UN CHIEN ANDALOU/ SURREALSIM

Dada -

A western Europe artistic and literary movement (1916-23) that sought the discovery of authentic reality through the abolition of traditional culture and aesthetic forms.

Pour introduire l'idée de folie passagère en mal de scandale et de publicité d'un isme nouveau si banal, avec le manque de sérieux inné à ces sortes de manifestations, les journalistes nommèrent Dadaïsme ce que l'intensité d'un art nouveau leur rendit impossible compréhension et puissance de s'élever à l'abstraction, la magie d'une parole (DADA), les ayant mis, (par sa simplicité de ne rien signifier) devant la porte d'un monde présent, vraiment trop forte éruption pour leur habitude de se tirer facilement d'affaire.
-- Note au Manifeste DADA, 1918, in *DADA*, Réimpression..., p. 54.

Dada (French: "hobby-horse"), nihilistic movement in the arts that flourished primarily in Zürich, New York City, Berlin, Cologne, Paris, and Hannover, Ger. in the early 20th century. Several explanations have been given by various members of the movement as to how it received its name. According to the most widely accepted account, the name was adopted at Hugo Ball's Cabaret (Café) Voltaire, in Zürich, during one of the meetings held in 1916 by a group of young artists and war resisters that included Jean Arp, Richard Hülsenbeck, Tristan Tzara, Marcel Janco, and Emmy Hennings; when a paper knife inserted into a French-German dictionary pointed to the word dada, this word was seized upon by the group as appropriate for their anti-aesthetic creations and protest activities, which were engendered by disgust for bourgeois values and despair over World War I. A precursor of what was to be called the Dada movement, and ultimately its leading member, was Marcel Duchamp, who in 1913 created his first ready-made (now lost), the "Bicycle Wheel," consisting of a wheel mounted on the seat of a stool.

Surrealism -

Surrealism, movement in literature and the fine arts, founded by the French poet and critic Andre Breton. Breton published his Surrealist Manifesto in Paris in 1924 and consistently dominated the movement. Surrealism grew directly out of the movement known as Dadaism (see DADA), an art and literary movement reflecting nihilistic protest against all aspects of Western culture. Like Dadaism, surrealism emphasized the role of the unconscious in creative activity, but it employed the psychic unconscious in a more orderly and more serious manner.

Surrealist Literature

The surrealists claimed as their literary forebears a long line of writers, outstanding among whom is the Comte de Lautréamont, author of the lengthy and complicated work Les chants de Maldoror (1868-1870). Besides Breton, many of the most distinguished French writers of the early 20th century were at one time connected with the movement; these include Paul Eluard, Louis Aragon, René Crevel, and Philippe Soupault. Younger writers such as Raymond Queneau were also influenced by its points of view. Pure surrealist writers used automatism as a literary form—that is, they wrote whatever words came into their conscious mind and regarded these words as inviolable. They did not alter what they wrote, as that would constitute an interference with the pure act of creation. The authors felt that this

free flow of thought would establish a rapport with the subconscious mind of their readers. A typical short example of surrealist writing is the proverb by Paul Éluard that states “Elephants are contagious.” This purely psychic automatism was modified later by the conscious use, especially in painting, of symbols derived from Freudian psychology. Like their forerunners, the Dadaists, the surrealists broke accepted rules of work and personal conduct in order to liberate their sense of inner truth. The movement spread all over the world and flourished in America during World War II (1939-1945), when André Breton was living in New York City.

Surrealism in Art

In painting and sculpture surrealism is one of the leading influences of the 20th century. It claimed as its ancestors in the graphic arts such painters as the Italian Paolo Uccello, the British poet and artist William Blake, and the Frenchman Odilon Redon. In this century it also admired, and included in its exhibitions, works by the Italian Giorgio de Chirico, the Russian Marc Chagall, the Swiss Paul Klee, the French artists Marcel Duchamp and Francis Picabia, and the Spaniard Pablo Picasso, none of whom was ever a member of the surrealist group. From 1924 the German Max Ernst, the Frenchman Jean Arp, and the American painter and photographer Man Ray were among its members. They were joined for a short time about 1925 by the Frenchman André Masson and the Spaniard Joan Miro, who remained members for some time but were too individualistic as painters to submit to the strong leadership of André Breton, who exercised final authority over the movement. Later members of the group included the French-American Yves Tanguy, the Belgian Rene Magritte, and the Swiss Alberto Giacometti. The Catalan painter Salvador Dali joined the surrealist movement in 1930 but was later denounced by most surrealists because he was held to be more interested in commercializing his art than in surrealist ideas. Although for a time he was the most talked-about member of the group, his work is so idiosyncratic as to be only partially typical of surrealism.

Surrealist painting exhibits great variety of content and technique. That of Dalí, for example, consists of more or less a direct and photographic transcription of dreams, deriving its inspiration from the earlier dreamlike paintings of de Chirico. Arp's sculptures are large, smooth, abstract forms, and Miró, a formal member of the group for a short time only, employed, as a rule, fantastic shapes, which included deliberate adaptations of children's art and which also had something in common with the designs used by the native Catalan artists to decorate pottery. The Russian-American painter Pavel Tchelichew, while not a member of the surrealists, created surrealist images in his paintings as well as in his numerous ballet designs. An American offshoot of the surrealist movement is the group of artists known as the magic realists, under the leadership of the painter Paul Cadmus. The group also includes George Tooker, Ivan Le Lorraine Albright, Philip Evergood, Peter Blume, and Louis Guglielmi. The assemblage sculptor Joseph Cornell began as an acknowledged surrealist, but later pursued his highly individual art. The surrealists' attitude toward free creation was a major influence on the beginnings of abstract expressionism in New York City. A representative collection of the graphic works of the surrealists is in the Museum of Modern Art and of the magic realists in the Whitney Museum of American Art, both in New York City.

SUREALSIM- In the Beginning

At the end of the First War World, Tristan Tzara, leader of the Dada movement, wanted to attack society through scandal. He believed that a society that creates the monstrosity of war does not deserve art, so he decided to give it anti-art–not beauty but ugliness. With phrases like *Dada destroys everything!* Tzara wanted to offend the new industrial commercial world–the bourgeoisie. However, his intended victims were not insulted at all. Instead they thought that this rebellious new expression opposed, not them but the "old art" and the "old patrons" of feudalism and church dominion. In fact, the bourgeoisie embraced this "rebellious" new art so thoroughly that anti-art became Art, the anti-academy the Academy, the anti-conventionalism the Convention, and the rebellion through chaotic images, the status quo.

One group of artists, however, did not embrace this new art that threw away all which centuries of artists had learned and passed on about the craft of art. The Surrealist movement gained momentum after the Dada movement. It was lead by Andre Breton, a French doctor who had fought in the trenches during the First World War. The artists in the movement researched and studied the works of Sigmund Freud and Carl Jung. Some of the artists in the group expressed themselves in the abstract tradition, while others, expressed themselves in the symbolic tradition.

Two Distinct Groups Emerge

Michael S. Bell, through his research, realized that these two forms of expression formed two distinct trends of surrealism with marked differences. One could be qualified as **Automatism**, the other, as **Veristic Surrealism**. "Automatism" explains Mr. Bell, "is a form of abstraction. It has been the only type of surrealism accepted by critical reviewers after the war."

Basically, two different interpretations of the works of Freud and Jung divided the two groups. For the purpose of personal analysis, Jung had talked about not judging the images of the subconscious, but simply accepting them as they came into consciousness so they could be analyzed. This was termed Automatism.

The Automatists

> When psychology talked about Automatism, these artists interpreted it as referring to a suppression of consciousness in favor of the subconscious. This group, being more focused on feeling and less analytical, understood Automatism to be the automatic way in which the images of the subconscious reach the conscience. They believed these images should not be burdened with "meaning."
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> Faithful to this interpretation, the Automatists saw the academic discipline of art as intolerant of the free expression of feeling, and felt form, which had dominated the history of art, was a culprit in that intolerance. They believed abstractionism was the only way to bring to life the images of the subconscious. Coming from the Dada tradition, these artists also linked scandal, insult and irreverence toward the elite's with freedom. They continued to believe that lack of form was a way to rebel against them.

The Veristic Surrealists

This group, on the other hand, interpreted Automatism to mean allowing the images of the subconscious to surface undisturbed so that their meaning could then be deciphered through analysis. They wanted to faithfully represent these images as a link between the abstract spiritual realities, and the real forms of the material world. To them, the object stood as a metaphor for an inner reality. Through metaphor the concrete world could be understood, not by looking at the objects, but by looking into them.

Veristic Surrealists, saw academic discipline and form as the means to represent the images of the subconscious with veracity; as a way to freeze images that, if unrecorded, would easily dissolve once again into the unknown. They hoped to find a way to follow the images of the subconscious until the conscience could understand their meaning. The language of the subconscious is the image, and the consciousness had to learn to decode that language so it could translate it into its own language of words.

Later, Veristic Surrealism branched out into three other groups (see Research on Surrealism In America).

Two Masters, Two Opposing Approaches to Art

Every profession has its own history in which the accumulation of knowledge is the basis to push the frontiers into the unknown. Dali and Picasso are two masters who stand at the vanguard of two opposite approaches to art in the Twentieth Century: To use that accumulated knowledge and build upon it, or to discard it.

Dali embraced all the science of painting as a way to study the psyche through subconscious images. He called this process the Paranoiac Critical Method. As any paranoiac, the artist should allow these images to reach the conscience, and then do what the paranoiac cannot do: Freeze them on canvas to give consciousness the opportunity to comprehend their meaning. Later on, he expanded the process into the Oniric-Critical Method, in which the artist pays attention to his dreams, freezing them through art, and analyzing them as well. As Freud said, "A dream that is not interpreted is like a letter that is not opened."

Picasso took the opposite approach to art. He inherited the gusto for ugliness, scandal and chaos of the Dada movement and the automatic surrealists. Picasso rejected the craft to become "primitive," deciding that the ingenuity of childhood is the basis of art. To him this meant that the less the artist is preoccupied with his craft the better his art. To Dali, however, the "ingenuity of childhood" meant keeping an open mind and maintaining the curiosity and excitement of the child throughout one's life, not painting as a child.

The Struggle of Surrealism

For the automatists the approach to the mystery of Nature is to never become conscious of the mystery, for the surrealists it is to learn from it. The Picasso camp, won the "faith" of society. The Dali camp would have to secure a dialog with the public to be able to show the individual the "surrealist way of life" or the "path of individuation" as Jung called it.

The Veristic Surrealist quest is none other than the one described by Breton as, "The cause of freedom and the transformation of man's consciousness." In the works of surrealists we find the legacy of Bosch, Brueguel, William Blake, the Symbolic painters of the Nineteenth Century, the perennial questioning of philosophy, the search of psychology, and the spirit of mysticism. It is work based on the desire to permit the forces that created the world to illuminate our vision, allowing us to consciously develop our human potential.

The Veristic surrealists of today recognize the difficulties that their movement has faced during the second half of the Twentieth Century as it attempted to become a major cultural force, like modernism had. The United States, a country in which the business community never had to share its power with the aristocracy, wholeheartedly embraced abstraction and modernism. They shared the belief of abstract artists that the chaos of action painting and automatism were expressions of freedom, and that form, subjugation and inhibition walked hand in hand.

The American art establishment looked at the image of form with mistrust until the advent of *Pop Art*, which glorified the imperialism of commerce, advertisement and marketing. Later, *Photorealism* which glorified modern life, was accepted. With these two movements **Realism** entered the cultural picture again (see Art Through the Ages). Therefore, the only historical artistic expression still in want of recognition as a cultural force in the Twentieth Century, is Veristic Surrealism.

The Future of Surrealism

Because it was ignored and rejected by the new academy of modernism, Veristic Surrealism in its evolution has become a new art. A new art that in the words of Donald Kuspit, "Must first show that it has democratic appeal–appeal to those generally unschooled in art or not professionally interested in it. Then it must suffer a period of aristocratic rejection by those schooled in an accepted and thereby 'traditional' form of art–those with a vested interest in a known art and concerned with protecting it at all costs."

Contemporary Veristic Surrealists have worked for the past fifty years in silent seclusion. A renaissance of this art form will provide the world with new eternal aesthetic pleasures and reawaken the use of meaningful expression in art, so that it can once again have a dialogue with the public.

It would take fifty years for artists born after the Second World War to discover how right this method is for helping us all understand the architecture of the psyche. Those who have understood the method, who have faithfully followed the images of the subconscious and, with patience, painted and analyzed them, have a lot to teach us about the make up and interaction of the three planes of the Spiritual, the psychological, and the physical.

A Biography Of The Surrealist Artist, Salvador Dali.
1904-1989

The Spanish artist, Salvador Dali, is considered one of the most impressive artists of the 20th century, not only because of his paintings but also because of his eccentric character. Dali was born in 1904 in

Figures, Spain, and nine months after the death of his older brother, who was also named Salvador. At the young age of 10, Dali first began painting. It was at the age of 12 that he vacationed with an artistic family, the Pichots. Ramon Pichots was probably Dali's first role model as a painter and influenced much of his early development and interest in art. He later attended Municipal Drawing School, where he first received formal art training, learned draftsmanship, painting, and engraving from Senor Nunez. In 1917, Dali's father organized an exhibition of his charcoal drawings in their family home. A year later, in 1918, one of his drawings was published in a Catalan magazine, Patufet. Dali was also recognized in local newspapers and the magazine Stadium. In 1921, Dali's mother passed away. Quickly after her death, his father married her sister.

Having been already exposed to the artist movement and styles of Impressionism, Post-Impressionism, and Futurism, he was accepted to the Academia de San Fernando in Madrid, only to be expelled in 1926 for refusing to take the examination in "Fine Art Theory." He stated that the faculty was not competent enough to examine him. During this time he explored Cubism, Neo-Classicism, and Realism in his paintings. The year 1929 proved to be an important year for Dali: he made his first Surrealist Film, Un Chien Andalou (An Adualusian Dog) with former classmate Luis Bunuel, joined the Surrealist group, and in June, he met Gala Eluard, the wife of Paul Eluard, a Surrealist poet. She eventually became hi wife, his muse, and influence behind many of his paintings. Other inspirational people for Dali were Picasso, Miro, the architect Guadi, and especially the landscape of Catalonia.

The Surrealist's ideology was based on Freudian psychology, which systematized the analysis of dreams as revealed in images from the subconscious. Many of Dali's work during the 1930's were intaglio prints that accompanied Surrealist books and periodicals; these prints included "L' Immaculee Conception," and "La Femme Visible."

The works leaned toward provocative, and the "paranoiac-critical method," which Dali' defined as a spontaneous mode of irrational understanding based on interpretative critical association of delirious phenomena. The Oxford Companion to Art refers to it as "an attempt to make systemic use of the organizational force of hallucinatory and obsessive experience with special emphasis on multiple figuration." Even the Surrealist group thought of these works as risque and controversial. Eventually, in 1934 Dali separated from the Surrealist group, because of his conflicting view toward their commitment to Marxist politics and development of rituals, and dogmas. He demanded absolute freedom, and he felt their censorship and political motivations were constricting his ingenuity.

Dali and Gala fled the German invasion of France in 1940 and headed toward the United States, where they stayed until 1948. During much of this time Dali gained international fame by capitalizing on self-advertisement through television, advertisements, and publications. As one of the most diverse artists of the twentieth century, Dali worked in many mediums, designing state settings, jewelry, clothing, and perfume; he also worked on animation for Walt Disney movies, which were never finished. He refers to this period as the time he desired to become "classic."

The bombing of Nagasaki and Hiroshima made quite an impression on Dali, he entered what is called his Nuclear and Atomic period. By the 1950's he had begun to focus on religious themes and in the 1960's Dali experimented with Pop and Op Art, as well as Abstract Expressionism, which eventually culminated in the stereoscopic paintings and holographs of the 1970's. The early 1950's he developed his principals of Nuclear Mysticism, in which he concluded "the very basis of life would prove to be spiral."

In 1970, Dali and Gala parted ways and he gave her the Castle at Pubol and only visited her with written invitation. In 1982, Gala died at the Castle Pubol. With his muse gone, he no longer had the desire to create and only did a handful of paintings and prints. Before dying of heart failure in 1989, he lived as a recluse in a room adjacent to his Teatro-Museum. He is now interred in his museum, surrounded by his art, which was his life.

Luis Bunuel Biography

Luis Bunuel was born in 1900 in Calanda, a village of about three thousand inhabitants, located 115 kilometers from Zaragoza in Spain. He was the first born of seven children. At the end of the last century Bunuel's parents owned a small cottage in Calanda, which they ripped down to build a larger one. In the mean time, they rented a stately mansion from a rich noble family. Here Luis was born to a wholesale merchant who had spent most of his life in America, and a Spanish native who had married him at the age of seventeen. Luis was baptized in Calanda just prior to his family moving to Zaragoza, the capital of Aragon.

Growing up he was a quiet little boy who served at mass, sang in the choir, and enjoyed playing with his two brothers and four sisters. The Bunuel children would dress up and put on plays using written dialogues. Sometimes Luis would participate in sadistic games, such as daring one another to swallow cigarette butts found in the street, or to eat sandwiches covered with ants.

At the young age of six, he was sent to the College of the Brothers of the Sacred Heart, and at seven moved to the Jesuit College where he worked on his baccalaureat, of bachelor degree, until he was sixteen. He always received top grades, but was embarrassed when he received titles like "Laurel Crown", "Carthiginarian". When he was fifteen, he began spending all holidays in San Sebastian, returning home only for Easter.

His early life was not irrelevant to his development later in life as a film artist. He liberated himself violently from his religion, which had been the cause of a lot of anxiety earlier in life. Another aspect of his early life that he rebelled against was his social status. He was a product of the bourgeoisie, and his family was part of an urban culture that was liberal and intellectual, but also landowners. Bunuel's work as a film artist was a pitiless analysis of his childhood, filled with aesthetic reminders whether they be musical, literary, or simply objects.

Bunuel's chief interests after achieving his bachelor degree were music, being the violin, and natural sciences. Bunuel opted to continue his study of music, but his father refused, insisting that he continue his studies within his other interest. He was sent to the Students Residence in Madrid to study to be an agricultural engineer. He learned to hate his studies during this time as he was forced to study mathematics for three years. After that, Bunuel was determined to succeed without his father's advice or help. In 1920 he enrolled as a student under Dr. Bolivar, an entomologist and director of the Museum of Natural History in Madrid. He studied insects, but after a year realized that he was more interested in the life or literature of insects than their anatomy.

During this time he formed many friendships in the Students Residence with a group of young artists who would influence him greatly. Among them were the poets Federico Garcia Lorca and Moreno Villa, and painter Salvador Dali. Bunuel preferred having discussions with these friends to sitting at a

microscope at the museum. Together, the young artists collaborated on literary publications and wrote poetry. Bunuel also pursued sports during this time. He became an amateur boxing champ in Spain.

It was his contact with the young artists, though, and their shared existence that was a catalyst to Bunuel as the celebrated film artist that he is known as today. The artists headed the Surrealist movement, from which Bunuel drew inspiration. Since 1920, Spain's most outstanding names in the fields of science, arts, and sociology have come from that incredibly strong movement. Many names along with the recognizable Bunuel and Salvador Dali are Alberti Guillen, Damaso Alonzo, Barradas, Palencia, Vazquez Diaz, Jose Ortega, and Adolfo Salazar.

Luis Bunuel went on to have an extensive film career. His important works often included details that were taken from his youth. The dreamlike imagery in his early films like 1928's *Un Chien Andalou* can be accounted for by his less than common childhood, his struggle with his religious beliefs, and his inspiration from his friends in the Students Residence.

Later, his work changed as he moved into another period of his life. Films like *Robinson Crusoe* explore his entry into commercial cinema to a degree. Bunuel never lost sight of his goals as a film artist and he took from his past to create much of the imagery that turns up in his work.

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Un Chien Andalou

April 16, 2000

BY ROGER EBERT

Luis Bunuel said that if he were told he had 20 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." Dreams were the nourishment of his films, and from his earliest days as a surrealist in Paris to his triumphs in his late 70s, dream logic was always likely to interrupt the realism of his films. That freedom gave them a quality so distinctive that, like those of Alfred Hitchcock and Federico Fellini, they could be identified almost immediately.

His first film, written in collaboration with the notorious surrealist artist Salvador Dali, was "Un Chien Andalou" (1928). Neither the title ("an Andalusian dog") nor anything else in the film was intended to make sense. It remains the most famous short film ever made, and anyone halfway interested in the cinema sees it sooner or later, usually several times.

It was made in the hope of administering a revolutionary shock to society. "For the first time in the history of the cinema," wrote the critic Ado Kyrou, "a director tries not to please but rather to alienate nearly all potential spectators." That was then, this is now. Today, its techniques have been so thoroughly absorbed even in the mainstream that its shock value is diluted--except for that famous shot of the slicing of the eyeball, or perhaps the shot of the man dragging the grand piano that has the priests and the dead donkeys on top of it. . . .

It is useful to remember that "Un Chien Andalou" was made not by the Bunuel and Dali that we see as crumbling old men in photographs, but by headstrong young men in their 20s, intoxicated by the freedom of Paris during the decade of the Lost Generation. There is a buried connection between the surrealists and the Sex Pistols, Bunuel and David Lynch, Dali and Damien Hirst (the artist who exhibited half a lamb in a cube of plastic). "Although the surrealists didn't consider themselves terrorists," Bunuel wrote in his autobiography, "they were constantly fighting a society they despised. Their principal weapon wasn't guns, of course; it was scandal."

The scandal of "Un Chien Andalou" has become one of the legends of the surrealists. At the first screening, Bunuel claimed, he stood behind the screen with his pockets filled with stones, "to throw at the audience in case of disaster." Others do not remember the stones, but Bunuel's memories were sometimes a vivid rewrite of life. When he and his friends first saw Sergei Eisenstein's revolutionary Soviet film "Battleship Potemkin," he claimed, they left the theater and immediately began tearing up the street stones to build barricades. True?

"Un Chien Andalou" was one of the first handmade films--movies made by their creators on a shoestring budget, without studio financing. It is an ancestor of the works of John Cassavetes and today's independent digital movies. Bunuel (1900-1983), a Spaniard lured to Paris by vague dreams of becoming an artist, found employment in the film industry, learned on the job, was fired for insulting the great director Abel Gance and drifted into the orbit of the surrealists.

He went to spend a few days at the house of Dali, a fellow Spaniard, and told him of a dream he'd had, in which a cloud sliced the moon in half, "like a razor blade slicing through an eye." Dali countered with his own dream about a hand crawling with ants. "And what if we started right there and made a film?" he asked Bunuel, and they did. They wrote the screenplay together, and Bunuel directed, taking only a few days and borrowing the budget from his mother.

In collaborating on the scenario, their method was to toss shocking images or events at one another. Both had to agree before a shot was included in the film. "No idea or image that might lend itself to a rational explanation of any kind would be accepted," Bunuel remembered. "We had to open all doors to the irrational and keep only those images that surprised us, without trying to explain why."

The image of the moon was followed by the image of a man with a razor (Bunuel) slicing a woman's eye (actually a calf's eye--although legend has transformed it into a pig). The hand crawling with ants was followed by a transvestite on a bicycle, a hairy armpit, a severed hand on the sidewalk, a stick poking the hand, a silent-movie-style sexual assault, a woman protecting herself with a tennis racket, the would-be rapist pulling the piano with its bizarre load, two apparently living statues in sand from the torso up and so on. To describe the movie is simply to list its shots because there is no story line to link them.

And yet we try to link them nevertheless. Countless analysts have applied Freudian, Marxist and Jungian formulas to the film. Bunuel laughed at them all. Still, to look at the film is to learn how thoroughly we have been taught by other films to find meaning even when it isn't there.

Bunuel told an actress to look out the window at "anything--a military parade, perhaps." In fact, the next shot shows the transvestite falling dead off the bicycle. We naturally assume the actress is looking at the body on the sidewalk. It is alien to everything we know about the movies to conclude that the window

shot and the sidewalk shot simply happen to follow one another without any connection. In the same way, we assume that the man pulls the piano (with the priests, dead donkeys, etc.) across the room *because* his sexual advance has been rebuffed by the woman with the tennis racket. But Bunuel might argue the events have no connection--the man's advance is rejected, and then, in an absolutely unrelated action, he picks up the ropes and starts to pull the piano.

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. Bunuel might argue that his actors have a similar relationship to the events surrounding them.

Luis Bunuel made another surrealist film, "L'Age d'Or" (1930), which was accused of sacrilege and suppressed for many years. He was a journeyman for MGM at one point, supervising the Spanish-language versions of Hollywood movies. He made many movies in Mexico, some of them, like "The Young and the Damned" and "The Criminal Life of Archibaldo de la Cruz," highly valued. At 61 he had a worldwide hit with "Viridiana," with its shocking scene modeled on the Last Supper. For the next 17 years, a period of inspired productivity, he produced one astonishing film after another, such as "The Exterminating Angel," "Diary of a Chambermaid," "Belle de Jour," "That Obscure Object of Desire," "The Discreet Charm of the Bourgeoise," "Tristana" and "The Phantom of Liberty."

"Un Chien Andalou" is a curtain-raiser: In a way, he was never unfaithful to it. A movie like this is a tonic. It assaults old and unconscious habits of moviegoing. It is disturbing, frustrating, maddening. It seems without purpose (and yet how much purpose, really, is there in seeing most of the movies we attend?). There is wry humor in it, and a cheerful willingness to offend. Most members of today's audiences are not offended, and maybe that means the surrealists won their revolution: They demonstrated that art (and life) need not follow obediently within narrow restrictions that have been decreed since time immemorial. And that in a film that is alive and not mummified by convention, you never know what you might see when you look out the window.

Enlargements of all the key frames and images in the film can be found at: http://www.tcf.ua.edu/Classes/Jbutler/T340/SurrealismUnChienAndalou1.htm. "Un Chien Andalou" is available on video, and will play with a live orchestral accompaniment April 30 in Roger Ebert's Overlooked Film Festival at the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign. Available online: Ebert's Great Movie reviews of the Bunuel films "The Exterminating Angel" and "Belle de Jour," at www.suntimes.com/ebert.

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UN CHIEN ANDALOU --

Un Chien Andalou was the calling card of two desperate, unknown Spanish artists. It "came from an encounter between two dreams." (1) The script was an easy and joyful joint collaboration between Buñuel and Dali (Buñuel would continue to write scripts in collaboration for the rest of his life), and Buñuel shot the film quickly over two weeks on a small budget supplied by his mother. Dali later claimed to have had a greater involvement in the filming, but by all contemporaneous accounts this does not seem to have been the case.

The film illustrates Buñuel's awesome ability as a fledgling filmmaker and served as a calling card for Buñuel and Dali into the elite club of the surrealists. After just over seventy years, the remarkable opening sequence still retains its power: "Once upon a time…" the introductory title proclaims. A proletarian Buñuel, feverishly puffing a cigarette, sharpens the blade of a razor. He cuts his fingernail to prove it is sharp. He exits the room for a balcony and looks at the full moon. A slither of a cloud is about to bisect the moon. Buñuel forces open wide the eye of a woman who has appeared from nowhere. The cloud cuts across the surface of the moon and the razor slices the eye apart. There is a second title, "Eight years later," which like all of the titles in the film is paradoxical and seemingly irrelevant.

This sequence still shocks and it is purported that Buñuel, although the originator of the idea and the images, was nauseated the first few times he viewed the scene. (2) This is the most famous sequence but it is also the key to the rest of the film. As Jean Vigo so profoundly stated: "Can there be any spectacle more terrible than the sight of a cloud obscuring the moon at its full? The prologue can hardly have one indifferent. It tells us that in this film we must see with a different eye." (3)

It is with this different perspective that the film must be viewed. One sequence leads seductively to the succeeding one, objects from one shot reappear in the next, a process of free association occurs; the illusion of a narrative of sorts develops. Dali stated in 1928, of the film's theme: "the pure and correct line of 'conduct' of a human who pursues love through wretched humanitarian, patriotic ideals and the other miserable workings of reality." (4) This seems to be the general perspective of most writers discussing the film. Nevertheless, Buñuel offered an alternative explanation: "Our only rule was very simple: No idea or image that might lend itself to a rational explanation of any kind would be accepted. We had to open all doors to the irrational and keep only those images that surprised us, without trying to explain why." (5)

Buñuel wanted to shock and insult the intellectual bourgeoisie. Buñuel later said, "Historically the film represents a violent reaction against what in those days was called 'avant-garde,' which was aimed exclusively at artistic sensibility and the audience's reason." (6) His film was to be 'a gob of spit in the face of art,' as Henry Miller, an obsessed supporter of *Un Chien Andalou*, was later to describe his own *Tropic of Cancer*. To achieve this, Buñuel and Dali made a film that was open to a myriad of interpretations, rendering such analyses redundant. The crutch of understanding through narrative or theme is useless. As Dali explained, the intention of the film was, "To disrupt the mental anxiety of the spectator," and one of the easiest ways to do this is to thwart the viewer's ability to logically interpret proceedings. (7) In the film, as in dreams, there is a dislocation of time and space. The disruption of time predominantly occurs through the use of the intertitles which almost appear to be a key to an understanding of the film. The dislocation of space occurs through the opportunistic use of locations. A

street and a beach occupy the same space outside the room, itself the central location of the film. What is necessary is to accept the film for what it is.

Yet most critics desire to increase our comprehension and ability to access the film through interpretation. As the film is made by a surrealist, psychoanalysis comes to the fore as an interpretative method. Yet interpretation is ultimately pointless. The most effective manner in which to appreciate the film is to allow the images to seduce, to watch with your eyes and emotions and not to seek an explanation.

This is a first film by two relatively young intellectuals and it is striking. Yet for all its critical and financial success, it never truly achieved its aim of outraging or affronting middle-class sensibilities. (8) Although there are reports of disruptions of screenings, these seem to be based on false memories of events surrounding the release of Buñuel's next film, *L'Age d'Or* (1930), where the blasphemy and perversion quotient was increased. *L'Age d'Or* was banned, but Buñuel was disappointed by the bourgeoisie's reception of *Un Chien Andalou*. He would later justify their response by stating, "What can I do about the people who adore all that is new, even when it goes against their deepest convictions, or about the insincere, corrupt press, and the inane herd that saw beauty or poetry in something which was basically no more than a desperate impassioned call for murder?" (9) Yet Sergei Eisenstein, on viewing the film in Switzerland in August 1929 stated that the film exposed, "the extent of the disintegration of bourgeois consciousness." (10) Was Eisenstein far from the truth? Buñuel was raised as a member of the feudal gentry in a pious and disciplined Catholic Spain, and although exiled by Franco's regime, he was, by the 1950s, increasingly accepting of Franco, even saying controversially in 1983, "I am even prepared to believe that he [Franco] kept Spain out of World War Two." (11)

Un Chien Andalou was, as were many of Buñuel's later films, a huge success amongst the French bourgeoisie, and a parallel can be seen between the careers of Buñuel and Chabrol. Chabrol is a self-confessed bourgeois who hates the complacency of his class. His films are deeply critical of the bourgeoisie yet his films have always benefited from the patronage of the middle-class. The same can be said of Buñuel. This can also be seen in Buñuel's uneasy relationship with the Catholic church. Undoubtedly the blasphemous content of his first two shorts contributed to Buñuel's banishment from Spain, and his ongoing vitriolic criticism of the Catholic church maintained the enmity of Franco's government. But *Nazarin* (1958), about a saintly but impractical priest's inability to improve the living conditions of the destitute peasants around him, nor to influence their hypocritical values, won an ecumenical prize from the International Catholic Cinema Office.

Buñuel always liked to shock. The eye-slicing in *Un Chien Andalou*, and Christ portrayed as the Duo de Blangis (obviously the Marquis de Sade) in *L'Age d'Or* are prime examples of this. Referring to *Un Chien Andalou* in 1983, Buñuel wrote, "I suggested that we [the surrealists of 1929] burn the negative... something I would have done without hesitation had the group agreed. In fact I'd still do it today; I can imagine a huge pyre in my own little garden where all my negatives and all the copies of my own films go up in flames. It wouldn't make the slightest difference." (12) Yet, for someone so nonchalant about his work, it is revealing that in the 1960s Buñuel created the sonorised version of *Un Chien Andalou*, based on the original music (Wagner, a South American tango) used for its original release.

How does *Un Chien Andalou* fit into the body of Buñuel's work? As with all of Buñuel's films, *Un Chien Andalou* illustrates Buñuel's obsessions and is replete with references to his upbringing.

Recurrent reference points are surrealism and religion, as already mentioned, seasoned with violence and a willingness to shock. Images from Spain appear regularly throughout his work as do images of the poor and suffering. It was Buñuel's only silent film and perhaps for this reason appears more dynamic than his other works. Along with *L'Age d'Or* and *Las Hurdes* (1933), the film is very explicit and confrontational. These three films are exercises in style and form. It is here that Buñuel learnt his craft, but thereafter, as Freddy Buache has said, Buñuel could still shock but "He preferred to bury his explosives blandly beneath the surface of an apparently traditional style." (13) However, this could be misconstrued. Rene Clair's surrealist *Entr'acte* (1924), made four years before *Un Chien Andalou*, has a greater appreciation of, and daring use of style. It does make Buñuel's film look traditional by comparison. Yet, for a film made as a companion piece to a Dadaist ballet, it lacks *Un Chien Andalou*'s grace and fluidity. Clair may be the greater stylist, but Buñuel is the greater filmmaker.