**Un Chien Andalou**

*Un Chien Andalou* (*An Andalusian Dog*, 1929) is a short Surrealist film by Luis Buñuel and Salvador Dalí, who collaborated on the scenario. The opening sequence of the film is one of the most famous within the experimental film tradition: the image of a thin sliver of a cloud crossing in front of the moon is then immediately doubled by an extreme close-up of a straight razor slashing open a woman’s eyeball. This sequence exemplifies one of the Surrealist intentions for cinema, as Buñuel would later claim, to “express the world of dreams, of emotions, of instinct” (Buñuel, 1958: 138). For the Surrealists, one of the revolutionary goals for art and politics was to liberate both desire and imagination, allowing the spectator to see the world with a new eye unconditioned by repressive bourgeois morality. The rest of the film, which purposefully defies any coherent narrative or definitive interpretation, is full of images intended to shock and disrupt the spectator’s supposedly safe position: ants crawl out of a hole in a man’s hand; a man pulls two grand pianos with dead, rotting donkeys with two live priests dragged behind; a beautiful androgynous woman casually pokes at a severed hand with a stick before being hit by a car. Buñuel was incensed that his film was positively received by bourgeois critics as a titillating aesthetic experience, notoriously stating that they “found beautifulor poeticsomething that was basically a desperate, passionate call to murder” (Buñuel, 1929: 34). While this work would be one of the few uncontested films within the so-called Surrealist film canon, its subsequent influence would be felt on diverse and disparate examples: the experimental film and video tradition, music videos and filmmakers like David Lynch and Guy Maddin.

**Further Reading:**

Buñuel, L. (1929) “Un Chien Andalou.” *La Révolution Surréaliste* (12): 34-37.

(full French language version available):

http://melusine.univ-paris3.fr/Revolution\_surrealiste/Revol\_surr\_12.htm

Buñuel, L. (1958) “Cinema as an Instrument of Poetry.” In Buñuel and White. pp. 136-

141.

Buñuel, L. (1983) *My Last Sigh*. London: Alfred A. Knopf.

Buñuel, L., & White, G. (2000) *An unspeakable betrayal: Selected writings of Luis*

*Buñuel*. Berkeley: University of California Press.

Edwards, G. (2005) *A Companion to Luis Buñuel*. Woodbridge, Suffolk: Tamesis.

**Paratextual Material:**

Attached:

1. Seeing film with a different eye. An image from *Un Chien Andalou* (1929)

*Un Chien Andalou* (1929) – out of copyright

http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=BIKYF07Y4kA

---

Ryan Robert Mitchell

York University, Toronto