named ‘the cyclist’ as this is how the protagonist is introduced in the film.
This sequence signifies stages of a disciplinary process, from confrontation (figures 5.18 and 5.21), confiscation (figures 5.20 and 5.21) and finally punishment (figure 5.22) of the protagonist's sexual orientation by means of castration (see Williams, 1992: 94). The predominant use of close-up and medium shots amplifies the tension between the two characters; authoritarian and outlaw, teacher and student, father and son.

In figure 5.18 Buñuel makes use of a point of view filmed from the stranger’s perspective to show the male protagonist’s submissive position in contrast to the dominant authority of the stranger. The tight framing of the image as well as the strong triangular compositional arrangement emphasises the cyclist’s submission. The diagonal lines of the wooden box lead the viewer’s eye to the protagonist’s direct gaze into camera, emphasising the tension between them. The direct gaze also acknowledges the audience. It is similar in effect to the woman’s gaze in the prologue, resulting in the audience being directly addressed and implicated in this confrontation.

The use of light in this scene, obviously at night, is much darker than the rest of the film, suggesting a possible inner conflict in the character in line with Williams’ Freudian interpretation. The strong contrast between highlights and shadow on the male protagonist’s face signify this struggle between the sexual orientation and the super-ego.

Figure 5.19 further underlines the stranger’s authority with the use of a medium shot along with a strong triangular compositional arrangement of form. The stranger’s stance is confrontational.

As the protagonist is stripped of his fetish garments, as seen in figures 2.20 and 2.21, Buñuel makes use of a long shot to contextualise the stripping (figure 2.20). The significance of figure 2.20, within the scene become clearer as it is the only long shot in this scene. In terms of narration this particular shot length is crucial, as it reaffirms the space in which the action is taking place. It breaks the rhythm of the sequence of

Figure 5.20: Un Chien Andalou  Figure 5.21: Un Chien Andalou
medium and close-up shots but also distances the viewer from the confrontation. The distancing, due to the informative communication quality of the long shot, between the viewer and action inversely confirms the reality of the protagonist’s fear, his castration.

Regarding the flow of narration the long shot informs the succeeding actions of the stranger. The window in the composition looms to fill half the screen, an emphasis, which assists the viewer to expect that the garments will get hurled onto the street.

Buñuel continues to use a series of close-up and medium close-up shots, (as seen in figure 5.21), for the remainder of the scene. Again the use of the close-up, similar to the long shot in figure 5.20, drives the narrative and communicates the significance of the action.

The first close-up to follow is the disposal of the garments as seen in figure 5.21. Here Buñuel makes use of the close-up to stress the action by drawing closer to the reality of the protagonist’s punishment. The close-up stresses the action of disposal of fetish desires, the window enables this, hence its importance in the frame.

The compositional arrangement of the elements within the open frame signifies the rigidity of this character. The frame is divided in three rectangular shapes of unequal width; to the left the character, the open space of night sky in the centre, and the window frame to the right.

The clever use of side lighting enables the stranger’s identity to remain hidden.

Finally, the stranger punishes the protagonist by instructing him to stand facing the wall, arms uplifted (figure 5.22). He doesn’t choose to use the tennis racquet to defend himself, unlike the woman protagonist who defended herself with it against her attacker.
Buñuel's used a medium close-up in figure 5.22 to portray the protagonist's defeat by authority. The tight framing of the image along with the shallow depth of the geographical and depth planes denotes the protagonist's punishment. Furthermore, the direct backlight casts a large, concentrated shadow on the wall, emphasising the limited depth in the image.

The tennis racquet, together with the sailor’s cap, hangs where it was when the woman used it in her defence. Strong triangular shapes lent by the tennis racquet press are replicated by the triangular crook of the protagonists arm as well as by the limb’s shadow on the wall. The triangles symbolise female genitalia and the shaft of the racquet the engaged male phallus that, together with the sailor's cap, signify a male dominated culture. This contrasts with the attitude of surrender implied by the raised hands of the protagonist who has been emasculated and stripped of his female garments. Furthermore, the Christ-like shadow falls on the same geographical plane as the wall mounted tennis racquet and causes tension within the equally divided frame.

In this scene Buñuel makes use of very standard cinematic techniques to comment on the domination of the stranger over the male protagonist. However, Buñuel mainly makes use of close-ups to build the tension between the two characters and plays with the visual rhythm quite effectively to emphasise this tension.

Scholars have argued that Un Chien Andalou (1929) was about the edit, concentrating more on the visual, and using the music to merely accompany the visuals rhythmically, instead of using it as an “intellectual discovery” (Aranda, 1975: 83). Richardson (2006: 28) however, in commenting on the rhythm of the film, noted that, like “silent comedies
which are held together not by the editing (as impressive as it may be) but by timing: *Un Chien Andalou* is probably the most well-paced film in the history of cinema”.

Furthermore, the characters’ gestures in this sequence signify the conflict between them, as Richardson notes by quoting Král who emphasises that *Un Chien Andalou* (1929) does not draw its power from symbols but, “again like burlesque comedy, from gestures, which often assume an insolent form” (2006: 29).

On the second semiotic order, Buñuel draws strong conceptual similarities to surrealist paradigms, by commenting on the domination of the super-ego (morality) and the id (desire). The male protagonist undergoes different stages of discipline, as enforced by his authoritarian self, stripping desire and replacing it with moral conformity.

Arguably Buñuel commented on his own experience of a Catholic26 upbringing, a theme that runs throughout his film career. Subsequently the rejection of authority (religion, culture, state) would become a prominent theme within Surrealism.

**SCENE 4: SIXTEEN YEARS AGO**

The continuation of the third scene is interrupted by the fourth interstitial title, *Sixteen years ago*. This scene has a duration of four minutes and fifty seconds and is the second longest of the film. It is comprised of three dominant sequences; the death of the stranger, the female protagonist’s realisation regarding the male protagonist and, finally, her leaving to meet a lover along the seashore.

The analysis of this scene will focus on the stranger’s death, as this sequence contains particular cinematic techniques; slow motion and strong grain qualities (figure 5.25), the disruption of narrative time and space (figure 5.26) and the use of cross-dissolves for effect (figure 5.29).

Williams argues that the stranger, who in this scene assumes the identity as the male protagonist, represents the male protagonist’s super-ego. A power struggle occurs as the books that the super-ego gave to the male protagonist change into two revolvers (not shown here); arguably a reference made by Breton in the second manifesto.27 The result

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26 Adamowicz (2010: 65) notes that the film contains several "satirical allusions to Catholic iconography. The severed hand, for instance, recalls medieval paintings of Christ’s Passion; the male protagonist’s outstretched arms holding books / guns allude to the Crucifixion of Christ; the hand crawling with ants suggests the stigmata, de-sublimated in an image of decomposing flesh; the striped box with its fetish contents is handled like a mock reliquary”.

27 “The simplest Surrealist act consists in going, pistol in hand, down into the street and shooting at random, for as long as one can, into the crowd” (in Durozoi, 2002: 189).
of this sequence is significant seen within a Freudian paradigm. The death of the super-ego allows a display of desire without interference. Williams (1992: 94) notes:

Though the death of the super-ego frees the cyclist from the social forces that have attempted to sublimate his sexual energy, it also leaves him insufficiently socialized and, as far as the woman is concerned, irrelevant.

![Figure 5.23: Un Chien Andalou](image)

Figure 5.23 illustrates a close-up shot of the pistols firing. Buñuel uses a particularly obscure camera angle for this image, breaking the traditional conventions in terms of camera placement. He places the camera towards the right of the frame, with the result that the pistols face towards the upper left of the frame. Traditionally the camera would be placed towards the left of the subject (see figure 5.23 as reference), thus the pistols points towards the right of the frame. Breaking what is known as the 180-degree rule causes a disturbance in screen direction. Hence Buñuel subtly interferes with the reading of the sequence by simply changing the pistols aim in order to cause a deliberate cognitive dissonance.

The close-up emphasises the pistols and draws the viewer closer to the action. Furthermore, the tight off-centre framing of the pistols and the lack of negative space creates a strong tension between the objects and the frame. The conscious use of the frame and the shot focal length and the triangular compositional arrangement signify the reality of the stranger; death becomes inevitable.

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28 The reproduction of this image does not make it clear that the man is holding two pistols.
In figure 5.25 Buñuel employs slow motion to illustrate the super-ego’s death. Typically slow motion is used to “create a dream-like impression... or to create an intense emotional feeling” (van Nierop, 1998: 47). Buñuel juxtaposes the slowness of the super-ego’s death with the rapidity of the gunfire, romanticising the death of the super-ego.

Moreover, the image contains far more noticeable grain typically associated with old black-and-white documentary and newsreel films. The striking amount of grain, the probable result of a higher frame rate, causes the image resolution to drop, noticeably affecting the sharpness of the image, hence the soft haze across the image.

The off-centre framing accentuates the disturbance in the screen direction used in figure 5.24 and allows the stranger space to fall. Once again the contrast between figure 5.24 and 5.25 becomes notable; the super-ego will be murdered (figure 5.24) however by simply shifting the frame (as seen in figure 5.25) the super-ego is allowed the space to fall freely. Williams (1992: 94) notes that the “film for once lets a passion play itself out”.

As the super-ego falls in the room, Buñuel places him in a meadow (figure 5.26), once again manipulating space without contextualising it. The framing and composition is almost identical, even to the use of light. Clever framing makes the transition almost seamless, as if it ought to be expected to happen. The background woodland, dark with
limited highlights, becomes neutral, mimicking the background of figure 5.25. The slightly lower camera angle allows for the stranger to collapse with enough space, so that the viewer can register what is happening. The lower angle of the image still signifies the stranger’s authoritarian dominance but simultaneously exaggerates the fall of the super-ego.

As with the third scene (figure 5.20) Buñuel introduces a long shot for the first time (figure 5.27). Here he establishes the scene in which the stranger falls, introduces a female figure symbolising desire, and finally moves to the start of a quiet sequence. Williams (1992:94) explains:

In the only restful moment in the entire film, the claustrophobic and intense enigmas of the male-female sexual games give way here to an irrelevant denouncement - a man dies in a field and a group of strangers discover and carry off his body in a series of “epic” long shots, at the end of which they all disappear.

The stranger’s final resting place reflects the poetic quality of his death (figure 5.29); a peaceful meadow next to a body of water surrounded by trees. Again Buñuel frames the image in such a way that the two characters are placed in the middle of the frame, alluding to the expansiveness of the surroundings.

A quick cut to a medium close-up shot (figure 5.28) is made to show the stranger’s hand desperately grasping for, but never possessing, the woman. The composition showing only the stranger’s hands on the woman’s back accentuates his final desperate and futile attempt to hold on, to satisfy his desire, and to escape the loneliness of death. The use of lower contrast lighting in the foreground lends a dream-like element to the image, the woman shimmers like a mirage, a desirable but unreachable. In contrast, the foliage in the background is darker and with greater contrast, emphasising the female figure. The framing of this image does not allow for the woman to react to his longing even though the frame is open, she faces the edge of the frame and is looking downwards.
As the super-ego dies, the woman fades away, leaving the corpse in the meadow (figure 5.29). Williams (1992: 94) refers to this as the “fleeting image of desire: another instance of the interdependence of passion and death”. The stranger lies face down on the lower third of the frame, opening the frame to view the background. Suddenly the emptiness (from both desire and death) is amplified by the long shot, with the slightly high camera angle indicating his defeat. The higher contrast in the image causes the corpse to blend in with the meadow, foreshadowing his return to nature.

Buñuel commented that *Un Chien Andalou* (1929) was a “desperate call to murder” (in Richardson, 2006: 43). In contrast to the previous scene, Buñuel allows the id to be released, a continuous aspiration within the surrealist paradigm. The schoolbooks (symbols of domination and control) that the authoritarian gave the protagonist become revolvers (symbols of revolution and lawlessness, but also of rough justice, used by enforcers of law). If indeed *Un Chien Andalou* (1929) was “a desperate call to murder” it would be in the context of his growing to adulthood in Spain. Buñuel (1984: 11) wrote: “Death [...] along with profound religious faith and the awakening of sexuality constituted the dominating force of my adolescence”.

Buñuel uses slow motion and shrewd editing techniques to disorient the viewer by manipulating the rhythm of the sequence as well as distorting the viewer’s sense of filmic space. Matthews suggests that Buñuel constantly challenges the viewer’s conclusions throughout the film. In this sequence, as Matthews (1971: 89) notes, “spectators of every persuasion are allowed plenty of time to interpret the climax to this sequence in their own way” as the stranger falls in slow motion. Yet, Buñuel forces audience members to reconsider their conclusions “as they discover that, by the time he has finished falling, the man is no longer in the room where he was shot,” (ibid). Matthews (1971: 89) concludes that:

> Throughout *Un Chien Andalou* the pattern is the same... Everything conspires to disorient the audience and undermine the confidence in their ability to handle the material this movie assembles.

Buñuel uses this scene to react against typical authoritarianism as deployed by institutional paradigms such as culture and religion. In contrast to the previous scene the super-ego’s attitude has changed from authoritative to compassionate, father-figure-becomes-mother.

The break in continuity of the scene by means of the interstitial title *Sixteen years ago* disrupts both the narrative and an audience member’s sense of time alluding that the
Scene is separate to the previous scene even though the scene reads as continuous. Drummond (1994: xx) points out that the inclusion of the interstitial title during the male protagonist’s confrontation with his double - rather than initiating a new scene, points “to the irregularity of this form of segmentation in the film as a whole”. He adds that the “prepossessing intrusion of the ‘double’ is thus contextualised in retrospect29 as no more than a momentary displacement of the central character-axis”.

SCENE 5: IN SPRING

The last sequence, the epilogue, indicated by an interstitial title, In Spring consists of a still image of two acquaintances buried chest deep in sand. It runs for twenty seconds, then fades to black. It is the film’s shortest scene.

![Figure 5.30: Un Chien Andalou](image)

The acquaintances, the female protagonist and her new lover, are in a desert, and is the closing image of the film. In contrast to the prologue’s fairy tale introduction as Once upon a time, the epilogue’s interstitial title is called In Spring. The image is quite the opposite of a fairy tale ending of living happily ever after. The interstitial text is ironic, mocking rebirth, fertility and energy (see Williams 1992: 99). Furthermore, the final image, as with the prologue is totally deprived of “logical connection and explanation within the body of the film” (Drummond, 1994: xx).

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29 Drummond (1994: xx) notes that ‘the ‘prologue’ is extremely difficult to read as an introduction to the film, while the later segment which follows on from the death of the male protagonist’s ‘double’, focusing attention for some time on his cortège, appears to be about to close the film, only for the film to promptly start again”.

83
The closed frame consists of the two acquaintances buried chest deep in the sand, with their eyes gouged out. She looks up at the sun and he down at the sand, seeing nothing. The composition of the image is unbalanced, with the woman placed towards the left of the frame and the man in the centre.

The image is its unnaturally still. Unlike the rest of the film there is no violence, but their eye sockets are hollow and they are eaten by insects. Williams (1992: 99) suggests that this “worn down, exhausted image of death” refers to the previous element of blindness/castration but simultaneously makes a new Freudian inspired suggestion of returning to the womb, and a reference from TS Eliot’s Waste Land. Moreover, as Koller (2001a) notes this particular image of the lovers buried is a clear visual reference to Fritz Lang's Destiny (1921), a film Buñuel saw when he first arrived in France, and subsequently inspired him to make films (see Brandon, 1999: 301).

Buñuel uses the final image to conclude and reiterate the film’s opening scene playing on the metaphor of blindness. The opening scene ensures physical blindness by cutting the of the eye, yet also provokes a new way of seeing. The final image echoes death as the final and permanent form of blindness, from which no further vision follows.

5.3 CHAPTER SUMMARY

This chapter discussed Buñuel's Un Chien Andalou (1929) by means of a close reading of the film. The analysis looked at specific sequences and images from the film's five scenes. These chosen sequences and images were delimited to key sequences and images.

The outcome of this analysis has shown that Buñuel employed "conventional cinematography, optical realism and narrative to invite identification, in order to make the misappropriation and rupture of these techniques all the more shocking" (in Carstens, 2009: 22). These standard cinematic techniques of the 1920's were adopted and subverted then appropriated to fit within the surrealist paradigm, the work being

30 The researcher should add that although these details are noted in the screenplay, the digital copy used to analyse the film does not depict these details clearly. The eyes simply look dark and hollow. Furthermore, it cannot be stated with confidence that the man in the final image is the same man from the beach scene, although the screenplay so indicates.

31 Freud (1919: 20) stated in his essay The Uncanny that dreams of burial often express the desire to return to the womb. Furthermore Freud states that no “bodily injury is so much dreaded as an injury to the eye” (1919: 7).

32 “There I saw one I knew, and stopped him, crying: 'Stetson!' /'You who were with me in the ships at Mylae! /That corpse you planted last year in your garden,/Has it begun to sprout?/Will it bloom this year?” (Eliot, 1922).
underpinned by Freudian theory and strong Spanish cultural references. Buñuel and Dali conceived the screenplay by employing free association, a common practice in Surrealism, manipulated the notion of time and space by means of montage editing techniques by introducing spatio-temporal inconsistencies (of which the interstitial titles are prime example) disorientating the viewer and subsequently echoing the dream state. Furthermore, Buñuel exploited the close-up\textsuperscript{33} shot that competes with the development of the narrative, again causing disorientation, and he also made use of free association images to transition between scenes. Although no factual information of the specific technologies available to Buñuel are known, the researcher have found that the cinematic techniques employed by Buñuel in Un Chien Andalou (1929) was a pertinent cause in the ‘transgression’ and ‘alienation’ of this film, particularly relating to the editing techniques. Thus the researcher cannot conclude, with confidence, whether the ‘transgression’ and ‘alienation’ are directly contributed by the technologies available to Buñuel.

The film analysis highlighted key cinematic techniques used by Buñuel. Some of the technical pivots in which Un Chien Andalou (1929) hinged upon are as follows:

The use of non-linear space, along with image juxtaposition and displacement to entice a sense of disorientation. The use of particular cinematic techniques such as dissolves and jump cuts, slow motion and grain, camera angles and compositions that emphasise the graphic presence of the film frame all of which contribute to create a surreal image.

The use of compositional arrangements of shapes to act as a metaphoric series in order to communicate a transition of free associations.

The use of specific cultural, religious and sexual symbols that produces specific meaning in a particular context that reiterates surrealist ideals and simultaneously characterises Buñuel as a surrealist filmmaker.

The next chapter discusses the application of the above-mentioned techniques in the case study Facebrick (2012).

\textsuperscript{33}Adamowicz (2010: 38) describes the close-up shot to be “a fragment that cannot be fully incorporated into a coherent narrative, and as a filmic element relatively free from the syntagmatic context, the close-up acquires a powerful material and semantic intensity”.
CHAPTER 6

6.1 INTRODUCTION
Important cinematic techniques used by Buñuel in the making of _Un Chien Andalou_ (1929) were appropriated in the production of a contemporary short film by the researcher, called _Facebrick_ (2012), which will be analysed in this chapter. It will be examined scene-by-scene using the methodology outlined in Chapter Three. A brief overview of the development of the screenplay and the technologies used will give context to the case study. Cinematic techniques such as the disruption of time and space, the inclusion of archetypal symbols and the use of free association characterise both films.

6.2 BACKGROUND TO _FACEBRICK_ (2012)
The production of _Facebrick_ (2012) made use of modern digital filmmaking technology and editing processes, as opposed to the analogue filmmaking processes available to Buñuel. The footage for _Facebrick_ (2012) was captured in colour, using spherical lenses. However, due to the nature of Digital Single Lens Reflex (DSLR) technology, the sensor captured an anamorphic image at a 16:9 ratio, with a resolution of 1920x1080 at 30fps (frames per second). The footage was converted to a frame rate of 25fps and digitally translated to black and white. Finally, scanned 35mm grain was overlaid in order to give the digital footage an authentic celluloid appearance.

The scripting of the film explores narrative and was guided by the semantic structures found in _Un Chien Andalou_ (1929). The narrative prescribes to a surrealist approach and it generates symbolic meaning through the content and the use of particular cinematic techniques, with especial attention being paid to spatio-temporal disruption. In accordance with a fundamental precept of Surrealism, _Facebrick_ (2012) aims to “postulate a return to the irrational and to the magic of dreams as a means of revelation and personal (hence social) liberation” (Vogel, 2005: 46). This concept of ‘dream’ is suggested by the displacement of objects from their expected context. Objects are transformed into ‘surrealist objects’ and it is this irrational representation of reality, which gives the film its clearest surrealist characteristic, the element of shock.

Unlike _Un Chien Andalou_ (1929) the screenplay for _Facebrick_ (2012) was not developed using free association writing techniques. However the visual development, or shot list, of _Facebrick_ (2012) employed an approach similar to that used in the making of _Un
Chien Andalou (1929), using a less linear structure to direct the visual narrative. Essentially Facebrick (2012) consists of two juxtaposed narratives that converge at some points. The first is the linear first person narrative of the main character describing his experience of speculating on (or ‘gazing’ into) the lives of three individuals. He is uninvolved with them, which makes his observations wholly subjective. This narrative is conveyed by means of a voice-over as an omniscient narrator.

The second narrative is conveyed visually. The visual narrative is juxtaposed against that which is heard. More explicitly, the aural imagery distracts from, or is out of sync with, what is presented in the visuals – creating a dislocation between the aural and visual. The visual narrative still communicates the ‘gaze’ of the observing main character, and by extension the audience, as a thematic element, it is however how it is represented that creates subversion. In contrast, the narrative delivery introduces the characters from a different, more objective – one unfazed by the imagination of the narrator – perspective and ignores the narrated dictation, causing conflict between the visual and aural storylines.

The aim of the conflict and discordance between the film’s aural and visual narratives is the intention to jar the viewer into not just thinking about the human condition but perhaps doing something about it. If a desire to effect social change is unlocked in the viewer it would demonstrate how film can bridge the gap between life and art. As Vogel (2005, 120) argues, to be able to use film as an effective tool to initiate social change, art itself must be denounced as a “bourgeois deception”, thus echoing the surrealist ideology.

The film incorporates Sartre’s notion of the ‘gaze’, which subsequently appeared as a thematic element in Surrealism34 and was also prominent in the prologue of Un Chien Andalou (1929). However, in contrast to Un Chien Andalou (1929), Facebrick (2012) does not urge the viewer to gaze differently in order to accept the poetic narrative. Rather, it is a comment on the notion of ‘gaze’ as part of looking. Sartre (in Wollen, 2007: 96) explains why the gaze is disturbing: “This is because to perceive is to look at, and to apprehend a look is not to apprehend a look-as-object in the world (unless the look is not directed upon us); it is to be conscious of being looked at”. Furthermore, Jean Goudal (1978: 357) notes:

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34 Adamowicz (2010: 69) notes that, “ambivalence is attached to the image of the eye throughout surrealist iconography and thought”.

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In the cinema, as in the dream, the fact is complete master. Abstraction has no rights. No explanation is needed to justify the heroes’ actions. One event follows another, seeking justification in itself alone. They follow each other with such rapidity that we barely have time to call to mind the logical commentary that would explain them, or at least connect them... These moving images delude us, by leaving us with confused awareness of our own personality and by allowing us to evoke, if necessary, the resources of our memory.

None of the characters in *Un Chien Andalou* (1929) have names. Roger Ebert (2000) argues that this element has significance and that it has a parallel in Sartre’s gaze theory:

> While looking at *Un Chien Andalou*, it is useful to look with equal attention at ourselves as we watch the movie. We assume it is the ‘story’ of the people in the film – these men, these women, these events. But what if the people are not protagonists but merely models – simply actors hired to represent people performing certain actions? We know that the car at the auto show does not belong to (and was not designed or built by) the model in the bathing suit who points to it. Buñuel might argue that his actors have a similar relationship to the events surrounding them.

Although this study focuses predominantly on cinematic techniques relating to the image, the use of sound in *Facebrick* (2012) bears conceptual significance, and makes use of similar surrealist characteristics such as juxtaposition and displacement to cause disorientation. The use of sound in cinema acts as a powerful signifier, and as Metz (see Stam et al, 2002: 37) suggests occupies three of the five cinematic tracks\(^{35}\). Although the technology available to Buñuel only allowed him to employ a recorded musical sound, as sound technology to record phonetic sound and environmental noises were only developed in 1930, he did embrace the use of sound in his next production *L’Age D’Or* (1930).

Buñuel’s use of this new sound technology included almost every element one would find in a modern soundtrack, “interior monologue, overlapping and distorted sound, recurrent aural leitmotifs, appropriate music intensifying what is happening on the screen and deliberately inappropriate music producing dissociation from it” (Taylor, 1964: 86). Similar to Buñuel, who used audio to disassociate the viewer in *L’Age D’Or*

\(^{35}\) Metz (Stam et al, 2002: 37) describes these tracks to be part of cinema’s matter of expression and are: the “moving photographic image, recorded phonetic sound, recorded noises, recorded musical sound, and writing (credits, interstitial titles, written materials in the shot)".
(1930) in the same way he used subtitles in *Un Chien Andalou* (1929), *Facebrick* (2012) deliberately juxtaposes the recorded noises to the images.

Monaco (1977: 181) informs us of the persuasive qualities of sound as it acts "to realise both time and space". He goes on to say that "sound also actualises time" (ibid).

*Facebrick* (2012) explores Monaco's notion that sound can be used to disrupt the spatio-temporal, by juxtaposing recorded noise to the image. Similar to Buñuel's use of both synchronous (sound that has its source inside the frame) and asynchronous (source of sound is outside the frame) sound techniques, in *L'Age D'Or* (1930), *Facebrick* (2012) utilises the same techniques to disrupt the spatio-temporal narrative arrangements. Synchronous and asynchronous sound further emphasise an open form and closed form composition.

Aranda (1975: 83) suggests Buñuel's use of the soundtrack in *L'Age D'Or* (1930) as "being the most important in this first stage of sound films". Furthermore his use of image-sound was a concise practical example of the theoretical counterpoint put forward by Eisenstein, Pudovkin and Alexandrov in their famous *Manifesto on Cinema Sound* (1928). Despite their initial objections, subsequently all three Soviet directors made use of the sound technology as soon as 1930. It is uncertain whether Buñuel was familiar with the manifesto, but as Aranda (1975: 83) speculates, "it is possible that he applied the theory intuitively, with the help of the Surrealist experience of collage".

Aranda (1975: 83) describes the soundtrack to be a "matter of a scandalising counterpoint, which instead of making the visuals sweeter, makes them still more insolent".

Lastly, there is a need to unpack the 'experience' of the film – not just a viewer's experience on a subjective level, whether intellectual or emotional, but the cinematic experience of the film itself. This "converges with the perception of the point of dissolution that is simultaneously also a point of origin, defined by Breton as the supreme point" (Richardson, 2006: 9). The film screened in a darkened room simulates the dream and the intention is to provide the viewer with "an experience of otherness" (Richardson, 2006:9). The representation of the dream state is one of the key principles of surrealist film and the concept is an important underpinning of surrealist ideology. Effectively the cinematic experience will communicate a singular narrative-driven message to an individual, yet also project onto the collective. Richardson (see 2006: 9) states that the film was the point of convergence in which a collective myth, emanating from within the unconscious of society as a whole, can be enacted. It is therefore this
projected quality of cinema where an environment akin with the dream state is provided, and therefore acts as the link between cinema and the dream state. It must be noted that this ‘cinematic experience’ will only exist as part of the overall concept of the practical aspect and is not interrelated to the theoretical research problem.

6.3 ANALYSIS OF FACEBRICK (2012)

The narrative of Facebrick (2012) consists of a prologue and five scenes divided by interstitial titles36 namely:

there is you,

no one sleeps. no one, no one.;

there is no oblivion; no dream: only flesh exists...;

open the trapdoors so he can see in the moonlight;

and finally: they had just escaped a shipwreck of blood.

Contrary to Buñuel’s use of interstitial titles to indicate, “precise yet jumbled temporal markers” (Adamowicz, 2010: 34) for narrative disruption, the use of interstitial titles in Facebrick (2012) is to give poetic effect to the scene and function. They are artificial notices to a five-act story. However, these interstitial titles share an inability to “anchor the narrative and orient the spectator” (ibid). The result is disorientation. The interstitial titles lose conventional functional intent and are subverted to become instruments of artistic expression.

SCENE 1: PROLOGUE

The opening scene of Facebrick (2012) follows traditional film opening sequences by introducing the two key protagonists. However, it subverts the notion of establishing the film in spatio-temporal terms. From a technical perspective the opening scene inter-textually references sequences from Jim Jarmusch’s Mystery Train (1989) and Jean Luc Goddard’s Breathless (1960), the former with regard to the characters and the technical approach of tracking, the latter in disrupting the viewer’s sense of time and space by failing to establish relationships and motives.

36 These interstitial titles are selected extracts from various surrealist poems (n.d). They are, in order of appearance: Robert Desnos’ Sleep Spaces (1926); Garcia Lorca’s Sleepless City (1929-1930) and Garcia Lorca’s Dawn (1929-1930).
Furthermore, the opening scene disrupts the orderly flow of time as the voyeur receives a letter posted at the climax of the film, which occurs after a narrative span of a year, a point made by using jump cuts and by intercutting editing techniques between two sequences.

The large number of close-up shots in the opening scene reference Buñuel’s use of close-ups in *Un Chien Andalou* (1929) to compete with the narrative:

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Another instance of filmic strategies that compete with the development of the narrative is the large number of striking close-ups, which include the slashed eye, the severed hand, the hand with ants, the armpit hair, the death-head moth (Adamowicz, 2010: 38).
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The first four images denoting the male protagonist (figure 6.1- 6.5), illustrate Elza Adamowicz’s argument regarding the development of narrative. These images, although disorienting, act as powerful signifiers, drawing attention to particular characteristics of the man. Firstly, they denote his addiction to smoking and also connote his addiction to gazing as a source of pleasure. Adamowicz (2010: 38) notes that the close-up “acquires a powerful material and semantic intensity”. The opening image, seen in figure 6.1, references Buñuel’s close-up image (see figure 5.1 in *Un Chien Andalou* (1929), and similarly breaks with the notion of establishing a scene.

The viewer is presented with a tracking shot from left to right of a cigarette being removed from a silver cigarette case. A strong sense of line is used in the opening images, underlining the rectangular form of the frame and also establishing the graphical nature of the surrounds. Strong background horizontals draw attention to the action but do not detract from the important signifier. Use is made of each graphical

37 Sartre saw the gaze as the “battleground for the self to define and redefine itself; we become aware of our self as subject only when confronted with the gaze of the ‘Other’ and become aware of our self as object” (Reinhardt, n.d.).
element in the frame to strengthen the dominant signifier. The cigarette and the darker tonal values reinforce its importance.

A jump cut occurs to another open image seen in figure 6.2, an extreme close-up of the cigarette being tapped on the silver cigarette case with evident intent. The highlighted edge of the cigarette case, the vertical lines of the left hand and the diagonals of the right, focus attention on the image centre where the action occurs. The contrasts between white and shade are assembled to support this focus.

![Figure 6.3: Facebrick](image)

![Figure 6.4: Facebrick](image)

Figures 6.4 and 6.5 show how jump cuts and close-up shots can disorientate. At this point in the narrative two characters have been introduced, (figures 6.2-6.5) a female protagonist (not shown here) in addition to the man. Nothing aside from the male protagonist’s nicotine addiction has been established. The viewer does not know what his intentions are. The closed image, seen in figure 6.3 illustrates him smoking hurriedly, an action enhanced by the limited depth of field, the use of contrast and the central placement of his mouth, again the focus reinforced by a triangular arrangement of elements in the image.

Another jump cut occurs (figure 6.4) to a close-up of the man. The cut between the extreme close-up in figure 6.3 to the close-up in figure 6.4 emphasises the edit, as well as suggesting his urgency. Tension is built through a combination of close-up shots and jump cut editing. Figure 6.4 also contains a limited depth of field. Horizontal lines are more evident in the equally divided composition. The highlighted and shaded background areas mimic similar tonal patterns in the foreground reinforcing the form of the foreground.

**SCENE 2: THERE IS YOU**

Particularly effective in causing disorientation by disrupting the understanding of the spatio-temporal arrangements is the use of reoccurring signifiers within the image.
Facebrick (2012) utilises these reoccurring signifiers in a number of places within the narrative, some being palpably obvious and others occupying a subtler realm.

Figures 6.5 and 6.6 illustrate the use of reoccurring signifiers to disorient the viewer’s sense of space. In figures 6.7 and 6.8 these reoccurrences become more obvious. Moreover, the added combination of shot focal length and camera angles subvert the notion that the two sequences are in different spaces. The viewer is unsure as to whether or not the action is occurring in the same space or whether they are dreaming – a significant disorientation.

Figures 6.5 and 6.6 occur in the same space; in fact all the indoor scenes occur in the same space, it is simply the rearrangement of elements within the frame that suggest it to be otherwise. Figures 6.6 and 6.7 illustrate how the change of camera angle and shot focal length intentionally alludes to the action occurring in different spaces, yet certain signifiers suggest differently. As in theatre where sets are merely changed to represent space change, Facebrick (2012) uses the same technique, but within the surrealist paradigm, where such repetitious use if space generates dislocation and disorientation in the mind of the viewer. As such, a dream-state is induced. The following figures illustrate how repetition in various scenes achieves the creation of a ‘dream’.
In figure 6.5 the male protagonist is shown entering an area in which he is comfortable, his home and apartment - his headspace. The low-camera angle tracks backward as he approaches the apartment door. The dimly lit scene highlights limited signifiers within the image making the protagonist the main focal point. Most importantly the nature of the highlights on the corridor wall appear to be the same as those in a later sequence (illustrated in figure 6.6), indicating that both sequences share the same textural qualities. In contrast to figure 6.5, figure 6.6 illustrates another man walking down the same corridor (from scene four). However using a different camera angle as well as a different focal length to indicate the same action (occurs in scene four) a dislocation and disassociation is made in the mind of the viewer. The reversal of the camera angle and the longer focal length suggests the space in which the scene is taking place could differ to the sequence seen in figure 6.5. The key signifier to disorient the viewer’s sense of space is the recurrence of the number twelve, as illustrated in figures 6.7 and 6.8 (found in scene four).

The number first appears when the male protagonist enters the apartment, as seen in figure 6.7. The composition focuses the viewer’s attention on the opening of the door on the far right of the frame, yet allows the protagonist enough space to enter the apartment without any need for the frame to be adjusted. At first the number on the door has little significance. Conventionally a filmmaker would cut to a close-up shot to emphasise the signifier. However, in Facebrick (2012) the filmmaker cuts to two interior images, then completes the sequence with the door shutting in the corridor, thereby subtly emphasising the signifier without having to readjust the frame.

The importance of this number becomes apparent, through a later close-up, in scene four when the assassin knocks on the door, (see figure 6.8). Here the number is re-contextualised in a different scene, using spatial disruption to disorientate the viewer. Furthermore, the use of the same number causes a continuity disruption within the narrative, yet the realisation of this disruption is only made after it is revealed that the man inside the apartment is not the male protagonist. Drummond (1994: xxiii) commenting on the Un Chien Andalou (1929), notes that the film’s surrealist qualities is defined by “the material production of the film’s specific play of difference, contradiction and re-contextualisation”.

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38 This image is not illustrated here, however the composition of the mentioned image remains the same as in figure 6.12.
SCENE 3: NO ONE SLEEPS. NO ONE, NO ONE.

A key characteristic of *Un Chien Andalou* (1929) is Buñuel’s use of cultural, religious and sexual symbols39. Similarly *Facebrick* (2012) draws on these characteristics by including a range of religious, cultural and, to a lesser extent, sexual iconography, which will be discussed below. Many of the symbolic images in *Un Chien Andalou* (1929) were memories from Buñuel’s childhood:

> I also have always felt a secret but constant link between the sexual act and death. I’ve tried to translate this inexplicable feeling into images, as in *Un Chien Andalou* when the man caresses the woman’s bare breasts as his face slowly changes into a death mask. Surely the powerful sexual repression of my youth reinforces this connection (Buñuel 1984: 15).

Furthermore, many of the film’s qualities derive from Buñuel and Dali’s Spanish descent. Aranda (in Adamowicz 2010: 69) argues “the spatio-temporal disruptions can be linked to a specifically Spanish theatrical and narrative tradition, while he links the roots of the tactile quality of the images to traditional Spanish art”.

In *Facebrick* (2012) however, the iconography echoes multifaceted South African culture – both religious and indigenous. Scene Three of *Facebrick* (2012) incorporates a combination of indigenous African iconography, while also commenting on the strong influence of Western ideals on the South African indigenous cultures.

**Figure 6.9: Facebrick**

*Facebrick* (2012) makes satirical allusion to Catholic iconography. The breaking of the bread as seen in scene two (image not show here) refers to the Biblical miracle in which Jesus fed thousands of followers with five barley loaves and two fish; the obvious Catholic shrines found in the male protagonist’s apartment evoking feelings of guilt; the

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39 The use of these symbols became a key characteristic in Buñuel’s work in general, and subsequently a driving element of the surrealist paradigm as indicated by Breton in his manifesto.
constant appearance of fish (as company or food) as an early Christian symbol (figures 6.9 and 6.10); the statue of Jesus with the sacred heart (figure 6.16), later referenced in the death of the ego in scene four; the Madonna and Child statue, later decapitated as the male protagonist declines into irrationality in scene six – and later in the final sequence when a decapitated woman emerges from the waters of the unconscious.

Figures 6.9 to 6.11 are extracts from the third scene illustrating a sequence in which a woman prepares a fish for dinner yet when the food is served the fish has inexplicably transformed into a sheep's head. It is placed on a table next to a statue replica of Botticelli's painting entitled *Nascita di Venere* [The Birth of Venus] (1486).

In figure 6.9 the woman strokes the fish before removing the scales. The open image is shot from a high angle denoting that she is being watched, referencing Sartre's theory on the gaze. Her stroking action appears to be compassionate in intent, calming in effect, but the reality, as seen in figure 6.10, is the brutality of the knife, her brisk cutting imparting a tactile quality to the image. The triangular compositional arrangement of elements keeps the viewer's eye on the fish. Her arm, to the right of the frame, discourages distraction from what is going on. The tonal value of the image is even, hinting at a poetic or dream-like moment with the fish, invoking a sense of serenity within the viewer.

The serenity imparted by figure 6.9 is shattered in the following frame as she carves the fish. The extreme close-up forces the viewer to watch. The overall tonal value of the image becomes much darker.

Figures 6.10 and 6.11 denote the preparation of a meal of fish. An acknowledgement of religion has already been connoted (in figure 6.9), and a necessary rejection of religion

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40 In South Africa a sheep's head is colloquially known as a Smiley.

41 Here the tactile quality reiterates the Spanish tradition, a characteristic that does appear in Buñuel's work, making particular reference to Velazquez's tactile quality in his paintings (see Adamowicz, 2010: 68).
in figure 6.15 as a means of self-actualisation. In figure 6.11, the sheep’s head connotes this self-actualisation as cultural identity but it conflicts with the statue that represents Western influences and ideals of beauty.

Figure 6.11 presents something the viewer is not prepared for. The static and compositionally balanced image is intended to shock the viewer by being wholly unexpected, the result of disruption in the expected narrative. The burning candle to the left, the woman’s body and the statue on the left, create a strong triangular compositional arrangement of elements, underpinning the stability of the image. Carefully selected tonal ranges are strategically arranged in the composition; the white candle and the white statue create visual harmony on the table; the white tone of the plate on which the sheep’s head reposes creates a strong focal point in the composition.

This particular image connotes more cultural symbols than the previous sequence. The sheep’s head references a South African cultural identity, but it is juxtaposed with a Western ideal of beauty and art. The crassness of the sheep’s head is in conflict with the gracious beauty of the chiselled statue. Furthermore, the image is composed to exclude the woman’s face, creating a dynamic between her headless body and the sheep’s bodiless head. Until this point the viewer cannot identify the woman. She might be the person who delivered the letter, but no evidence for this exists.

SCENE 4: THERE IS NO OBLIVION; NO DREAM. ONLY FLESH EXISTS...

Scene four references *Un Chien Andalou* (1929) by drawing on a similar Freudian theme (ego, super-ego and id), however in *Facebrick* (2012) the super-ego assassinates the ego instead of the id. The same character plays both the super-ego and the ego, yet it is far less apparent than in *Un Chien Andalou* (1929). Instead the filmmaker utilises similar cinematic techniques (figures 6.12 and 6.13) in the two sequences to signify particular signs within the image that illustrates the identity of both the super-ego and ego.
Although this sequence consists predominantly of close-up shots in order to disorientate the spectator, these close-ups highlight particulars that describe the character. In effect the super-ego sequence is displayed by specific fragments (use of close-up shots and limited depth of field) yet displays an overall sense of his character, thus avoiding the need to make use of long shots.

Figure 6.12 illustrates the super-ego smoking a pipe. The close-up highlights important signifiers; the pipe being the dominant signifier, the beard secondary, and also including the black jacket in the background. The closed image has a triangular arrangement of compositional elements. Strong focus on the pipe and the mouth is the result of limiting the depth of field in the image. The combination of backlighting (as the main source) and a frontal fill light (as the secondary source) ensures that the dark pipe and the character's face are highlighted, retaining their significance within the composition.

Figure 6.13 illustrates the ego smoking a pipe, in what appears to be his apartment. In contrast to the super-ego, the ego is wearing a white vest and workman’s trousers. He is feeding a bird (not shown in this image). The commonalities however between the super-ego and the ego are highlighted in similarities between figures 6.12 and 6.13. Figure 6.13 shows a close-up shot of the ego’s mouth, sharing similar compositional elements. The compositional arrangement in the closed image replicates the triangular arrangement seen in figure 6.12. Furthermore, the use of a strong side light emphasise the same signifiers in the composition (the pipe and the beard) as seen in figure 6.12.

Apart from the Freudian theme that underpins the fourth scene, a second characteristic drawn from *Un Chien Andalou* (1929), continuity disruption, is employed in this scene, as seen in figures 6.14 and 6.15.

Figure 6.14 illustrates the super-ego pointing a pistol at the ego, from a victim’s point-of-view perspective. The image contains a strong triangular compositional arrangement of elements, however the focus is placed on the mouth of the pistol's barrel by means of
limited depth of field. In addition, the soft frontal lighting highlights the barrel mouth and lifts the form from the muted background. The medium close-up along with the central placement of the character within the frame, further signifies the stern and calm qualities of the super-ego. Similar to the prologue of *Un Chien Andalou’s* (1929) (see figure 5.10) the viewer is immediately implicated in the action, becoming a participant as the super-ego is framed at eye level. The angle of view suggests that the super-ego is aiming at the ego’s head as the shot is fired. But the fatal wound is not where it is expected to be, as shown in figure 6.15. The location of the fatal on wound, just below the heart, disrupts the continuity, which accords with the intention to disorient the viewer.

![Figure 6.16: Facebrick](image)

The close-up image of the wound is not the focus of the image in figure 6.19. Instead the focus is on the measuring tape the super-ego uses to measure the ego’s proportions.

Moreover, figure 6.15 references two earlier images, the first being (quite blatant) the numeral twelve (figures 6.7 and 6.8) on the door; the second (a subtle visual reference) the sacred heart as seen in the second scene (figure 6.16). Buñuel made use of reoccurring elements of signification in *Un Chien Andalou* (1929); the striped box, fetish garment, the ants reoccurs constantly throughout the film, yet they hold no specific meaning within the narrative. Adamowicz (2010: 54) explains:

> The film invites interpretation, yet it resists a totalizing meaning. It resists interpretation, yet teases the spectator with a multiplicity of possible meanings... Interpretations are all the more open since objects and actions are not firmly grounded in a fixed diegetic development. Untrammelled by syntactic constraints, they can proliferate freely.

In *Facebrick* (2012) these reoccurring symbols reference Buñuel’s use of signs that offer no clear meaning. The numeral twelve for example, indicates a particular space (figures 6.7 and 6.8) a particular time (image not shown here) and finally a particular width as
seen in figure 6.15, yet offers no specific meaning per se. The use of this sign is a powerful signifier in disorientating the viewer.

The second reference made in figure 6.15 is to the sacred heart (figure 6.16), a Catholic icon seen in the second scene. The reference, similar to the number twelve, is intertextual, and assumes a diegetic link between the two characters (the male protagonist and the ego), yet as Adamowicz (2010: 54) notes:

Metonymic or simply syntagmatic links replace narrative logic, the proliferation – and consequent diffusion [sic] or dissolution – of meanings impedes the linear unfolding of the story.

Unlike *Un Chien Andalou* (1929), the ego's death is not romanticised in *Facebrick* (2012), leaving the viewer with more questions, as the narrative does not offer a justification for the ego's assassination. Buñuel made use of the poetic death of the super-ego in *Un Chien Andalou* (1929) allowing for a restful moment in the film as the claustrophobic sexual tensions between male and female enigmas give way to an "irrelevant denouncement" (Williams, 1992: 95).

SCENE 5: OPEN THE STAGE TRAPDOORS SO HE CAN SEE IN THE MOONLIGHT

The fifth scene is the film’s shortest with a running time of one minute and twelve seconds. It follows the narrative of an old man, seemingly in his old age, polishing his shoes, while listening to music on an old gramophone with a funnel-shaped speaker. Although short, the scene is significant. It acts as an important thematic transition between the first four scenes and the last scene.

![Figure 6.17: Facebrick](image1)

![Figure 6.18: Facebrick](image2)

The camera remains static throughout the sequence keeping the same composition only separating the action with jump cut editing. The use of jump cut editing techniques is to create a sense of disorientation, as the movement loses fluidity. The gramophone fills most of the frame, a constant and dominating signifier in this sequence. The stark background ensures that the focus remains firmly on the foreground.
This sequence is a precursor to the final scene, subtly preparing the viewer for what is to follow. Figure 6.17 shows the old man listening to the music. Possibly deaf, he struggles to hear the sound and so moves closer to the gramophone. This image cuts to figure 6.18, where he has his head inside the speaker. The effect, shown in figure 6.18 is intended to be humorous, referencing an element of displacement for humourist effect, an important characteristic of Surrealism\textsuperscript{42}.

A second jump cut is used to cut to figure 6.19, however this time the old man has disappeared, and it is only the gramophone left in the composition.

![Figure 6.19 Facebrick](image)

Figures 6.17 to 6.19 are endowed with more significant meaning. The old man has returned to the womb\textsuperscript{43}, a similar process to that undergone by the main male protagonist in the final sequence of \textit{Facebrick} (2012). Freud associates the idea of wanting to be in love “with a longing to return to home – or to return to the womb” (Boles, 2007). This desire to return to the womb and the desire to stare complement one another quite well. In order to be loved, the self must be known, yet the self is only realised through experiencing the other gazing at the self.

\textsuperscript{42} Dali noted that humour is “a denial of reality, the grandiose affirmation of the pleasure principle” (in Suleiman, 2003: 2).

Freud (ibid) conceives humour to be a mechanism to overcome pain by “asserting one’s superiority to the situation”. He writes (ibid): “Humour is not resigned, it is rebellious... The humorous attitude...refuses to undergo suffering, asseverates the invincibility of one’s ego against the real world and victoriously upholds the pleasure principle”.

\textsuperscript{43} The return of the womb is a prominent Freudian concept, also referenced in \textit{Un Chien Andalou} (1929) (see Williams 1992: 99). Moreover, this concept is enhanced by the form of the gramophone that resembles a flower, the reproductive organ of a plant. Thus this sequence could be interpreted as the engagement of sexual intercourse.
SCENE 6: THEY HAD JUST ESCAPED A SHIPWRECK OF BLOOD

The sixth and final scene Facebrick (2012) shows the main male protagonist’s descent from obsession to insanity and then, finally, transcending into an unconscious state.

Figure 6.20 to 6.25 shows this transcendence from madness into unconsciousness by means of a metaphoric transition, a similar method to what Buñuel employed in Un Chien Andalou 1929).

Buñuel made use of metaphoric transition, based on Freud’s concept of free association in Un Chien Andalou (1929) (see figures 5.13 to 5.16). Facebrick (2012) incorporates a similar technique of free association, using triangular compositional arrangements in contrast to Buñuel’s use of circular compositional arrangements. Furthermore, the metaphoric transition in Facebrick (2012) contributes to the diegesis of the film, from a conceptual standpoint, as opposed to hindering the narrative flow, as found in Un Chien Andalou (1929). In contrast to Un Chien Andalou (1929), the metaphoric transition images consist mainly of long to medium shots, making use of the wider image frame to display the graphic qualities of the form.

Figure 6.20 shows the male protagonist bemused by the realisation that his visual prey has acknowledged his gaze. Sartre (in Wollen, 2007: 97) notes:

Someone is looking at me! What does this mean? It means that I am suddenly affected in my being and that essential modifications appear in my structure—modifications which I can apprehend and fix conceptually by means of the reflective cogito. First of all, I now exist as myself for my unreflective consciousness. It is this irruption of the self which has been most often described: I see myself because somebody sees me—as it is usually expressed.

The medium close-up image forms a strong triangular compositional arrangement in the frame. The male protagonist is framed in its centre, looking directly into camera. The importance of his direct gaze into camera is iteration of his discovery of self, thus implicating the viewer in the unfolding of this process. The limited depth of field in the image further isolates the protagonist within surroundings, which are empty except for
a framed 'family tree', the genealogical reconstruction of one's ancestral roots, a common and affirming voyage of discovery for many. The frame hangs skew behind him indicating that it is of little value, and his face is lit to reveal, in the manner of a Rembrandt portrait, something of his inner self to viewers, accentuating the worth of his discovery of the self. The light falls from the window, highlighting his discovery, a defining cloak of darkness.

Figure 6.20 cross-fades into figure 6.21, as medium shot of a triangular building façade, and mimicking the triangular compositional arrangement of figure 6.20. A white triangular relief inside the building façade further amplifies the triangular shape of the building. The lighting is far lower in contrast than in the preceding two images. Its triangular form of this image signifies the male, as a phallus as well as culture, a rational concept.

A second cross-fade occurs between figure 6.21 and 6.22 to a medium shot of organ pipes inside a cathedral. The composition of the image is, as with figure 6.21, centrally framed. The compositional arrangement of the elements also becomes more complex within the image frame, compared to the rest of the transitional series. The main arrangement still remains as a triangle, however elements such as the arch behind the pipes, as well as the two triangular shapes (male signification at the top, and inverted triangle signifying the female directly underneath) introduce new elements of connotation within the image. A sense of religious dominance, the male over the female, is amplified by the lower camera angle. To some extent this image connotes the Freudian concept of the three structures of the mind; the ego, super-ego and the id. The arch, connoting the super-ego, the smaller triangular shape where the cross is found connotes the ego and the inverted triangle connotes the id.

A third cross fade transition figure 6.22 into 6.23, a long shot of a landscape. There is an almost identical compositional arrangement of elements in the two but the contrast between man (in figure 6.22) and nature is stark. The composition contains the same
triangular elements, but the spatial relationship between these elements differs in terms of visual dominance. In figure 6.23 the inverted triangle of the gorge dominates in the frame, signifying the shift from male dominance to female, or to reference *Un Chien Andalou* (1929) the castration of the male ego. The focal point in this image remains on the ego, the small hill in the background, due to the two strong diagonal lines converging towards the centre of the image, and the strong horizontal line of the bridge confining the spectator’s attention within the central area of the image. The use of light replicates its use in figure 6.20, however in this instance, the shadow is slowly creeping towards the right hand side of the image, creating an interesting dynamic between light and shade 44.

![Image](image.png)

**Figure 6.24: Facebrick**

A fourth cross-fade marks the end of the metaphoric transition from the male (figure 6.21) to female, completing the castration process by introducing female genitalia as the dominant form (figure 6.24). The close-up and the high contrast tonal values emphasise the graphic qualities of the vulva. Side lighting is used in a similar way to its deployment in figure 6.23. The use of lighting in this transition becomes very prominent when comparing figures 6.21 and 6.24. Light fades into dark, as the transition from the ego to the id occurs.

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44 The play between light and shadow in this case, does not represent a power struggle between good and evil but rather the submergence from the conscious (light) into the unconscious (dark).
Figure 6.25 concludes the metaphoric transition and connotes the main male protagonist entry back into the womb or the unconscious, drawing from Freudian concepts of identity. The arrangement of elements forms a strong triangular composition, referencing the female symbol. Similar to figure 6.19, a sequence that preempts this sequence, the male disappears from his literal surroundings and moves into an unknown space. The strong grain qualities in the closed image resemble this unknown space. The reoccurring statue of Birth of Venus (1486) references the female from scene two, but moreover, signifies unconscious sexual desire within the male protagonist.

6.4 CHAPTER SUMMARY
This chapter discussed the appropriation of the cinematic techniques employed by Buñuel in a contemporary short film, Facebrick (2012) developed by the researcher. Firstly a brief overview of the development of the screenplay as well as the technologies employed was given to contextualise the film. The analysis followed. It embraced a similar framework to that of Chapter Five, namely, examining the film scene-by-scene. The extraction of key sequences and shots and the use of the proposed methodology from Chapter Three enabled the researcher to conduct a close reading of the case study. Facebrick (2012) embraced the key cinematic techniques in Un Chien Andalou (1929). It was paralleled against certain characteristics of Buñuel’s film such as; the disruption of time and space; the inclusion of archetypal symbols, and; the use of free association sequences, seen particularly in the closing sequence.

The researcher found that disrupting the spatio-temporal arrangements; along with juxtaposition and displacement induced a sense of disorientation. The use of close-up shots, dissolves and jump cuts, camera angles and compositions that emphasise the graphic presence of the film frame, all contributed to create a surreal image.
It was found that the use of compositional arrangements of shapes, that acts as a metaphoric series in order to communicate a transition of free association did, as observed for *Un Chien Andalou* (1929), "impede or displace diegetic development" (Adamowicz 2010: 37). These metaphoric transitions embodied Barthes' notion of the myth on a visual platform quite clearly, as the history of the form is stripped in order to connote the concept.

Lastly the researcher found that the use of these techniques does not recreate a true surrealist film, but the inclusion of these techniques draws the film closer towards a pure surrealist paradigm. As such, the significance of these deductions contributes to the understanding of an influential movement that inspired artists and filmmakers alike since its inception in 1924. Often, a movement’s aesthetic characteristics are re-appropriated out of the original context to purely entertain the visual. This study however has sought to re-visit the surrealist filmmaking movement in order to develop a clearer understanding of their defining visual characteristics, particularly within the context of cinema, and to apply these characteristics to a contemporary film. The significance of this exercise enabled the researcher to develop a point of departure to experiment with similar techniques, whilst still understanding the conceptual significance of these techniques, and thus apply it to a contemporary film. As a result the researcher’s own understanding of cinema was expanded, aiding in the development of a contemporary visual technique, based on a firm theoretical and historical foundation.

The next chapter will conclude the study and highlight recommendations for further exploration of this particular study.
CHAPTER 7

7.1 SUMMARY OF PRECEDING CHAPTERS
The primary objective of this study was to determine and understand the interrelationship between meaning(s), form (specifically framing and composition), cinematic technology, and the surrealist ideology with specific reference to Buñuel’s *Un Chien Andalou* (1929). The following aims formulated in support of this study are to:

Determine the key cinematic techniques and technology employed by Buñuel in order to provide a basis for the analysis of *Un Chien Andalou* (1929).

Reflect on how the cinematic techniques employed by Buñuel impact on the reading (in the Barthian sense) of surrealist film such as Buñuel’s *Un Chien Andalou* (1929) in order to comment on the disruption of time and space, the use of archetypal symbols and free association that contribute to the characteristics of the surreal image.

Reflect on the possible ‘transgression’ and ‘alienation’ of Buñuel’s surrealist film as directly attributable to the technology itself in order to better understand the relationship between the technical limitations of filmmaking of the period and surrealist ideology.

The practical component consists of a short film entitled *Facebrick* (2012). The theoretical component was divided into six chapters followed by the concluding Chapter Seven.

Chapter Two discussed Surrealism as a movement, and then examined the movement’s strong relations with the cinema through a literature study. This chapter briefly discussed the origins of Surrealism and the aims of the movement in order to identify key tenets and characteristics that define the movement. These tenets included spatio-temporal disruptions, the use of free association as well as specific cultural, religious and sexual symbols as a revolutionary tool. Furthermore, the role played by cinema in communicating surrealist ideals was examined in order to create a theoretical backdrop that facilitated the semiotic reading of the relevant film texts in Chapters Five and Six. The characteristics of Surrealism not only guided the semiotic reading of *Un Chien Andalou* (1929), but also played a crucial role in establishing how the researcher constructed his short film, *Facebrick* (2012).
Chapter Three outlined the research methodology, focussing on the significance of cinematic language within the study as well as describing the approach to the film analysis. This chapter focussed on the theoretical semiotic work of predominantly Mitry, Metz and Barthes, and employed Rose’s methodology as the chosen semiotic framework, reflecting Monaco’s schema for analysing the moving image. Rose’s (see 2007: 13) methodology illustrating the three modalities, at which greater critical understanding of the image is generated, namely technological, compositional and social, was utilised in order to visually read and interpret the film text of Buñuel in Chapter Five, as well as reading and interpreting the researcher’s selected film text in Chapter Six.

Chapter Four discussed the acceptance of Buñuel and Dali to the surrealist movement and as well as the production of Un Chien Andalou (1929). Furthermore, this chapter reviewed the response to the film amongst the surrealists and highlighted the film’s importance as a milestone within the surrealist movement.

Following the placement of Un Chien Andalou (1929) within the surrealist context, the analysis aimed to uncover and highlight the surrealist tendencies within the film. The film was measured against the key characteristics of Surrealism as developed in the literature study and analysed using the methodological framework proposed in Chapter Three. Some of the technical pivots upon which the production of Un Chien Andalou (1929) hinged were defined as follows:

- Firstly, the disruption of spatio-temporal arrangements, along with juxtaposition and displacement to entice a sense of disorientation and the use of particular cinematic techniques such as close-up shots, dissolves and jump cuts, slow motion, grain, camera angles and compositions that emphasise the graphic presence of the film frame, all contributed to create a surreal image.

- The conscious use of compositional arrangements of shapes that acted as a metaphoric series in order to communicate a transition of free association.

- The analysis highlighted the inclusion of specific cultural, religious and sexual iconography to suggest specific meaning that subsequently reiterated surrealist ideals.

- The researcher found that Buñuel employed conventional cinematic techniques equivalent to his contemporaries, however it was the misappropriation and rupture of these techniques that gave Un Chien Andalou (1929) its surrealist qualities.
Lastly, it was noted that although no factual information regarding the specific cinematic technologies available to Buñuel were found, *Un Chien Andalou* (1929) still managed to cause ‘transgression’ and ‘alienation’ due to the techniques (particularly the editing techniques) employed. An example is found in the prologue of the film where jump cut editing techniques as well as continuity disruptions are used to disorientate the viewer.

Chapter Six followed with an analysis of the researcher’s short film entitled *Facebrick* (2012). The analysis was conducted, similar to Chapter Five, according to the three characteristics of Surrealism as was derived in Chapter Two.

Although the researcher’s process of constructing the short film differs from that of Buñuel, parallels however exist between various central concepts, as is evident from the semiotic reading according to the three characteristics of a surrealist text. The following parallels could be determined:

- In a similar fashion to Buñuel, the researcher disrupted the spatio-temporal arrangement of the narrative in order to cause disorientation. Techniques such as close-up shots, jump cut editing, dissolves, grain, slow motion and compositional arrangements that reinforce the graphical quality of the frame were employed to contribute to the characteristics of the surreal image.

- The researcher included particular cultural, religious and sexual archetypal symbols that referenced a strongly South African identity, in contrast to Buñuel’s Spanish influenced symbology.

- Similar to Buñuel, the researcher employed a series of images inspired by free association that acted as a metaphoric transition between an interior and exterior space.

- Moreover, the researcher similarly referenced particular Freudian themes of identity and sexuality as found in *Un Chien Andalou* (1929). Included too is gaze theory, a theme drawn from Existentialism, a theory not pertinent to Surrealism.

7.2 CONTRIBUTION OF THE STUDY

Although *Un Chien Andalou* (1929) has been extensively discussed within the academic realm, this study highlights an area often overlooked by scholars, a technical

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45 Richardson notes that *Un Chien Andalou* (1929) is one of the most analysed short films in the history of the cinema.
cinematographic approach to understand and highlight the surrealist characteristics of the film. The primary concern of this study was to analyse Buñuel's cinematographic application that would enable the production of a short film to utilise and re-appropriate these techniques for a contemporary audience. This study is significant in that it does not merely reproduce these techniques, but rather appropriates them within different cultural context. The study has revealed a better understanding of the movement and its intentions. Thus the techniques, successfully communicate the surreal, both aesthetically and intellectually.

7.3 SUGGESTIONS FOR FURTHER RESEARCH

Further research avenues can encourage the exploration of other surrealist film texts, such as Buñuel's surrealist masterpiece *L’Age D’Or* (1930) from a cinematographic perspective, which would encourage other filmmakers to explore these ground breaking cinematic works. As with all movements, particularly influential ‘art’ movements such as Surrealism, contemporary filmmakers and audiences commonly misinterpret the core ideals of the movement as the original ideals are diluted with re-appropriation over time. This study, however, has set the foundations by developing a framework for an analysis based on Surrealism enabling the researcher to appropriate specific cinematic techniques that communicate surrealist ideals. Further research on other ‘art’ movements can utilise this study’s framework in order to appropriate cinematic techniques that characterise those movements.

7.4 CLOSING COMMENTS

This study tried to understand a small aspect of Surrealism as an ideological structure, by reverting to the original movement, dissecting an artefact in order to come closer to a ‘purer’ understanding of the movement’s intentions from a contemporary perspective. It must be stressed that *Facebrick* (2012) is in no way surrealist or attempting to reiterate surrealist discourse; it merely appropriated certain surrealist ideals, supported by extensive literature study, through subjected analysis and applied these ideals to a contemporary short film. In essence, to rephrase Buñuel, *Facebrick* (2012) would not have existed as a film if it were not for the extensive and inspiring groundwork laid by Buñuel.
8.1 REFERENCE LIST


Olivier, B. 1996. Projections: Philosophical Themes on Film. Port Elizabeth: University of Port Elizabeth Publication Series.


Figure 4.1: Magritte, R. 1929. *I do not see [the woman] hidden in the forest/Photomontage for The Surrealist Revolution No. 12*. [Photograph]. *The Photograph: A Strange Confined Space*. (Price, 1994: 54).


APPENDIX A

UN CHIEN ANDALOU (1929) SHOOTING SCRIPT

PROLOGUE

Once Upon a Time...

A balcony at night.

A man stands by a window, sharpening a razor. He looks to the sky and sees a cloud moving toward the full moon.

As the cloud passes across the face of the moon, a razor blade slices through the eye of a young woman.

End of Prologue.

EIGHT YEARS LATER

A deserted street. It is raining.

A man dressed in a dark-gray suit appears riding a bicycle. His head, back and loins are adorned in ruffles of white linen. A rectangular box with black and white diagonal stripes is secured to his chest by straps. The man pedals mechanically without holding the handlebars, with his hands resting on his knees.

The character is seen from the back down to the thighs in a medium shot, superimposed lengthwise on the street down which he is cycling, with his back to the camera. The character moves toward the camera until the striped box is seen in a close-up.

An ordinary room on the third floor on the same street. A young girl wearing a brightly colored dress is sitting in the middle of the room attentively reading a book. Suddenly, she is distracted from her reading. She listens with curiosity, before freeing herself of the book by throwing it on a nearby couch. The book stays open with a reproduction of Vermeer’s The Lacemaker on one of the pages facing up. The young woman is convinced now that something strange is happening: she gets up, and, half turning, walks in quick steps toward the window.
The character we have mentioned before has just at this very moment stopped, below on the street. Without offering the least resistance, out of inertia, he lets himself come down with the bicycle into the gutter, in the midst of a mud heap.

Looking enraged and resentful, the young woman hurries down the stairs and out to the street.

Close-up of the character sprawling on the ground, expression-less, his position identical to that at the moment of his fall.

The young woman comes out of the house, and, throwing herself on the cyclist, she frantically kisses him on the mouth, the eyes and the nose. The rain gets heavier to the extent of blotting out the preceding scene.

Dissolve to the box whose diagonal stripes are superimposed on those of the rain. Hands equipped with a little key open the box, pulling out a tie wrapped in tissue paper. It must be taken into account that the rain, the box, the tissue paper and the tie should all exhibit these diagonal stripes, with their sizes alone varying.

The same room.

Standing by the bed, the young woman is looking at the clothing articles that had been worn by the character - ruffles, box, and the stiff collar with the plain dark tie - all laid out as though they were worn by a person lying on the bed. The young woman finally decides to pick up the collar, removing the plain tie in order to replace it with the striped one which she has just taken out of the box. She puts it back in the same place, and then sits down by the bed in the posture of a person watching over the dead.

(Note: The bed, that is to say, the bedspread and the pillow, are slightly rumpled and depressed as if a human body were really lying there.)

The woman is aware that someone is standing behind her and turns around to see who it is. Without the least surprise, she sees the character, who now is without any of his former ac-cessory articles, looking very attentively at something in his right hand. His great absorption betrays quite a great deal of anxiety.

The woman approaches and looks in turn at what he has in his hand. Close-up of the hand, the middle of which is teeming with ants swarming out of a black hole.

Dissolve to the armpit hair of a young woman sprawled on the sand of a sunny beach. Dissolve to a sea urchin whose spines ripple slightly. Dissolve to the head of another
young woman in a powerful overhead shot framed by an iris. The iris opens to reveal the young woman surrounded by a throng of people who are trying to break through a police barrier.

At the center of this circle, the young woman, holding a stick, attempts to pick up a severed hand with painted fingernails that is lying on the ground. A policeman comes up to her, sharply reprimanding her; he bends down and picks up the hand which he carefully wraps up and puts in the box that was carried by the cyclist. He hands it all to the young woman, saluting her in a military fashion while she thanks him.

As the policeman hands her the box, she must appear to be carried away by an extraordinary emotion that isolates her completely from everything around her. It is as though she were enthralled by the echoes of distant religious music; perhaps music she heard in her earliest childhood.

Their curiosity satisfied, the bystanders begin to disperse in all directions.

This scene will have been seen by the characters whom we have left in the room on the third floor. They are seen through the window panes of the balcony from which may be seen the end of the scene described above. When the policeman hands the box over to the young woman, the two characters on the balcony appear to also be overcome to the point of tears by the same emotion. Their heads sway as though following the rhythm of this impalpable music.

The man looks at the young woman and makes a gesture as though he were saying: "Did you see? Hadn't I told you so?" She looks down again at the young woman on the street who is now all alone and, as if pinned down to the spot, in a state of utter restraint. Cars pass all around her at breathtaking speeds. Suddenly she is run over by one of the cars and is left there horribly mutilated.

It is then that, with the decisiveness of a man fully knowing his rights, the man goes over to his companion, and, having gazed lasciviously straight into her eyes, he grabs her breasts through her dress. Closeup of the lustful hands over the breasts. These are bared as the dress disappears. A terrible expression of almost mortal anguish spreads over the man's face, and a blood-streaked dribble runs out of his mouth dripping on the young woman's bare breasts.
The breasts disappear to be transformed into thighs, which the man continues to palpate. His expression has changed. His eyes sparkle with malice and lust. His wide-open mouth now closes down as if tightened up by a sphincter.

The young woman moves back toward the middle of the room, followed by the man who is still in the same posture.

Suddenly, she makes a forceful motion, breaking his hold on her, freeing herself from his amorous advances.

The man's mouth tightens with anger.

She realizes that a disagreeable or violent scene is about to take place. She moves back, step by step, until she reaches the corner of the room, where she takes up a position behind a small table.

Assuming the gestures of the melodrama villain, the man looks around for something or other. He sees at his feet the end of a rope and picks it up with his right hand. His left hand gropes about too, and gets hold of an identical rope.

Glued to the wall, the young woman watches with horror her attacker's stratagem.

The latter advances toward her dragging with great effort that which is attached behind to the ropes.

We see passing before our eyes on the screen: first, a cork, then a melon, then two Brothers of Christian Schools, and finally two magnificent grand pianos. The pianos are loaded with the rotting carcasses of two donkeys, their feet, tails, hindquarters and excrement spilling out of the piano cases. As one of the pianos passes in front of the camera lens, a large donkey's head is seen pressing the keyboard.

Pulling with great difficulty this burden, the man desperately strains toward the young woman, knocking over chairs, tables, a floor lamp, etc. The donkey's hind-quarters get caught in everything. A lamp hanging from the ceiling is jostled by a stripped bone, and continues rocking until the end of the scene.

When the man is about to reach the young woman, she dodges him with a leap and escapes. Her attacker lets go of the ropes and begins pursuing her. The young woman opens a door and vanishes into the next room, but not quickly enough to be able to lock the door behind her. The man's hand gets caught at the wrist in the doorway, held captive.
Inside the other room, pressing the door harder and harder, the young woman looks at the hand, which wrenches in pain in slow motion, as the ants reappear and swarm over the door.

Right away, she turns her head toward the middle of the new room, which is identical to the previous one, but on which the lighting confers a different look; the young woman sees...

A man sprawled on the bed, who is the same man whose hand is still caught in the door. Wearing the ruffles, with the box resting on his chest, he does not make the least movement, but lies there, his eyes wide open, his superstitious expression seeming to say: "Something really extraordinary is now about to happen!"

**ABOUT THREE O’CLOCK IN THE MORNING**

A new character is seen from the back on the landing; he has just stopped by the entrance door to the apartment. He rings the bell of the apartment where the events are taking place. We don't see the bell nor the electric hammer, but in their place, over the door, there are two holes through which pass two hands shaking a silver cocktail shaker. Their action is instantaneous, as in ordinary films when a doorbell button is being pressed.

The man lying on the bed glances up.

The young woman goes and opens the door.

The newcomer goes directly to the bed and imperiously orders the man to get up. The man complies so grudgingly that the other is obliged to grab him by the ruffles and force him to his feet.

Having torn off the ruffles one by one, the newcomer throws them out of the window. The box follows the same route and so do the straps, which the man tries in vain to save from the catastrophe. And this leads the newcomer to punish the man by making him go and stand with his face to one of the walls.

The newcomer will have done all this with his back completely turned to the camera. He turns around now for the first time in order to go and look for something on the other side of the room.

The subtitle says...
SIXTEEN YEARS BEFORE

At this point the photography becomes hazy. The newcomer moves in slow motion and we see that his features are identical to those of the other; they are one and the same person, but for the fact that the newcomer looks younger and more doleful, as the other must have been years before.

The newcomer goes toward the back of the room with the camera tracking back and keeping him in medium close-up.

The school desk toward which our individual is heading enters the frame. There are two books on the school desk, as well as various school objects, whose position and moral meaning are to be carefully determined.

The newcomer picks up the two books and turns to go and join the other man. At this point everything goes back to normal, the fuzziness and slow motion having disappeared.

Having come up to the man, the newcomer directs him to hold out his arms in a cruciform position, places a book in each hand, and orders him to remain so as a punishment.

The punished character's expression has now become keen and treacherous. He turns to face the newcomer. The books he has been holding turn into revolvers.

The newcomer looks at him with tenderness, an expression that becomes more pronounced with each passing moment.

The other, threatening the newcomer with his guns and forcing him to put his hands up, does not heed the latter's compliance and fires both revolvers at him. Medium close-up of the newcomer falling down fatally wounded, his features contorted in agony (the photography's fuzziness is resumed and the new-comer's fall is in slow motion, in a way that is far more pronounced than previously).

We see in the distance the wounded man falling; however, he is no longer inside the room, but in a park. Seated next to him is a motionless woman with bare shoulders, who is seen from behind, leaning slightly forward. As he falls, the wounded man attempts to seize and stroke her shoulders; one of his hands is turned, shaking toward himself; the other brushes against the skin of the naked shoulders. Finally, he falls to the ground.
View from afar. A few passers-by and several park-keepers rush over to help. They pick him up in their arms and bear him away through the woods.

Slow fade out, then...

We are back at the same room. A door, the one in which the hand had been caught, now opens slowly. The young woman we already know appears. She closes the door behind her and stares very attentively at the wall against which the murderer had stood.

The man is no longer there. The wall is bare, without any furniture or decoration. The young woman makes a gesture of vexation and impatience.

The wall is seen again; in the middle of it there is a small black spot.

Seen much closer, this small spot appears to be a death's-head moth.

Close-up of the moth.

The death's head on the moth's wings fills the whole screen.

The man who was wearing ruffles comes suddenly into view in a medium shot, bringing his hand swiftly to his mouth as though he were losing his teeth.

The young woman looks at him disdainfully.

When the man takes away his hand, we see that his mouth has disappeared.

The young woman seems to be saying to him: "Well, and what next?" and then she touches up her lips with a lipstick.

We see again the man's head. Hair begins to sprout where his mouth had been.

Having caught sight of this, the young woman stifles a cry and swiftly examines her armpit, which is now completely bare. She scornfully sticks out her tongue at him, throws a shawl over her shoulders, and, opening the door near her, goes into the adjacent room, which is a wide beach.

A third character is waiting for her near the water's edge. They greet each other very amiably, and meander together down the waterline.

A shot of their legs and the waves breaking at their feet.
The camera follows them in a dolly shot. The waves gently wash ashore at their feet the straps, then the striped box, followed by the ruffles, and finally the bicycle. This shot continues a moment longer without anything else being washed ashore.

They continue their walk on the beach, little by little fading from view, while in the sky, the following words appear...

**IN THE SPRING**
Everything has changed.

We see now a desert without end. We see the man and the young woman in the center, sunk in sand up to their chests, blinded, their clothes in tatters, devoured by the sun and by swarms of insects.

**END**
APPENDIX B

FACEBRICK (2012) DIRECTOR’S TREATMENT

Facebrick can be described as film noir with some black comedy elements. It follows the life of a voyeur, a man who loves to watch people. As the obsession grows so too does his ego. Yet, it’s only a matter of time before the watcher becomes the watched.

The look of the film will be heavily influenced by the Surrealist films of the 20’s, Soviet Russian films of the 30’s as well as the French new wave films of the 60’s.

Buñuel's Un Chien Andalou (1929) and L’Age D’Or (1930), Eisenstein's Strike (1925), Battleship Potemkin (1925) and October (1929) and Goddard’s Breathless (1960) will inform the visual style of the film greatly. Furthermore, Wender’s Million Dollar Hotel (2000) and Jarmusch’s Dead Man (1995), Coffee and Cigarettes (2003) as well as Night on Earth (1991) will influence the cinematographic style of the films. The final product will be in black and white, to reflect the feel of the silent film era.

The cinematography and camerawork will be lethargic and slow moving. Many scenes will take place in long takes, with slow tracks following the action. This is aimed to create tension within the viewer, signifying the uneasiness of being watched. In contrast to the long takes, further tension will be build quickly with quick cuts between objects and the characters in order to signify an immediacy of the character’s emotional needs. DSLR’s will be used in order to gain from the depth of field by opening up and stopping down lenses as required. Chiaroscuro lighting will be used to sugget certain sadness each character possesses.

The score will be composed using abstract sounds and noise in order to create uneasiness. As the male protagonist stares at the three characters, the sound will simulate the slow moving shots with subtle abstract sound and silence. As the action becomes quicker so too will the sound design pick up in pace, becoming more blatant. General sounds such as traffic rushing past, car hooters blowing will all emphasize the tension and the silence.
APPENDIX C

FACEBRICK (2012) SCRIPT

Narrator (V.O)

Length: 7min

PROLOGUE

I find it poignant that in this moment that the noun for which I am staring at is that: Face brick.

Red. I am facing the brick, indeed. And turning red has become a usual voyeuristic habit from which I cannot escape. A boyish desire to stare, but a Catholic-guilt infused rush of blood to cheeks. There is no-one to see me blush. Just myself. Guarding my thoughts.

FADE TO BLACK

FADE IN:

THERE IS YOU

I’m perched like a bird of prey at a window in the inner city. Across the road is a tower block of apartment cubicles. From where I sit I cannot see the end of it, as it stretches upwards, so it looks like it goes on forever. The people go on forever too. I mark their comings and their goings, not unlike a trainspotter.

I wonder sometimes, when that creepy feeling of pedophilia comes over me, if what I am doing is somehow inherently wrong .... must be the Catholic guilt again. But, as with all “wrong” things, it feels so good. I’m not a pedophile.

I can sympathize with those who have that issue, because I see the continuum within me that could have led to that life. It didn’t though. Perhaps I’m more sinister? (Or that could also be my own sense of drama coming out). I’m a peopleophile. An addict of people. One that derives pleasure from the general populace. Sex has nothing to do with it.

I’m alone, as usual. The window never lets me feel isolated though. Like TV, I guess. Alone at home with the TV on, one never feels the desperate isolation one feels when whisking through the world with no connection. No-one to talk to....
The window is my tele-vision. I spend all day here, and never get bored. There is always something on. I can flip through the frames and will always find a scene or sequence of events. A leak of light into someone else’s domain.

FADE TO BLACK

FADE IN:

NO ONE SLEEPS. NO ONE, NO ONE
Thin and tired looking. I wonder if, she is sick. The smell of paraffin and cheap stewing meat creeps from her window. My nostrils clench at the familiar smell. It feels like she’s rung my bell. A notification that she is in. I sit down.

I can see her silhouette as she waits until 6:30 – when there is no more light to go by – to turn on the lamp. I assume she is saving electricity. It’s that time of the new democracy. Electricity is the new great equalizer. It’s bringing back the primal, the dark. I like that she uses paraffin too. The paralyzing smell of cloudless dreams.

No longer silhouetted, I can read the tired line etched into her face. She worries all the time – but somehow she remains a survivor. Somehow the blows of life rest on her shoulders with an uneasy grace. She is wearing the light green sweater she wears on Tuesdays. I see her collapse into an uncomfortable pose on an equally uncomfortable looking chair. Cheap pine, no doubt.

She looks out the window onto the street in a trance. I wonder if she sees it as a window of opportunity – or just a reflection of herself? Wind sweeping through the corridor of urban filth, whipping up paper, and dust, and crimson-sad leaves in the musty blue dusk.

FADE TO BLACK

FADE IN:

THERE IS NO OBLIVION; NO DREAM. ONLY FLESH EXISTS...
He looks like a brick-layer. Shiny, and black. The kind of black that only becomes that black after endless hours in the sun. His world seems to revolve around a bright little bird that he keeps in the window.

I used to abhor that bird and wish carnal sins upon it in the early grey morning. Now it’s like a chime. Or like any of the other sounds from the city seeping up from below. At first you cannot sleep through the dull sounds of cars gliding, foreign accents vloeking..... how does one know what swearing is in a different language - by instinct?
And then the crescendo-ing and echoing like the wind pumping through the corridor once more resumes its seductive and solitary whirl. I, with x-ray vision imagine I can see through the apartments to the back, to where there are stairs and real corridors must be… Polished with the Red Cobra.

FADE TO BLACK

FADE IN:

OPEN THE STAGE TRAPDOORS SO HE CAN SEE THE MOONLIGHT

The lace curtain is always drawn cross the checkered window frame. I cannot see in properly. The camera obscura. He intrigues me most because of the pale yellow façade. The veil he has drawn between society and his private life makes him the interesting one. And he listens to jazz.

I see him dancing from room to room, wooden spoon in hand, pretending to be someone opportunity may have afforded him to be, but didn’t. He is my melancholy. The notes cruise off the walls, bounce round his room and squeeze out the open sliver of window, between the crumbled lace. Bass has a life of it’s own that walls cannot contain. I feel my heart beat in time with the rhythmic resonance. It connects me with Sam. I feel like I am him. Strong and black. Talented but without hope.

FADE OUT

FADE IN:

THEY HAD JUST ESCAPED A SHIPWRECK OF BLOOD

We do this dance, I imagine. My subjects and me. We clutch each other. Kindred souls in the embrace of the darkness of anonymity. Afraid that, without the other, the stunning light of knowing, or the true world, would come tumbling in separating us forever.

I feel like an omniscient maestro of these people’s lives. A puppeteer or warden in a Benthamian panopticon - watching the prisoners of my creation, moving strings and giving them life.

Then, by chance, I walked passed the window. It must have been over a year of voyeuristic intrusion and puppeteering on my part. My ego was huge. Perhaps, the hobby was bigger. A glimpse.

Eyes connect in a moment that is defined by acknowledgment. She looks across the divide of tar and air - electric. I see her and then see everything as it is.
I look at all the windows and I see souls. I see them seeing me. The realization reels me back a couple of steps. I am stumped by the obviousness of it. I see the situation as it really is. I have let myself believe I am the master, the creator of life without knowing the truth. It's the seduction of the ego and ergo: the watcher has become the watched.

FADE OUT

CREDITS ROLL

END