

## Document Citation

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L'AGE D'OR (THE GOLDEN AGE) and  
France, 1930

UN CHIEN ANDALOU (AN ANDALUSIAN DOG)  
France, 1929

*This film is aimed neither at the heart nor the mind  
but directly at the solar plexus.*

—Henry Miller

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Since 1930 the solar plexus of the average moviegoer has been pummeled by a rain of blows increasingly intense and ever more frequent. So it is questionable whether today, forty years after they were made, *L'Age d'Or* and *Un Chien Andalou* have quite the impact they once did. Much depends upon one's expectations. There are at least three ways of looking at these films. It is not enough to view them in order to see what they say about the world of their time, though they certainly say a good deal.

Perhaps the best approach to any surrealist film is simply to sit back, open one's eyes and ears, and let the images and sounds flow in. A great deal has been said about the so-called passivity of film viewers who cannot be expected to have the sorts of transactions with film that theater thrives on. But it should be added that genuine passivity requires an openness of mind as well as open, receptive senses which in turn depend upon habits, attitudes and even physical conditions. If one is truly receptive and alert, *L'Age d'Or* and *Un Chien Andalou* can still surprize, shock and excite. Then, afterward, there is time to assimilate and think about one's experience.

Active, analytical viewing of the film is also a profitable approach. Buñuel is a tough Spaniard whose intellect is omnipresent in his films and, especially, in *L'Age d'Or*. "On the sound track alone practically every device known to the modern cinema—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—is to be found." (John Russell Taylor, *Cinema Eye, Cinema Ear*, Hill & Wang, N.Y., 1964) And what Buñuel is up to—what he is doing with his seemingly unobtrusive style—is a constant challenge to the viewer.

It is not too much to say that *L'Age d'Or* and *Un Chien Andalou* surpass the best surrealist paintings in the sense that these paintings have become part of the Establishment, but the films of Luís Buñuel have not.

—Philip Chamberlin

L'Age d'Or: Directed by Luís Buñuel and produced by Buñuel in association with Vicomte Charles de Noailles. Screenplay by Luís Buñuel and Salvador Dali. Edited by Luís Buñuel. Photography by Albert Dubergen under the direction of Dr. P. P. Brauer. Art direction by Schildtnecht. Original music by Georges van Parys. Music directed by Armand Bernard from the works of Wagner, Debussy, Beethoven and Mendelssohn. CAST: Gaston Modot (The Man), Lya Lys (The Girl), Max Ernst, Pierre Prévert, Jose Artigas, Cardinal de Lamberdesque, Lionel Salem, Mme. Noizet and Jacques Brunius. Running time: 65 minutes.

Un Chien Andalou: Directed by Luís Buñuel. Scenario by Salvador Dali and Buñuel. Music: excerpts from *Tristan and Isolde*, by Richard Wagner. CAST: Pierre Batcheff, Simone Mareuil, Jaime Miravilles, Salvador Dali and Luís Buñuel (as the young man with the razor).