# MAIDSERVANTS AND MIDDLE-CLASS *SEÑORITAS* IN PRE-DEVELOPMENTALIST MADRID: SAURA AND PATINO AT THE INSTITUTO DE INVESTIGACIONES Y EXPERIENCIAS CINEMATOGRÁFICAS

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## MADRID IN THE FILM SCHOOL

To obtain a clear picture of the way Spanish films represented the city of Madrid during the Francoist period, it is essential to consider the work produced by Instituto de Investigaciones y Experiencias Cinematográficas (IIEC) and its successor, Escuela Oficial de Cinematografía (EOC). Throughout the period from 1947 to 1976, almost all outdoor footage taken by students of these Madrid film schools was shot in the streets, parks, gardens, municipal facilities and monuments of Spain's capital. In total, there are several hundred short and medium-length films made by film students who just a few years later, upon completing their studies, would be responsible for some of the most important milestones in Spanish cinema in the second half of the 20th century.

The precarious nature of these productions—in terms of both the film equipment and the sets—and the increasing influence of the realist fashion on these apprentice filmmakers over the course of the 1950s would make outdoor locations an almost inevitable choice for the settings of their stories, as had been the case in post-war Italy. The ruins of Madrid's University City in *Paseo por una guerra antigua* [A Stroll through an Old War] (Luis García Berlanga, Juan Antonio Bardem, Florentino Soria & Agustín Navarro, 1949) (Pérez, 2016; Deltell & García Sahagún, 2020; Aranzubia, 2021), the airport in *Barajas* (Juan Antonio Bardem, 1950), El Rastro in *Dos veces trece* [Twice Thirteen] (Florentino Soria, 1951), and the suburbs in *Áspero camino* [Rough Road] (José Gutiérrez Maesso, 1950) thus became privileged locations for the student projects completed by the first generation of IIEC graduates, all of which reflect the realist trend in different ways. And when, by the middle of the next decade, fantasy (and other genres) had replaced realism as the model to follow, outdoor settings would somewhat paradoxically continue to be the preferred option for certain

low-budget science-fiction films, such as *Los buenos samaritanos* [The Good Samaritans] (Francisco Montolio, 1966) and *Soy leyenda* [I Am Legend] (Mario Gómez Martín, 1967) (Aranzubia, Aguilar & Castro de Paz, 2022), which would use vacant lots on Madrid's outskirts to create the image of the futuristic and in some cases post-apocalyptic landscapes typical of the genre. However, of all the city locations chosen as sets by IIEC-EOC students, El Retiro park would be the site of the most and the widest variety of film shoots: from the moral fable with the atmosphere of a Chinese fairytale in *Gran plegaria ante los muros de la ciudad* [The Great Prayer at the City Walls] (Carlos Gortari, 1967) to the social drama about a serial child killer in *Luciano* (Claudio Guerín-Hill, 1965) (Aranzubia & Castro de Paz, 2010), along with the political tirade of *Antoñito vuelve a casa*… [Antoñito Returns Home] (Manuel Revuelta, 1969) and the various projects based on the same premise of a Sunday evening in the city, notably including two productions with practically identical titles: Carlos Saura's *La tarde del domingo* [The Sunday Evening] (1957) and Basilio Martín Patino's *Tarde de domingo* [Sunday Evening] (1961).

## THE *MAIDSERVANT*

After two initial practice efforts without sound—*Tío vivo* [Merry-Go-Round] (1954) and *La llamada* [The Call] (1955)—filmed in his second and third years at IIEC, and one flawed final project—*Pax* (1955)—that received a failing grade, Carlos Saura was advised by Eduardo Ducay that for his next submission he should try "something more sensible, more everyday" (Santesmases, 2021: 32) and in some way closer to the principles of Italian neorealism that were so in vogue at the time. Although Saura intended to try again with "something […] experimental, with a lot of camera movements and all that [and] had chosen an American novel, by William Irish, something a little Hitchcockian", no doubt influenced by the Madrid première in October 1955 of *Rear Window* (Alfred Hitchcock, 1954), based on another story by the same American author, he ultimately allowed himself to be guided by the compelling opinion of his fellow Aragonese, the man who had directed his work on *Carta de Sanabria* [Letter from Sanabria] (Eduardo Ducay, 1955) and in just one night (according to Saura himself) they adapted a story by Fernando Guillermo de Castro about a thwarted autumn Sunday evening in the life of a humble small-town girl employed as a housemaid by the kind of uncouth, narrow-minded middle-class national Catholic family typical of the era.[1]

Despite the undeniably neorealist premise—and Saura himself would acknowledge that it is perhaps his only film made under the more or less direct influence of the Italian movement, although there is also a clear connection to the literary group known as the Generation of '50, some of whose members (such as Ignacio Aldecoa, Carmen Martín Gaite, Jesús Fernández Santos, and Daniel Sueiro) were friends of the filmmaker—the impact of Juan Antonio Bardem's recently released landmark film *Main Street* (Calle Mayor, 1956) seems to be just as crucial for a full understanding of some of Saura's semantic strategies in this film. Indeed, the narrator's voice-over that begins the film while the camera pans over the rooftops of Madrid on a Sunday morning reveals a clearly didactic and generalising intention[2] that might have been taken either from Italian cinema or from the early use of extra-diegetic narrators in the *cinema herido* of post-war Spain (Rafael Gil's adaptations of Fernández Flórez, Luis García Berlanga, and Bardem himself), combined here with the naturalist approach of *Death of a Cyclist* (Muerte de un ciclista, Juan Antonio Bardem, 1955), which aspired to present "a 'scale model' of Spanish society taken as a whole, […] to give full form to the old naturalist dream of being able to reconstruct the whole of a society out of the fragment of a lost fingernail" (Zunzunegui, 2005: 167).

The obvious didactic approach that the first part of the film might initially be accused of—taking place almost entirely in the family's apartment on the morning of that Sunday (the middle-class family treating the maid with such blatant rudeness, the girl herself so patently despondent)—is clearly a popular, melodramatic and somewhat *Bardemian* starting point that would facilitate the depiction of the everyday life of one of the many poor girls working as domestic servants in those days, setting up what will in fact be a meticulous description of her thankless and interminable household chores and her often humiliating interactions with her bosses and their children.

In exactly the same sense, and in full consonance with the tone of recognition and engagement Saura sought with his potential audience in order to provide access to more complex and obscure discursive realms, the film's soundtrack is equally worthy of analysis, marking as it does the beginning of a film career that would earn Saura the label of "acoustic auteur" (Vernon, 2021: 313-331), capable not only of conceiving of music "as a central thematic element and a basic sign of his directorial style" (Gorbman, 2007: 149), but also of transforming "the acoustic atmosphere, the timbre of the voices [...], the rhythm of the sounds and the silence, [and] the relationship of the auditory phenomena with dramatic and emotional effects" (Wierzbicki, 2012: 12). With total conviction about the dramatic and discursive weight that he wanted to give his film's music, Carlos Saura and his composer Rafael Martínez Torres worked with *Canción de la calle* [Song of the Street] by the sisters Elia and Paloma Fleta,[3] an extremely big hit of the moment that played constantly on the enormous radio receivers found in Spanish houses in those years, like the one that appears in numerous shots in Saura's film. It thus became the musical background in countless Spanish homes, making its presence in the film entirely natural and realistic for a Spanish viewer in 1957. At the same time, the song's lyrics, which refer to thwarted young

Image 1

love, the memory of which "passes from mouth to mouth around the city outskirts",[4] and its profoundly melancholy tone serve as the basis for all kinds of uses and variations over the course of the film: an orchestra version with winds, strings and piano on the film's non-diegetic soundtrack; the original song played on the radio; and a version performed by the band in the party hall at the Cine Salamanca. The song effectively signals Clara's inability to escape her pitiful situation—subtly but powerfully foreshadowing the film's heartbreaking conclusion—and, through some outstanding audiovisual compositions, it is also able to reveal the private emotional evolution of the protagonist, played by a sometimes insecure but nearly always extremely believable Isana Medel.

Shortly after the opening credits begin, while an initial trumpet version of the song plays over shots of the street showing life in the city on a typical Sunday morning (the music shares the audio track with the sound of carts pulled by the humble rag pickers in a Madrid with neighbourhoods still in many ways stuck back in the 19th century, while the church bells calling people to mass), in


Image 2

Image 3

a half-lit establishing shot. And walking along the pavement in the background we see Clara for the first time, practically indistinguishable in this first appearance. The camera seems to anticipate her destination, as it pans upwards to show the outside of the apartment where she works.

The Sunday edition of the Spanish national newspaper, *ABC*, which the paper-boy slips under the door, is the central image of the film's first expressive composition. Its front page shows a woman gathering the wheat harvest, an image echoed at once by Clara's entrance on the left: two subjugated women in different times and places, a natural, diegetic juxtaposition that could be read as a critique of the injustice suffered by maidservants.

While a new ambient instrumental version of the song plays in the background, Clara, who can barely read, struggles to make sense of an ad in the paper and she sits down wearily at the table in a kitchen carefully arranged for the most realistic effect possible (furniture, coffee grinder, dishes, cups, tablecloths, broom, etc.).

Although the very few studies of this film have highlighted its obvious referencing of *Umberto D* (Vittorio de Sica, 1952), thereby confirming its unequivocal debt to neorealism, there has been a tendency to overlook another equally important feature: the sophisticated use of Clara's point of view, which serves as a formal device to convey her inability to achieve even her humblest dreams. It could be argued that there is a point at which Saura abandons the Italian style of atmosphere creation with the inclusion of a brightly lit close-up of the smiling young woman gazing hopefully at the calendar (Sunday, 20 September).

Then, having aggressively established the model of the individual gaze that dominates the mise-en-scène of this first segment in different ways, the subjective composition is abruptly undone by the sour-faced lady of the house shouting: "Clara! Clara! You're starting the day well, sitting down. Come on, get the coffee ready." Saura is happy to present this character to us as a threatening dragon wearing her hair badly done up and a long bathrobe as tasteless as it is supposedly elegant. This marks the beginning of a whole series of visual (im)possibilities for the girl, which are constantly disrupted by the presence or the voice of one of the family members, who cut short her fleeting daydreams. In fact, the only person that Clara can really talk to (albeit not without difficulties) is Visi, the maid who works in the apartment upstairs, with whom she communicates out of the kitchen window. This strategy, supported by the camera's upward pans, portrays the friendly solidarity of the working class, but confines it to

awkward, unnatural exterior shots of a messily framed void. Later, when the employers are gone, they meet briefly to prepare their evening outing, and for the first time we hear the name of Juan, who according to Visi is an extremely handsome "military man" who "never stops talking about" Clara. Although she hides her feelings from her friend, Clara's excitement shows clearly on her face as soon as she is alone.

A short but significant interlude in El Retiro park, where they have arranged to meet with other friends (also housemaids), we are presented with a series of compositions depicting a solitary, melancholy Sunday, while we hear their conversations about their hopes of enjoying the evening ("If you don't enjoy your Sunday, the rest of your week will be dull"), the men they fancy (and who have agreed to meet them that night), and their blushing embarrassment at the bare breast of a statue in the park, but also Clara's complaints about the treatment she receives from her employers: "their kind insult anyone they want to... But don't even think of insulting them back."

Above. Image 4. Below. Image 5

Juan fails to show up, and although his friends try to justify his absence with some pretext related to his military service ("what he is is a shameless cad who has gone off somewhere else," concludes Visi), Clara's romantic daydream is irremediably torn apart. Her friends and the young men all try unsuccessfully to console her, and all the supposed thrills of the dance she had been expecting (the crowded hall, the music, the boys asking her to dance) now turn into violent signifiers of aggression.

As other authors have astutely noted, this second part of the film—the long sequence of the dance—marks the first real example of the documentary realism that would characterise the films Saura made immediately after this one. In fact, with his notable talent as a photographer (Berthier, 2017: 355-387), Saura had previously documented the dance hall at Cine Salamanca, where much of this sequence was filmed with a hidden camera, mixing the actors in with members of the public at a real Sunday dance. This strategy was only possible thanks to the use of the Tri-X negative film stock left over from the filming of *Carta de Sanabria*:

> I think it is the first time that Tri-X, left over from [...] [Ducay's film], had been used in the film school (and perhaps in Spain); it was well-known in photography, but not in cinema. Nobody had dared to use this material in cinema, because it was very fast, around 400 ASA, sheer madness. Thanks to that, I was able to film in the dance hall at the Cine Salamanca, where I used to go quite often. And because in those days you couldn't throw anything

Image 6

Image 7

> out (90% of the footage taken was used in the final cut), however deficient the results might be, you had to leave it in (Sánchez Vidal, 1998: 19).

Clara gradually sinks into a state of desperation, and while she drinks Coca-Cola with a male friend who tries to cheer her up, a quick montage of shots of her face and of the orchestra musicians begins to create a *crescendo* of anxiety that will conclude with her rushing out of the dance hall—the version of *Canción de la calle* played by the orchestra, distorted and grating in her ears, is the definitive trigger for her departure—and running home through the streets of Madrid, where the frenetic city bustle and the lights in the shop windows seem to threaten her mercilessly thanks to the effects of the Tri-X negative film stock. In any case, what is interesting about this sequence is not only the increasing pace of the alternating cuts that seems to foreshadow the visual violence of the famous rabbit hunting scene in *The Hunt* (La caza, Carlos Saura, 1965), but also the relatively long-lasting shots of Clara playing first with the zip on her purse and then with a soft drink bottle cap, where time seems to stand still somehow, presaging the focus on dead time and temporal ambiguity that would come to characterise modern film styles.

Back again in her (non-)home, Clara has to prepare the dinner for the family, in a scene "filmed and lit from a high angle, from a chandelier whose rays of light, like something imposed and crushing, [that] envelopes not only the maid but also its own components" (Sánchez Vidal, 1998: 19). The laughter and applause on the radio contest playing in the background contrasts with

Image 8

Clara's final emotional collapse and her uncontrollable weeping, as she pulls off the page of the calendar while a slow pan seems to show us her dark present and even darker future. She is one of so many Claras, condemned by social inequality to a life that seems much like a living death.

## THE MIDDLE-CLASS *SEÑORITA*

After making two films that have not been preserved—*El descanso* [The Rest], shot in 1957 in his second year at film school, based on photographs of a construction worker who had to cross from one end of Madrid to the other every day after work to get home, and *El parque* [The Park] in his third year, starring his friend Mario Camus, about a couple who meet a poor hungry man in a Madrid park—Basilio Martín Patino chose for his final project to explore the tedious evening of an affluent middle-class *señorita* after her parents and the maid (who, like the protagonist in Saura's film, only gets Sunday evenings off) leave her alone at home, an apartment located in the central street of Calle Barceló in Madrid's Justicia neighbourhood, next to Calle Fuencarral, while they go out and enjoy their respective Sunday activities.

*Tarde de domingo* was based on a screenplay that was unsurprisingly approved at first only "provisionally"[5] by José Luis Sáenz de Heredia at the beginning of 1960. The script's original title, *Muchacha a la ventana* [Girl at the Window], reflected the vital importance its underlying structure gave to the subjective gaze of the nameless protagonist[6] and her reactions to what she sees. That structure would ultimately constitute just one of many elements of the textual framework of an experimental and innovative film which, with minimal dialogue and eschewing the option of a voice-over to tell the story or even to share the protagonist's thoughts with the viewer, manages to establish a sombre discourse on the almost imperceptible and only vaguely suggested

THE LAUGHTER AND APPLAUSE ON THE RADIO CONTEST PLAYING IN THE BACKGROUND CONTRASTS WITH CLARA'S FINAL EMOTIONAL COLLAPSE AND HER UNCONTROLLABLE WEEPING, AS SHE PULLS OFF THE PAGE OF THE CALENDAR WHILE A SLOW PAN SEEMS TO SHOW US HER DARK PRESENT AND EVEN DARKER FUTURE. SHE IS ONE OF SO MANY CLARAS, CONDEMNED BY SOCIAL INEQUALITY TO A LIFE THAT SEEMS MUCH LIKE A LIVING DEATH

longings, fears and existential angst of a young woman who decides not to go out that evening. And it does so in a light-hearted and apparently casual and inconsequential way, creating subtle combinations of audiovisual effects that not only evoke the passage and the weight of the interminable, mournful dead time of a Sunday in which the terrors of childhood and the anxieties of growing up seem to converge, but also (and especially) aim to give cinematic form—with the bold use of his newly created yet strikingly well-stocked filmmaker's palette—to some of the girl's *mental experiences*: attitudes, movements and gestures that are almost unconscious, details that are apparently ordinary, unremarkable and even automatic, yet in the final instance profoundly revealing. All this is shaped by a historically situated conception of the world, society, education and family, a socio-political and cultural system comprised of a set of values, customs, practices and family and social relations that are strictly coded and conditioned by the narrow constraints of an asphyxiating Catholicism whose empty rhetorical formalities are always visible and audible in the still very dull public and private world of Francoist Spain in the early 1960s, in which any sign of modernity could only be glimpsed from a distance.

Image 9

With unmistakably *Bardemian*[7] resonances, the closer shots of the girl gazing out the window constitute one of the film's most important formal devices, while at the same time they are directly related to the diegetic origins of the other two sources of sound: the voices and noises of the street outside, and the voices and music coming from the party taking place in the apartment upstairs.

Most of these scenes[8] take place at the balcony window of the piano room, which looks out over the Jardines del Arquitecto Ribera, a park surrounding the old Royal Hospice of San Fernando, which today is the History Museum of Madrid. The protagonist—who metaphorically shares the cage hanging next to the balcony with her canary, whose birdsong punctuates the soundtrack repeatedly in numerous shots—observes the visual and auditory echoes of a reality that is far from encouraging or appealing. While the first POV shot belongs to the maid and her soldier boyfriend walking away arm in arm down the street, the second shows us three young men whistling at a girl as they surround her and for a moment block her way: "Pretty, gorgeous, beautiful! Where are you going? So long, doll!" Much later, towards the end of the film, two older men who notice the protagonist looking out the window will call up to her from the street in similar terms: "Hey! What a woman! You're alright…! Beautiful!" In this way, Patino seems to want to make clear what women had to deal with on a daily basis.

Moments later, two youths arrive on a Vespa and stop in front of the building, gleefully calling to a group of people who respond to them from the balcony of the apartment upstairs, some with glasses of wine in their hands. Just then, while we hear the sound of church bells, the protagonist takes away the canary's cage and pulls back slightly from the balcony. She subsequently disappears

completely behind the curtains after coming back to watch the group harassing a young woman walking down the street. The group's members now seem to have noticed her and are gazing up at her. This conjunction of incidentally coinciding details—the church bells, the beginning of the party in the apartment upstairs, the youths looking at her, her withdrawal from the window—offers suggestions, clues never explicitly spelt out but legible, about some of the possible reasons for her shy and reserved demeanour.

The visual—and auditory—relationships with the young people at the party are temporally and semantically central to the film, and from these elements Patino attempts to extract some of the most suggestive of the subtle *mental* relationships and sensations referred to above. The well-known rock, jazz, blues, calypso and bolero songs played on the record player at the party, for example, at this point become the diegetic soundtrack in a wide sampling of the various musical styles in fashion in 1960 (Elvis Presley's "Jailhouse Rock", Harry Belafonte's "Will His Love Be His Rum" and "Hosanna", the Kalin Twins' "Jumpin' Jack", Charlie Parker's "Slam Slam Blues", Lous Armstrong's "C'est Si Bon", etc.), which are mixed as well with songs on the radio at certain moments,[9] resulting in brief but highly unique and strident musical combinations, unexpected blends of sound that suggest cultural, historical and social models, forms and transformations which at that time were still only latent and could hardly have been conveyed in any other way. At one point, the protagonist even tries to play one of the songs she hears on the piano (Nat King Cole's "Quizás, Quizás, Quizás"), but she quickly shifts back to her socially accepted practice piece "Für Elise". A little later, Domenico Modugno's famous "Volare" overlaps with an excerpt from the traditional Spanish zarzuela "La Verbena de la Paloma" being played by an organ grinder right in front of the building, who is given an *ad hoc* close-up filmed on the street, while our bored protagonist has fallen asleep sitting at the table in the living room. When she wakes up, she looks out and sees

Image 10

Above. Image 11. Below. Image 12


Image 13


Image 14

the youths at the party tossing coins down to the organ grinder from the balcony above, and she is about to do the same when she catches sight of another young man in the street who is arriving for the party with two bottles in his hands. When he notices her, he makes a few gestures that could be interpreted as sexual insinuations.

The partygoers' discovery of the *Miss Lonelyhearts* (to use the Hitchcockian expression) in the apartment below them occurred just before this scene, when she came out onto the small terrace outside the kitchen. Without getting too close, trying her best not to be seen, she looks up through the two windows of the apartment upstairs to where couples are dancing, drinking and kissing in various POV shots (some of which are closer than others, explicitly underscoring their significance). In another shot, the protagonist turns her full attention to a boy who is trying unsuccessfully to kiss his dance partner. After the young man notices the protagonist watching him, Patino accords him the *right* to the point of view and even an attempt at dialogue ("Hey, sweetheart! Why don't you come up and dance a little with us?"), provoking the extreme embarrassment of the protagonist, who quickly gathers up the clothes hanging out on the terrace, even dropping a bra before she gets back inside. The partying neighbours don't give up and even call her twice on the phone to invite her up. She doesn't answer, although she is curious enough to pick up the phone the first time.

The protagonist gazes repeatedly at the gardens, accompanied by the canary once again in its cage hanging on the balcony, while we hear the songs from the party and the musical sounds and noises coming from the street as the evening goes (or drags) on. At a given moment, one of the romantic melodies wafting down from upstairs begins to blend with a children's tune with significant lyrics sung by a girl on the pavement below while she bounces a ball ("One, two and a pear to the chicken, the skull looks dead...") and with the powerful sound of church bells in the foreground.

After a fade to black, we see the maid in the street, saying good-bye to her soldier. A bus is returning from a Sunday in the mountains. Night has fallen, the parents come back and the waltz resumes. The girl tries to play the piano. When she gets up to open the door, the sheet music is

swept up in the wind blowing through the open balcony. The noise of the doorbell and of the banging window shutters thus adds to the waltz, the rock music and the bells, in a strange medley that floods the empty, cheerless final shot with sound.

## CONCLUSIONS

With a few exceptions, the image of Madrid conveyed in Spanish films of the late 1950s has little to do with the view of the city offered by the two medium-length films analysed in this article. In contrast to the Madrid with modern interiors—with the first signs of those white kitchens typical of Hollywood films, which for Isabel, the protagonist in *Main Street*, represent the very height of luxury—and brightly lit, colourful avenues (Gran Vía, Alcalá, Paseo de la Castellana, etc.) so perfectly in keeping with the image of progress that characterised Spanish comedy during the Franco regime's developmentalist period, in their film school projects Saura and Patino seem determined to present a very different image of the city.

The Madrid of *La tarde del domingo* is a city closer to the autarkic Spain of rag pickers, emigrants and black marketeers portrayed so well in José Antonio Nieves Conde's *Furrows* (Surcos, 1951) than to the Spain of the tourism boom and increasing motorisation depicted in the films of Masó, Dibildos, Lazaga, Salvia & co. But above all, the city in Saura's film is a hostile environment, as made evident in the dark and narrow inner courtyards that make it so difficult to articulate even a furtive class solidarity; the housemaids' tram trips (an image whose composition, deliberately uncomfortable for the viewer to look at, constructs an inhospitable reality with no real place for the maids); the long and unsettling sequence of the dance, and above all, Clara's subsequent flight through the streets of a nocturnal Madrid whose insidious shop window lights and frenetic activity only aggravates the protagonist's desperation. Of course, this far from pleasant image of Madrid would reappear in Carlos Saura's subsequent work; indeed, one need look no further than his first project as a professional filmmaker, *The Delinquents* (Los golfos, 1959), which would allow him to introduce audiences to some of the ideas he had tried out at film school.

As Pérez Millán (2002: 49) points out, the connections between Saura's and Patino's student projects are so substantial that they seem to "prolong, project or complement" one another. This is not only because the main character in Saura's film is a supporting character in Patino's, but also because of certain similarities in their respective portraits of Madrid. Because it is this same hostile city that treats the *maidservant* so cruelly that is the reason for the confinement of the middle-class girl *señorita*. However, the Madrid of *Tarde de domingo* is not so much a physical city as an accumulation of sensations or mental experiences provoked by a range of auditory, visual, verbal and other types of stimuli coming in from outside—from the street, from the apartment upstairs, on the telephone or the radio—and that to some extent are the expression of a particular system of values, customs and practices; or more precisely, assorted manifestations of the familial, religious, social and cultural order underpinning a regime that had abandoned autarky but, somewhat paradoxically, condemned some of its own subjects to a kind of voluntary confinement. Whether that confinement would be transitory or permanent remained to be seen. ■

## NOTES

1 Sánchez Vidal (1998: 18) astutely argues that "the film expresses perfectly the everyday life of a young maid, as well as her subjection to the demands of a very middle-class family, of the kind that lives off baking soda, *La Casera* soft drinks, the *ABC* newspaper, Sunday mass and weekend football. The real theme revolves around her expectations for her free Sunday evening and her frustration at the dance

with her friends. The rhythm of the dull and almost ritualistic activities of a housemaid up to the crescendo of the dance hall that [...] upsets Clara is perfectly achieved."

2 "This could happen in Madrid on any Sunday of the year... Perhaps a Sunday in autumn, when the sun shines softly, when just a few leaves are left on the trees, when one has hope and waits for things that never come. Perhaps, a Sunday in September that starts like any other: the solitary streets, the carts of the rag-pickers, the closed shops, the early morning mass, and Clara; Clara, who like many other Claras, was waiting for Sunday evening..."

3 The extraordinary success of the Fleta sisters (who enjoyed huge sales right from their first record, released in 1953, and received an Ondas award for Best National Attraction in 1954) introduced Spain to new styles and rhythms of light-hearted, melodic music unrelated to the tradition of the *copla* that had completely dominated Spanish popular music up until that time.

4 The song's lyrics are: "Una simple cancioncilla de la calle/va de boca en boca por los arrabales/despertando en tantas almas mil recuerdos/de despreocupada y dulce juventud. Una simple cancioncilla de la calle/con palabras que el amor ha envejecido/y que siempre hay quien la escucha conmovido/recordando un tiempo que no volverá. Un ventanal se iluminó/y poco a poco se entreabrió/alguien se asoma a escuchar y a suspirar. Una simple cancioncilla de la calle/ va de boca en boca por los arrabales/para quien espera y sueña con amores/es la eterna y dulce historia del amor." ["A simple little song of the street/passes from mouth to mouth around the city outskirts/ awakening in so many souls a thousand memories/of the carefree sweetness of youth. A simple little song of the street/with words that love has grown old/ and that always moves someone listening/recalling a time that will never return. A window lit up/and little by little began to open/someone looks out to listen and to sigh. A simple little song of the street/passes from mouth to mouth around the city outskirts/for someone waiting and dreaming of love/it is the eternal, sweet love story."]

5 In his report, the IIEC's director at the time warned of the extreme difficulty of the project, given "the intimate nature and levity of the anecdote, supported on pure nuance, [which] makes the production of this script very difficult, as its subject matter requires a very finely tuned formal language. It would need a very carefully measured orchestration of all the elements—camera, setting, performance—that would be difficult to achieve with insufficient experience and limited resources" (Filmoteca Española, IIEC-EOC Archive, "Tarde de domingo").

6 The protagonist is played in the film by Matilde Marcos, a young woman chosen by the director after he saw her by chance in a store in Salamanca and who would not pursue an acting career. "[I] thought she had exactly what I was looking for: she wasn't a star, or a known face, but a normal, anonymous young woman... She might have been an office worker or a student, I don't know... I asked her if she would work with us, she accepted happily and showed extraordinary interest. But she wasn't an actress, and it shows. I think I miscalculated my possibilities," given that "many of the film's possibilities of communicating something" depended on her (Pérez Millán, 2002: 52).

7 Basilio Martín Patino would include *Main Street* (Calle Mayor, Juan Antonio Bardem, 1956) among his favourite Spanish films in a survey taken in 1961.

8 But not all of the scenes, as in addition to the kitchen windows (referred to in this analysis) she would also look once out her bedroom window, which offered a view of the busy entrance to a cinema where Terence Fisher's version of Dracula (*Horror of Dracula*, 1958) was showing, starring Christopher Lee as a physically imposing and attractive vampire, in a film very much focused on blood, sex and death.

9 On two occasions the girl turns the knob on the classic 1950s radio receiver and the melodies broadcast on it offer a brief and precise construction of the *sound of an era*, foreshadowing the director's interest in sounds and songs as building blocks of the Spanish social imaginary that would form the basis for his

later film *Canciones para después de una guerra* [Songs for After a War] (Basilio Martín Patino, 1971): soccer scores, broadcasts of bullfights with bugles, cheers and applause, *coplas* (*A la lima y al limón* sung by Concha Piquer), *cuplés* (*El lindo Ramón* performed by Lilian de Celis), zarzuelas (*La rosa del azafrán* with music by Jacinto Guerrero), military marches and advertising for the army (*El ejército aumenta*) and songs dedicated by listeners to family members, all of which was also mixed together with the sounds of the street and the songs being played at the party, as noted above.

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## MAIDSERVANTS AND MIDDLE-CLASS *SEÑORITAS* IN PRE-DEVELOPMENTALIST MADRID: SAURA AND PATINO AT THE INSTITUTO DE INVESTIGACIONES Y EXPERIENCIAS CINEMATOGRÁFICAS


### Abstract

The film production of the Spanish film schools Instituto de Investigaciones y Experiencias Cinematográficas (IIEC) and its successor, Escuela Oficial de Cinematografía (EOC), offers some excellent material, both in quantitative and qualitative terms, for studying how Spanish cinema during the years of the Franco regime depicted the city of Madrid. This article proposes an initial approach to an object of study (the relationship between Madrid and IIEC-EOC) based on a detailed analysis of two medium-length films produced by this institution, which should necessarily be the subject of future research. The similarities between *La tarde del domingo* (Carlos Saura, 1957) and *Tarde de domingo* (Basilio Martín Patino, 1960) are not limited to their title and premise, but also extend to the role played by the city in both films. In both stories, Madrid is a hostile space that functions as a projection of the anguish of the two protagonists. But while in Saura's film the threat of the city is embodied physically (the stifling tram, the lights in the shop windows, the frenetic city bustle, etc.), in Patino's production the city is primordially an accumulation of sensations, an experience more mental than real.



### Key words

IIEC-EOC; Madrid; *La Tarde del Domingo*; *Tarde de Domingo*; Basilio Martín Patino; Carlos Saura; Pre-developmentalist Spain



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## CHICAS DE SERVIR Y SEÑORITAS DE CLASE MEDIA EN EL MADRID PREDESARROLLISTA. SAURA Y PATINO EN EL IIEC


### Resumen

La producción cinematográfica del Instituto de Investigaciones y Experiencias Cinematográficas (IIEC) y de su sucesora la Escuela Oficial de Cinematografía (EOC) ofrece, tanto en términos cuantitativos como cualitativos, un material de primer orden a la hora de estudiar cómo el cine español del periodo franquista ha representado la ciudad de Madrid. A partir del análisis pormenorizado de dos mediometrajes producidos por dicha institución, este artículo propone un primer acercamiento a un objeto de estudio (las relaciones entre Madrid y el IIEC-EOC) sobre el que necesariamente habrán de volver futuras investigaciones. Las similitudes entre *La tarde del domingo* (Carlos Saura, 1957) y *Tarde de domingo* (Basilio Martín Patino, 1960) no se circunscriben al título y a una premisa compartida, sino que alcanzan también al rol que desempeña la ciudad. Madrid es, en ambos relatos, un espacio hostil que funciona como una proyección de la angustia de las dos protagonistas. Pero mientras que en la práctica de Saura la amenaza de la ciudad tiene una encarnadura física (el agobio del tranvía, las luces de los escaparates, la actividad frenética...) en la de Patino Madrid es, sobre todo, un cúmulo de sensaciones, una experiencia mental antes que real.



### Palabras clave

IIEC-EOC; Madrid; *La tarde del domingo*; *Tarde de domingo*; Basilio Martín Patino; Carlos Saura; Predesarrollismo



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