

HUMOUR AND METADISCOURSE: DEFINITION OF A PARODIC-REFLEXIVE STYLISTIC MODEL IN SPANISH CINEMA*

Introduction

Santos Zunzunegui's now well-known premise that "the richest, most original and creative aspect of Spanish cinema has to do precisely with the way that certain filmmakers and films inherit, assimilate, transform and revitalise a whole series of native aesthetic forms with which the Spanish community has historically expressed itself" (ZUNZUNEGUI, 2005: 491-492) alerted scholars to the useless nature of studying the particular features of a *certain type of Spanish cinema* without considering the way our filmmakers recycle the most deep-rooted Spanish cultural traditions. This retrospective gaze that Zunzunegui suggests is no less a foundational pillar in the configuration of a discourse that would enable us, insofar as is possible, to understand those aspects that give shape to the Parodic-Reflective Stylistic Model.

José Luis Castro de Paz, the author of a theoretical and historiographic articulation of four Stylistic Models for Spanish films made in the period from 1939 to 1950, drew the conclusion that the "Parodic-Reflective Stylistic Model

was formalised and most intensely developed in the early post-war period" (CASTRO DE PAZ, 2013: 14), after bringing together and reformulating numerous elements derived from different Spanish art forms such as the *sainete*, the *astracán*, the comic *zarzuela*, the parodies and comic pieces popular in Madrid theatre, the revue and the variety show and, above all, the absurd, avant-garde humour found since the 1920s in magazines, plays and novels by authors who would subsequently play a primordial role in the consolidation of the cinematic version of the model. I refer here to the founders of *humor nuevo*¹ who would coalesce around the group known as "The Other Generation of '27",² comprising Edgar Neville, José López Rubio, Enrique Jardiel Poncela, Antonio de Lara "Tono" and Miguel Mihura, along with secondary members like Eduardo Ugarte, Claudio de la Torre and Ernesto Giménez Caballero. Although each with the particular features of his personal style, these authors would all share a vision conveyed "by uninhibited humour or iconoclastic mockery, and by certain

techniques indirectly and partially associated with the different European avant-garde movements acclimatised to Spain by the pioneering work of the man who could be considered the involuntary mentor of these young authors: Ramón Gómez de la Serna (1888-1963)" (PÉREZ PERUCHA, 1998: 51).

The new humour

The inventor of the *gregería*, and a man for whom José López Rubio expressed his deepest gratitude in his speech on admission to the Spanish Royal Academy, Ramón Gómez de la Serna outlined his conception of humour in *Gravedad e importancia del humorismo* (1928)³, a manifesto in which he advocates a subversive exercise which, like the carnival, "inverts hierarchies and introduces paradoxes, mixtures, imbalances, imperfections" (LLERA, 2001: 462), and which is marked by the perspectivism and multifocal gaze of a humourist approach which, in a certain way, Miguel Mihura endorses when he asserts that humour forces us to look at ourselves "from the front and back, like standing in front of the three mirrors of a tailor..." (MIHURA, 1948: 304).

Gómez de la Serna is not the only precursor to the Parodic-Reflexive Stylistic Model (PRSM). Its convergent corpus is affected by the filtration of other influences, such as the *Costumbrista* comic theatre of Carlos Arniches, with a Madrilenian working-class style that produces some clever dialogues, "partly resulting from the lower-class Spaniard's desire to imitate and at the same time parody the upper classes in a felicitous combination of humour and sarcasm" (GONZÁLEZ-GRANO DE ORO, 2004: 57); the comedies of the Álvarez Quintero brothers, characterised by typical characters who engage in rapid-fire conversations with the distinctive flair of rural Andalusians; or the *astracán* of Pedro Muñoz Seca and Enrique García Álvarez, also associated with fast-paced dialogues and a rapid succession of situations that ultimately provoke a tangled mess.

Outside the theatrical genre, the members of the "Other Generation of '27" did not lose sight of the contribution to humour of the Galician writers Julio Camba and Wenceslao Fernández Flórez. The first of these writers was the subject of a heartfelt article written by Miguel Mihura for *ABC* on the occasion of his death, "Solos, sin Camba", in which he noted that "Julio Camba, our great teacher, with his philosophical and concise humour, saw through everything and clarified our ideas about life and about people with a broad and deep vision that had a universal reach" (MIHURA, 1962: 38). For his part,

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Fernández Flórez, at Mihura's request, was included among the writers for the comic magazine *La Codorniz* from the beginning, and contributed to the first issue with the article "En busca de una reputación" (In Search of a Reputation, 8-6-1941), in which he staked his claim as a serious writer, challenging the labels, which he believed to be mistaken, that had pigeon-holed him in the category of humorous authors. In his speech upon his admission to the Spanish Royal Academy, titled "El humor en la literatura española", Fernández Flórez proposed two key definitions for the invariably slippery concept of humour: the first was that humour could never be solemn, but

that it was certainly something serious; and the second was that it constituted a perspective on life (1956: 986). The seriousness with which he developed some of his humorous pieces tended to produce irony, one of the variants of humour, which in this Galician writer's work was usually determined by the communicative link established between implicit author and implicit reader at the expense of the narrator, ultimately resulting in an untrustworthy narrator who creates in the reader a certain resistance to credulity in the stories. The second of the anchors of humour used by the Galician author in his speech sustains that humour is not created, but arises automatically through an establishment of observation that foregrounds the "*desaforo*" (outrageousness) and inconsistency of human actions (1956: 986, 992). The Spanish word *desaforo*, in addition to referring literally to a series of outlandish acts which, in themselves, constitute the raw material for all parody and caricature, also suggests an interpretative thread that leads us towards everything beyond the front stage or *foro teatral*, i.e., those parts of the stage that should be hidden from the audience.

Finally, another key figure in the configuration of *Humor Nuevo* is the philosopher Ortega y Gasset, thanks above all to the diagnosis he offered of the avant-garde movements of the twentieth century in his work *The Dehumanization of Art* (originally published in Spanish in 1925), where he describes the mission to eliminate the automatism of artistic conventions imposed since the Renaissance and Romanticism, and defines the modern artist as a person who "invites us to contemplate an art that is a jest in itself" (1948: 48) and stresses the idea of the artistic act "as an attempt to instil youthfulness into an ancient world" (1948: 50).

All of these ingredients would add, in successive stages of stewing, to the broth that would subsequently season this type of reformist humour, and it

would be in the magazine *La Codorniz*, initially directed by Miguel Mihura (1941)⁴ and whose appearance would coincide with the release of the most representative films of the model, where many of the formal patterns and semantic features that had been forged after being moulded in magazines that preceded it, like *La ametralladora*⁵, *Gutiérrez*⁶ and *Buen Humor*,⁷ would converge and materialise.

The model

The experiments of modulation were not limited exclusively to the literary or graphic arts, as prior to the development of the model in the 1940s, certain postulates of *Humor Nuevo* had already been experimented with in the cinema, an art form with which all the members of the generation were closely associated. With the introduction of talking pictures, and as dubbing systems had yet to be developed, Hollywood required the filming of different versions of movies in various languages. This provided an opportunity for the young men of "The Other Generation of '27" (except for Miguel Mihura, due to a hip problem at the time) to cross the pond and work as dialogue writers and directors. This work would allow them to hone their scriptwriting expertise until they had developed a skill and style that would end up being a characteristic of the PRSM.

Mihura had to wait for a dubbing industry to be established in Spain to begin his own career in the film world,⁸ when he plunged into the parodic trilogy of *Una de fieras* (1934), *Una de miedo* (1934) and *Y... ahora... una de ladrones* (1935), a cycle of short films directed by Eduardo García Maroto with dialogues by Mihura, which "displayed a comic cheekiness coupled with the 'nonsense' of Jardiel Poncela to produce a result that was truly original and striking in the Spanish cinema

of the era" (GUBERN, 1977: 112). In *Una de fieras*, a narrator (Mihura himself) introduces us to the story by explaining the challenges of making a feature film in Madrid. The tone throughout the film follows a line along which self-reflexivity and parody converge, in such a way that each metacinematic device is dressed up with a parodic and burlesque quality, as in the case of the search for a location for an adventure film, which, according to the narrator, it would be more advisable to set in some virgin jungle in Africa than in the Alcázar de San Juan region south of Madrid, because "everybody has been to Alcázar de San Juan and everybody knows what goes on there." In the end, the shooting is interrupted in

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the final scene before the main characters can be burned at the stake, due to the sudden arrival of the Civil Guard, in a homebred parody of the Seventh Cavalry Regiment, because of their failure to obtain a filming licence. The same effects of intertwined parody and reflexivity can also be found in the second instalment in the trilogy, *Una de miedo*, where, after the narrator explains that "to make a scary movie what you need to do is to wait until nightfall, and then go and find a field and hose it down with a lot of water to bother the folks who pass through the field," the camera shows us a film crew creating some rudimentary sound effects imitating a storm and spraying the main characters with water from a hose as they walk past. Finally, as in the

previous film, they are forced to stop shooting, this time because a thief has stolen the camera from the camera operator, who cries out indignantly: "My camera's been stolen. I can't work like this." Essentially, the trilogy relies on the parodic recreation constructed on the basis of exposing the world behind the camera—the *desaforo* mentioned above—which, in turn, eliminates the automism of the conventions of certain film genres.

Humor Nuevo engages in a battle against the solemnity of certain customs not only with the aim of transgressing that solemnity, but also to shift the frontal point of view from a classical perspective towards *pluriperspectivism*, an inverse and multifocal view, a foreshortened observation, like the one suggested by Miguel Mihura with the image of the three mirrors of the tailor that allows us to see everything, and that also ties in with the words of Santiago Vilas when he argues that "[t]he humourist needs to see 'forwards and backwards' and all at the same time, simultaneously, as he needs to *be* in himself and in the object

with identical simultaneity" (1968: 59-60), a description that also suggests a relationship with the postulates of the Cubist movement. The numerous visual references to the filmic apparatus with shots that show the director, the camera or the film crew constitutes the exposure of the underside of an artistic object which is inevitably coupled with a Brechtian distancing that breaks the emotional connection so that the humour thus reaches the reader or spectator via the intellect.

With respect to the narrator's role in the series of films by Maroto and Mihura, an analysis of the comments he makes from outside the frame reveals the extent to which this use of the voiceover can be interpreted as a semi-narration external to

the diegesis that would become a staple in the PRSM, whereby narrators act as “masters of this ceremony of the absurd” (Castro de Paz, 2012: 14) and that would exhibit certain features recognisable in films outside the model, such as *El hombre que se quiso matar* (Rafael Gil, 1942), or, in the 1950s, *¡Bienvenido, Mister Marshall!* (Luis García Berlanga, 1953), with Miguel Mihura’s involvement in the script, or *Calle Mayor* (Juan Antonio Bardem, 1956), inspired by Carlos Arniches’s play *La señorita de Trévez* (1916). This voiceover has a much more marked presence in the first film in the trilogy, *Una de aventuras*, because its main function involves the *delineation* of certain scenes

without dialogues—except for the musical number, a few sound effects and the cry “Here comes the Civil Guard” by one of the indigenous characters—as if they had been filmed according to the traditions of silent film. In this way, the narrator’s description of the actions goes further than merely narrating, describing or identifying, and gives free rein to explicit comments that make reference to elements of the plot (“The story is that Mr. Martínez, who is the shortest one, when the film is almost over, falls in love with a sweet little twenty-seven year-old named Alicia Gomar...”), general remarks (“... but without money the only thing you can do in Madrid is watch lunar eclipses...”), questions addressed directly at characters (“And you, Mr. Gómez, do you want to go with Mr. Martínez?”), and self-conscious indications (“Also, to the right there is a sergeant of the carabineers dining with his girlfriend, and if they come out in the film it would upset the atmosphere, because the girlfriend is stunning but the sergeant isn’t worth a fig.”). In short, it is a humorous delineation of the silent images, imitating the technique once used by the writer

Jardiel Poncela, who, “parodying the use of the footnote in didactic essays, comments on the English expression *I love you*: ‘Which, as everybody knows, is English for “time is money”’ (1942). Jardiel’s pre-war novels are filled with these kinds of techniques; in order to show the reader the scaffolding of the story, to engage the reader in an uninhibited reading, the author, doubling as an ironic commentator on his own writing, creates a hybrid, original and anomalous narration. Irony and metadiscourse, parody and Jardielan rhetoric of accumulation, the footnote adds new intricacies to the text, creating new mirrors to delight the reader, to seal the pact made with the implau-

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sible.” (LLERA, 2003: 66).

This unique, distancing and parodic technique of delineating a narration also finds cinematic expression in the work of Jardiel Poncela himself thanks to his film experiment *Celuloides rancios* (1933),⁹ which he would later complement with the *Celuloides cómicos* series (1936-1939),¹⁰ based on the addition of off-camera commentary to pre-existing film material, “material considered ‘old’ because it deals with stories of an earlier period, whose themes and props are now dated, pretext material (never better said) whose genre could be remodelled and even transformed, so that themes that were originally melodramatic are represented as burlesque for the purposes not only of comedy but—and this is essential for

understanding the operation of the *Celuloides* series—of a modern, urban, ironic and cinematic spirit, identifying the cinematic as an ideology allergic to ridiculous, tear-jerking melodrama: to the mustiness of the turn of the century” (SÁNCHEZ SALAS, 2002: 38). With precedents like the silent film explicator and the clownish figure of the *gracioso* or *donaire* of Spanish Golden Age theatre, the off-camera text of the *Celuloides rancios* series openly exposed the comic nature of images that had not been created to make people laugh: “And the travellers are getting off. And you have to look slowly at the travellers of 1903! [...] They dressed so badly that you can’t blame the bandits for

holding them up; on the contrary, you might think they deserved it” (JARDIEL PONCELA, 1973: 872).¹⁰

Thanks to this generous source of aesthetic forms compromised by the reforming power of humour, in the 1940s the PRSM was ripe enough to fall from its tree. From Jardiel’s pen would flow plots that helped consolidate the model through his adaptations, like the play that premièred in

Madrid on 25 April 1941, *Los ladrones somos gente*, brought to the screen a year later by Ignacio F. Iquino, a bold filmmaker who knew how to take advantage of the potential of the cinematic medium to develop works that reinvented the dramatic text. The title itself (*ladrones* [Thieves] and *honrados* [honourable]) highlights the game of contrasts around which the whole plot revolves. Indeed, it is a story that shows both sides of the coin, the head and the tail, the front and the back, both on the discursive level and on the semantic level. In the first conversation between Daniel (Manuel Luna) and Herminia (Amparito Rivelles), the story’s predilection for associating opposites becomes clear: “Silence is the most eloquent speech



Figures 1 and 2. *Los ladrones somos gente honrada* (Ignacio F. Iquino, 1941)

there is. Only when we are silent do we say it all," asserts Daniel, to which the young woman, who moments later will remark that some see her as an angel and others as a devil, responds with the question: "Well then, why don't you be quiet?" "Because I have nothing to say," he replies. "And

as a synonym for a tangled mess), unveiled thanks to the film cameras that the police have hidden in the mansion (in the theatre version they were only microphones) to film the various shenanigans of the characters, which are subsequently projected—miraculously edited and developed with

the use of the diegetic observer who, like "el Tío" and "el Castelar", hide behind a screen to spy on everything that happens in the main parlour of the mansion: "This house is a movie" exclaims one of them in response to the surprising revelations unfolding before his eyes. In a meandering and scattered manner, Iquino expels us as spectators from the place that belongs to the audience and drops us backstage, or, translating this idea to the cinema, makes the pro-transparent rigidity of the Institutional Mode of Representation more flexible in the interests of certain enunciative signs aimed at reinforcing our role as observers of an artificial and distant act. Thus, for example, the modulation of shots, camera movements and points of view modulates the scene prior to the encounter between Daniel and Herminia. The *découpage* is as follows:

1. Close-up of Daniel behind a window through which he is looking inside the house (figure 3).
2. Close-up of Germana, Herminia's mother, singing a Russian song. The camera pulls back slightly to a medium close shot into which the figure of a violinist enters (figure 4).
3. Another close-up of Daniel, who is still watching. This succession of shots seems to confirm that Daniel is an observer-subject and the object of his gaze is captured with a POV. However, this conclusion is cast in

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if you have something to say, you'd be quiet?" "Yes." "Well, it's a shame you have nothing to say." Everything seems to move in two directions, the paradox, the antithesis, the two-faced: characters who are not what they claim to be, shameful pasts, secret doors, disguises, false passwords, fake beards, armour that conceals devices for opening and closing doors, etc., until the network of dualities has woven an outrageously tangled skein. The exposure of the *tramoya* (a Spanish term which I use intentionally here in both its senses, as a piece of stage equipment used in theatre to make major set transformations, and

sound just minutes later—and commented on by Inspector Berengola in an effort to unravel the imbroglio. Prior to this conclusion, certain enunciative signs are sprinkled through the film with forced placement shots—static shots that capture the action at a certain distance partially obstructed by objects or furniture in the foreground—that imitate the hidden cameras and, consequently, reflect the effort to distance the film from classical solemnity in order to foreshadow the trap (figures 1 and 2).

A second mechanism that gives visibility to the artificial aspect of the characters and their actions involves

doubt when Daniel moves away from the window.

4. We return to shot 2, but now we cannot interpret this image as Daniel's POV. We are thus offered an external gaze of a diegetic character who is watching the scene from outside the house, but after his exit this external position belongs to the spectator. Immediately thereafter, a pan to the right leads us to Herminia, who is visibly uneasy for some reason—perhaps because of Daniel's presence, noticed by her earlier—and tries to leave the room where her mother is singing the song, but in doing so runs into her father and stops to avoid raising any suspicions. The camera retraces the previous pan and returns to the left to frame Germana for just a few moments, and then moves back to the right to the figure of Herminia, who takes advantage of something that has distracted her father to leave the parlour and go into the hallway. Added to the pan is a dolly shot that follows Herminia's movement as she crosses the hall until, at last, she exits the frame on the right. Then, the camera pulls back until it is positioned behind the window through which, a few moments earlier, Daniel had been watching the scene (figures 5, 6 and 7). Once on the porch, a new turn to the right brings us back to the protagonist, who is alerted again to Herminia's presence.

5. Medium-long shot of the girl on the porch. Daniel approaches, but at once moves away again. Behind him, a servant closes the front door. A conversation is then struck up between the two characters, which will culminate, months later, in their marriage.

Of all the camera movements, the most striking is the backwards dolly shot that positions us outside the house, in the place occupied by Daniel in shots 1 and 3. It is not a movement motivated by the movement of a character, as this backwards movement begins when Herminia has already left

the frame and Daniel has already abandoned his viewpoint at the end of shot 3; rather, it is motivated by an enunciative intention to position us outside the scene, in the *desaforo*, where we can observe the artificiality of the story more clearly.

This space between parody and reflexivity is also where we find the feature film *Intriga* (Antonio Román, 1943), based on a book by Fernández Flórez (*Un cadáver en el comedor*, 1936)¹¹ and with a screenplay by Miguel Mihura, which encapsulates several of the characteristic features of the PRSM. Antonio Román's film parodies detective stories until the chief investigator accuses the director of the film, whom we see with his entire film crew when the camera turns around, of being the killer, thus bringing the shooting of the film to a halt. This metacinematic about-face made by the film in its final scenes, i.e., "this visibility of the world of representation, this modern, *anti-transparent* incredulity of its own stories that characterises a certain kind of Spanish cinema of the 1940s..." (CASTRO DE PAZ, 2012: 132), reflects the scepticism that underlies its creative proposal, but which in this case is reinforced when it is directly introduced into the diegesis through the main character who decides to boycott the shooting of the film because he finds the plot completely absurd and implausible and abandons his portrayal to exclaim openly that he does not believe in the fiction that he himself is portraying.

While in this film the cinematic medium becomes the main target of the parody, something very similar would occur in another film based on Jardiel Poncela's play *Eloísa está debajo de un almendro*, which had its theatrical premiere on 24 May 1940 and was brought to the screen



From top to bottom, figures 3, 4, 5, 6 y 7.
Los ladrones somos gente honrada
(Ignacio F. Iquino, 1941)

four years later by Rafael Gil. With specific features that reveal analogies with the Obsessive-Delusional Stylistic Model, this is a comedy of errors that does not shy away from reflexive jibes, like the scene in which the director quotes himself by making the film projected in the theatre where Fernando (Rafael Durán) and his uncle Ezequiel (Alberto Romea) enter none other than *Viaje sin destino* (Rafael Gil, 1942), so that the director can also be seen as a character in the film within the film; or like the pastime pursued by Edgardo (Juan Espantaleón) of projecting images taken from a moving train to simulate a railway journey that he takes without getting out of bed, in imitation of the Hale's Tours.¹² In addition to the aforementioned *Viaje sin destino* and *Intriga*, we can also find this passion for self-reflexivity in certain films by Ramón Barreiro, such as *El sobrino de don Búffalo Bill* (1944) or *Pototo, Boliche y compañía* (1948), and other films made by Ignacio F. Iquino for CIFESA between 1940 and 1944, like *¿Quién me compra un lío?* (1940), *El difunto es un vivo* (1941), *Boda accidentada* (1943), *Viviendo al revés* (1943), *Fin de curso* (1943), *Un enredo de familia* (1943) and *Ni pobre, ni rico sino todo lo contrario* (1944), promoted on its release as *La Codorniz* on the screen.

Coda

In this article I have shown how *Los ladrones somos gente honrada* brings together some of the premises of reformist humour: the paradoxes of the *greuerías*, the entanglements of the *astracán*, the interest in exposing the artifice, the gaze from the *desaforo* that constitutes a break from classical solemnity, self-parody, metacinema and the narrator-commentator. But I have wanted to leave for the end an aspect that I mentioned in passing with a quote by Ortega y Gasset alluding to the youthfulness of avant-garde art which, in the films of the PRSM, goes beyond the large group of characters who exhibit infantile behaviour, such as the maidens in *Eloísa está debajo de*

un almendro and *Los ladrones somos gente honrada* or Señora Maldonado in *Intriga*, as these expand their childish attitude to the whole model, like the red clown (absurd, roguish, mischievous, surprising and provocative) who represents freedom, anarchy and the child's world, in counterpoint to the white clown, who embodies law and order and the realm of the adult. In the end, the irreverence of the red clown and his desire for destruction—or deconstruction—is the basis of the humour that shapes this model. ■

Notes

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1 *Humor Nuevo* ("New Humour") was a name coined by the Madrid magazine *Gutiérrez* (1927-1935) to refer to this type of humour, which would also be classified as "absurdist", "ludicrous", "abstract", and *cordonicesco* (for its association with the comic magazine *La Codorniz*) (cf. GÓNZALEZ-GRANO DE ORO, 2004). The author identifies the story "El humor nuevo. Elsa López, la rubia fatal y alambriista. (Atroces escenas de la vida de los artistas de circo)" (*Gutiérrez* No. 40, 3-3-1928: 14-14), by Miguel Mihura (under the pseudonym of Miguel Santos) as an early example, considering it to be fully representative of this type of humour, although prior to this story *Gutiérrez* had already published other pieces under the label "*El Humor Nuevo*".

2 It was José López Rubio who would popularise this label in his speech upon admission

to the Spanish Royal Academy on 5 June 1983.

3 Later, this text would be expanded for inclusion in "Humorismo", one of the chapters that would form part of the book *Isomos*.

4 Miguel Mihura was the first editor-in-chief of *La Codorniz*, from its foundation in 1941 up to 1944, when Álvaro de Laiglesia took over.

5 A wartime magazine (18/1/1937-21/5/1939) which Miguel Mihura, after taking it over, oriented towards a humour closer to that of *La Codorniz*. Contributing with him were Tono and Edgar Neville.

6 Founded by the cartoonist K-Hito (a pseudonym of Ricardo García's), it would feature contributions by the most outstanding representatives of avant-garde humour: Mihura, Jardiel, López Rubio, Neville, Tono, Tovar, Orbegozo, Manuel Abril, Xaudaró and Antoniorrobles (7/5/1927-29/9/1934).

7 Directed by the graphic artist and caricaturist Pedro Antonio Villahermosa Borao "Sileno" (4/12/1921-27/12/1931, with a parenthesis in 1924 and 1925), with the participation of Edgar Neville, Wenceslao Fernández Flórez, Jardiel Poncela and Ramón Gómez de la Serna, while Mihura and Tomo contributed as young cartoonists and illustrators.

8 CEA Studios, which monopolised all foreign production imported for dubbing, organised a section in which Eduardo García Maroto worked as editor, Jerónimo Mihura as director, and his brother Miguel as dialogue adapter.

9 There was a total of six short films made by the director in Paris for Fox Movietone: *Emma, la pobre rica*, based on Emma's Dilemma (1906); *Los ex presos y el expreso*, on The Great Train Robbery (1903); *Cuando los bomberos aman*, based on The Chorus Girl (1908); *Rusaki guani zomino-vitz*, on The Heart of Waleska (1905); *El amor de una secretaria*, based on For the Man She Loved (1906); and *El calvario de un hermano gemelo*, on Twin Dukes and the Duchess (1905). This caricaturesque path was also taken by Antonio de Lara "Tono" and Miguel Mihura with *Un bigote para dos* (1940), a re-synching of burlesque dialogues for an Austrian film *Immortal Melodies* (Unsterbliche melodien, Heinz Paul, 1935).

10 The shorts are titled *Un anuncio y cinco cartas*, *Definiciones*, *Letreros típicos* and *El fakir Rodríguez*.

- 11 On 13 March 1936 in the collection *La novela de una hora*, a project was published by Editores Reunidos based on the publication of short stories.
- 12 An attraction invented by William Keefe in the early twentieth century that consisted of a train wagon with one of its sides stripped off, which ran through a circular tunnel whose wall was a screen for the projection of filmed images taken from an actual moving train.

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