# L'ATALANTE

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**notebook**

## FACES, VOICES, BODIES, GESTURES

THE CONCEPTION
OF ACTING AS
THE CORE OF
FILM ANALYSIS

**dialogue**

ICÍAR BOLLAÍN

**(dis)agreements**

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**vanishing points**

# L'ATALANTE

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# Actors in the Centre, Actors on the Margins

**Pablo Hernández Miñano and Violeta Martín Núñez**

**Translated by David Morsillo and Jessica Kish**

Since the beginning of the last century, the art of moving pictures has been (almost) completely dominated by anthropocentrism. Of course, there is nothing natural about this dominance; indeed, over the years a small number of filmmakers have tirelessly resisted it, exploring other avenues, developing other potential uses for that "invention without a future". But the centrality of the human figure in cinema has been so firmly established, giving the appearance of a fact so logical and undisputable that it makes it necessary to point out something that should be obvious: that cinema could actually have done without actors and actresses entirely. In the time of the Lumière brothers, at least, it did not seem absurd to relegate models and extras to the margins or the background, losing sight of their figures in vast landscapes and urban geographies, blending the individuality of their faces into the crowds.

And yet, very early on the actor began to occupy a privileged position in cinema, a position that became all the more central with the development of the dominant cinematic model: the narrative cinema that was born—if we may allow the generalisation—with the conception of a ubiquitous camera that could move around the set and adopt different positions during a single scene, chiefly to capture the nuances of tear-filled eyes, the slight hint of a grin, or faintly trembling hands.

With their habitual technological determinism, the canonical stories of cinema highlighted the supposed consequences that the arrival of this new technology and its extraordinary mobility would have on the art of acting: the proximity of the camera, with its amplifying effect, would force actors to adopt a new performing style for the screen: less codified and mimetic, more sober and introspective. As James Naremore proposes in the article that begins the Notebook section, we can now question the extent to which mimetic techniques and Delsartean gestural systems really were abandoned because of cinema. And we may also ask ourselves whether it was not in fact the reverse that occurred: first came the actor, then the camera. Or was it not perhaps the eagerness to give up the gestures of the histrionic code, the desire to capture the subtlest reactions of the human body, that prompted D. W. Griffith's camera to move closer to the actors?

The body of the classical actor was, it might be said, simply *raw material* to film: a patient "object" under the film camera's gaze, subject to the power of directors and producers, even deprived of control over the final form of his or her own work. In short, a passive figure – although this is also a matter of great dispute, as can be concluded from the incidental dialogue established between Gonzalo de Lucas and Núria Bou in their articles on the work of Marlene Dietrich included in this issue's Notebook section. But the body of the classical actor was, above all, even if we admit its relative passivity, a body endowed with a formidable centripetal force, and actors did not need to participate actively in the big decisions (financial, staging or even editing decisions) to impose their appeal and organise everything around them: from the angle, the distance or the height of the camera to the duration of a shot or the spatial arrangement of lights and microphones on the set, everything revolved around their bodies, their mouths, their eyes. The actors and actresses did not even need to intervene to bring about the technological revolution that gave them back their voices, even though the introduction of sound film (viewed in retrospect, and considering the thwarted careers of more than a few silent film stars to be a mere side effect) constituted the actor's ultimate conquest of the heart of the system, their final consolidation as a privileged body capable of determining, to a large extent, the forms and norms of classical cinema. And not just of classical cinema, but to a certain degree, other cinematic forms far removed from the legendary Dream Factory, as can be appreciated in Cynthia Ann Baron's study of the importance of acting in American independent cinema, or Nicole Brenez's analysis of the function of the actor, based on the actor's role in different movements in experimental film.

Paradoxically, film *analysis* has responded to this centrality of the actor in film *practice* (practically throughout film history, with logical and undeniable variations but few substantial exceptions, as notable as such exceptions may be) with the greatest indifference that could possibly be expected. Confronted with the expression of bodies with no grammatical system, of gestures with an almost infinite vocabulary, and of voices that complicate the meaning of every word with their modulation, their rhythm and even their timbre, film studies (of almost any movement and perspective) has all too easily chosen to bypass these figures of flesh and blood, which focus the *average viewer's* attention but threaten the coherence, rigor and supposed objectivity of the analyst.

Of course, we do not deny the difficulties analysts face when trying to incorporate—and as no less than the very heart of their object of study—an element as slippery, as difficult to describe with precision, as the actor's work undoubtedly is. How should we examine an idiolect, or the idiosyncratic gestures of an actress, as Marga Carnicé does in her analysis of Anna Magnani's art? How do we incorporate the actor's work into a narratological study, as Héctor J. Pérez proposes? What tools should be used to assess the discursive effects of a simple casting choice? How do we discuss presence? How do we measure energy? What patterns can we use to quantify photogenic qualities or empathy?

It is not our intention, of course, to resolve such complex issues in this issue of *L'Atalante*. Our humble aim here will have been achieved if the very different approaches presented in the Notebook section, in the Dialogue with Icíar Bollaín and in the discussion between filmmakers and actors compiled in the (Dis)agreements section, serve to demonstrate to the reader that the analysis of a particular conception of acting, the study of its methods and foundations, can reveal just as much or even more about the suppositions of a film than a detailed examination of its *decoupage*, its lighting style or its narrative structure; if, in short, this issue contributes to a reconsideration of the actor's work as a core element in the construction of the form and meaning of a filmic text. ■

# NOTEBOOK

Cate Blanchett impersonating Bob Dylan in *I'm Not There* (Todd Haynes, 2007) / Courtesy of Savor Ediciones

# Faces, Voices, Bodies, Gestures

## The Conception of Acting as the Core of Film Analysis

James Naremore

# IMITATION, ECCENTRICITY, AND IMPERSONATION IN MOVIE ACTING

From the eighteenth until the early twentieth centuries the Aristotelian concept of mimesis governed most aesthetic theory, and stage acting was often described as an "imitative art". Denis Diderot's *Paradox sur le comédien* (1758), for example, argued that the best theatre actors played not from personal emotions or "sensibility", but from "imitation" (Cole and Chinoy, 1970: 162). According to Diderot, actors who depended too much upon their emotions were prone to lose control, couldn't summon the same feelings repeatedly, and were likely to alternate between sublime and flat performances in the same play; properly imitative actors, on the other hand, were rational observers of both human nature and social conventions who developed imaginary models of dramatic characters and, by imitating those models, reproduced the same nuances of behavior and colors of emotion every evening.

For centuries actors on the stage were taught to imitate a vocabulary of gestures and poses, and certain variations on the theory of acting as imitation persisted into modern times, as in the essays on aesthetics in the 1880 and 1911 editions of *The Encyclopedia Britannica*, which try to distinguish between the mimetic arts and the "symbolic" or abstract arts; in both editions, acting is described as an "imitative art" dependent upon and subordinate to the higher art of poetry. At a still later date, Brecht went so far as to argue that not only fictional characters but also everyday personalities and emotions are developed through a process of imitation: "The human being copies gesture, miming, tones of voice. And weeping arises from sorrow, but sorrow also arises from weeping" (1964: 152). For the past seventy or eighty years, however, the dominant forms of actor training in the United States have minimized or even denied the importance of imitation and the related arts of mimicry, mime, and impersonation. "The actor does not need to imitate a human being," Lee Strasberg famously declared. "The actor is himself a human being and can create out of himself" (Cole and Chinoy, 1970: 623). More recently, the website of a San Francisco acting school specializing in the "Sandford Meisner Technique" (named for a legendary New York teacher of stage and screen performers) announces that its students will be taught to "live truthfully under imaginary circumstances" and to "express oneself while `playing' imaginary circumstances" (www.themeisnertechniquestudio.com).

**In practice most modern actors are pragmatic rather than doctrinaire, willing to use whatever technique works or seems appropriate in particular circumstances. In fact, a great many films require a mixture of naturalistic and imitative techniques**

The change of emphasis from imitation to expression is due in part to motion pictures. Filmed performances are identical at every showing, making Diderot's paradox appear irrelevant, and movie close ups of actors reveal the subtlest emotions, giving weight to the idiosyncrasies of personal expression. But the shift toward personally expressive acting precedes the movies. The first manifestations of the change appear in the second half of the nineteenth century, with Henrik Ibsen's psychological dramas, William Archer's call for actors to "live the part," and Konstantin Stanislavsky's new style of introspective naturalism. By the late 1930s, when variants of Stanislavsky's ideas were fully absorbed into the US theatre and Hollywood achieved hegemony over the world's talking pictures, dramatic acting was nearly always evaluated in terms of naturalness, sincerity, and emotional truth of expression. A kind of artistic revolution had occurred, which, in some of its manifestations, was akin to the victory of romanticism over classicism at the beginning of the nineteenth century. As M. H. Abrams (1971) explains in a famous study of that earlier revolution, the metaphor of art as a mirror reflecting the world was replaced by the metaphor of art as a lamp projecting individual emotions into the world. "Imitation" became associated with such words as "copy", "substitute", "fake", and even "counterfeit". (Notice also that in some contexts the related term "impersonation" now signifies an illegal act.)The new forms of psychological realism, on the other hand, were associated with such words as "genuine," "truthful", "organic", "authentic", and "real". Thus V. I. Pudovkin's early book on film acting championed Stanislavsky's idea that "an actor striving toward truth should be able to avoid the element of *portraying* his feelings to the audience" (1949: 334), and in the theatre the Actor's Studio advocated the development of "private moments" and "organic naturalness".

The romantic revolution was concurrent with the democratic and scientific revolutions that also changed attitudes toward "innovation", a term which had been reviled in the writings of Francis Bacon, Thomas Hobbes, and even Shakespeare, but which in the nineteenth century became a signifier of artistic achievement and "experimentation". As René Girard points out, however, where art is concerned innovation depends upon an imitative or mimetic relationship between new work and prior models: "The main prerequisite for real innovation [in art] is a minimal respect for the past and a mastery of its achievements, that is, *mimesis*" (2008: 244). The postmodern spread of pastiche and quotation might be said to involve are turn to just this sort of mastery, but postmodernism relies upon a quality of irony or knowingness quite different from the classical arts.

The irony of the situation is that classicism and romanticism have always been two sides of the same coin. As Raymond Williams convincingly argues in *Culture and Society* (1950), the eighteenth-century doctrine of imitation was never intended as slavish adherence to a set of rules or to previous works of art; at its best, it was a set of precepts that were supposed to help artists achieve what Aristotle called "universals". But romanticism also claimed to be dealing with universals; the imitative tradition and the cult of personal expression were therefore equally idealistic and equally committed to a representation of what they regarded as essential reality. Where the history of acting is concerned, the major difference between these two schools is that the former claims to be Plato's "second nature" achieved by mimesis, and the latter claims to be original nature, achieved by playing "oneself".

Both approaches to performance are capable of producing good acting, and in practice most modern actors are pragmatic rather than doctrinaire, willing to use whatever technique works or seems appropriate in particular circumstances. In fact, a great many films require a mixture of naturalistic and imitative techniques. Consider Barbara Loden's raw, disturbing, utterly natural-looking performance in the title role of *Wanda* (1971), a film Loden also wrote and directed: she probably makes use of Method-style "sensory memory" to help create states of fatigue and hunger (as in the scene in which she sops up spaghetti sauce with bread and chews with gusto while also smoking a cigarette), but her performance also involves mimicry of a regional, working-class accent.

Although the technique of imitation and the technique of personal feeling are often opposed to one another by theorists, they aren't mutually exclusive; it's quite possible for pantomime artists or actors who use conventional gestures to "live the part" and emotionally project "themselves" into their roles. A remarkable testimony to this phenomenon has been given to us by Martin LaSalle, the leading "model" in Robert Bresson's *Pickpocket* (1959). LaSalle wasn't a professional actor when the picture was made and he found himself serving as a kind of puppet, executing whatever movements and poses Bresson asked of him. His performance is minimalist, seldom changing its expressive quality; at one point he sheds tears, but most of the time his off-screen narration, spoken quite calmly, serves to inform us of the intense emotions his character feels but doesn't obviously show on his face or in his voice. And yet LaSalle creates a memorably soulful effect, reminiscent in some ways of the young Montgomery Clift. In 1990, when documentary filmmaker Babette Mangolte tracked LaSalle down in Mexico, where he has worked for many years as a film and theatre actor, he described how the experience of *Pickpocket* had marked his entire life. He recalled that Bresson told his "models" to repeat actions over and over, never explaining why; at one point he shot forty takes of LaSalle doing nothing more than walking up a stairway. The technique nevertheless had emotional consequences for the actor. LaSalle believed that Bresson was trying to provoke "an inner tension that would be seen in the hands and eyes", as if he wanted to "weaken the ego of the 'model'", thereby inducing "doubt", "anxiety", and "anguish tinged with pleasure". While the performance was achieved through a sort of pantomime or rote repetition of prescribed gestures and looks, it was by no means unfeeling.

**Martin LaSalle performing his character in *Pickpocket* (Robert Bresson, 1959)**

"I felt the tension of the pickpocket", LaSalle told Mangolte. "I think, even if we are only models, as [Bresson] says, we still take part in and internalize the activity. I felt as if I were living the situation, not externally but in a sensory way". The astonishing result was that after *Pickpocket* LaSalle moved to New York and studied for four years at The Actor's Studio with Lee Strasberg, who became the second great influence on his career.

As important as deeply felt emotion may be to a performer, there's something disingenuous about the modern pedagogical tendency to devalue imitation, for we can find many instances in which movie actors, even naturalistic ones, are required to perform imitative tasks: depending on the situation, they can be called upon to mimic accents and physical signifiers of age, social class, gender, and sexuality; to deliberately emphasize conventional poses and gestures; to "act" for other characters in visibly artificial ways; to imitate models of "themselves" by repeating personal eccentricities from role to role; and to impersonate historical figures or other actors.

We need only think of film comedy, which often involves foregrounding of sterotypical behavior and the mechanics of performance. Alec Guinness, a distinguished stage actor whose work in dramatic films depended upon minimalism and British reserve, was one of the most natural looking performers in screen history, and yet he performed in a manifestly "imitative" way when he played comedy rather than drama. As George Smiley, the leading character in the British television adaptation of John Le Carré's *Tinker, Taylor, Soldier, Spy* (1989), Guinness is so quiet, so natural, so lacking inenergetic movement and obvious emotion, that he makes the actors around him look like Dickensian caricatures; he reveals a repressed emotional intensity only when he makes slight adjustments of his eyeglasses and bowler hat. Contrast his performance in Alexander Mackendrick's dark comedy, *The Ladykillers* (1955): as the leader of a group of crooks who rent a room from a harmless little old lady, he wears comic buck teeth and sinister eye makeup, and his interactions with the landlady overflow with fake sincerity and oily sweetness. As Pudovkinmight say, he *portrays* feelings, so that the audience, if not the naïve old lady, can see his absurdly unconvincing act.

The burlesque comic Ed Wynn once distinguished between joke-telling clowns and comic actors. The first type, Wynn explained, says and does funny things, and the second type says and does things funn*ily*. The distinction doesn't quite hold because comic actors sometimes also say or do funny things; even so, light-comic genres often depend upon performers who can execute ordinary movements and expressions in amusing ways, as if "quoting" conventions. Ernst Lubitsch's Paramount musicals of the early 1930s are clear examples, requiring the actors to behave in a chic but visibly imitative style. In *The Love Parade* (1930), which employs a good deal of silent pantomime, Maurice Chevalier is cast as a Parisian playboy and military attaché to the unmarried and sexually yearning Queen of Sylvania, played by Jeanette MacDonald. When the two characters meet, their comically stiff formality soon dissolves into flirtation and then into a duet entitled "Anything to Please the Queen". Throughout, their every intonation and expression is so heightened and intensified that there's barely any difference between talking and singing. In the slightly later *One Hour with You* (1932), everyone poses, speaks, sings and exchanges glances in this imitative fashion, heightened by moments of rhymed dialogue and direct address to the audience.

Lubitsch's non-musical comedy *Trouble in Paradise* (1932) might seem different because it's filled with Samson Raphaelson's witty dialogue, but it, too, involves imitation. In an opening scene, Herbert Marshall stands in the moonlight on the balcony of a hotel in Venice, looking down at the Grand Canal as an obsequious waiter hovers behind his shoulder and offers to serve him.

Amusing as the words are, the charm of the scene has as much to do with Marshall's performance, which epitomizes the popular 1930s idea of ultra-cosmopolitan masculinity. His well-cut tuxedo, his slicked-back hair, his elegant pose with one hand holding a cigarette and the other in a jacket pocket —all this creates an air of "sophisticated-ness" befitting

**Herbert Marshall in *Trouble in Paradise* (Ernst Lubitsch, 1932)**

an advertisement in a luxury magazine—. Marshall also speaks amusing*ly*, in a plummy English accent, almost singing his lines in a tone of worldly, romantic melancholy. In keeping with the dialog, he's too good to be real. Indeed we soon learn that he's not a Baron but a jewel thief, perfectly suited to a film in which almost all the characters are pretending or wearing social masks.

An even more obvious form of imitation can be seen when actors play characters that try to hide their true feelings from one another or that put on a comic or ironic act —something that inevitably occurs in films that have theater or playacting as subject—.

**An even more obvious form of imitation can be seen when actors play characters that try to hide their true feelings from one another or that put on a comic or ironic act**

*Being Julia* (István Szabó, 2004), for example, adapted from Somerset Maugham's novel *Theatre*, concerns an actor whose excess of real emotion threatens to undermine her performances. Annette Bening plays a middle-aged British stage star of the 1930s, a larger than life character endowed with innate theatricality and acute emotional sensitivity. The realistic performance requires Bening to imitate certain conventional models; she must adopt a British accent and her every gesture and expression, both on stage and off, must suggest the fragile histrionics of an aging diva.

The ensuing plot concerns her affair with an American fan barely older than her adolescent son who seduces her and then turns her into a miserable, sexually dependent slave. When the affair begins, she's lifted out of a mild depression and becomes giddy and girlish; but when her lover withdraws and treats her coldly, she becomes a haggard, weeping neurotic, alternately angry and groveling. What helps her conquer the roller-coaster of emotion is her memory of a long dead director and mentor (Michael Gambon), who magically appears as a sort of ghost in moments of crisis, criticizing her everyday performance and dispensing advice. Gambon is a projection of her own critical self-consciousness — an internal monitor or coach, created through her professional ability to mentally observe her performances as they happen, both on stage and in real life—. In Denis Diderot's words, Julia has within herself, like all the best actors, "an unmoved and disinterested onlooker" (Cole and Chinoy, 1970: 162).At her most anguished point, when she's weeping hysterically, Gambon appears and mocks her ability to "turn on the waterworks". He advises her to become a more imitative actor, exactly the sort of player Diderot might have admired: "You've got to learn to *seem* to do it —that's the art of acting!— Hold the mirror up to nature, ducky. Otherwise you become a nervous wreck". In the film's concluding moments, this advice enables her to emerge victorious not only in private life but also on the stage, where her lover's new girlfriend has been cast alongside her.

The stage acting in *Being Julia*, shown in close ups, is manifestly artificial and full of tricks: we see heavy makeup on the actors' faces, we hear the actors' loud voices projected toward the theatre auditorium, and we glimpse Bening struggling with a misplaced prop during a tearful scene. In the off-stage sequences, however, the acting looks realistic and the emotions are sometimes expressed in nakedly exposed style. In the scene in which Bening has her tearful breakdown, she wears no apparent makeup and her pale skin becomes read and blotchy as she weeps. We can never know(without asking her) how this scene was achieved — she may have been feigning emotion, she may have been playing "herself" in imaginary circumstances, and she may have been doing both—. No matter how she accomplished her task, her performance looks spontaneous, as if she were *being* Julia rather than imitating her.

At the same time, the audience recognizes Julia as Annette Bening, whose body and expressive attributes can be seen in other films. Her apparent authenticity of feeling, which earned her an Academy-Award nomination for *Being Julia*, is essential to the cinema of sentiment or high emotion and is valued in all of today's popular genres; but the doubling or tandem effect of recognizing Bening alongside the character has a longer history, essential to the development of the star system. It first emerged in eighteenth-century theatre, at the time of Diderot, when leading actors such as David Garrick not only imitated Hamlet but also brought individual style or personality to the role. Thus, as time went on, it became possible to speak of "David Garrick's Hamlet", "John Barrymore's Hamlet", "John Gielgud's Hamlet", "Laurence Olivier's Hamlet", and even "Mel Gibson's Hamlet".

In motion pictures this phenomenon was intensified, with the result that stars often gained ascendency over roles, repeatedly playing the same character types and bringing the same personal attributes and mannerisms to every appearance. Consider again Maurice Chevalier, who at Paramount in the 1930s was cast as a military officer, a medical doctor, and a tailor, but who always played essentially the same character. Chevalier had been a hugely popular cabaret singer and star of the Folies Bergère in Paris during the 1920s, and Hollywood wanted him to display many of the performing traits associated with his success; at the same time, directors such as Lubitsch and Mamoulian modified those traits, making him less uninhibited and bawdy, more suitable to a general American audience. In his Paramount musicals of the pre-code era, he's always the boulevardier in a straw hat, the stereotypical representative of what American audiences at the time thought of as "gay Parée"—sophisticated, exuberant, grinning, amusingly adept at sexual innuendo, always ready to charm and seduce beautiful women—. Hence in *The Love Parade* and *One Hour with You*, the films I've described above, he not only imitates certain conventional gestures and expressions for the sake of comedy but also reproduces the broad smile, the jaunty posture, the suggestive leer, the rolling eyes, and the distinctive French accent that were associated with "Maurice Chevalier". His public personality was in a sense unique, but it was nonetheless a carefully crafted "model" in Diderot's sense of the term —a model so idiosyncratic that Chevalier became a popular subject for generations of comic impersonators to imitate on stage and in film—.

Chevalier's performances were stylized and extroverted, indebted to the musical revues of Paris, and for that reason he could be viewed as what the early futurists and the Soviet avant-garde called an "eccentric" actor; indeed Sergei Eisenstein's doctrine of "eccentrism", which is most clearly evident in the grotesque caricatures of *Strike* (Stachka, 1924), was developed in part by analogy with music-hall performers. Relatively few of the leading players in classic Hollywood had this extreme kind of eccentricity, although comics like the Marx Brothers and W. C. Fields or unusual personalities like Wallace Beery, Marie Dressler and Mickey Rooney certainly qualify. Many character actors of the period were also eccentrics; indeed the very term "character actor", which in Shakespeare's day referred to a performer who played a single vivid type, was often used by the film industry to describe supporting players with cartoonish personalities: we need only think of the lively crowd of eccentrics in Preston Sturges's comedies —William Demarest, Eugene Pallette, Franklin Pangborn, Akim Tamiroff, Raymond Walburn, etc.—. Comedic females such as Marjorie Main and Thelma Ritter belong in the same category, as do many of the non-comic supporting players, such as Sydney Greenstreet, Elisha Cook, Jr. and Peter Lorre in John Huston's *The Maltese Falcon* (1941).

Leading players, on the other hand, tended to have symmetrical faces and usually behaved in almost invisible fashion; their close-ups conveyed what Richard Dyer has called their "interiority", and the smallest movements of their bodies helped create a sense of their personalities. But the classic-era stars were no less carefully constructed performers than the character actors; their identities were created not only by their roles but also by their physical characteristics and idiosyncrasies or peculiarities of expression. Nearly all actors in the period played types and tended to be typecast, but they also brought unique qualities of "personality" or personal eccentricity to the types they played. In her intriguing essay on Humphrey Bogart, Louise Brooks makes precisely this point. "All actors know that truly natural acting is rejected by the audience", Brooks writes. "Though people are better equipped to judge acting than any other art, the hypocrisy of 'sincerity' prevents them from admitting that they, too, are always acting some role of their own invention. To be a successful actor, then, it is necessary to add eccentricities and mystery to naturalness, so that the audience can admire and puzzle over something different than itself" (1983: 64-65).

Bogart was certainly a natural-looking performer who seemed to have a reflective, mysteriously experienced inner life, an actor who appeared to be *thinking* in a way quite different from Garbo's blank-faced close-up at the end of *Queen Christina* (Robert Mamoulian, 1933). But Bogart's "naturalness" was expressed through distinctive physical attributes and carefully crafted displays of personal eccentricities. To express thoughtfulness, for example, he often tugged at his earlobe, and to create an air of relaxed confidence or bravado he repeatedly hooked his thumbs into his pants waist. At one level Bogart was simply reacting as he naturally would; but the gestures were practiced and perfected until they became part of an expressive rhetoric, a repertory of performance signs. At the height of his fame he played many roles, among them a private eye, a gangster, a neurotic sea captain, a disturbingly violent Hollywood screenwriter, and an aging Cockney sailor; but his eccentricity persisted through variations of character. You can see the business with the thumbs in such different pictures as *The Big Sleep* (Howard Hawks, 1946) and *The Barefoot Contessa* (Joseph L. Mankiewicz, 1954). You can see it in a wartime short subject, *Hollywood Victory Caravan* (1945), where Bogart appears as "himself" and where, as Gary Giddins has observed, he stands with "thumbs under belt as though he were doing a Bogart impression"(2006: 43). You can also see it in a well-known news photo of 1947, when Bogart, Lauren Bacall, Paul Henried, Richard Conte, John Huston and other Hollywood notables went to the US capitol to protest the HUAC hearings on supposed communists in the movie industry: Bogart stands front and center of the group, his jacket spread and thumbs under his belt. He's imitating or copying a model of Humphrey Bogart.

Like Chevalier, Bogart was a star that comic entertainers liked to impersonate. Others have included Marlon Brando, Bette Davis, James Cagney, Kirk Douglas, Clark Gable, Cary Grant, Katharine Hepburn, Burt Lancaster, Marilyn Monroe, Edgar G. Robinson, James Stewart, and John Wayne. (One of the most popular subjects of comic impersonation as I write this essay is probably Christopher Walken, an eccentric if ever there was one.) Usually the stars are subject to impersonation because of a peculiar voice or accent, an oddity of facial expression, or a distinctive walk. Some have had all three. John Wayne had a deep voice with a drawling California accent, a habit of raising his eyebrows and wrinkling his forehead to express surprise or consternation, and an oddly rolling, almost mincing gait. Marilyn Monroe had a breathy voice, a parted mouth with a quivering upper lip (a quiver that, as Richard Dyer has observed, was designed not only to express yielding sexuality but also to hide an upper gum line), and an undulating, provocative walk that emphasized her hips and breasts. Some of the legendary stars, especially the stoic males like Dana Andrews or the flawless females like Ava Gardner, were difficult to mimic except perhaps in caricatured drawings. But even the less eccentric actors had performing quirks or tricks, such as Andrews' tendency to cock his elbow out to his side when he drinks from a glass. There are so many famous names one could mention in this context that eccentricity would seem the norm rather than the exception. Sometimes the eccentricity is sui generis, and sometimes it has an influence on the culture. Marlon Brando and Marilyn Monroe's mannerisms have been imitated by many other actors in more or less subtle ways; and James Cagney spawned a generation of teenaged performers, beginning with the Dead End Kids, who copied the early Cagney's ghetto-style toughness and swagger.

The classic-era stars were no less carefully constructed performers than the character actors; their identities were created not only by their roles but also by their physical characteristics and idiosyncrasies or peculiarities of expression. Nearly all actors in the period played types and tended to be typecast, but they also brought unique qualities of "personality" or personal eccentricity to the types they played

In the history of cinema there have been occasions when famous actors have not simply imitated but impersonated other famous actors. One of the best known examples is Tony Curtis's impersonation of Cary Grant in *Some Like it Hot* (Billy Wilder, 1959). (Curtis's equally amusing impersonation of a woman in that same film is based partly on Eve Arden). A more recent instance is Cate Blanchett's remarkable impersonation of Bob Dylan in Todd Haynes's *I'm Not There* (2007), a film in which Dylan is also played by Christian Bale, Marcus Carl Franklin, Richard Gere, and Heath Ledger. Blanchett is the only actor in the group who tries to look and behave like Dylan, and her performance is a tour de force, achieving uncanny likeness to the androgynous pop star in the most drugged phase of his career. But impersonation in fiction film, especially when performed by a star, has a paradoxical effect; the more perfect it is, the more conscious we are of the performer who accomplishes it. Successful impersonation in real life is a form of identity theft, but in theatre or film our pleasure as an audience derives from our awareness that it's Curtis pretending to be Grant or Blanchett pretending to be Dylan, never a complete illusion.

The example of Blanchet serves to remind us that the film genre most likely to involve overt imitation or impersonation of one actor by another is the biopic, especially the biographical film that tells the life story of a celebrity in the modern media. Film biographies of remote historical figures or real-life personalities from outside the media seldom if ever require true impersonation; we have no recordings or films of Napoleon or Lincoln, and the many actors who have played them on the screen needed only conform in general ways to certain painted portraits or still photographs. The audience seems inclined to accept fictional representations of historical characters and even modern celebrities as long as the performance is consistent and reasonably plausible: Willem Dafoe has played Jesus Christ, Max Shreck and T. S. Eliot without radically changing

**Cate Blanchett impersonating Bob Dylan in *I'm Not There* (Todd Haynes, 2007) / Courtesy of Savor Ediciones**

his physiognomy, and Sean Penn is quite convincing as gay activist Harvey Milk in *Milk* (Gus Van Sant, 2008) even though he doesn't physically resemble Milk. When a conventionally realistic biopic concerns a popular star of film or television, however, the situation is a bit more complex. The actor needs to give a fairly accurate and convincing impersonation of a known model while also serving the larger ends of the story. No matter how accurate the impersonation might be, the audience will inevitably be aware that an actor is imitating a famous personage; but if it becomes too much a display of virtuosity, it can upset the balance of illusion and artifice.

Biopics in general are crucially dependent upon a dialectical interaction between mimicry and realistic acting, an interaction that can become threatened when a major star undertakes an impersonation. In *White Hunter, Black Heart* (1990), one of Clint Eastwood's most underrated films, Eastwood plays a character based on John Huston and in the process accurately imitates Huston's slow, courtly manner of speaking. Good as the imitation is, it has a slightly disconcerting or comic effect, if only because it's performed by an iconic star in the classic mold; any basic change in such an actor's voice and persona seems bizarre, almost as if he had donned a strange wig or a false nose. Probably for this reason, some of the most effective impersonations in recent films have been accomplished by actors who are not stars in the classic sense. Meryl Streep, for example, has performed a variety of characters and accents, so that when she impersonates the celebrity chef Julia Child in *Julie and Julia* (Nora Ephron, 2009) there is no great dissonance between the star persona and the role.

Like Streep, Phillip Seymour Hoffman's particular kind of stardom is based on his work as an actor, not on his sex appeal or public personality. One of the high points of his career is his impersonation of Truman Capote in *Capote* (Bennet Miller, 2005), which won several awards and was widely praised by people who had known Capote intimately. Whatever the shortcomings of the film, Hoffman's work is exemplary. We can see the actor behind the mask of Capote, but the actor doesn't have a consistent behavioral image that generates conflict with the mask. The impersonation, moreover, is never slavish, so nuanced and emotionally convincing that the display of imitative skill never causes a rift in the suspension of disbelief.

One phenomenon peculiar to celebrity impersonation in the biopic is that because of the realist nature of the genre it always takes a few scenes for the audience to fully accept mimicry and settle into a willing suspension of disbelief. This is especially true when a star performs the impersonation. Near the beginning of Steven Soderbergh's *Behind the Candelabra* (2013), for example, Michael Douglas reenacts Liberace's Las Vegas nightclub act, and I keep saying to myself: "It's Michael Douglas!" The thought never goes away but becomes less intrusive, in part because the film moves from public spectacle to increasingly intimate scenes in which Douglas gives a good deal of complexity to the character. When a relatively unknown actor performs an impersonation, the effect is slightly different because the audience doesn't know the actor's normal "self". An impressive instance is Christian McKay as Orson Welles in Richard Linklater's textual biopic *Me and Orson Welles* (2009).

Welles has been played by many actors, including Paul Shenar, Eric Purcell, Jean Guerin, Vincent D'Onofrio (aided by the voice of Maurice LaMarche), Liev Schreiber, and

Angus MacFadyen —but none have come this close to his looks, voice, and slightest movements—.

He captures the booming voice, the vaguely mid-Atlantic accent, the twinkle in the eye, the forbidding glance, and the heavy yet somehow buoyant walk. He's slightly too old (Welles was twenty-two at the time of *Caesar*) and never displays Welles' infectious laugh; but he merges with the character more completely than a star could have done and is just as convincing when he tries to seduce a young woman as when he proclaims ideas about theatre. To hear him read aloud a passage from Booth Tarkington's *The Magnificent Ambersons* is to feel as if one were in the presence of Welles himself. Even so, the actor McKay is always present to us alongside the impersonation, taking obvious pleasure in the magic trick he performs, enabling us to see that Welles was not simply a flamboyant personality but an actor and director of seriousness and importance who could bring audiences to their feet.

Whenever we encounter an overt, creative impersonation such as McKay's Welles we can easily appreciate the singular skill of the performers. But imitation in all its manifestations has always been an important, even crucial feature of the art of movie acting. The rote repetition of predetermined gestures and movements, the development of model character types, the repeated performance of personal eccentricities, and the impersonation of historical characters may not be the most valued aspect of what actors do, but they are obvious sources of pleasure for the audience. They contribute to the system of genres and styles (as in the distinction between comedy and drama or between conventional movie realism and a director like Bresson), and more generally to the rhetoric of characterization and the formation of personality on the screen. In a more subtle and general sense, they complicate our ideas of personal autonomy and individuality by making us at least potentially aware of the imitative aspects of our lives in the real world, as both personalities and social beings.

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## Notes

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Héctor J. Pérez
Translated by Martin Boyd

# THE THREE BODIES OF NARRATION: A COGNITIVIST POETICS OF THE ACTOR'S PERFORMANCE[1]

Audiovisual narrative theory has been based on the study and classification of elements specific to cinema, a perspective that has often led theorists to forget or overlook the contribution of other arts, such as sound or the actor's performance. This means that for most film scholars only framing and editing, techniques exclusive to cinematography, can narrate.

The most recent and influential theories on the theatre suggest that the issue does not start with cinema but much earlier, with the actor's performance on the stage, which of course precedes film acting by many centuries. Neither Erika Fischer-Lichte, in her ambitious theoretical assertion of the performative dimension of theatre (FISCHER-LICHTE, 2004), nor James Hamilton, in his highly refined philosophical argument for the independence of the stage from the text (HAMILTON, 2007), give the slightest attention to the narrative aspect of theatre. Nevertheless, the most widely read and respected treatise on narration in Western history is a poetics of tragedy; i.e., a treatise on theatre narration!

The origin of this mystery can be found right there, at its very thematic core, in the conceptual pair diegesis/mimesis, with which Aristotle separated and distinguished the epic from theatre, contrasting stories recounted by a voice with those played out through mimetic embodiments of characters. Although at no point in his treatise does Aristotle suggest that the two categories are mutually exclusive, his proposition gave rise to a whole tradition of defining narrative as stories written to be read, excluding from that definition anything written for the stage.

Of course, I will not be claiming here that most narrative theorists are unaware of the importance of the actor or the body. There are indeed major authors in film theory who demonstrate the significance of acting for narrative. The first of these was Méliès, who at the same time expressed dissatisfaction with his many experiences of filming with theatre actors and the indispensable nature of the gesture above the narrative qualities of the spoken story (DIEDERICHS, 2004: 36-37). Among Germany's silent film theorists, out

*La libertad* (Lisandro Alonso, 2001)

of the fascinating discussions that focused on classifying cinema among the artistic genres there emerged statements of the narrative character of cinema as one of its chief artistic qualities. For example, the theory of pantomime, dominant among German authors like Joseph August Lux, Herbert Tannenbaum, Walter Thielemann and Willy Rath, sustained that cinema was capable of imitating drama with its expressive resources, which would make it a genre more akin to theatre than to dance (DIEDERICHS, 2004: 124-25). In the same decade in the United States, authors like Epes W. Sargent and Henry A. Philips characterised the action as a basic performative unit of narrative, making a theoretical effort to define its constructive qualities, a context more recently explored by Michele Guerra (GUERRA, 2014). But it is without doubt Bela Balasz who has made the greatest contribution to the research into gesture and facial expression over the course of his work, identifying in them the range of artistic qualities that differentiate the cinema, the only art capable of constructing the story through small variations in the external elements constituted by the gestures of an actor's performance (BALASZ, 1970).

However, contrary to these propositions drawing on silent film, modern narratology has fully embraced the dichotomy that dismisses the value of mimesis as narration. Gerard Genette, one of its founding fathers, formulated a science of narration using the literary model of the novel, which would be carried over into studies of film narrative based on the conception of a film as a text whose author is the director.

In this context, the highly influential Christian Metz not only returned to this mutually exclusive dichotomy in defining film as an epic art-form and theatre as a mimetic art-form, but also added elements to the opposition, identifying in theatre a close link to reality, while cinematic narration met the definition of 'de-realization' characteristic of any narrative (METZ, 1982: 66-68). While the influence of Metz and Genette has been less pronounced among theorists of American cinema, only one major author, Seymour Chatman, has developed the idea that the novel, the theatre and the cinema all share elements such as a plot, a cast of characters and a setting. Based on this he has also argued for the existence of instances of narration in stories without an apparent narrator (CHATMAN, 1990: 109). However, there is no evidence that these isolated arguments have had an influence on subsequent authors. Contemporary French narrative theory appears to undervalue the contribution of actors to the narration, as can be seen in the earliest articles of authors like François Jost or André Gaudreault in the 1990s (GAUDREAULT, JOST 1990), and a similar phenomenon is also observable in the work of the most prominent Italian theorists (CASETTI, DI CHIO, 1990). Although it is true that a decade later new perspectives would be opened up, such as the so-called semiotics of the body posited by Jacques Fontanille, I have not found a clear line of continuity in the development of these ideas. (FONTANILLE. 2004).

## The possibility of mimesis as narration in cognitivism

If we want to identify a first breakthrough of real consequence we can find it in the literary narratology of the English-speaking world, with various perspectives that were finally capable of accepting a dramatic narrative. The most substantial contributions are recognizable in Brian Richardson, who details and extends Chatman's account through numerous examples of dramatic texts that illustrate narratological elements, such as time, space, causality and even the beginning and end of the story, or minor aspects such as extradiegetic insertions that denote reflexivity (RICHARDSON, 2007: 142-155). It is important not to overlook the reflection of a theorist as recognized as Manfred Jahn, who had previously spoken of a 'show-er' narrator and had sustained that all narrative genres are mediated by an agency which, in a performance, could be a disembodied narrative function responsible for selection, arrangement and focalization (JAHN, 2001). But the decisive turn came with cognitivist literary studies. Monika Fludernik's idea of 'natural narratology' seemed to avoid the old prejudices with respect to differences between narrative voice and the body on the stage, focusing the interest on the performative stage narrative (FLUDERNIK, 2008).

But ultimately Fludernik particularly seems to have paved the way for others, such as Nünning and Sommer, whose most recent contribution posits plays as 'acts of narration', whose characters act as intradiegetic narrators (NÜNNING and SOMMER, 2008).

In this recent positive development it is no accident that the cognitivist line has been the one that has broken new ground in narratology. And although this breakthrough has not been as evident in film studies, this does not mean that these contributions can be ignored. On the contrary, from their origins through to the most important debates of this decade, they invite us to explore them and examine their foundations, without which it would be difficult to understand an actor's performance as a true *actio narrativa*. This is what I intend to do in this paper, although rather than an exhaustive exploration what I propose here is a brief reconnaissance that aims to resolve one particular problem.

If there is any one idea that underpins all the cognitivist contributions to and discussions of film studies, it is that the emotions are a primordial aesthetic element of the narration, which at once establishes the character as the main subject of investigation. It is well-known that this proposition has produced one of the major currents of thought, related to the concept of empathy, a topic still very much in vogue today (GOLDIE and COPLAN, 2011). It was Murray Smith, in an article that continues to inform key reflections following this line, who proposed a fundamental concept: 'Recognition describes the spectator's construction of character: the perception of a set of textual elements, in film typically cohering around the image of a body, as an individuated and continuous agent' (SMITH, 1995: 82). One of the distinctive features that Smith stresses is the cognitive line of continuity between spectator and characters. Recognition is presented not as an identification but as a re-identification, i.e., a process that produces a continuous identity recognised as such by the spectator. The second key feature relates to the 'bodily' conditions for this recognition of the character. In a view that is critical of the tendency towards structuralist abstraction, Smith identifies the corporeality of actors as generative of a stable and continuous identity for cognitive recognition: 'Recognition in cinematic fiction is, then, a process in which iconic renderings of the physical features of the body, face, and voice typically play an important role, though language may contribute and interact with them' (SMITH, 1995: 116). This introductory concept to the general theory that Smith defines as the 'structure of sympathy' gives us three essential ingredients: continuity as an essential structure of narration, the value of the body of the characters and the importance of the spectator as a factor in narrative analysis.

A few years later, Carl Plantinga produced what in my view is a seminal work dedicated to exploring the emotional resonances, and their consequent narrative effects, of facial close-ups in cinema. In a clear line of continuity with the theories of Balasz, Plantinga sets out a series of theoretical guidelines to demonstrate the extraordinary power of the face in particular cases of narrative construction. In fact, he offers an analysis of the greatest impact that a face can have, in what he calls the scene of empathy:

> 'Many films feature a kind of scene in which the pace of the narrative momentarily slows and the interior emotional experience of a favored character becomes the locus of attention. In this kind of scene, which I call the *scene of empathy*, we see a character's face, typically in close-up, either for a single shot of long duration or as an element of a point-of-view structure alternating between shots of the character's face and shots of what she or he sees' (PLANTINGA, 1999: 239).

Plantinga's essay explores the degree to which such scenes are aimed at eliciting an empathetic reaction from the spectator. At that time, when the discussion of the concept of empathy had still yet to be developed, Plantinga was already defining with considerable precision some of the emotional and cognitive values that form part of this complex process, and based on these definitions he even identified certain tendencies in the location of these kinds of scenes: 'To contextualize empathy, films often attempt to elicit an empathetic response only after a protagonist has undergone some kind of trial or sacrifice, has neared the end of her or his life, or in some cases, has actually died' (PLANTINGA, 1999: 251). In any case, what Plantinga's work established was the possibility of defining the body of the performer as a generator of wide-ranging narrative effects, capable of definitively consolidating, for example, the ideological or moral values of a narration with communicative and emotional effectiveness. The communicative power of facial expression is thus a central feature, also highlighted in a line of argument that is quite different but nevertheless complementary to mine, also put forward by Murray Smith (SMITH, 2005).

**If we want to identify a first breakthrough of real consequence we can find it in the literary narratology of the English-speaking world**

### Towards a poetics of actors' narration

In a more general sense than the very detailed work of Plantinga, what I wish to propose here is a framework through which to understand the main variants of the role in narrative construction taken by the actor's body. The first task is to explicate the way in which the bodies that the spectator identifies as characters with continuity in the story can be considered to have a narrative function. I will now identify this element, which is without doubt the most important for my proposition here.

In practically all of its concepts, cognitive film studies assume that the emotional attraction of the spectator to the story is the cornerstone of the narration. Emotional attraction is understood here to mean any kind of emotional response by the spectator to the stimulus arising from the story, provided that it inspires the spectator to engage with the story rather than to lose interest in it. Therefore, if there is any one thing common to all of such moments of emotion, it is attention. When our emotional involvement with a character with a character grows, we feel that the range of emotions evoked in us tends to intensify our attention. Our feelings of sympathy for Don Draper, for example, prompt us to pay closer attention to the events that result in the end of his first marriage (*Mad Men*, AMC: 2007-). Our fascination and repugnance for the Joker, taken to a disturbing level thanks to Heath Ledger's performance (STERNAGEL, 2012), turns his confrontation with Batman into a magnetically charged event for the spectator of *The Dark Knight* (Christopher Nolan, 2008). The appearance of the mystery surrounding the name of Rebecca in Alfred Hitchcock's film of the same name (*Rebecca*, 1939) piques our curiosity about the life of the male protagonist, Maxim de Winter. The spectator's emotional experience always goes hand in hand with attention to the story, suggesting that a key condition of a narration is the fact that it has been conceived with the aim of catching the spectator's attention. This points to the underlying hypothesis of my article: the body narrates insofar as it is able to engage the spectator's attention. The following paragraphs outline the core of my analysis, presenting what I understand to be the main variants of the contribution to narrative made by the actor's performance. Certain overlaps with the categories proposed recently by Vivien Sobchack will be evident; however, the phenomenological bases of the US theorist's work and the cognitivist bases of my proposal result in significant differences both in terms of objectives and of methodology (SOBCHACK, 2012).

**In this recent positive development it is no accident that the cognitivist line has been the one that has broken new ground in narratology**

### The narration of the body in movement

My first point of reference applies not only to fiction, but also to reality in its most normal or even neutral dimension in emotional terms, since the body as a narrative element is part of everybody's daily experience. We have all experienced moments in which we have lingered on a person performing an action: watching a person walk, contemplating how a pair of hands wrap around an object, or observing a person's hair being blown by the wind. This could also apply to auditory experiences: listening to a conversation without following the meaning, or the sound made by any human action, is a major point of emotional cognitive attraction. Normal bodies in normal situations. Any action, even in its most isolated condition, is capable of capturing and holding our attention, without even necessarily arousing our curiosity.

Neuroscience has offered us a better understanding of the phenomenon without having to view it in terms of that contemplative predisposition so extensively explored and exalted by the Romantics. Drawing from studies of the attention, especially those taking an evolutionist approach, it could be assumed that attention to other bodies is an essential part of our learning process, and a necessary strategy of self-preservation (KNUDSEN, 2007). Studies of intersubjectivity based on the discovery of the mirror neuron suggest that there is a mimetic mechanism whereby we submit each observed action to a process of embodied understanding, because to make sense of it we need to mimic it by replicating it almost as if we ourselves had experienced it. Seeing another body's action would be like starting to live another life, which is one of the fundamental theories of Vittorio Gallese's adaptation of the scientific paradigm to the interpretation of the arts, in collaboration with Italian film scholar Michele Guerra (GALLESE AND GUERRA, 2012). Consider, for example, *Freedom* (La libertad, Lisandro Alonso, 2001), a film that simply narrates a day in the life of a rural worker. While watching the film, through the attention captured by the actions of its only protagonist, played by Misael Saavedra, the spectator witnesses an essentialist embodied narration, something truly exceptional in cinema. Yet what we find in this unique film is quite ordinary. Much of our attention to the screen is devoted to following the actions of bodies in all kinds of situations: we see a couple slowly eating breakfast, a character driving for a while, another character descending a flight of stairs, and yet another on the verge of falling asleep. There is probably not a single human action that has not been embodied in a narration. And all such moments in which our attention is held by apparently normal happenings are narrative moments that express the lives of the characters, as well as being an essential element in the cognitive continuity of the characters for the spectator. The attention aroused by the bodies in action is an omnipresent substratum, and although there are differences between a film by Eric Rohmer and one by Steven Spielberg, these extremes mark a continuous presence of narrative mimesis. The reference of this narrative dimension to the cognitive level of mimesis and to the framework of *embodied simulation* does not presuppose that this mode is limited to the pre-reflective domain. Thus, this narration will be the site of more complex cognitive operations, such as empathy. From this point on I will use this term as it is defined by Jean Decety in neuroscience or Murray Smith in his most recent contribution to this research, as a process in which a subject A imagines perceiving, knowing or feeling, partially or wholly, that which is perceived, known or felt by a subject B, while conscious both that it is imagined and that it belongs to the experience of the other (DECETY AND JACKSON, 2006; SMITH, 2011).

*Three Colors: Blue* (Trois couleurs: Bleu, Krzysztof Kieslowski,1993)

## The narration of the exceptional body

The second mode in which actors' bodies engage the attention of the spectator tends to occur with greater intensity. This relates to a body's exceptionality as a source of sexual attraction, repugnance, amazement, curiosity, sympathy and practically any other emotion capable of increasing the spectator's attention to the story. This mode has some extremely interesting variants. Consider the fragile body of the old woman who tries to drop the empty bottle in the bin in *Three Colors: Blue* (Trois coleurs: Bleu, Kristof Kieslowski, 1993). Our attention is captured by the physical condition of this extremely old body which, almost incapable of achieving its objective, creates a moment of singular suspense. It is only a moment, but few spectators would not have felt the emotion and mnemonic and even metaphorical impact of this scene. It is possible to imagine that this scene, understood as a poetic expression of human vitality, makes a subtle reference to the ethics of life that underlies the narration and, by extension, all of Kieslowski's films. Kathrin Fahlenbrach has explored the complexity and significance of visual metaphors, including a section dedicated to body metaphors, making her analysis one of few recent works that are truly sensitive to the expressive value of the body. Fahlenbrach identifies with great precision the connections between the creation of meaning in the generation of metaphors and emotional dynamics with a powerful narrative function, such as the generation of empathy. For example, her reference to the effect produced by the body of E.T. (*E.T. The Extra-Terrestrial*, Steven Spielberg, 1982), whose monstrous body image at once signifies the strange and the extraterrestrial, and even the same emotions of repugnance provoked by other aliens, which is powerfully nuanced with humanoid features that start to appear on his face and in his voice, and guides the spectator towards moments of empathy and sympathy that are extremely important to the narrative. This example is a very clear case of the unique functions performed by an exceptional body (FAHLENBRACH, 2010: 229).

From such unusual examples we could go to more ordinary cases in which the exceptionality of the body becomes a continuous factor in drawing attention to the character. There is a significant mode of opening scene in classic films where the attention is to be captured from the first moment and we are given essential narrative information. In *Suspicion* (Alfred Hitchcock, 1941), the protagonist Johnnie Aysgarth, played by Cary Grant, slips into the train compartment where his future wife is seated. The ticket inspector sees that he has a third class ticket and asks him for the difference. He doesn't have the money corners her into giving it to him. The situation arouses her suspicion, foreshadowing the attitude that she will maintain towards him through much of the film and which will be central to the narrative, insofar as the spectator assumes her point of view and adopts the numerous options for empathy that will be offered to him/her. But essential to this whole structure is the exceptional appeal of Cary Grant, with his elegant and expensive looking suit. From the outset it seems strange, and piques our curiosity as to why a man who looks like this would be short of money. The spectator would never take an interest in this opening scene if the characters meeting had been ordinary people. But the meeting of these bodies of exceptional physical beauty, elegance and expressiveness raises the expectation that something is going to happen.

Indeed, while the body, with its visual and auditory impact, has produced numerous effects recognisable as narrative resources, the most universal is the effect of beauty. Little has to happen once a character has seen an-

Paulette Goddard in *Modern Times* (Charles Chaplin, 1936)

other of exceptional beauty. All that is needed is for their gazes to meet, and at once the spectator starts to imagine the beginning of a story. It could practically be asserted that this body imposes an empathetic gaze, as the spectator recognises as beautiful or attractive the very character who becomes the object of desire in the narration. Thus the spectator will be able to anticipate, taking a step towards metanarrative awareness, a possible development in the form of expectation, or of imaginative play, easily justifying the desire of a character in the story. An even more explicit case than the one above, with a charge of sexual intensity, can be found in *Bitter Rice* (Riso amaro, Giuseppe de Santis, 1949), when Silvana Mangano uses her voluptuous dancing to attract a criminal on the run, played by Vittorio Gassman. The effect can adopt unique and ironic formulas, as in *Modern Times* (Charles Chaplin, 1936), where after the appearance on screen of the formidable beauty of Paulette Goddard, highlighted in close-ups of her face, her first encounter with Chaplin, instead of the classic gaze, is a frontal collision that brings them falling to the floor, but locked in an embrace, in a body metaphor that foreshadows the amorous relationship that will develop between them. What is important in all these cases is not only that an exceptional body is associated with an expectation arising at a particular moment in the narrative, but that in all of them, to a greater or lesser extent, the emotion and meaning produced becomes a central feature of the character for the spectator, usually in a way that is reinforced to increase the narrative intensity.

In *M* (Fritz Lang, 1931), we witness a similar effect in reverse, where ugliness displays a power on a par with its opposite. In this case, the image of the protagonist does not establish an expectation, but reinforces one already established. By the time Peter Lorre's egg-shaped head and bulging eyes appear, the central narrative element has already been made clear: everybody is searching for a child murderer. Lorre appears contorting his face in front of the mirror while we hear an expert report on his handwriting, which betrays the insanity of the suspect. As the plot advances, the dominant expressive component becomes a complement to the key emotions that come into play, especially in the suspense because, having seen the murderer's evil nature revealed in his strange appearance and insane expression, the objective of the search for the killer established previously now takes on an emotional urgency for the spectator.

## The narration of the acting body

Another decisive narrative feature of the actor's performance is its artistic dimension, the product of study and technique, as well as the personal qualities of the actor him- or herself. This aspect is extremely important to the narrative, and for its analysis we must look to where cognitivism explores the emotional factors that have the biggest influence on the narration, i.e., those determined by a stable relationship between the spectator and the characters in the story, which Murray Smith also proposed with his central category of *allegiance.* Smith uses the term *allegiance* to refer to the cognitive and emotional evaluation that engages the spectator more sympathetically than empathically, leading him/her to rank the characters in the story according to a system of preference (SMITH, 1995: 84-86). Smith gives a non-artistic element – morality – a central place in narrative understanding of films, especially applicable to classic cinema, easily recognisable in the Hollywood mainstream (in this respect, the critical dialogue established with Smith by Plantinga [2009] is particularly interesting), and also evident in more complex contexts in contemporary television series (MITTELL, 2012-13). This interest in morality in audiovisual fiction has developed to such an extent that Tony Soprano has ignited a protracted debate leading to an exhaustive review of the influence of moral qualities in emotional experiences of sympathy and empathy. But this debate at the same time reveals an often overlooked and yet extremely significant aspect. Murray Smith dedicates one of his best articles to explaining the unique dimensions of *allegiance* provoked by Tony Soprano. In the article he explores the aspects that compensate for the negative moral classification of James Gandolfini's character in an analysis that is exhaustive, precise and disturbingly rational, because he reveals that no single aspect is sufficient on its own (SMITH, 2011). In his analysis, however, it is also possible to detect an absence; an aspect similarly overlooked by others who had taken part in this debate (EATON, 2012). Towards the end of the article there is a moment when Smith asks whether it may be the overall artistic effect that determines our relationship with Tony Soprano. He refers for the first time to a factor of artistic influence, but associates it with the overall impression. Having concerned himself exclusively with a single character, why does he not mention artistic aspects of that character, or, more precisely, attributable to the actor who portrays him, James Gandolfini?

The question that Smith leaves open is this: if morality facilitates the formation of strong and stable bonds between spectator and characters, and the main effect of this is to strengthen the narrative qualities of the story, why not admit that the aesthetic properties of an actor's performance may also have narrative effects, such as influencing the spectator's emotional relationship with the character?

In the case of Tony Soprano, might not the thrill of watching the suffering gangster be an aesthetic pleasure? One of the main lines of Smith's argument is that Tony Soprano, while being a gangster capable of violence and cruelty, also exhibits behaviours that help the spectator to understand him and appreciate him as a normal person. Indeed, Gandolfini embodies the Mafia boss who reveals his inner life for the first time in that central setting that is Jennifer Melfi's psychiatric office, where the spectator will see Tony agonise, cry and struggle with his demons. To produce a catalogue of expressions of fragility and make them coexist with brutality is obviously no easy task, but Gandolfini expresses the fragile side of the mobster so skilfully that it seems quite normal. When a performance makes a character so convincingly realistic, it paradoxically becomes more difficult to distinguish the artifice that makes it artistic.

**Kevin Spacey in *House of Cards* (Beau Willimon, Netflix: 2012-).**

It would be easier to support my theory here, for example, with reference to Sheldon Lee Cooper, the protagonist in *The Big Bang Theory* (Chuck Lorre, CBS: 2007-) who arouses fascination in spite of his egocentricity, pathological lack of empathy, inflexible reasoning, infantilism, obsessiveness, arrogance... in short, in spite of his extraordinarily repellent personality. In contrast with Tony Soprano's normal appearance, Sheldon's personality and idiosyncrasies are a conglomerate of eccentricities. Jim Parsons, who portrays Sheldon, constructs an equally eccentric body puzzle and gives him an extraordinary fluidity to make it plausible. It is amazing to observe the coexistence of the long list of quirky effects of his body, voice and gestures from one shot to the next: the almost mechanical turn of his head, the subtle stiffness of his gait, the contained vehemence of his gaze when asserting an important conviction, the sheer absence of empathy in his eyes during conversations, the lifelessness of his angular hand movements, his curved back, the impatient and aggravated expression in his eyes when he desires something...

But his great achievement is not only constructing a personality out of these elements, but doing so to achieve an artistic effect: comedy. Is it not this comic aspect, which is the main source of aesthetic pleasure offered by the character, a factor that influences our emotional engagement with Sheldon, as it allows us to enjoy spending time with someone whom we would probably find unbearable in real life? We should probably even explore how these aesthetic effects interact with emotional aspects characteristic of television series, such as familiarity, recently explored in a specific line of research (BLANCHET and BRUUN VAAGE, 2012; BRUUN VAAGE 2014).

I have outlined my perspective almost exclusively with reference to the power of the body, but the voice is also one of the points of aesthetic attraction for the possibilities it offers in an artistic performance. One field where this is easy to appreciate is animation, a domain in which we generally find the best voice actors. Some of the most recognisable figures of the history of animation are remembered for their voices, such as Bugs Bunny, voiced by Mel Blanc, whose articulation and expressive brilliance, together with the unique timbre of his voice, give the sound of this character a leading role, with genuine qualities of creativity and decisive narrative impact on nearly every level imaginable.

**I have outlined my perspective almost exclusively with reference to the power of the body, but the voice is also one of the points of aesthetic attraction for the possibilities it offers in an artistic performance**

Returning to the cognitivist debate about anti-heroes, I must inevitably offer a reflection on cases in which the protagonist is presented not with a mixed profile of dark and positive traits intertwined in an effort to keep from repelling the spectator, but as utterly dark and morally repellent, such as the character of Frank Underwood in the US version of *House of Cards* (Beau Willimon, Netflix: 2012-). Underwood does not exhibit a single feature that arouses sympathy, yet many would agree that Kevin Spacey's character is fascinating. A case like this may in fact reinforce my hypothesis, as in the absence of *allegiance* and with a performance as outstanding as Spacey's, aesthetic pleasure can be generated as a key to the emotional bond formed between spectator and character. *House of Cards* deploys some powerful resources to elicit empathy. The whole narrative architecture of both the first and second seasons requires the spectator to adopt the perspective of the protagonist, as expressed in the direct appeal to the spectator made by Frank Underwood in his gaze at the camera. Few actors are capable of combining their bodily traits and technique with vocal control like Spacey, whose seductive tone ultimately transforms his voice into a powerful instrument for inspiring empathy.

With respect to the most general aspects of the plot, for example, both seasons offer a *crescendo* of situations that threaten to thwart Underwood's objectives. In the first, his plan to secure his nomination for vice president nearly fails due to the phalanx of Republican congressmen against him and the problematic Peter Russo; in the second, after his manoeuvring to become the only voice with influence over the president, he faces a tough battle with the man he has displaced from this position, the multi-millionaire Raymond Tusk. Both these plot developments reach a major emotional climax that is interesting from a cognitive point of view. The tension provoked by the increasingly serious and radical threats that place Underwood in a critical situation inspire an expectant anxiety in the spectator to know how things will turn out. This expectancy, which is a response that is crucial to the narrative orchestration of each season, does not depend on sympathy with the protagonist; the spectator does not need to hope for the character's well-being. The desire that Frank Underwood will overcome these critical moments depends on the development of an empathy in which the emotional responses to the character's expressive use of gestures, for example, are extremely important. Sympathy doesn't seem necessary, in spite of the fact that the whole series relies on an orchestration of the spectator's interest in the fate of Frank Underwood.

A good example of this is the scene in which Underwood meets with Tusk and Lanagin, after having witnessed the violence and consequences of their attacks. At this moment they offer him a pact, but then, just when Underwood appears to be cornered, he terminates his confrontation with them with greater aplomb than ever, with extraordinary expressions of self-assurance and the full range of self-affirming gazes that Spacey is capable of, and in particular with the parting gesture of throwing the steak they offered him into the pool, thereby closing the scene with an act of defiance (#2x8: James Foley, Netflix: 2014).

The narration compels the spectator to take Frank Underwood's side. There are various factors that influence this: first, the antagonists are the same as or worse than Frank; second, focalization almost always determines that the spectator will support the character privileged by the perspective of the narration; and finally, there is the aesthetic factor, as Underwood's gestural repertoire must be entertaining because it is an exceptional expression of a personality. Spacey constructs a character when he compels us even to appreciate his gesture of hypocritical arrogance as an expression of sheer cunning, of tireless dedication to his goals and of nerves of steel in bringing his intelligence to the table in any situation. Underwood's exceptional character is not merely bodily but artistic, as Spacey takes these virtues to an expressive level that makes them appreciable to us, even in a man whose philosophy is that success in politics comes through hypocrisy and victims. Thus, if there is anything valuable that the spectator doesn't wish to lose when Underwood faces a critical moment, it is the character.

## Conclusions

The examination of the narrative properties of acting adds a layer of complexity to the aesthetic analysis of audiovisual fiction proposed by cognitivism. The narration of the neutral body, the product of the overlap of perceptive experiences in the real world and on a screen, means a focalization of central and omnipresent attention, which is the mimetic substratum of any narrative. The second mode, the narration of the exceptional body, inspires and conditions expectations and empathetic and sympathetic involvement by marking the experience of the narrative with the extraordinary erotetic power of the image. In doing so, many of the emotions that people are capable of provoking come into play, ranging from physical reactions, such as sexual attraction or admiration of beauty or strength, to the common associations of appearance with character, the intrigue provoked by impenetrability, moral repugnance for a strange face, compassion for a fragile face, or sympathy for a kind face.

Finally, the narration of the acting body engages all of our cognitive resources to the maximum in our reaction to gestures, adding narrative meta-awareness, which entails consciousness of being immersed in an aesthetic experience, to the whole range of motor-sensory responses of bodily narration and new appeals to the imagination through empathy. The pleasure resulting from the product of an actor's performance is a source of practically stable emotion in any narrative context.

The distinction between these three modes is an abstraction, as they do not normally occur separately, and thus the narrative scenario suggested by this perspective is rather more complex than has been proposed to date, although perhaps close to that posited by Grodal with his PECMA model. What is important is not to fall once again into the mistake of simplification. Everything that has been posited here about the qualities of an actor's performance needs to be understood in the full context of the films' narrative resources, without overlooking those aspects that have been given the greatest consideration by researchers up to now, but situating them in relation to these aspects, in a richer and more complex framework with greater cognitive and emotional depth, and with an appropriate identification of the origins of each emotion.

## Notes

1 The pictures that illustrate this article have been provided voluntarily by the author of the text; it is his responsibility to localize and to ask for the copyright to the owner. (Edition note.)

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Gonzalo de Lucas

Translated by Alejandra Rosenberg

# TOWARDS A COMPARATIVE MONTAGE OF THE FEMALE PORTRAIT. THE THEATRE OF THE BODY: FICTIONAL TEARS AND REAL TEARS

One of the many ways of approaching film history—and probably one of the most neglected— is to examine how filmmakers portray actresses: the distances, relationships, and stories which, behind the main plot, are captured between the one filming and the one being filmed. In cinema, unlike literature or painting, a character is not only an imaginary being, but also a real person who inscribes his or her voice, gestures and gazes into the experience of the film; this occurs "in the world and with the world, with real creatures as raw material, before the intervention of language" (Bergala, 2006: 8).

In this article, I will explore this work with corporeal matter, the signs inscribed as *real presences*, through the tears of actresses in performances filmed by D. W. Griffith, Josef von Sternberg, Nicholas Ray, John Cassavetes and Rainer Werner Fassbinder. As is well known, in modern cinema actresses have abandoned or at least moved away from the figure of the *movie star* in the interests of presenting a more realistic image, thereby eroding the distant, ideal image constructed in the studio: a transition from an *iconic* image to an *indexical* image, in which the effects of reality and the passing of time on the body are made visible. In the 1960s, filmmakers such as Bergman or Cassavetes would take these signs to the absolute extreme, stripping the actress of all but her condition as a person or a mask.

An actress usually portrays crying as a fictitious and depersonalised dramatic moment of her private life. However, when modern filmmakers transformed the cinematic forms of the female portrait, in an effort to expand the limits of everyday realism, they sought to make tears evoke or reveal something that belonged to the performer's private world and made visible a personal or autobiographical emotion. In this respect, it is important to differentiate *real tears* from *fictional tears*: between the two manifestations a tension will often occur in what is visible, between the artifice (feigned

*A Day in the Country* (Partie de campagne, Jean Renoir, 1936)

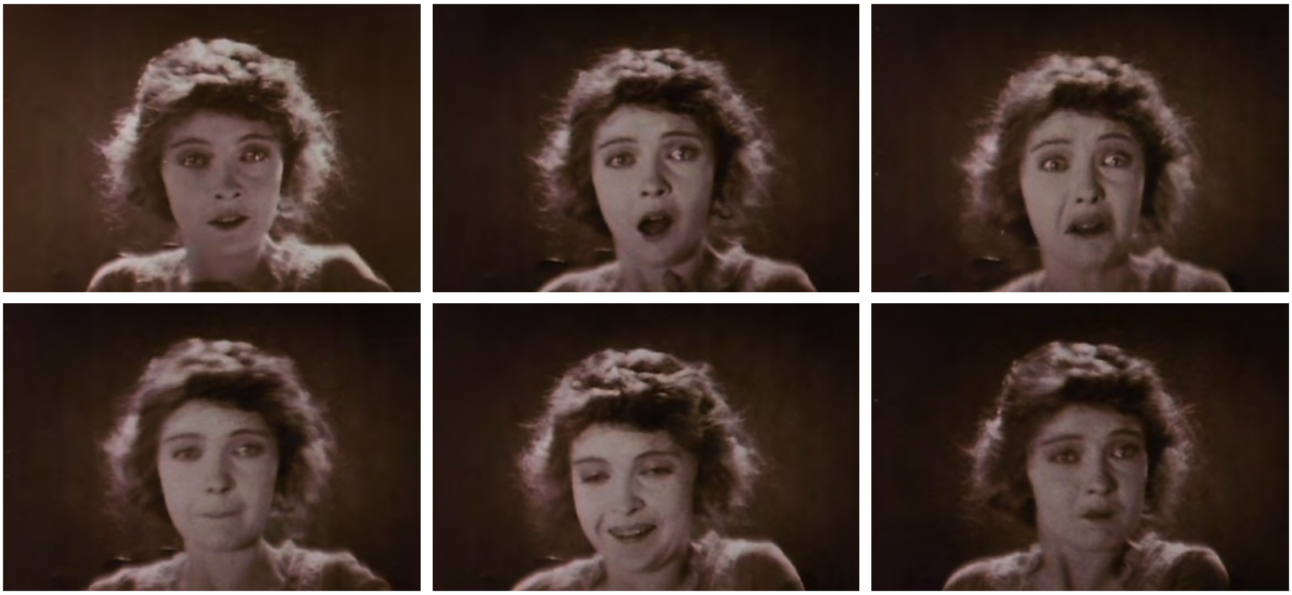
*Stromboli* (Stromboli, terra di Dio, Roberto Rossellini, 1949)

*Her life to live* (Vivre sa vie, Jean-Luc Godard, 1962) / Courtesy of Regia Films

tears) and a presumed transparency (uncontrollable tears that fall beyond our will). Since we learn to use tears and understand what they represent, many dramatic scenes suggest a character's doubt about the truth or the motivations of another character who cries. Film, in general, follows the classical perspective in which tears belong to the realm of emotion and not of feeling, as the neurologist Antonio Damasio observed: "emotions play out in the theatre of the body, while feelings play out in the theatre of the mind" (Damasio, 2005: 32). In this sense, in scenes in which tears are portrayed, the body acts as a theatre or a depiction in which there is a friction between the iconic and the indexical image. It is thus hardly coincidental that some of the most meaningful moments in modern cinema are those showing an actress's tears: Sylvia Bataille, after the romantic encounter in *A Day in the Country* (Partie de Campagne*,* Jean Renoir, 1936), Ingrid Bergman on the volcano island in *Stromboli,* (Stromboli, terra de Dio, Roberto Rossellini, 1949), or when she sees the burnt bodies of two lovers in *Journey to Italy* (Viaggio in Italia, Roberto Rossellini, 1953), or as Anna Karina in *My Life to Live* (Vivre sa vie*,* Jean-Luc Godard, 1962), or while watching the theatrical tears of Falconetti in *The Passion of Joan of Arc* (La passion de Jeanne d'Arc*,* Carl T. Dreyer, 1928). In this essay, I will compare different film scenes from the perspective of the formal ideas exchanged between filmmaker and actress, according to the construction of her image as an icon or as a real body.

## Fictional tears

The portrayal of suffering in the female face emerged very early in film history, thanks to the possibilities of the close-up and its way of enlarging the smallest and almost imperceptible details of the face, thus exploring exhaustively all of the actress's expressive and facial dynamics at close range, turning her face into a theatrical stage. The film actress's portrayal of emotions has surely never been as central as it was in Griffith's films: every emotion seemed to correspond to a gesture, and Lillian Gish's mastery consisted of her ability to play these performative notes at an extremely quick *tempo*. It was a rhythm



*Way Down East* (David Wark Griffith, 1920) that left the spectator amazed, as cinema seemed able to capture whole stages of an emotional life in just a few seconds (from laughter to mourning, from pain to joy, from passion to fear): “Granted that the person has a moving-camera face–that is, a person who photographs well–the first thing needed is ‘soul’ […] For principals I must have people with souls, people who know and feel their parts and who express every single feeling in the entire gamut of emotions with their muscles” (Griffith, 1971: 50-51).

In *Way Down East* (D. W. Griffith, 1920), when the male seducer confesses his unfaithfulness to Lillian Gish, she crosses the full emotional arc that from tears to laughter in just a few seconds: there is not a single frame without a complete expressive gesture; that is, not a single expressive gesture is prolonged, because what matters is its dynamic energy, the maximum force of expression and facial mimicry. On the other hand, this iconic composition of the face in transformation illustrates a conception of time (the flash, the ephemeral vibration) that contrasts with the drawn out depiction of the expression to the point of emotional emptiness in Warhol’s or Garrel’s starkly real actresses. In Griffith, the gestures accentuate the expression because of the extreme use of their performative and dramatic potentiality, and are perfect analogies (representations of our idea of panic or excessive emotion) as icons of suffering or visible forms of the poetic idea of suffering. In *Broken Blossoms* (D. W. Griffith, 1919), the father of Lillian Gish’s character asks her to smile. The expression would be very different, as would also be seen in Cassavetes’s films, where the face is pushed to its limits and shows signs of real suffering. But in the history of the landscape of the face, Lillian Gish was virgin territory that the filmmaker had yet to conquer. She kept her purity intact because pain could still be depicted through mimicry and the actress could be freed (or purified) from it by embodying it. Her face could return to its original, unharmed state without any marks or signs of a real experience.

This conception of the face that kept its beauty unchanged projected the iconic dimension and force of the star, like Dietrich or Garbo: a being impervious to the effects of time, able to go from one film to the next with her image intact, with no signs of the corrosion of time, a sort of mask or ideal beauty, frozen and imperishable.

For Josef von Sternberg, the face was a landscape: “The camera has been used to explore the human figure and to concentrate on its face […] Monstrously enlarged as it is on the screen, the human face should be treated like a landscape. It is to be viewed as if the eyes were lakes, the nose a hill, the cheeks broad meadows, the mouth a flower patch, the forehead sky, and the hair clouds. Values must be altered as in an actual landscape by investing it with lights and shadows” (Sternberg, 1973: 323).

This was a task in which the filmmaker needed to find beauty under the explicit or ordinary layers and masks to reveal it in its ideal form: “The camera by itself is a destructive instrument and the men behind it need a lot of time and effort to tame it. It has its own concept of beauty and it dramatizes what it sees; it cuts, deforms and flattens mass. The term *beauty* describes the most nebulous concept of all” (Sternberg, 1973).

There is a valuable document of Sternberg filming a close-up included in *Josef von Sternberg, een retrospektieve* [Josef von Sternberg, a retrospective] (Harry Kümel, 1969). In this piece for television, made at a time when the filmmaker had not shot a film in fifteen years and shortly before his death, Sternberg prepares the shot by moving the lights with his own hands, managing areas of shadow and subjecting the actress to the directives of the only shot possible, with a single angle and lighting.

During the preparation of the shot, Sternberg explains some of his aesthetic doctrines, based on the suppression of the will of the actress, who has to become a mere surface or a piece of clay for the filmmaker to shape: “Tell her not to think, to forget everything. There is nobody here, except me” or “When I finish with an actor he is exhausted. He doesn’t know what he wants: and that is what I want.” During shooting, Dorothée Blanck, the actress, bursts into tears: “Why is she crying? Is it my fault? Tell her that in this business, we work with our heads, not with our hearts. An actor doesn’t cry. If he cries, the audience won’t cry. Our job is to pretend, not to be real. My actors never know what to do.” Sternberg, on this point, seems to share Diderot’s theory in *The Paradox of Acting*: taking up Horace’s precept for drama and all literature in *Ars Poetica*, line 102, “*si vis me flere primum dolendum est ipsi tibi*” (“if you wish me to weep, you yourself must first feel grief”), Diderot argues for a distance or mental coldness on the part of the actor in relation to the

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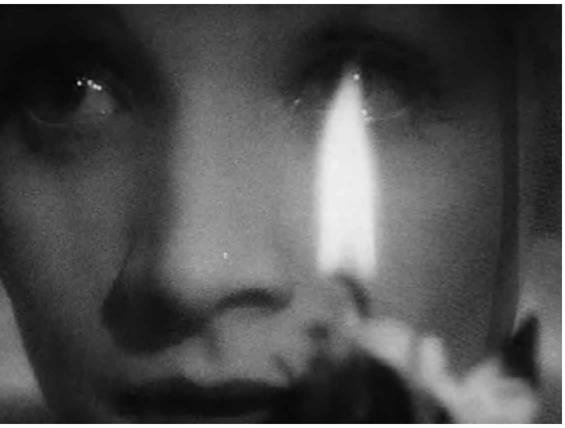
*Josef von Sternberg, een retrospektieve*
**(Harry Kümel, 1969).**



***The Scarlet Empress***
**(Josef von Sternberg, 1934)**

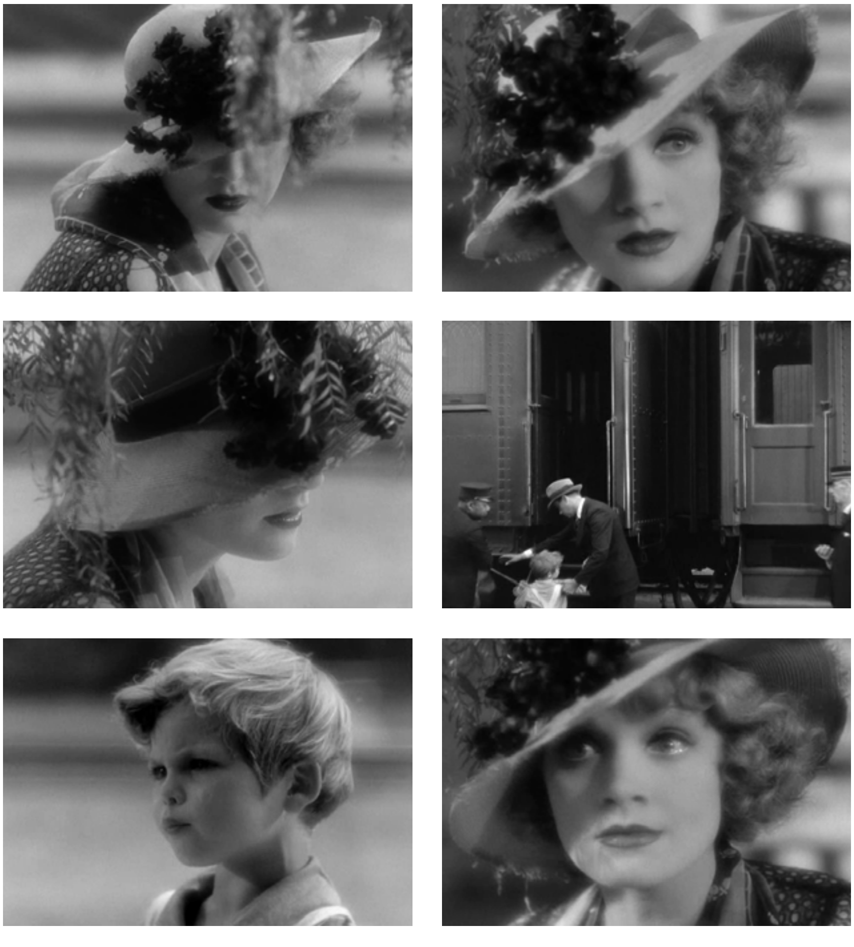
emotion in order to "transfer to the theatrical and the literary the ambiguity of all moral characterisations" (Valverde, 1999: 166).

At the end of the film shoot, when the lights are already set, Sternberg gives only one instruction to the actress: "Look at my hand." Throughout the seven films he made with Marlene Dietrich, his *marionette* (as he refers to her in his memoirs), Sternberg maintained the idea that tears should be kept veiled, barely intuited or glimpsed, rather than made explicit, so that the spectator could be brought closer to the drama and its emotion. The beauty of his style lies in the way he sublimates tears through visual motifs that are able to contain or express the inner potentiality of weeping. For instance, in *The Scarlett Empress* (Josef von Sternberg, 1934), the flame of a candle which, placed in front of the actress's iris, reveals the emotion in her eyes, in the theatre of the body, without any theatrical performance by the actress, who acts here as cold matter sculpted by the filmmaker: as her pupils grow moist, a tear wells up.

On the other hand, in the scene of *Blonde Venus* (Josef von Sternberg, 1932) where Marlene Dietrich is unfairly forced to give up her child, Sternberg elegantly shows the modesty and the discretion —in this case, forced rather than proud— of her tears. After her husband tells her: "Stay away from Johnny, for good. Give him a chance to forget you. That's the only way you can be a good mother to him now", Sternberg shows a close-up of Marlene Dietrich, a tree branch blocking our view of her left eye, which almost seems to be drawing the tears she sheds onto her face. The aesthetics of the character —and the actress— are identified the contention of the cinematographic style, as the emotion in the distant shot is that of a body that suppresses its tears. Later in the film, when her son says goodbye to her, her hat discreetly hides her face, leaving it to us to imagine her pain. It is, of course, a rhetorical device: although we see that she is covering her gaze, it is really only covered to us, because in the actual reverse shot her son can see her eyes.

After this scene, when the son leaves with his father on the train, the actress no longer has to hide her tears. Sternberg conceives these moments as an emotional combination: he apparently distances us from the figure in the wide shots, although his composition shows her loneliness and abandonment, in a kind of identification through distancing —she is sitting on a bench waiting for her son to board the train and leave— which is reinforced by a shot from her point of view. In the first shots, we move progressively closer to Marlene Dietrich to see the moment when she can no longer contain her tears, and to feel the depth from which they come and the silent pain they reveal, reinforced by the sound of the departing train: first, her hat covers one eye; then, we see the first tear; and finally, two uncovered watering eyes. When a tear appears in Sternberg's cinema, it is but a brief flash.

***Blonde Venus*** **(Josef von Sternberg, 1932)**



*Shanghai Express* (Josef von Sternberg, 1932)

*Les Hautes solitudes* (Philippe Garrel, 1974)

Finally, his way of filming the Hollywood star begins to take the form of an approach towards a portrait of intimacy, either through the actress' position or through body gestures in close-ups, with an intimacy that is shared or constructed only for the spectator: for instance, in *Shanghai Express* (Josef von Sternberg, 1932), in the scene where Shanghai Lily (Marlene Dietrich) weeps alone after deciding to give herself up to Chang to save her former lover, Captain Harvey (Clive Brook). This scene has the appearance of a shot filmed in the privacy of a studio, an intimate portrait that anticipates Jean Seberg's shots in *Les hautes solitudes* [The High Solitudes] (Philippe Garrel, 1974).

In short, it is a contained and discreet beauty that reveals (in art and art theory) the difficulty faced by the actress in portraying crying (in front of the spectator, other characters, and the camera) when she should not or does not want to cry, and the difficulty faced by the filmmaker who wants to film the deep, inner emotion of tears, not merely their outer manifestation: "To know what to reveal and what to conceal," wrote Sternberg, "and in what degrees to do this is all there is to art" (Sternberg, 1973: 311-312). And in a letter, he wrote: "All art is an exploration of an unreal world [...] it comes from the search for abstraction that doesn't normally appear in things as they are" (Merigeau, 1983: 36). Sternberg's poetics of the portrait depends on safeguarding the beauty of the icon from the irruptions of reality while at the same time finding the distance at which the invisible and the abstract can be embodied dramatically in the human figure. What do we see in the scenes discussed here? Nothing that does not arise from our own projections and from the mechanisms through which, from our distance as spectators, make us feel close to the image of the actress. In contrast to Rossellini, for whom a tear will always be a tear (according to his famous idea that if things are there, they don't have to be manipulated), the index or trace of a real presence, for Sternberg a tear is an ideal form that we compose in our minds. Thus, the spectator constructs the scene and makes the mental comparison between the little tear, real, filmed or suggested, and its ideal or dramatic form in our imagination: an iconic presence, the unreal way in which we feel the vibration of beauty.

## Real tears

In *La Rampe*, Serge Daney suggests that what made Garbo or Dietrich stars "was their way of looking at something far away that wasn't even imaginable. Modernism began when the photo of Bergman's Monika transfixed a whole generation of cinephiles without making a star of Harriet Andersson" (Daney, 2004, 81-82).

In modern cinema, many films (by Rossellini, Bergman, Godard or Antonioni) composed a documentary layer beneath or underlying the fiction: sentimental chronicles of the filmmaker filming his wife or lover, in a sort of intimate diary or portrait which was at the same time a self-portrait. This way of filming the other gave importance to how to show the tension between the real woman and her condition of actress, and at the same time established a form of activating the visual correspondence (or reverse shot) of the character/actress/woman from the position of the camera, off-camera, towards the filmmaker, instead of towards the fictional male character. It was a temporal relationship that generated a move towards to the filmed body, or a move away from the mythical and iconic vision of the star, which ultimately revealed the signs of the passage of time in the faces filmed, to the point of showing them in their depletion and evanescence. In this history of forms, filmmakers established their ideas on the ontology of film.

In his distinction between symbols, icons and indexes, Pierce placed photographic images in the last category: "Photographs, especially instantaneous photographs, are very instructive, because we know that they are in certain respects exactly like the objects they represent. But this resemblance is due to the photographs having been produced under such circumstances that they were physically forced to correspond point by point to nature. In that aspect, then, they belong to the second class of signs, those by physical connection [index]" (Dubois, 1986: 67).

In his essay on the photographic act, Philippe Dubois comments on some of the implications of the conception of photography as index: "in typological terms, this means that photography

**In that same period in Hollywood, Nicholas Ray, using an autobiographical background, created another approach to the intimate portrait**

**Arriba.** ***Persona*** **(Ingmar Bergman, 1966)**
**Abajo.** ***Husbands*** **(John Cassavetes, 1970)**

is related to that category of signs in which we also find smoke (index of a fire), a shadow (index of a presence), a scar (index of a wound), a ruin (vestige of something that was once there), the symptom (of an illness), or the footprint. All these signs share the fact of 'being really affected by its object' (Pierce, 2,248), of maintaining a relationship of 'physical connection' with it (3,361). In this sense, it is radically different from an icon (which is defined only by its similarity) and from symbols (which, like words from a language, define their object by a general convention)" (Dubois, 1986: 47).

Smoke, shadow, scar, ruin, symptom, footprint: images and metaphors that characterise a new way of filming the face. Consider the films of Rossellini, Bergman, Godard, Warhol, Cassavetes, Pialat, Garrel or Dwoskin, in which actresses must hold their gaze in the face of the violence of the recording or filming mechanism of the camera, in an effect of dramatisation of time, or where the camera close-up maximizes the porosity of their faces, revealing its filmic gesture and desire through imperfect, out-of-focus images, in aggressive misframes.

It is a very well-known fact that Rossellini's films with Ingrid Bergman were among the founding moments of this decline of the female portrait. Here, the Hollywood actress, instead of losing her star status through contact with reality and the ordinary world, ends up exposing her *mask*. Placed in natural settings that assault her figure, and faced with the vision of the real, full of uncertainty, the actress moves, turns on herself and is forced into a state of alienation —her famous foreignness— which makes her confront herself, as if she were seeing her image mentally, but abrasively, in a mirror, with her status of Hollywood actress, while trying to fake naturalness or a performative realism. In the morning at the end of *Stromboli,* in the images of her serene tears, we witness a moment of weakness in the actress, who had spent the shooting of the film crying —and perhaps her tears provoked Rossellini's need to film them— over the consequences of her love for the filmmaker, for whom she had abandoned her daughter and become the object of stern criticism in the United States: "I cried so much that I thought there wouldn't be any tears left [...] (Roberto) had seen all the tears I'd cried on Stromboli... People thought I was having such a marvellous time being in love, when all I did was cry because the real guilt of my offence was grinding me down" (Bergman, 1981: 294). Thus, the image documents the depression and exhaustion of the actress, who no longer forces a naturalist expression or an artificial act of weeping, and where the mask of the actress is indistinguishable from the mask of the woman, in a recognition of the impossibility of unravelling a truth concealed behind the appearance: the truth is the appearance, which in its objectivity reveals that what characterises Ingrid Bergman is precisely that *she is* an actress. When the actress tries to detach herself from her mask she realizes it is impossible because her mask has become or is now her face.

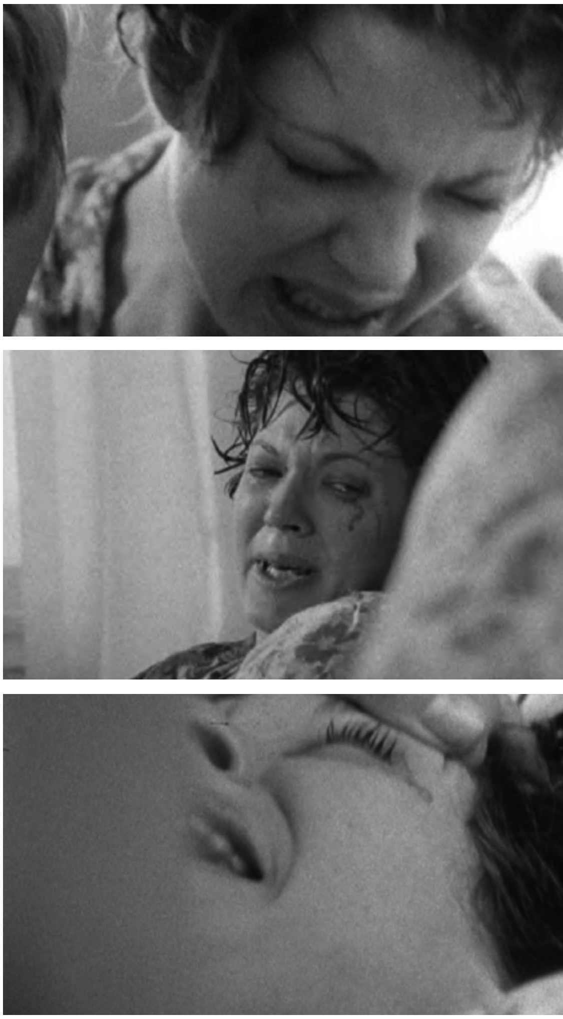
In that same period in Hollywood, Nicholas Ray, using an autobiographical background, created another approach to the intimate portrait. His relationship with Gloria Grahame was shorter and much less intense than Rossellini and Bergman's: it started during the shooting of *A Woman's Secret* (Nicholas Ray, 1949) and ended a year later, during the shooting of *In a*

**Arriba.** ***Stromboli*** **(Stromboli, terra di Dio, Roberto Rossellini, 1949)**
**Abajo.** ***In a Lonely Place*** **(Nicholas Ray, 1950)**

*Lonely Place* (Nicholas Ray, 1950). Nevertheless, in this sorrowful film we find a quality similar to Rossellini's, as Erice pointed out: "The almost documentary use of the Humphrey Bogart-Gloria Grahame couple, very much a reflection of the relationship between Ray himself and the actress (to whom he was married and from whom he separated during the shooting), gave *In a Lonely Place* an almost autobiographical tone, whose only parallel in Europe was Rossellini's films with Ingrid Bergman. *In a Lonely Place* was filmed at Ray's first home in Hollywood and the last scene —improvised on the set— must have been quite a faithful reproduction of his own breakup with the actress" (Erice, 1986: 128).

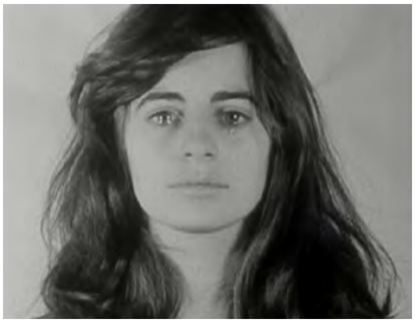
In Gloria Grahame's last scene in the film, when she says goodbye to Dixon (the screenwriter played by Bogart), a tear falls slowly down her left cheek, leaving a mark in its wake, while she says: "I lived a few weeks while you loved me. Goodbye, Dix." In this shot, real life or a real separation seems to have left a painful residue, a scar on the fiction. If we compare these real tears to some previous ones in the film, which are clearly fictitious, such as the scene where Laurel comforts herself with Dixon's agent and expresses her discomfort, we can see that she is an acting body, a body pretending, while in the final scene her face is the index of a separation that is happening at that moment and whose final outcome is as yet unknown: this final scene is left open, without a narrative closure, and escapes the controlled limits of the fiction. What mattered to Ray was the melody of the eyes, and the way cinema was able to capture the thoughts or the emotion flowing between filmmaker and actress: "«The camera is an instrument, it's the microscope which allows you to detect the melody of the look. It's a wonderful instrument because its microscopic power is for me the equivalent of introspection in a writer, and the unrolling of the film in the camera corresponds, in my opinion, to the train of thought of the writer" (Ray, quoted in Erice: 1986, 84).

The camera as a microscope or as a supplement to vision has entailed a new emotional perception of corporeal matter: for instance, the enlarged tear as a mark, a trace, a fluid matter that dramatises the skin and decomposes the expression of the face or makes its make-up run is an essential motif in John Cassavetes' poetics. In his films, which avoid any decorative stylisation, the scenes are filled with off-centre and overexposed shots, where the filmmaker pushes the limits of the sensibility of the film with different emulsions that expose the filmic matter (its granularity) and, at the same time, add a sort of tactile vibration to the image, as if the camera were caressing, stroking, or even hitting the actress in the filmmaker's rage or desire to film/touch the other. Hence the jarring violence of Cassavetes's style in fragmenting the figure, filming until he finds something painful in the form of traces and marks on the cheekbones, the cheeks, the eyes, the face, as seen in the close-ups in *Faces* (John Cassavetes, 1968), in which Lynn Carlin's tears appear *enlarged* after her suicide attempt, with her face distorted and almost asphyxiated by the borders of the frame. The tearful scenes of Cassavetes's wife, Gena Rowlands, in *Minnie and Moskovitz* (John Cassavetes, 1968), the tears of a girl after her boyfriend's rejection in *Shadows* (John Cassavetes, 1959), or the tears of a young Chinese woman in a long, out-of-frame and then out-of-focus shot in *Husbands* (John Cassavetes, 1970): the concentration of time shared, compacted and lived out in those faces has such an intensity that it becomes difficult to distinguish where artifice ends and reality begins. The intimate pain that Ray exposes in Gloria Grahame's tears has exploded, leaving only the effects of its devastation. As Jacques Aumont would say: "the face could not go through all of this, the apocalypse and the hardships, without being marked by it. [...] Long scenes of wordy conversation, performed in a state of empathy disconnected from reality, fill the faces with emotions, making them overflow, always to the limits of breakdown, only then to regain control of themselves. Cassavetes's relentless camera hunts them down, makes off with them and draws them out in prolonged close-ups, magnified all the more by the texture of the swollen 16mm print. They are shown as passive prey to all that passes through them, all that flows and spills, tears, words, emotions" (Aumont, 1986: 161).

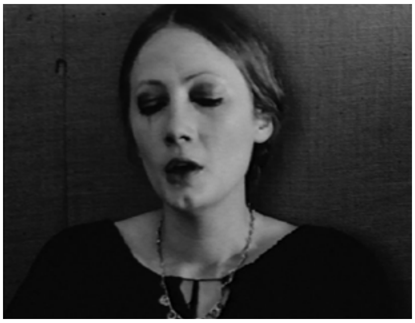


***Faces* (John Cassavetes, 1968)**

Alongside this energetic dramatisation of the flow of time and emotions, other filmmakers started working on shots of suspended, abrasive duration, the violence of prolonged filming, in which the actress is immersed



***Screen Test* (Andy Warhol, 1964)**



***The Mother and the Whore* (La maman et la putain, Jean Eustache, 1972),**

in an introspective image or an inner thought, as she starts to meditate or to search inside herself in response to being filmed without knowing what to do or how to react. This is the device revealed in Ann Buchanan's tears in her *Screen Test* (Andy Warhol, 1964). In the 1960s, starting with *Tree Movie* (Jackson Mac Low, 1960) and Warhol himself, the spaces filmed highlighted their duration as a major theme and compositional rhythm, and cinema reached a level of poor or private realism where it had not yet been, a private bedroom, the intimate space that would be the setting for some of the films of Garrel, Akerman or Estauche. Having moved from the fifty-second reels used by the Lumière to the ten-minute reels, the shot could now last longer and extend the synchrony between real time and filmed time, at the same time broadening the possibilities of the domestic film and stretching the dramatic duration of the weeping to a more ordinary and realistic time, as in the final confession of *The Mother and the Whore* (La maman et la putain, Jean Eustache, 1972), unsustainable precisely because of the sustained duration of the shot, utterly overwhelming and distressing. Again, as we saw with Griffith or Sternberg, the aesthetic of the filmmaker —his desire for the shot— is identified with the aesthetic of the character —her emotion in the drama— through the rhymed time between life and its depiction.

All of these questions on the forms of the cinematic portrait were ultimately turned into dramatic plots in the films of Fassbinder or Werner Schroeter. But while Schroeter starts with the iconic face to take its indices to explosive extremes, Fassbinder, who mythologises actresses in a different way, goes in the opposite direction, starting with a wounded, wrinkled face, with no make-up, to dream of filming an imaginary, ideal face. This process is marked —unlike the softness with which Schroeter or Garrel filmed faces— by jealousy and aggression. In *Veronika Voss* (Die Sehnsucht der Veronika Voss, Rainer Werner Fassbinder, 1982), a film about the decline of an actress in 1950s Germany, the meeting with the journalist at the beginning of the film allows us to glimpse the almost abstract vestiges of an old icon, of imaginary, ideal beauty. Veronika Voss is an old star, one who could go from crying to laughter in a fraction of a second, who ends up consumed by drugs. In the end, on a film set, she will be unable to express artificial tears in a natural way and will have to use glycerine. Fassbinder films this scene as a psychological humiliation and a visual corrosion.

These few fragments, which could be extended and problematised with many others, at least point to the aesthetic tension generated in the sensibility of the film by the dual iconic and indicial nature of the film portrait: rather than separating by periods, what I wish to suggest here is that these two are the negative and the positive side of the same image, depending on the filmmaker's perspective. In the different types of cinematic approaches to the tears of the actress we find, rather than different narrative forms, the ways in which different filmmakers build their ideas about time in working or in the work of the body.

## Notes

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**Núria Bou**
**Translated by Martin Boyd**

# MODERNISM BORN OUT OF CLASSICAL CINEMA: THE BODY OF MARLENE DIETRICH IN THE FILMS OF JOSEF VON STERNBERG

## In the beginning was a classical body

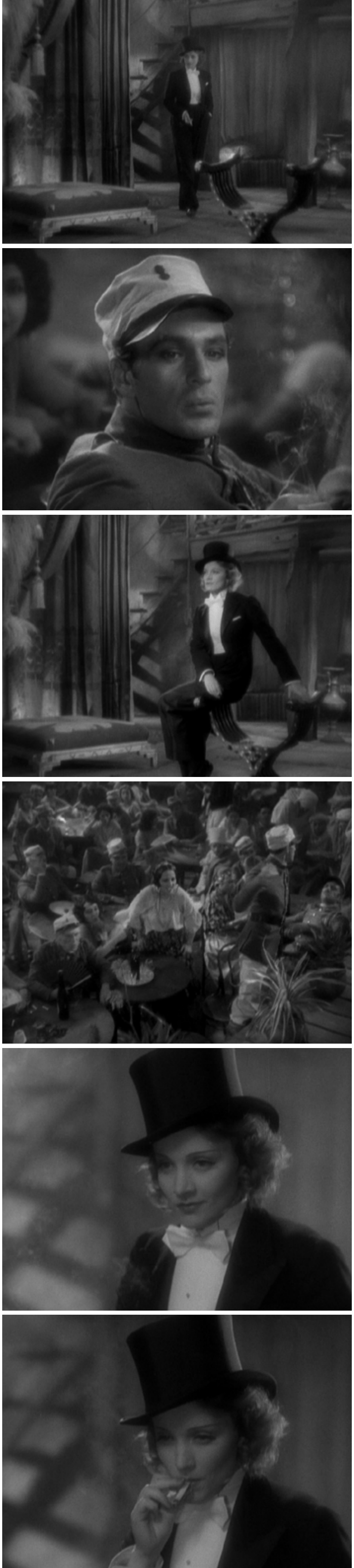
Can an actress's way of acting tell us how classical cinema operated? Can a Hollywood star reveal to us the desires of American filmmakers to transgress classical conventions? The body of Marlene Dietrich can. To prove it, I believe it is first necessary to debunk the legend that has obscured the importance of this female figure, which claims that Marlene Dietrich was discovered and moulded by Josef von Sternberg. Historians and biographers (Walker, 1967; Spoto, 1992; Dyer, 1998) all tell the same story of how Sternberg was captivated in a Berlin theatre by Dietrich's "natural eroticism" while he was looking for an actress to play Lola-Lola in his film *The Blue Angel* (Der blaue Engel, 1930). The story goes that this film brought Marlene Dietrich international fame, Hollywood took notice and Paramount signed her up to turn her into the new star of the 1930s. But as the historian Joseph Garncarz (2007) reveals, what actually happened was quite different: the actress, when she met Josef von Sternberg, was not merely a supporting actress, but a figure who had already become well-known -not only in Europe but also in the United States- for the melodramas she'd starred in in Germany. She had begun to attract critical attention for a series of films in which she shamelessly copied the image, gestures and style of the most important actress in classical cinema at that time, Greta Garbo. Joseph Garncarz, in his passionate article "Playing Garbo: How Marlene Dietrich Conquered Hollywood" (2007), compiles the opinions of German and U.S. critics who appraised Dietrich's imitative performances, arguing that their comments, most of which were admiring, were what convinced Paramount to sign the German actress at a time when the film studio was looking for a face to compete with Metro Goldwyn Mayer, which had exclusive rights to the *Divine* Garbo. Indeed, *The Blue Angel* had only just premiered in Europe when the new star was signed up. Furthermore, the producers who had seen it told Josef von Sternberg that for the new film *Morocco* (1930), Marlene Dietrich's character should have nothing to do with the "vulgar" Lola-Lola, but instead should recreate the Garbo-esque mystique that she had exuded in her earlier German melodramas.

It is not my aim here to engage in an exaltation of Marlene Dietrich at the expense of the undeniable talent of Josef von Sternberg. But it seems to me extremely important to stress the fact that the actress took an active and creative role in these films. James Naremore (1988: 156) points out how difficult it is in these films to identify when the director might have surrendered his control over the staging to allow the star herself to take over. Based on this idea, I will use the Dietrich/Sternberg formula to refer to aspects of her performance that might equally have been the work of either the director or the actress. The power that the stars had over the production during Hollywood's Golden Age was huge: historian Mick Lasalle (2000), examining the contracts of Greta Garbo and Norma Shearer, notes that these actresses had the authority to decide on how their shots were framed, and could intervene in the final edit of the film. Similarly, Joseph Garncarz explains that in Germany the production system in the 1920s allowed actors total control over their image. Marlene Dietrich thus decided to take a classical body —no less than Greta Garbo's— as her model when she first entered the *Dream Factory*. She then chose to fan the flames of the Pygmalion legend when expressing her point of view and personality because, as Garncarz intuited (2007: 116), she understood that the fable of the poor, unknown girl who dreams of being an actress and becomes famous and successful in Hollywood invited those who had suffered the Crash of ‘29 to believe once again in the American dream.

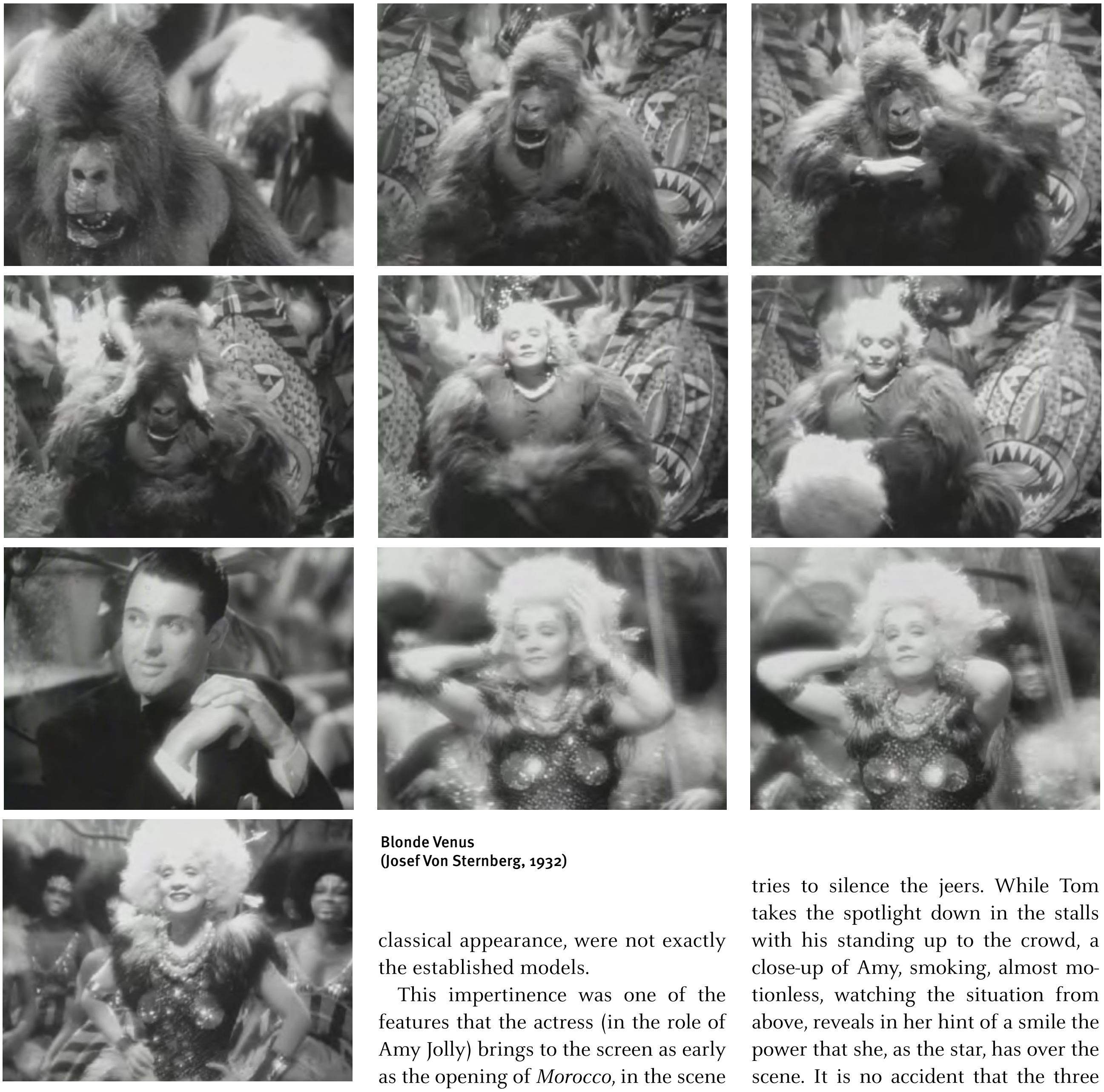
Alexander Doty (2011), following Garncarz's research, analyses the similarities and differences between Greta Garbo and Marlene Dietrich, and suggests that from the moment that Paramount had signed the *new Garbo*, they immediately saw a need to differentiate her from the original figure. To do this, Paramount immediately began describing Dietrich as their *answer to Garbo*. This apparent contradiction in Paramount's publicity is key to understanding how classical cinema operated: the creators of the films of Hollywood's Golden Age reworked their stories with new elements or variations based on established formulas; they could thus challenge their own conventions in a quest for constant renewal. They weren't afraid of new forms because those new forms emerged from old structures or conventions. It is thus not surprising that along these lines Miriam Bratu Hansen (2000) should argue that classical cinema exhibits what she calls "vernacular modernism". I am adopting this same position because I believe that Marlene Dietrich, with her initial imitation of Greta Garbo, demonstrating that she understood the formulation of the classical image, came to explore new attitudes in front of the camera that can be defined as modern. But with an important qualification: this is a modernism that arose out of classicism, far from the reasoning of Bill Nichols (1981: 106) when he connects the modernism of Josef von Sternberg's style with that of Ozu or the new European filmmakers. In this article, I will explore Marlene Dietrich's gestural repertoire to demonstrate how traces of modernism arose naturally out of classical forms.

## Marlene Dietrich's *impertinent* expression

In the early 1980s, Dietrich took part in a documentary about her career, *Marlene* (Maximilian Schell, 1984), on the condition that she would not be shown on screen, but that only her voice would be heard. In the first part of the film there is a montage of images directed by Sternberg in which Dietrich appears in different love scenes with her partners. The voice of the eighty-three year-old actress is laid over the soundtrack of these classic scenes, declaring that her performances "were corny". Director Maximilian Schell, who converses



**Morocco**
**(Josef von Sternberg, 1930)**



**Blonde Venus**
**(Josef Von Sternberg, 1932)**

with the actress throughout the film, unhesitatingly corrects her comment, clarifying that she “was not corny”, but that her performances were in keeping with the “romantic” films of the era. Dietrich retorts with meaningful bluntness: “I gave the impression that I was a romantic, but really I was impertinent.” It is obvious that Marlene Dietrich was fully aware that fifty years earlier she had played some female characters which, in spite of their classical appearance, were not exactly the established models.

This impertinence was one of the features that the actress (in the role of Amy Jolly) brings to the screen as early as the opening of *Morocco*, in the scene where she is famously dressed in male attire. And it is not so much the androgyny suggested by her appearance as the serene and swaggering attitude she displays before an audience that boos her aggressively.  Marlene Dietrich shows the world that she is invulnerable. This is her impertinence: making visible her status of almighty star, who controls the unfolding events of a plot written just for her. There in the unruly crowd is the legionnaire Tom Brown (Gary Cooper), who is the only one who applauds her with enthusiasm and even tries to silence the jeers. While Tom takes the spotlight down in the stalls with his standing up to the crowd, a close-up of Amy, smoking, almost motionless, watching the situation from above, reveals in her hint of a smile the power that she, as the star, has over the scene. It is no accident that the three wide-angle shots of Tom are taken from the point of view of Amy who, with her controlling gaze, reduces the figure of the hero, thereby supporting Gaylyn Studlar’s (1988) theory that Marlene Dietrich is always the dominant subject of the scene.

It is no surprise that the audience immediately settles down to watch and listen to her attentively. With the slightest gesture, Dietrich dismisses the lascivious invitation of a man in the hall and, a little later, she shares the famous kiss on the lips with another woman, revealing that although she still has her eye on the soldier, she is also attracted by female beauty. To activate the erotic imagination of the spectator was the primordial objective of the films of the era: from Greta Garbo to Norma Shearer, from Jean Harlow to Mae West, the 1930s constantly challenged audiences, even after the imposition of the Hays Code in 1934. Classical cinema needed provocation, and censorship was there to underscore it.

But Marlene did not stand out because of her androgynous provocation. It was the revelation of her acting style that set her apart. Her smiling face, seeming to mock the scene, distinguished her from any other actress of the era. A fan from 1930 would describe it simply and meaningfully in the magazine *Photoplay* by asserting that "Marlene Dietrich has everything that Garbo has and something else besides: humour!" (Doty, 2011: 119). It is clear that while the *Divine Garbo* created an image in which romance triumphed at the end of her films and she offered herself with conviction, sanctity and transcendence, Marlene Dietrich questioned her own attitude to love or even put forward the idea that the emotions could not be taken too seriously. In this sense, it can hardly be accidental that in her introductory song she should slyly insert a playful air into her performance when, after singing of the sorrow of being separated from a loved one, she brazenly declares that new love affairs would soon come her way. It is right at the moment when the star begins with elegant subtlety to poke fun at sentiments of love that her face and her body shine their brightest: her impertinent smile wins over the spectators in the hall. Because this performer's way of presenting the sentimental, of opening a new discourse about passion, is what differentiated her from any other actress of her time. The protagonist of melodramas in which the plot was driven by emotions, Marlene Dietrich emerged as a figure who sought to be idealised like Greta Garbo, a sophisticated and glamorous female legend who acted *for love*, just as the classical canon required. At the same time, she developed a discourse on the fleetingness of the emotions, which she engaged in with an air of distance. With a refined sense of humour, Dietrich was able to deconstruct the classical discourse. But she was not a comedienne; compared to the comical qualities of Jean Harlow or Mae West, Marlene Dietrich's approach was always a complex attempt to combine opposites: her humour was profoundly serious.

This acting style at once had a huge impact on the inner workings of the *Dream Factory*: two years after the release of *Morocco*, Greta Garbo imitated Marlene Dietrich in the opening scenes of *As You Desire Me* (George Fitzmaurice, 1932), in which she played a cabaret singer with bleached blonde hair and black trousers who dismisses the gallant attentions of her suitors, in a mocking attitude towards love. The intention of the Swedish star seems clear, as Richard Corliss (Doty, 2011: 113) suggests, the *Divine Garbo* was, in this opening scene, parodying her German rival. In this way, Greta Garbo confirmed that Marlene Dietrich's transgression of classical convention could be absorbed into that same convention. It is well known that an open competitiveness existed between the two stars, a fact that helps explain the way classical cinema was orchestrated because they competed over the variations or transgressions that had been successful with the audience: for example, in *Dishonored* (Josef von Sternberg, 1931) Marlene Dietrich played a melodramatic spy analogous to the one that Greta Garbo had played in *The Mysterious Lady* (Fred Niblo, 1928), and, a few months later, the *Divine Woman* herself would again play a spy in *Mata-Hari* (George Fitzmaurice, 1931), following Dietrich's success; after this, it would come as no surprise that Marlene Dietrich should answer Garbo's *Queen Christina* ( Rouben Mamoulian, 1933) with a royal portrayal of her own in *The Scarlet Empress* (Josef von Sternberg, 1934). The two actresses depicted women of dubious sexual morals, which always made their characters extremely fascinating. Marlene Dietrich took the morality of the melodrama as her starting point, but her ironic attitude opened up a new discourse on love that the classical tradition then adopted in order to offer unexpected new narratives.

Previous authors (Sarris, 1966; Wood, 1978; Nichols, 1981) have offered detailed discussions of the irony apparent in the endings to the six films that Sternberg and Dietrich made for Paramount. Given that only the director's style has been examined to argue for the parodic nature of these final scenes, I would like to turn the focus to Marlene Dietrich's facial expressions to explain how the actress participated in the interrogation of the classical *happy ending*. In *Shanghai Express* (Josef von Sternberg, 1932), for example, Dietrich's performance up to the final kiss is, beyond any doubt, a simulation, a dramatisation of the happy ending. Andrew Sarris (1966: 35) has already pointed out that this film has a "false happy ending". And indeed, although the director positions the protagonists in close shots while they declare their love for one another, the male character (Clive Brook) suddenly comes out with a question that is unequivocally comical: "How in the name of Confucius can I kiss you with all these people around?" The question is preceded by the restless, sarcastic gaze of Marlene Dietrich who, from the beginning of the scene, accentuates the theatrical nature of her performance, flaunting her awareness that she is merely acting, thus participating in a scene that is deliberately staged to appear artificial. Her reply to his question, after Sternberg has inserted a shot of the station filled with people, is utterly ironic: "There's no one here but you and I." The protagonists then kiss and once again the director superimposes the shot of the station crowded with passengers. Sternberg makes use of Dietrich's ironic presence to underline the falseness of the fiction, to expose the multiple subtleties that make the performance possible.

Marlene Dietrich, in fact, always acts as if she were on a stage. While the stars that preceded her had contributed to the creation of the illusion that we were not merely witnessing a portrayal, Dietrich transgressed the classical transparency, making her role as an actress visible. During the film *Shanghai Express*, the protagonists make it clear that they don't trust one another; as a result, when the *happy ending* arrives, Marlene Dietrich ridicules this imposition of the *Dream Factory* by constructing an overplayed moment of happiness which she offers as theatrically as possible. What is extraordinary is that her dramatisation is not based on exaggerated gestures, but on an impertinent impassivity. In her case, the excess lies in the fact that she barely acts at all. In the scene of the lesbian kiss, for example, she seduces the woman only with her gaze: a long, cold stare, and then suddenly, as if she were not planning a transgression, the kiss. The theatricality here is indisputable because the audience applauds enthusiastically and she even responds, albeit with only the slightest gesture of her hand towards her hat. But in the previous scene, Marlene Dietrich, playing the woman fleeing to Morocco to escape a mysterious past, reacts just as artificially when the character played by Adolphe Menjou approaches her to help her: When the contents of her suitcase fall out, Amy Jolly is unable to pick them up in a conventional way, moving instead with an almost mechanical unnaturalness, making her presence as a body palpable. The spectator isn't watching Amy Jolly, but an actress who is (not) acting.

Dietrich was Manet's *Olympia* in relation to Titian's *Venus of Urbino* : images which, in short, displayed the erotic female body not in a totemic but in an interrogative, openly impertinent way

Dispensing with the expressive movements canonised by Lillian Gish or Greta Garbo (to mention two actresses who knew how to soften emotional exaggerations in their bodies and faces, but who made the spectator experience the emotions), Marlene Dietrich moved the spectator equally with her impassivity. This tendency towards containment in her acting, towards restraint of her emotions, contrasts with the sumptuous wardrobe that the actress wore in Sternberg's films. Feathers and even more ostentatious attire combined with the overloaded scenery and the visibly artificial lighting used by the Viennese director; Sternberg liked to expose the falseness of the show to the spectator and so dressed her star in a lush manner, far removed from ordinary reality. I suspect that Dietrich's restraint and even the slowness of her gestures is the technique that actress and director used so that the figure of the star could *be seen* in Sternberg's mannerist mise en scene. In this sense, the scene in which the actress emerges from a gorilla costume in the film *Blonde Venus* (Josef von Sternberg, 1932) seems to me paradigmatic: Dietrich pulls off the false monkey head and extracts herself mechanically from the beast's hairy chest, putting on a curly blonde wig without dramatising the mutation, while dancers and musicians dressed as African savages fill out one of the most surrealist frames the director ever staged. The absurdity of the set is utterly outlandish, but Marlene Dietrich, with her impassivity, performative restraint, provocative gaze and impertinent smile, dignifies the imaginative delirium of the action. This is how she became the most idealised body of the era. Her appeal was not her legs ("the prettiest in the world", as she allowed them to be publicised), but her bold display that proclaimed her ostentatiously -but also parodically- to be an embodiment of eroticism. In such moments, Marlene Dietrich came closer to the iconoclast discourse that Mae West was building around the female presence than the core ideals that Greta Garbo had established for classicism. In other words, Dietrich would introduce an self-conscious, ironic and reflective gaze that compelled spectators to look at her in a different way, leaving no doubt to the contrary. Dietrich was Manet's *Olympia* in relation to Titian's *Venus of Urbino* : images which, in short, displayed the erotic female body not in a totemic but in an interrogative, openly impertinent way.

### A classical body for modernism

In *The Devil is a Woman* (Josef von Sternberg, 1935) we find one of Marlene's most honest performances: shortly before the end of the film, her character asks a stranger for a cigarette and tells him, with a smiling and somewhat melancholy expression, that she had once worked in a cigarette factory, thus recalling a scene from the first part of the film. This is the last shot filmed by Sternberg that spectators would see of Dietrich. The least visibly artificial expression that they would film together in a film in which the actress played one of the most implausible and theatrical characters of her career. The scene may seem mannerist (the actress recalling a moment of her portrayal) but instead proves utterly genuine: without losing her impertinent smile, she offers a hint of a melancholy look back on her past performances with Sternberg.

This purity in her expression was not new: already in *Dishonored* we can detect, in one of the most shocking moments of Dietrich's performance, an equally revealing expression that appears immediately after an extremely artificial scene in which the actress, in the role of the spy Marie Kolverer, faces death in a brutal execution. Nobody who has seen this film could forget Marlene Dietrich looking at her reflection in the cold metal of a soldier's sword to check how she looks a few moments before her death. A little later, as the protagonist awaits the execution order, a close-up shows her staring ahead bravely, facing death with a defiant, passionate smile; but a soldier interrupts the shooting with a speech on the injustice of war and the star, resuming the fictitious tone of before, takes advantage of the unexpected pause in the action to apply her lipstick and adjust her stockings. In the end, her body falls as she is shot down by the firing squad. And what is surprising is that, immediately after this extravagant mise en scene, reality bursts onto the screen. In the perceptive words of Diderot: "The height of the sense of the real in art is the height of artifice" (Drove, 1994, 63). Indeed, after the actress's ostentatious dramatisation, spectators are shown a female figure which, perhaps for the first time in the history of classical cinema, is given to them in a form that is all too human: a victim of violent aggression, the actress falls back from the rapid impact of the bullets, inscribing at this moment, in a realistic manner completely distinct from the way that female protagonists normally died in the *Dream Factory*, the resistance of the flesh in the fragile bone structure of a woman who, in spite of having disguised her confrontation with death, breathes her last without being able to mask the terror of being hewn down by the bullets. Marlene Dietrich's body is made real because what prevails in the scene is the insolence of the meaninglessness, of the chaos: completely indifferent to imaginary significations, a star is killed senselessly by a firing squad.

It is obvious that the Dietrich/Sternberg team were testing out new ways of presenting a body. Jean-Luc Nancy (2003: 99) writes: "let there be writing, not about the body, but the body itself. Not bodihood, but the actual body. Not signs, images or ciphers of the body, but still the body. This was once a program for modernity." It is clear that in this last gesture, which includes a notion of reality, the creators of *Dishonored* came even closer to what would later become modernism. A modernism which, it is worth repeating, emerged from classicism itself. Without a doubt, the goddess Marlene Dietrich confronted the vulnerability of love, faced up to the loss of intensity of relationships and exposed the arbitrary nature of the emotions, moving away in such moments from the idealist romantic discourse of the time, and towards the lived experience of the human being. In her first film for Paramount, *Morocco*, the lovers, in the changing room —a space where masks are usually removed— converse for the first time to declare their mutual attraction. But, unexpectedly, the scene does not lead directly to the classical kiss on the lips; instead, the passion of the two lovers is shown as sporadic. There is no deliberate *crescendo* in the portrayal of this first encounter; the hesitant lovers appear undecided and indifferently insinuate that they don't believe in love as a promise of eternal happiness, because they have suffered disappointments in the past; thus, in spite of the attraction they feel, they appear tired, unexcited by an experience which they remark they have already failed at before. Indeed, Gary Cooper and Marlene Dietrich are placed in a situation in which I would argue the spectator's patience has never been put so much to the test: for eight drawn-out minutes, the lovers move together and apart, speaking in enigmatic metaphors that prevent the meaning of their dialogue from being understood; on the narrative level, words do not serve to advance the plot; on the contrary, they deliberately slow it down. So what is the purpose of this scene, in which Gary Cooper even looks at his watch, as if bored with not being able to act passionately? To dramatise, in a psychologically realistic way, the rational doubts that hold two mutually attracted bodies back from each other. I don't believe that modernism could be better represented than this.

It is a modernism which, moreover, has been reinforced since the emergence of the argument (Dyer, 2001: 199) that Josef von Sternberg projected his amorous feelings for Marlene Dietrich onto his filming of her. Just as Jean Luc Godard had done with Ana Karina, Michelangelo Antonioni with Monica Vitti or Ingmar Bergman with Liv Ullmann, Sternberg toyed with the idea of using the camera to capture Marlene Dietrich's most intimate secrets, but in her sometimes impertinent, sometimes melancholy or defiant expression the actress reveals the energy of a woman who shimmered in the gaze of the man behind the camera. The statements of both suggest it was a tempestuous relationship that kept them united and distant at the same time, just as was the case for the characters she played in their films. For this

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reason, I propose the consideration of the six films with Paramount as a series of essays reflecting the feelings not only of the director but also of the actress; six confessional tales that expressed the emotions of both creators at the time of filming.

If a dialogue existed between director and female star in other productions in Hollywood's Golden Age, it was because the star had considerable power. Already in the 1920s, Norma Shearer was enriching the direction of Monta Bell with daring expressions of complicity that revealed the attraction and, sometimes, aversion that existed between them. It is doubtful that Karina, Vitti or Ullman ever participated as freely in the creative development of a film. Perhaps the blame lies in the exploitative gaze of Roberto Rosellini who, in his desire to show the inner expressions of his wife Ingrid Bergman, silenced the actress's creative expression without realising it. The active impertinence of Marlene Dietrich stands in contrast to the muted sobbing of Ingrid Bergman: these are two very different forms of expression in the history of cinema that help explain why the six Dietrich/Sternberg films should not be considered a precursor to modernism, but rather, another trace of the *vernacular modernism* of classicism. Marlene's body shows how classical convention sought new forms of expression: with Marlene Dietrich, the *Dream Factory* was taken to its most brilliant creative zenith.

## Notes

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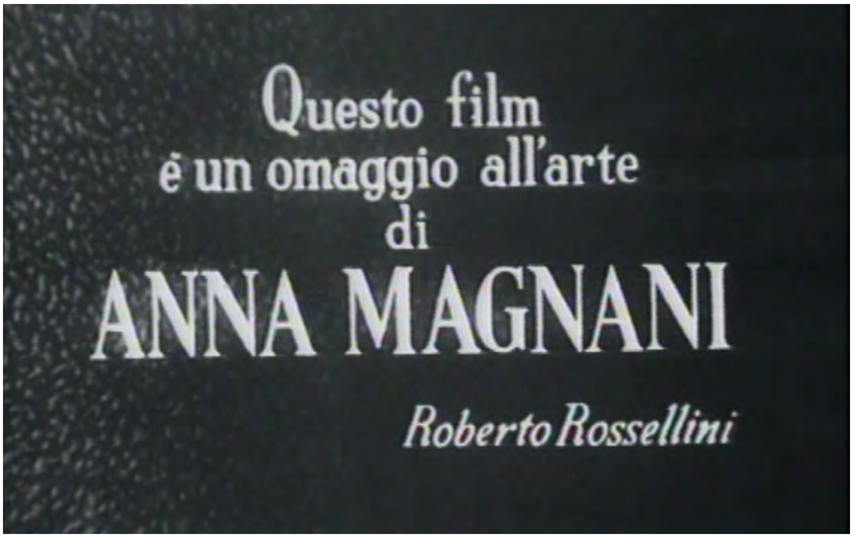
Translated by Annabel Jose

# WHO AM I? ACTING STYLE IN THE ART OF ANNA MAGNANI

## Anna Magnani and the genealogy of Italian neorealism

Between the two medium-length films that comprise *L'amore* (1948), Roberto Rossellini inserted the following inscription: "this film is dedicated to the art of Anna Magnani." The actress, star of *Rome, Open City* (Roma città aperta, 1945), was involved with the director both artistically and romantically from 1946 to 1949, a transition period that ended when in 1950[1] Rossellini embarked upon the project with Ingrid Bergman that was to mark the birth of cinematic modernism: *Stromboli, Land of God* (Stromboli, terra di Dio). The story of two artistic eras linked to two different actresses brings to mind what Serge Daney said about relationships between actors and directors in *La rampe*: actors are the essence of dialogue between filmmakers. "The actor's body pervades the cinema until it becomes its real history" (Daney, 1996: 201).

Despite Anna Magnani's suitability for the human amalgam of neorealist depictions, often played by non-professional actors, *Rome, Open City* was not, of course, the actress's first contact with the cinema, or with neorealism and its ideologues. Visconti had wanted her for the main part in *Obsession* (Ossessione, 1943), a project she had to turn down as she was about to have a baby. Italian directors of the 1930s, such as Goffredo Alessandrini, who was married to the actress at the time, knew her for her unorthodox style, for the awkwardness of directing her in supporting roles and for the difficulty of photographing an irregular face that did not take well to the dim light of drawing room dramas. The effect of the actress's depiction in scenes of so-called *Telefoni Bianchi* films such as *Full Speed* (Tempo Massimo, Mario Mattoli, 1934) and *Thirty Seconds of Love* (30 secondi d'amore, Mario Bonnard, 1936) is awkward and constrained. In a sense, the naturalism of her depiction anticipates the decline of the classical phase of Italian cinema and the possibilities of the aesthetic that would prevail upon the


Questo film
è un omaggio all'arte
di
ANNA MAGNANI
Roberto Rossellini

*L'amore* (Roberto Rossellini, 1948)

rise of neorealism. Her roles alongside Aldo Fabrizi in the early 1940s in popular comedies such as *The Peddler and the Lady* (Campo de' Fiori, Mario Bonnard, 1943) and *The Last Wagon*, (L'ultima carrozzella, Mario Mattoli, 1943) are paradigmatic, as they are notable for the mimesis of the comedians of popular Roman theatre of the time with the archetypal Roman streets. The talent of Fabrizi and Magnani in comic roles with realist touches make these pictures veritable precursors to the neorealist performing style. Anna Magnani's years of training in popular theatre would have vested her style with a great capacity for representing the collective identity through the realistic gestural style of the supporting character. The climax of Rossellini's film alone demonstrates clearly enough that the *popolana* Pina is a supporting character who emerges from the neorealist human chorus, from the crowd of non-professional actors, to captivate us with her exaggerated gestural style. Pina's rebellion, her struggle against the soldier's arms that hold her back, her cry against injustice and her fatal pursuit of the truck taking away her man adopt postulates of performance to canonise the idea of humanism depicted in *Rome, Open City* as a cinematic manifesto of Italian neorealism.

From the moment she met Rossellini, Anna Magnani's career would remain profoundly linked to this aesthetic and to its most essential quests of depiction. The neorealist dramas in which the actress starred between *Rome, Open City* and her American period (1954-1959) reveal the impact that the character of Pina had made on the audiences of the time. *L'onorevole Angelina*, (Luigi Zampa, 1947) and *Woman Trouble* (Molti sogni per le strade, Mario Camerini, 1948) adhere to the same production pattern: screenplays by Zavattini constructed around a feisty maternal character who makes prodigious use of every gesture that the brief appearance of Pina in *Rome, Open City* had elided in the character of the *popolana*, while allowing the audience to project them onto the absence that the actress's depiction leaves in the film. The nostalgia for an anonymous revolutionary who dies unjustly while pregnant had a significant effect on her future performances, and thus the depiction of the struggling mother defined what would be Magnani's hobbyhorse and also that of the Italian cinema of the transition, the aim of which was to rebuild the mirror in which Italian society, crushed by the war, could recover its essential images. It is a film tradition in which, as Giovanna Grignaffini suggests in "Women in Italian Cinema, Stories of Rebirth"[2], the idea of rebirth is closely associated with the representation of the female and the depiction of the maternal (Brunetta, 1996: 367). From the scene where her *popolana* asserts herself in the climax to *Rome, Open City* to the moment when the cry of *Mamma Roma* (Pier Paolo Pasolini, 1962) buries the neorealist monument in Pasolini, **Italian cinema encoded the essential aesthetics of an entire era in a single physical and dramatic presence**, in an acting style that effectively defined the

The Rose Tattoo (Daniel Mann, 1955)

cinema of her time, from Rossellini to Pasolini, from Visconti to Renoir and Fellini, establishing, as Daney suggests, that the history of cinema also concerns the gestural style of its actors.

### Key aspects of acting style

In 1946, before the premiere of *Rome, Open City* in New York City, a few months before the film burst onto the international scene at the Cannes Film Festival, the critic James Agee penned an awed tribute to the performers, highlighting the brilliance of "a magnificent woman called Anna Magnani"[3] (Pistagnesi, 1988: 17). The illusion of truth generated by the film, as Ingrid Bergman herself would confirm years later in her memoirs (Bergman and Burgess 1982: 7), was so great that it was hard to give the artifice a name; it was hard, in this case, to write the word *actress*. The case of Anna Magnani is paradigmatic because her approach to depiction suggests a blurring of the line between actor and mask, a reflection of the historical paradox of the performer, and because the parameters of her acting style take on an essential role in the dialogue between filmmakers. She is the only Italian actress to appear in the works of the five most prominent Italian directors of the time: Rossellini, Visconti, De Sica, Pasolini and Fellini, throughout which this approach to depiction undergoes a process of perpetuation (in the first generation of filmmakers) and monumentalisation (in the second). Although this pilgrimage embodied by the actress under the biggest directors of her era never went unnoticed, critics took it as the conclusion rather than the catalyst for analysis. Her status as muse of Italian cinema perpetuates the intuition acknowledged by Rossellini in the dedication in his prologue to modernism, but does not resolve it. What exactly was it about Anna Magnani that could bring out the aesthetic and dramatic essence of a subsequent film movement in a shrewd perception like that of the Roman director? Beyond her suitability for the neorealist depiction of the female, to what extent might the actress's gestures contain the keys to the evolution of the language of cinema?

***Rome, Open City*** **(Roma città aperta, Roberto Rossellini, 1945)**

In "The Human Voice" (Una voce umana, 1948), Rossellini experiments with the formula of the medium-length film on the basis of Magnani's dramatic approach, demonstrating the capacities of a depiction with scarcely any staging support in one of the most neglected pieces of the filmmaker's work, yet one of the most eloquent in terms of the mark that Anna Magnani's style left on his filmography. The idea that unleashed Rossellini's creative process in the films he made with her, constructed around the director's fetishizing of the actress's presence, is that, first of all, the story is inscribed in the gestures of the performer, because it is these that have the capacity to absorb and project the essence of the film that contains them. And secondly, just as the body of the actress contained the aesthetic of the neorealist manifesto, in her tragic and confessional acting style Rossellini appears to test the bases of the new aesthetic that he would bring into play in his subsequent films and that other European directors would follow in filming the gestures of actresses who were also the women they loved at the time. As in *Ways of Love*, the modern camera would also scrutinise the feminine passions in the bodies and faces of actress-lovers, giving rise to films that dissected marital conflict and the mysterious depths of the female soul. The dedication included in Rossellini's film would have, at this point, the documentary —and testimonial— value of confirming the importance of the actress at the time of filming, while predicting that the essence of the European aesthetic of the subsequent decades would be very much tied to the work of actors, and, in particular, actresses.

### Self-reference and *jeu d'acteur*

It is well-known that in 1949 the arrival in Rome of a telegram from Ingrid Bergman put an end to the creative and romantic relationship between Anna Magnani and Rossellini. It was an intense break-up that would be marked by the filming of *Volcano* (William Dieterle, 1950), a film made in parallel with *Stromboli*, based on an original idea that Roberto Rossellini had agreed on with the Italian production house Panaria Films before Bergman's arrival, and whose only claim to fame would lie in its value as a testimony of Magnani's atonement.

This testimonial value began to gather momentum in the actress's works. In 1952 she made two films practically simultaneously: *Bellisima* (Luchino

*La carroza de oro* (Le carrosse d'or, Jean Renoir, 1953)

Visconti) and *The Golden Coach* (Le carrosse d'or, Jean Renoir, 1953). The filmmakers of both these films tested the limits between reality and representation by making the boundary between theatre and life the focus of stories built around Anna Magnani's character. In Renoir's film, Camilla/Colombina is an eighteenth century actress overcome by the on-stage identity of Colombina, a bipolar character lost between her actress's awareness and the limits of her mask. In Visconti's, Maddalena is the character in a Roman farce who lives with Magnani's own ability to break through the tragicomic mask to reveal the very heart of the artifice, a performative essence with a depth that operates beyond the limits of the diegesis, often spilling over them. Camilla suffers the burden of a character who is not allowed to have what she desires: the life of an ordinary woman. Maddalena has all the gestures of the *popolana*, but she chases the dream of fiction in front of the mirror and in her determination to turn her daughter into an actress. These films reflect Magnani's distancing from neorealism, as in the 1950s she was broadening her repertoire and began being cast in specific dramatic roles. The characters of Maddalena and Camilla/Colombina share a common essence, and their features exhibit the symptoms of a performative approach that was very much Magnani's: the pain of the actress suffering from the limits of her mask of fiction. "Why do I succeed on the stage and destroy everything in my life? Where is truth? Where does the theatre end and life begin?" Camilla puts into words the symptoms hinted at previously by Anna Magnani's characters in Rossellini's films. While in *Ways of Love* the actress galvanises the shot with the demonstration of her autonomy and solitude to the camera, in this case her character has almost no interaction at all; that is, in the character's moments of truth, no reverse shots are necessary to support or reinforce her position in the composition. In other words, the character is not explained through the reaction of supporting characters, but instead is a core element of the image, an image in itself, an autonomous and solitary element that invites observation, and in which the camera seeks a reflection of what is happening in the world depicted in the film. In the case of Visconti, the operation is very clear; the director, who had also moved on from neorealism, was particularly concerned with capturing, in the actress's gestures, the mannerist self-depiction which, by force of repetition, her neorealist mask had become: "The real subject of the film was Anna Magnani: through her I wanted to draw a portrait of a woman" (Pistagnesi, 1988: 116). Visconti identifies the subjectivity of the maternal gaze as the central concept of the film. Through the technique of the sequence shot, the use of direct sound and an openness to improvisation as a dramatic approach[4], the editing gradually leaves aside the elements external to the mother-daughter relationship to focus on the way in which Maddalena's face projects the beauty of a little girl who is not, as the film claims, "the prettiest girl in Rome", but rather a child whose real charm consists in that maternal subjectivity operated in the *jeu d'acteur*, built on the photogenic nature of the actress's gaze and projected to the viewer through a conscious inscription on the image by Visconti. Above all, *Bellisima* documents a performing approach, and the only thing that remains of the neorealist aesthetic is the actress's capacity to penetrate the essence of its principles. In this case, the image of motherhood as a trophy of an essential Italian-ness, rescued at a time in which the memory of the essential images of Roman society, with the wave of the *Risorgimento* already under way, was beginning to fade. Pasolini would recover this approach by filming, in the gaze of Mamma Roma, the pain of separation from Ettore and the premonition of the tragic denouement. The entire film is built upon the tragedy of loss, on the gaze of a mother who tries in vain to recover the gaze of the son she abandoned in childhood. In Pasolini's work, the autonomy of the actress acquires a higher level in the shot, and the drama is underpinned by the absence of the reverse shot of Ettore, by the maternal gaze that is never reciprocated and by the impossibility of the final embrace. It is no accident that *Mamma Roma* is the film with the most close-ups of the actress's entire career after Rossellini, to such an extent that the cinematographer, Tonino delli Colli, was instructed by Pasolini to keep the actress's hands, which were usually raised to the level of her chest and face, out of frame[5]. The Bolognese director, an auteur with clearly pictorial concerns, sought in Magnani's expression a highly poetic allegory of Mary, placing all of the dramatic weight of the film in the same gaze and the same gestures of distress that had foreshadowed modernism in Rossellini's films. Pasolini confirms Magnani's autonomy in the shot, a constant which in many cases has the effect of underscoring the solitude of the actress's characters in the story. The unhappiness of her women, often misunderstood by their *partenaires*, other times alone in front of the camera, possess something of the melancholy that her contemporaries identified in their portrayal of an actress of legendary independence, who never played the role of wife or mother according to the social customs of her time. In the work of Renoir, Visconti and Pasolini, the directors' discourse documents the idea of the acting performance —or style— by focusing on what Rossellini called *the art of Anna Magnani*, the compendium of principles, and also ideas, that the actress held with respect to her own craft.

## Style of depiction and aesthetic approach

Along with the Roman mother, the actress and the prostitute were two other constants of Anna Magnani's depictions. Mamma Roma is the last great character in a process of depiction which had gradually been integrated into Italian cinema over two decades, and which might well constitute the peak of Magnani's baroque style for its capacity to embody duality, opposition, through the photogenic nature of the vital links that was always a part of the aesthetic aim of neorealism. The baroque as a symptom of the decline of the classical is present in all her portrayals, and proof of this is the metonymic power invoked by her presence with the passage of time: it is not so much her films that are remembered as the specific characters she depicted. Any viewer who attempts to evoke the image of the actress comes up with a similar icon: a woman in her forties, in the contrasting black and white of post-war Italy. Of medium build, typical of the Mediterranean female body of her time, she wears a dark dress that covers her figure down to the knees, leaving the whiteness of her face and cleavage exposed, with arms and hands of a masculine sturdiness. Her figure is slight but strongly anchored, and her austere attire hides neither the voluptuousness of her feminine curves nor the marks of time left upon them; however, exclusive attention to her figure is diverted to what were the great canvases of the Magnani expression: her face and hands. The first wears a tragic look, without makeup, which does not conceal the signs of the passage of time in the shadows of a face crowned by a wild-looking mane of black hair, one of the actress's greatest features. Her hands, shaped by years of strict piano practice in her adolescence, possess a great capacity for measured movement and often create postures through contact with other parts of her body such as her face, neck, chest, stomach or waist. This snapshot uncovers two important facts: that this body is an accomplice, which helps remind the viewer of the times and that both are survivors of the horrors of the twentieth century; and that it is the body of an actress who, through her command of the gestural and expressive composition, also commands the time in which the gestures are inscribed on the image. In the modulations of her face (in long shots often filmed in a single sequence, with a certain reminiscence of Magnani's theatrical background) and the blatant control of her hands (which a body unfamiliar with the art of declamation or oratory would be incapable of using in a non-instrumentally random way) are a record of an actress, a fictitious intention that lives beyond its organic integration into the *italianità* of an all-embracing Roman personality. An analytical reading of this information reveals the essential effect of Magnani's *instinctive* approach to performance: the fusion of the most archaic of the dramatic art with its newest innovations. The physical expansion and theatricality of the gestures take their inspiration from pantomime, from the *commedia dell'arte* to popular Italian post-war theatre, but the almost wild spontaneity of her gestures and movements anticipate the mixed emotions that would characterise cinema following the 1950s, with the rise of the "Method" of the American Actors Studio.

***Mamma Roma*** **(Pier Paolo Pasolini, 1962)**

The free combination of opposites —the mysticism of Mamma Roma and the carnality of the prostitute—

forms part of the outline of her portrayal of the female. She possesses the dark qualities employed by the American canon for its depiction of the *femme fatale*: her flowing mane of hair, her penetrating gaze and her conscious physicality. She does not have the youth, beauty or grace of Edgar Morin's female star (1972: 46), but she does have an overwhelming physical presence resulting from her cinematic version of theatrical beauty inherited from earlier style of European actress: the mystical, warm theatricality of Eleonora Duse or the physical contortion of Francesca Bertini, two great Italian interpreters of the feminine sentiment. But the influences on her visual style can be found in earlier European actresses not only from the south, but also from the Nordic countries. Anna Magnani's photogenic qualities are evident in the luminous chiaroscuro style of Pola Negri, and the narrative capacity of her face was the expressive gift that Béla Balász attributed to Asta Nielsen's mimetic style of imitating the expressions of those around her by wearing her own expression as well as that of the other (Aumont, 1992: 91). Her training in popular theatre gave her a stage actor's intuition and she knew how to make her mask the canvas for an identity shared with the ordinary audiences of her time, a popular theatre quality that the actress was able to integrate into mid-century cinema, in films in which she sometimes performed alone and other times shared with anonymous actors, with children in actors' roles, with professionals ranging from Aldo Fabrizi to Totò and even with stars like Marlon Brando and Burt Lancaster. What made Anna Magnani unique was the fact that she was an actress totally removed from the "star system" production model, who came to embody the paradox of the comedian by going down in history confused with her own mask, and through the legend of an occasional actress taken from the streets to become the face and the body of neorealism.

## Gesture and dramatic approach

Within the essence of her gestural style, constant contact with her own body gives her depiction a totally different expression from that which the viewer might have acquired from a cinematic education based classical Hollywood cinema. As discussed above, her depiction involved a highly unique tendency of placing her hands on her body. Viewers are likely to remember her touching her neck, stomach, forehead or chest. If we were to trace imaginary lines over the body or to recover anatomical portraits by Renaissance painters, we would see that Magnani's recurring points of contact coincide with the basic points of the body, the places where the vital organs lie and where, according to Medieval medicine, the passions originate: the stomach, the belly, the heart and the neck. Anna Magnani portrays her body as a living organism, showing not only the effect of the passions on the expression, but also how those passions originate. The eccentricity of such apparently theatrical gestures went unnoticed in a style always conceived to be a paradigm of naturalism; nevertheless, they prompted the viewer's gaze to identify in them the sensation of a living body, the physical awareness of an actress whom the critics of the time viewed as volcanic. It is an anarchic, quixotic sense of gesture that coexists with the iconic capacity of *Mamma Roma,* who employs ancestral gestures and sheds ancient tears drawn from the carnality of the prostitute. Among her repertoire of recurring gestures, those of bringing her hands together in prayer, placing a hand near her belly and expressions of impending tragedy allude to an iconography of the Virgin Mary that is omnipresent in the actress's work, which, throughout her career, from Pina to Mamma Roma, is marked by the visual motif of the Pietà. However, in her visual renderings of blushing or anxiety, raising her hand to her face or breast, we see the image of the penitent Magdalene as painted by Georges de la Tour, Titian or Artemisia Gentileschi. In her outpourings in sequence shots, in the passion and the pain of the characters she created in American films together with Tennessee Williams such as *The Rose Tattoo*, (Daniel Mann, 1954), we see the pathos of the pre-Christian dances and tragic heroines described by Aby Warburg together with Laocoön in his *Mnemosyne* atlas. The free combination of opposites is essential to the performing style of Magnani, a lover of both moderation and excess, of long pauses but also of a deliberately histrionic tendency towards outbursts, which the actress did not repress, and which vests her whole dramatic approach with a sense of human neurosis and imperfection which, rather than dragging her style down, actually perfect it. The clash between restraint and outburst is especially evident in her American roles, perhaps the most tortuous for an actress who did not hide her displeasure at finding herself working under a production model and in a world so different from the Italian. The modulation of crisis on the character's face in moments of doubt, fragility, passion or fear, reaches portentous heights of expression in the angst of characters like Gioia in *Wild is the Wind*, (George Cukor, 1957), Serafina delle Rose in *The Rose Tattoo* and Lady Torrance in *The Fugitive Kind*, (Sidney Lumet, 1959). In her American heroines, Magnani reveals the abyss that separated her performing style from the Hollywood system, giving her characters an aura of slight unreality and a testimonial register which, rather than inspiring rejection, aroused admiration in Hollywood, to the extent that it awarded Anna Magnani's iconoclastic virtuosity the first Oscar for an Italian actress in 1954. Despite her frequent collaboration with Paramount and with Harold B. Wallis, no US producer considered the possibility of moulding her into a star, precisely because she represented an utterly unique kind of actress, with an originality that Hollywood could do no more with than bear witness to its capture on celluloid.

***Fellini Roma*** **(Federico Fellini, 1972)**

The fact that Anna Magnani maintained the same working principles in Hollywood that she observed in Italy gives a special value to the permanence of her style, which remained completely removed from the "star system". As James Naremore suggests in his study of acting in cinema (1988: 102-112), and as reflected in Luc Moullet's *Politique des acteurs*, the style of every great actor contains an ideology distilled from his own personality. In *I coetanei*, writer and friend Elsa de Giorgi describes Magnani's character as an ideological principle that crossed from the screen into real life: "She clearly suffered the burden of living within petty bourgeois limits, and thus carried within the greatness of her character as a challenge to the conventional world to which she belonged" (1955: 62). Other contemporaries, such as the painters Carlo Levi and Giorgio Taber and the photographer Federico Patellani, immortalised her in all her genuineness. In the details of their beautiful portraits lies the seed of an anti-conventional femininity: utterly spontaneous and defiant postures, her legs deliberately separated, a hand holding a breast, her body surrendering to the sun in natural landscapes, surrounded by her entourage of dogs and in complicity with the wild environment. They are images of life directly connected to the idea of a freedom of gesture that Anna Magnani stamped on the screen with her commitment to a depiction of femininity free of prejudices, and with the belief in a process of depiction stripped of the authority of the classical canon and its taboos. These documents monumentalise the intimate frankness of a woman for whom defying conformity formed part of an untimely essence, the great quality that Nietzsche attributed to the good contemporary, and to which one of the most important approaches to depiction in cinema must be attributed. The body that Italy took from reality to overcome a war returns in the gaze of its contemporary painters, chroniclers and photographers, in the depiction of a rebellious and vehement femininity whose expressive frankness anticipates, in its dramatic essence, the physical dimension of modernism.

### Epilogue: the untold story

Fellini was the last director to cast Anna Magnani in his films. He wanted her for the leading role in *Fellini-Roma*. It was 1972 and the actress had just finished a television project called *Tre Donne* (Alfredo Giannetti, 1971), which told the history of Italy through Anna Magnani and her habitual depictions: the mother or *popolana* (*Correva l'anno di grazia 1870*), the actress (*La Sciantosa*), and the prostitute (*L'automobile*). The identification of the Roman *tragédienne* with the symbol of Italy was by this time universally agreed. Magnani turned down the starring role in Fellini's film but accepted a cameo role in which, at the end of the film, the director's camera catches her by surprise as she is going into her house:

> "This lady, who is just getting home, is a Roman actress, Anna Magnani, who might well be the symbol of the city itself."

The actress challenges the narrator with a tough question, the same one that Jesus asked the apostles before accepting them as followers in the Gospel of Matthew:

> "Who am I?"

Fellini's voice responds with the popular consensus in measured poetry, with a shower of epithets that every Roman attributed to the nocturnal image of Anna Magnani: the motherliness of a feminine and welcoming Rome, and the wildness of its pagan underbelly; the sweet face of the provider and the brutal face of the Capitoline Wolf. This impassioned biographical sketch evokes the language used in her obituaries, in press reviews and in the encyclopaedia entries that record the intense film career of the actress, her inimitable and much-missed boldness on celluloid in the 1940s and 1950s. In a certain way, the director's admiration confronts the actress with the ghost of her own posterity and, perhaps for this reason, the greatest power of Fellini's snapshot is that of the camera capturing Magnani's rejection of the second question, which is never asked and never answered:

> "Can I ask you a question?"
>
> "No."

Just as Antigone denied Creon the pleasure of shaming her for thinking differently and going against the authority of the polis, the actress denies the director the possession of her aura.

> "I don't trust you. Goodbye. Good night!"

The sudden death of Anna Magnani in 1973, at the age of sixty-five, made this scene her last, and her disappearance behind her front door, her escape from the shot, will remain forever as a testament to the actress, a denial that is a rejection of the posterity created from the hyperbolic admiration of the phenomenon that embodies an icon, of the idealised identification of the actress's mask with the spatial-temporal reality in which her depictions had been constructed, in constant dialogue with the audience of her time. The silence resulting from her absence in the shot invites us to consider that the essence of actors continues to lie in their power to etch themselves on our memories, a mystery never told or shared, arising from an unknown essence that goes beyond the legend, from the intimacy and the mystery of a process that is yet to be revealed. The importance of Anna Magnani in the cinema of her time is related to this invisible footprint, never decoded yet still present. "The art of Anna Magnani" that would have been revealed to Rossellini is this body which, arising from the acting style, pervades the cinema and bears witness to a true yet "untold" (Daney, 1996: 201) story. Without it, we would not have been able to explain the place, the time or the evolution of a cinematic movement that bears the name of all the directors that subscribed to it, and whose gazes converged upon perhaps the only common point of the body, the gestures and the personality of a single actress.

## Notes

* The pictures that illustrate this article have been provided voluntarily by the author of the text; it is her responsibility to localize and to ask for the copyright to the owner. (Edition note.)

1 According to the study by Alain Bergala in *El cine revelado*, the keys to modern poetics are established by Rossellini in *Stromboli, Land of God* and *Journey to Italy* (Viaggio in Italia, 1959).

2 In the original: "Il femminile nel cinema italiano, racconti di rinascita."

3 James Agee authored the first international critique of *Roma, Open City* under the title "Open City", which was published in the journal *The Nation* on 23 May 1946. The comment cited was quoted by Stephen Harvey in the volume dedicated to Anna Magnani in 1988 and edited by Patrizia Pistagnesi.

4 Visconti declared the importance of this guideline of (non)direction in the documentary *Io sono Anna Magnani* by Chris Vermorken (1979), distributed by Interama Video, 1984. "You had to be able to treat Anna in a particular way, because she wasn't like other actresses. Above all you had to know how to do something that no other director has remembered to mention. You had to learn to accept her proposals. Anna was an inexhaustible source of ideas."

5 "Anna Magnani moved her hands a lot, she gesticulated a lot with them, and this annoyed Pasolini so he always asked me for close-ups." Tonino delli Colli in the extras of the Spanish edition on DVD of *Bellísima* by Visconti (Wella Visión. M-50746-2008).

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Cynthia Ann Baron

# ACTING: CENTRAL TO A DIRECTOR'S CINEMA SUCH AS AMERICAN INDEPENDENT FILM

Film and media studies have analyzed American independent film in relation to cultural trends, technological developments, and the conglomerates that shape Hollywood cinema[1]. To extend that line of research, and to illustrate once again that acting is "a component of film" warranting the same critical attention given to framing, editing, and other filmic elements (Baron and Carnicke, 2008: 237), this essay focuses on selected performances in American independent film during the 1980s, when work by directors such as John Sayles, Jim Jarmusch, and Spike Lee established what John Pierson (2003: 24) has described as a "golden age" of independent cinema, distinguished by low-budget films produced and distributed without Hollywood influence, that reflected filmmakers' rather than corporate executives' vision.

American independent film has been seen as a director's cinema at least from John Cassavetes forward. As Yannis Tzioumakis (2006: 174) observes, Cassavetes "paved the way for other talented individuals who wanted to use the medium of cinema for personal expression". Yet the signature style of independent directors often relies on the specific physical and vocal choices in the actors' performances and the impressions created by the acting company associated with the directors' films. The unique style of a Cassavetes film hinges on portrayals by actors such as Gena Rowlands and Peter Falk. The quirkiness of a Wes Anderson film emerges in part from performances by actors such as Bill Murray and Owen Wilson. Jarmusch's *Stranger than Paradise* (1984) became known for "its subsequently much-imitated deadpan performances, introverted characters, sparse, iconic dialogue and static camera", while *Return of the Secaucus Seven* (1979) established Sayles as a filmmaker associated with "naturalistic performances and political insight" (Wood, 2004: 7).

To explore one piece of the substantial evidence that acting is central to the director-centered domain of American independent film, it can be useful to consider the neo-naturalistic performances in *Matewan* (1987) by Sayles, who "has been called both the grandfather and the godfather of American independent cinema" (Shumway, 2012: 1). Sayles himself emphasizes that actors' contributions are crucial to his films. He explains, "My first priority is always with the acting and the believability of the characters" (American Cinematographer, 1999: 53). This focus reflects his background. Sayles notes, "I was an actor before I was a writer or a director" (Scott, 1999: 131). His experience and training as an actor shape his approach to writing and directing. He observes: "I think some of the depth in my writing comes from having been an actor… When I finish a screenplay, I look at every part as if I had to act it, and ask, is there enough here to be a three-dimensional character" (Ebert, 1999: 162). He points out: "Because I have acted, I try to look at the characters that way. How do I play this person? Is the person consistent? Is there some action, something that this character wants" (Schlesinger, 1999: 25).

Sayles (1987: 84) reveals that when filming *Matewan* "believable acting was usually the highest priority. We would go a few extra takes in one scene to let the actors do their best, sometimes giving the lighting people very little time to set up for the next one". Actors developed their characterizations in advance of filming, incorporating information from the character biographies written by Sayles and their conversations with Sayles about their characters' backgrounds, beliefs, and relationships with other characters (Sayles 1987: 94, 95). As in other Sayles's films, each actor in *Matewan* was expected "to know his character" (Kushner, 1999: 119), "thinking and seeing the world the way the character would" so that the performance was grounded in "the life of the person being played" (Sayles, 1987: 101).

### Neo-Naturalistic Performances in *Matewan*

*Matewan* is set in the hills of West Virginia in the 1920s. Low wages and dangerous working conditions lead the local coal miners to strike; pacifist union organizer Joe Kenehan (Chris Cooper) arrives to coordinate it. The mine owners retaliate, hiring Baldwin-Felts agents (Kevin Tighe and Gordon Clapp) to reestablish control. Matewan's sheriff (David Strathairn) refuses to cooperate with them. The owners' try to end the strike by bringing in new workers; the locals thwart that attempt by welcoming the Italian and African American miners into the union. These setbacks prompt the hired gunmen to callously murder a local boy. Knowing that this will finally provoke the miners into violence, the owners hire a squad of armed men to fight them. The film's last major scene depicts the brief but deadly Matewan Massacre.

Sayles is interested in working with actors who craft performances that seem to emerge spontaneously from interactions between the characters[2]. Describing the audition that led him to cast Chris Cooper, Sayles (1987: 48) recalls: "The thing that stood out about his reading [of Joe's first long speech to the miners] was that I forgot which line came next and just listened to a guy making up a pretty good argument from his own feelings and whatever other organizing speeches he'd heard in his life". Drawing on the same aesthetic values, Sayles cast Mary McDonnell as Elma Radnor, the widow who runs the boarding house where Joe and later the Baldwin-Felts agents stay, because he saw McDonnell as a "really good actress [able to] convey Elma's hard past and knowledge of a hard future without 'playing' it" (Sayles, 1987: 50).

**Yet the signature style of independent directors often relies on the specific physical and vocal choices in the actors' performances and the impressions created by the acting company associated with the directors' films**

Sayles (1987: 19) explains that to "personalize the backbone of the film, Joe's struggle for justice without violence", he created the character of Danny, Elma's son, "an adolescent boy, a coal miner, preacher, and union man who has both the Old Testament values of righteousness and retribution and the New Testament dreams for peace and justice within him". Sayles (1987: 50) recalls that he cast Will Oldham as Danny because "he had a bit of Kentucky in his voice, which broke now and then like Jimmy Stewart's" and was able to read Danny's first sermon "just like a guy telling us a story". Describing James Earl Jones's ability to portray his character in an understated but engaging way, Sayles (1987: 51) notes: "James Earl turned out to be one of the best prepared, most helpful actors I've ever gotten to work with. He understood the mixture of strength and savvy Few Clothes needed to help his men survive in a deadly confrontation far from home, and brought even the moments where he just sits and listens to life".

The neo-naturalistic feel of *Matewan* arises from the performances of these actors. It also relies on the work of other actors who have shown their ability to portray individualized but culturally specific characters in various Sayles's films. In addition to McDonnell, who also stars in *Passion Fish* (1992), and Chris Cooper, who has leading roles in *City of Hope* (1991), *Lone Star* (1996), *Silver City* (2004), and *Amigo* (2010), David Strathairn, who plays the sheriff, is in eight Sayles's films, from *The Return of the Secaucus Seven* (1979) to *Limbo* (1999)[3].

The performance style in *Matewan* shares some common ground with what came to be known as the Method style after Marlon Brando appeared in films such as *A Streetcar Named Desire* (Elia Kazan, 1951) and *On the Waterfront* (Elia Kazan, 1954). Outlining key aspects of that style, James Naremore (1988: 278) highlights: "(1) Deliberate lapses in rhetorical clarity, signaled especially by overlapping speech and apparently contingent, spontaneous behavior. (2) Careful attention to the accents and manners of an indigenous, urban society. (3) Moments of expressive incoherence designed to indicate repression, or deep-seated psychological drives". Acting choices in *Matewan* can also be compared to work in more contemporary films. For example, one could see parallels between the performances in *Matewan* and those in films by British director Mike Leigh. As Paul McDonald (1999: 150) observes: performances in Leigh's films suggest "a heightened sense of realist observation. Accents are more distinct than in everyday life and all characters have their twitches that are forever foregrounded... Characters appear as both clearly representative of ordinary lives but also extraordinarily idiosyncratic".

### Historically Grounded Neo-Naturalism

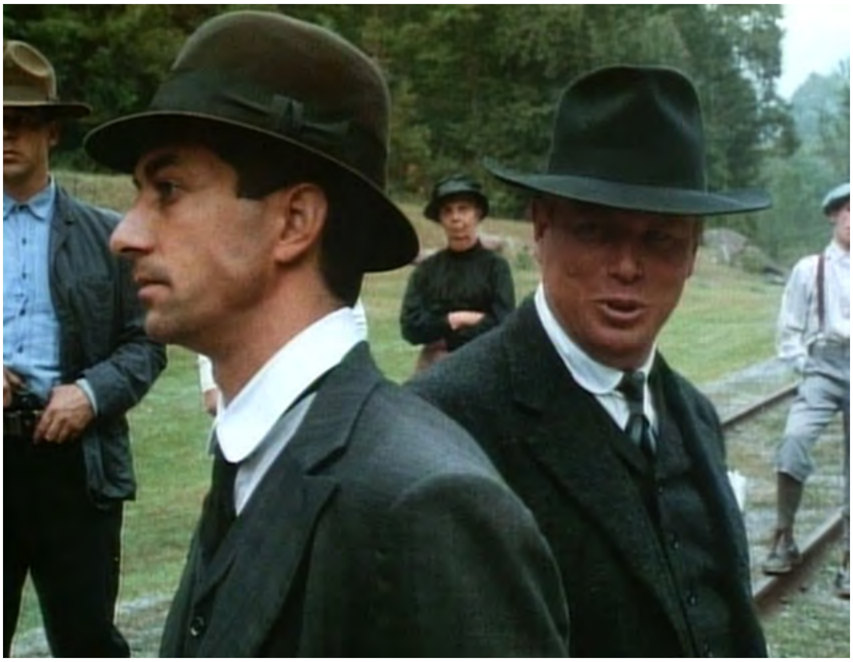
There are, however, important contrasts between performances in Sayles's films and portrayals in the male-melodramas that launched the Method style. There are also significant differences between the acting in *Matewan* and in Leigh's films. *On the Waterfront* and *Secrets and Lies* (Mike Leigh, 1996) have performances marked by "over-heated naturalism, a sense of hysteria held in check" (Naremore, 1998: 210). Both emphasize characters' eccentricities. By comparison, portrayals in *Matewan* convey characters' individuality and social circumstance in equal measure. In Kazan's and Leigh's films, characters are psychological entities; while they belong to identifiable social categories (class, region, time period, etc.) they respond to situations based on their ahistorical psychological makeup. By contrast, in *Matewan* the characters' personalities have been shaped by multifaceted social circumstances; their responses to events, situations, and other characters reflect their way of embodying their material circumstances and surrounding belief systems. As documents in The John Sayles Archive reveal, Sayles designed his characters as social types; his notes read: "Sid – the courage & ignorance of the culture, Joe – courage & idealism of the movement... Elma – wants to live in peace, Danny – the promise of the future» (University of Michigan, 2014).

Performances in *Matewan* feature "apparently contingent, spontaneous behavior", but they do not render characters that are "extraordinarily idiosyncratic". They include moments of "expressive incoherence" when the audience can see what characters are thinking or feeling while the surrounding characters cannot, but those moments do not reflect characters' "deep-seated psychological drives" but instead their awareness of their place in the social order. For example, in early scenes James Earl Jones holds his head still but quickly glances about to show us that Few Clothes knows that as a black man in a white town he must stay on guard to survive.

**The film's portrayals can make the characters' thoughts and feelings legible and lead us to see their responses, plans, and actions reflecting historical circumstances**

One might see performances in *Matewan* as comparable to portrayals in Kazan's and Leigh's films because they reflect a "heightened sense of realist observation". However, the performances in Sayles's film contrast with those shaped by the conventions of psychological realism or Hollywood realism, because they offer more than "a faithful reproduction" of the physical world (Mayer, 1999: 26). With the characters' individuality emerging from their material circumstances and belief systems, the portrayals in *Matewan* highlight the cultural, "philosophical, and socio-political system in which human behaviour and environment are inextricably linked" (Mayer, 1999: 26). The film's illustration of factors surrounding the characters reveals a connection between *Matewan* and "what Raymond Williams defines as 'authentic naturalism'" (Naremore, 1988: 200). The film's portrayals can make the characters' thoughts and feelings legible and lead us to see their responses, plans, and actions reflecting historical circumstances. That orientation means that the performances in *Matewan* are informed by naturalism; as noted by cultural theorist Raymond Williams, whose early work includes *Drama: From Ibsen to Eliot* (1952), in contrast to romanticism and realism, naturalism is "a critical movement, in which the relation between men and their environments [is] not merely *represented* but *actively explored*" (Naremore, 1998: 200-201) [4].

Building on naturalism, performances in *Matewan* are best understood as neo-naturalistic. They are "grounded in a conception of character that shows the influence of the naturalist and the modernist traditions: the characters are shaped by their specific social environments, yet those environments are the source of fragmented, indeterminate psychological and social identities" (Viera, 2006: 159-160). Joe's actions are influenced by the tradition of pacifism as well as the confrontational, often violent tradition of early-twentieth-century union organizing; the actions of Danny and his mother are grounded in Old Testament as well as New Testament values. Sayles departs from nineteenth-century naturalism because he "brings no overarching preconception about the nature of reality to his films, assuming neither that history is a dialectical march toward utopia, nor that the current social arrangements are natural and inevitable" (Shumway, 2012: 7). Portrayals in his films reflect the priorities of 1960s social movements; David Shumway (2012: 7, 12) finds that Sayles "understands that the human personality exists only within a definite social order", yet does not see class relations as "the root of all injustice", but instead that people's interactions are troubled by various sources of power.



**Strathairn follows a joke with coldness, as the sheriff negates the friendliness that might have been suggested by his passing levity**

## Gesture-Signs and Gesture-Expressions in *Matewan*

Analyzing performances in *Matewan* requires thorough attention to the film's conception of character, for "in contrast to modernist and postmodern traditions that differentiate themselves in unique ways from the 'realist' norm", when considering performances details, especially in isolated frame captures, "it can be more difficult to demonstrate significant differences between neonaturalist performances and acting that conforms to Hollywood 'realism'" (Baron, et al., 2004: 4). Parallels exist between realism, naturalism, and neo-naturalism because stage and screen performances shaped by aesthetic norms and values in the performing arts in the west have led actors to use "basic, culturally transmitted gestures to 'write' characters; the standard postures change slightly over time, but they are easily noticed, especially in comedy, where stereotypical expression is fore grounded" (Naremore, 1988: 63).

Actors' use of recognizable social gestures need not be seen as conventional. Through studies of theater and film, the Prague Linguistic Circle found that attention to *gesture-signs* (social gestures like handshakes) and *gesture-expressions* (individual uses of social gestures) allow one to analyze "the way a particular detail of performance sustains, amplifies, or contradicts the thought or feeling usually conveyed by such social expressions as greeting, farewell, apology, concern, condolence, and so on" (Baron and Carnicke, 2008: 89-90). As their landmark research demonstrates, "Interplay between gesture-signs and gesture-expressions can reveal character, show the performer's skill, and contribute to commentary on social class, time period, and cultural circumstance" (Baron and Carnicke, 2008: 111)[5].

With *Matewan*'s characters firmly grounded in their cultural setting, the actors' use of recognizable gesture-signs is central to their characterizations and to the film as a whole. Their crafted use of seemingly incidental gesture-signs conveys rich meaning about their characters' social position, cultural background, and evolving hopes, fears, plans, and responses. To appreciate the crucial information carried by the gesture-signs selected and the qualities in each individual gesture-expression, one could trace each performance from beginning to end. In an abbreviated study, one might simply consider salient confrontations between central characters. For example, the initial confrontation between the sinister Baldwin-Felts agent (Tighe) and the stoic Matewan sheriff (Strathairn) not only illustrates Sayles's vision of good acting; as he (1987: 102) explains: "When good actors really lock into each other you get involved in the push and pull, you feel that unless the first one said what he did exactly the way he said it, the other one would never have answered the way *he* did, and each moment is up for grabs". The scene also illustrates the actors' apt and creative deployment of social gestures. During a moment in the encounter, Strathairn's physical expression contradicts social conventions when he follows his delivery of an amusing line by tightening his face rather than breaking into a grin; in response Tighe contradicts social conventions by smiling as he prepares to deliver his next verbal threat.

Those choices illuminate the social and emotional dimensions of the situation. In this confrontation between the

**Cooper's circumspect demeanor – accentuated by the downward glance of the girl in the background – establishes Joe as an ideal guide into the complex relationships in Matewan**

town sheriff and the gunman empowered by the mine owners to establish law and order as they see it, both men see themselves in a social position unfettered by outside rules; both aim to put pressure on the other by making their claim for control explicit. The acting choices also reveal the characters' awareness of their vastly different resources: Tighe's free flowing smile and cocky pose convey his confidence in the unlimited resources at his disposal; through his tightly bound physical expression, Straithairn conveys the sheriff's recognition that he will need to work quietly and strategically to retain control of his town.

The standoff between the two lawmen creates an opportunity for Cooper to show that Joe will approach the crisis in Matewan in a careful way, always gathering information and gauging the actions of people around him. His physical expression (wide open eyes and forward leaning body) not only reflects the priority Sayles places on actor interaction; as Sayles (1987: 102) explains: when an actor "is really listening he doesn't necessarily do anything different with his face, but you can feel the information going in, being thought about, and a reaction forming". Cooper's individual gesture-expression (quiet but filled with energy) also amplifies the caution generally associated with the recognizable gesture-sign of listening carefully.

The qualities in actors' individual gesture-expressions also generate the meaning and emotion of the massacre's aftermath. Oldham's limp body and drooping arms convey Danny's shame for breaking with Joe's gospel of non-violence; McDonnell's crumpled posture, clasped hands, and anguished expression convey Elma's grief that the miners' efforts to improve their lot has caused only more pain and suffering. Drawing on familiar gesture-signs of shame and grief, their performances also allow audiences to reflect on the consequences of violence in general.

## Acting in American Independent Cinema

Contrasting the expressive characterizations in Sayles's films with modernist cinema's minimalist portrayals, Diane Carson (2004: 184) notes that Sayles's actors also avoid "broad, emphatic gestures and amplified, inflated language". Carson (2004: 175) points out that the engaging performances in Sayles's films also "eschew the postmodern affectations of ironic distanciation, self-conscious cynicism, or allusions to contemporary cultural artifacts and media images". As these observations perhaps suggest, a more comprehensive account of American independent cinema would consider a wide range of performances, illustrating ways in which they can be seen as existing on a continuum, with neo-naturalistic performances on one end and distinctly modernist performances on the other.

One could see acting choices in Sayles's films as reflecting twentieth-century naturalistic traditions, with characters defined by social circumstance and performance styles grounded in observed human behavior. Moving along the continuum, one could see performances in films by Spike Lee, for example, also belonging to naturalist traditions, with historical circumstances crucial to conception of character and identity, but with portrayals and filmic presentation of performance often including more visibly symbolic and expressive details to convey characters' background and experience; *Do the Right Thing* (1989) exemplifies this complex collage of naturalistic and modernist strategies of performance and presentation of performance.

A more complete account of performance styles in 1980s American independent cinema would also consider performances that are more thoroughly influenced by modernist traditions, where performers create minimalist portrayals designed to avoid theatricality and mannerisms. One could consider a film such as *House of Games* (1987) by David Mamet, which features a modernist conception of character and vocal choices informed by a modernist interest in distancing audiences from characters in the narrative performance, but physical choices shaped by realist or naturalistic traditions. One could explore performances in Jarmusch's films, which occupy yet another step along the continuum, for in productions such as *Stranger than Paradise* (1984), performances arise from a modernist conception of character that reflects abstractions like hipster, alienated outsider, or global tourist; minimalist performances combined with self-reflexive filmic choices can suggest commentary about popularized types in contemporary life.

The observable qualities in the actors' gesture-expressions illuminate the characters' feelings and the central themes of a film.

Although it would require more time to illustrate the various ways independent films differ from Hollywood offerings, analyzing performances in *Matewan* should reveal one way they break with the "faux realism" of commercial cinema (Carson, 2004: 175). Whereas portrayals of psychologically complex characters in Hollywood cinema can cause audiences to be more engaged in the world of the film, performances in *Matewan* can lead viewers to be engaged with the characters and learn something about the world outside the film. Sayles (1987: 101) explains that he gets "uncomfortable when the performance [he is] watching seems to be based on another performance the actor has seen or imagined and not on the life of the person being played". His discomfort leads him to write characters rarely seen in Hollywood movies and to rely on actors skilled and insightful enough to craft performances that illuminate not only the characters' inner experiences, but also the social realities that influence their interactions with others and shape their ideas, actions, and reactions.

> **A more comprehensive account of American independent cinema would consider a wide range of performances, illustrating ways in which they can be seen as existing on a continuum, with neo-naturalistic performances on one end and distinctly modernist performances on the other**

Analyzing acting choices in films such as *Matewan* is absolutely essential, because so much meaning is created by the actors' selection and combination of recognizable gesture signs (e.g., handshakes, nods of the head). The gesture-signs they use in their performances convey a wealth of information about the characters' cultural backgrounds and social circumstances; the gesture-signs that the actors do and do not use in specific interactions also reveal what they want, how they plan to get it, and so on. There is also dense meaning transmitted by the observable qualities in actors' individual gesture-expressions (e.g., a hearty handshake, a rigid nod of the head); the degree to which actors' gesture-expressions sustain, amplify or contradict the meaning of social gesture-signs communicates characters' immediate thoughts and feelings, as well as their upbringing, beliefs, and place in the social order. Sayles sees the acting as his "first priority" when making films; analyzing the acting could be our first priority in discussing them.

## Notes

* The pictures from *Matewan* that illustrate this article have been provided voluntarily by the author of the text; it is her responsibility to localize and to ask for the copyright to the owner. *L'Atalante* thanks Universal Pictures International the licensing of the images from *Do The Right Thing* illustrating this article. (Edition note.)

1 Recent studies include: the 2013 anthology edited by Geoff King, Claire Molloy, and Yannis Tzioumakis; *Hollywood's Indies* (2011) by Yannis Tzioumakis; *Indie Inc.* (2010) by Alissa Perren; *Indiewood* (2010) by Michael Z. Newman; and *Indiewood USA* (2009) by Geoff King.

2 The performances' spontaneous feel might lead one to imagine they involve improvisation. However, as Sayles explains: "I really have never had much time for rehearsing... And I really haven't had the money to improvise... You try to write it so that it seems people are making it up. It's in the writing" (American Film, 1999: 82). While one might think the performances depend on the camera capturing natural behavior, Sayles selects highly skilled actors for leading roles. He notes: "In most of the movies I've directed I've know some of the

people beforehand, either from having seen their work or, as I was an actor for a while, having worked with them. We always have so little time to shoot that I usually work with people who have worked in theater because they can retain two pages of dialogue with no problem" (American Film, 1999: 81). He explains: "Anytime you've worked with an actor before, you can eliminate a question mark [and cut down on the] emotional energy and time [spent] working something out with that actor" (Ratner, 1999: 208). See Sayles's *Thinking in Pictures* (pp. 45-53; 93-103).

3 *Matewan* also features: Kevin Tighe (three films) and Gordon Clapp (four films) as the Baldwin-Felts agents; Josh Mostel (three films) as the meek but steadfast mayor; Nancy Mette (four films) as the woman tricked into helping the company spy; Jace Alexander (three films) as the youth whose murder leads to the final shootout; Tom Wright (five films) as a miner; and Michael Mantell (five films) as a terrified gunman who Danny spares in the massacre.

4 Discussions about how to describe the realism or naturalism in Sayles's films can also be found in *Lone Star: The Cinema of John Sayles* (2009) and the essays by Cynthia Baron and Alex Woloch in *Sayles Talk* (2004).

5 For information about Prague semiotics, see *Reframing Screen Performance* (pp. 89-112).

**Imagen de *Haz lo que de debas* (Do the Right Thing, Spike Lee, 1989). Cortesía de Universal Pictures International**

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Nicole Brenez
**Translated by Paula Saiz Hontangas**

# ARE WE THE ACTORS OF OUR OWN LIFE? NOTES ON THE EXPERIMENTAL ACTOR

In his *De institutione oratoria,* the first-century lawyer Quintilian distinguishes between three types of arts: the *theoretical* arts, which rely on speculation and the knowledge of things and require no action, such as astrology; the *practical* arts, which involve action and “the action once performed, nothing more remains to do”, such as dancing; and the *poetic* arts, which “achieve their purpose in the completion of a visible task: such we style productive”, such as painting (Quintilian, 1953: 347). It is clear that the film actor achieves a synthesis of these three dimensions of art, leaving us the task of figuring out how he achieves the first, “the intelligence of reality”, in Quintilian’s words; how he undertakes the second, that is, the performance; and what type of image he creates.

Unless we refer blindly to a Civil Code which abstracts, cuts and simplifies for legal purposes, we will never exactly know what a body, a person, a man, an equal, the self or our neighbour is. The ordinary experience of the undefined is often intensified: for example, in the mirror test, the test of the doubt, of the swoon or the spectacle of an actor whose performance transforms the undefined into expressiveness. [... The actor is the site of this doubt and of this investigation. In this sense, he is, anthropologically speaking, an experimental laboratory, irrespective of the aesthetic tradition to which he belongs.] Whether he is caught in the trap of a repertoire, rebels against the sign or has no point of reference at all, the actor puts the representation to the test with his body and sets himself up as a quasi-subject. “Being is *what requires creation of us* for us to experience it” (Merleau-Ponty, 1968: 197).

## 1. The actor rebels: Marlon Brando-Delphine Seyrig

In the hand-to-hand tussle with the imaginary, dedicated and confined to the symbolic, the whole set of delegation practices at work in a society are connected and associations with other representatives (the politician, the artist, the bard, etc.) are generated. It is often confused, for the worse (Ronald Reagan) or the better (Bob Dylan, Doors singer Jim Morrison, star of the excellent experimental film *HWY: An American Pastoral*, [Paul Ferrara, 1969]).

### The actor's social function

"Man is the singular animal who watches himself live" (Valéry, 1983: 57). Adopting the form of parietal footprints, drawings, engravings, paintings and all kinds of live performances, he surrounds himself with effigies which allow him to delimit his experience, to redesign the collective rituals, to banish for a moment the terror that can be inspired by the meaninglessness of life and, more recently, throughout the history of performance, to question his own identity. By his nature, the actor challenges familiar existence, an existence that is needy even in its emotional habits, as his job involves transporting life to the territories of creation, beginning by turning to the possible or the impossible, by reaching towards or away from existence. Most often the actor raises an effigy of confirmation that can be used to verify a condition of the world and of its representation. He may also create a defector that takes a position on the negative side or that contests the rational forms of knowledge and signification.

### Actors who agree/refuse to play: Marlon Brando

Opposed to the immense mass of actors who agree to play and collaborate with the dominant ideology (whatever that ideology may be) and who are happy and proud to support it with their complacent reflections, there are initiatives by actors who rebel not only against the images, but also against the prevailing codes of symbolisation. The work of an actor is also defined by what he refuses to play or do, such as Gian Maria Volonté's refusal to attend the Cannes Festival in 1972, where two of his films were to be presented, in solidarity with Pierre Clémenti, imprisoned in Italy, and with Lou Castel, expelled from the same country[1]. A beacon in this respect is Marlon Brando, who staged a brilliant ploy in 1973. Nominated for an Oscar for his role in *The Godfather* (Francis Ford Coppola, 1972), Brando refused to attend the ceremony and sent in his place a young Apache woman, Sacheen Littlefeather, who read a speech denouncing the depiction of Indians in films and on television. It was later revealed that Sacheen was a Mexican actress named Maria Cruz. Despite his landmark performances in *On the Waterfront* (Elia Kazan, 1954), *Queimada!* (Gillo Pontecorvo, 1969) or *Apocalypse Now* (Francis Ford Coppola, 1976), Brando's masterpiece is really *Meet Marlon Brando*, a documentary by Albert and David Maysles, who followed the actor around in 1965 (a date long before Hollywood's alignment with the counterculture movement), while he was promoting the film *Morituri* (Bernhard Wicki, 1965). Marlon Brando, at his most energetic, sabotages with irresistible irony every industry norm, and takes the journalists (who are delighted to escape for a moment from their own servility) along for the ride.

***Meet Marlon Brando* (Albert y David Maysles, 1965)**

> Lois Leppart (KMSP-TV, Minneapolis): It's a wonderful show, I've talked to people who have previewed it and they tell me…
>
> Marlon Brando: I don't think we should believe what we hear. Even if it's a good report, and even if it's a bad report. We have to make up our own minds about it. I think that's essential. And don't… You shouldn't… make up your mind about that picture until you see it.
>
> Lois Leppart: You know this is sort of your whole personality. In a capsule. Not to believe…
>
> Marlon Brando: How do you know what my personality is?
>
> […]
>
> Bill Gordon (KGO-TV, San Francisco): We haven't seen the picture yet, but I'm here to tell you I'll bet it's a great picture, isn't it, Marlon?
>
> Marlon Brando: It sure is, pal. No, all the pictures that they make in Hollywood are really great films, and everybody knows that!
>
> Bill Gordon: They haven't made a bad picture there in…
>
> Marlon Brando: … in ninety years!
>
> Bill Gordon: That's right. *Lassie gets Bar-Mitzvah*[2], that was probably the last bad picture that I think Hollywood made.
>
> Marlon Brando: Bill, it's been wonderful talking to you and, gee, that's a real checkered coat… and… Vote for Willkie![3]

Marlon Brando's example inspired his whole generation. For example, Vanessa Redgrave, in her speech at the Oscars (for *Julia* [Fred Zinnemann, 1977]) announced her professional plan: "America is gangsterism for the private profit of the few […] I choose all my roles very carefully so that when my career is finished I will have covered all our recent history of oppression". Becoming a great actress entails having a vision of the world and of the role we play in the *theatrum mundi*.

### Delphine Seyrig

This conviction was shared by Nicholas Cassavetes. When John Cassavetes told his father that he wanted to become an actor, he expected vehement disapproval. But his father, a descendant of the civic-minded Greek culture that gave us democracy, told him: "Son, be a worthy representative; it is a great responsibility to represent the lives of human beings." Delphine Seyrig, with the bea-

**Delphine Seyrig in *Jeanne Dielman, 23 Quai du Commerce, 1080 Bruxelles* (Chantal Akerman, 1976)**

ring of a Greek statue and the face of Athena, has embodied that sense of responsibility even in her most trivial choices.

We can view the fulfilment of the actress' work as a political catalyst in Delphine Seyrig's collaboration with Carole Roussopoulos, which gave rise to three major cinematic essays. In *SCUM Manifesto* (Carole Roussopoulos, Delphine Seyrig, 1976), Seyrig gives one of her best performances as she recites with her melodious and deliberate voice the incendiary and brutal words of Valérie Solanas, shattering Seyrig's principle of an unbreakable alliance between aristocratic grace and radical subversion. *Maso et Miso vont en bateau* (Nadja Ringart, Carole Roussopoulos, Delphine Seyrig, Ioana Wieder, 1975) offers a wild, hilarious and direct critique of the naïve feminism of Françoise Giroud, criticised in a broadcast of "Apostrophes". "'Television images do not and cannot represent us. It is with video that we tell our stories.' This conclusion from *Miso et Maso vont en bateau* became our profession of faith." By 1974 Delphine Seyrig had thus formulated the project that would become *Sois belle et tais-toi* (Delphine Seyrig, 1981): "One thing I would like to do is a kind of film with other actresses of my generation. Because the common denominator that I have with all women is that I'm an actress. I think all women are forced to act. Basically, actresses only do what all women are asked to do. We do it more thoroughly, because we felt the desire to go all the way with it (this dress-up). I'd like to talk to other actresses and find out how they got here" (Bernheim, 1974: 98). *Sois belle et tais-toi* was filmed with Carole Roussopoulos in Los Angeles in 1975 and later, in 1976, in Paris. Delphine Seyrig asks twenty-two actresses about their job: Jane Fonda, Anne Wiazemsky, Juliet Berto, Maria Schneider, Viva, Barbara Steele, Ellen Burstyn, Jill Clayburgh... to compile a collective testimony of the reduction of the image of the woman to certain archetypes imposed by the film industry and by images in general, resulting in a paucity of roles for actresses. Jane Fonda, an emblematic figure in the fight for civil rights and against the Vietnam War, describes the reification of the actor in Hollywood in the following terms **:

> I'll never forget the first day I went to Warner Brothers for a makeup test. It was the first time I was going to be in front of a camera. They put you, as every actress knows, on a chair that looks a bit like a dentist's chair: lots of light on your face and all the men like surgeons, men, a bunch of guys, like surgeons all around you. Yes, you see people, heads of the makeup departments from the main Hollywood studios, very, very well-known guys who have created the big stars: Garbo, Lombard and all the rest. Then they made up my face and they stood me up and I looked at myself in the mirror and I didn't know who I was. I looked like someone off a production line... With eyebrows going in all directions, huge lips like an eagle's mouth. They told me that I should dye my hair blonde because that was the way it had to be. They wanted me have my jaw broken, to get it fractured by a dentist to highlight my cheekbones. To mark my cheekbones... I had pretty cheeks a bit like a teenager's... Joshua Logan, who was the director (and also my godfather!), told me: "With that nose you'll never be able to play tragedy, because you can't be taken seriously with a nose like that." And finally, the word came from the top that Jack Warner, the head of the studio, wanted me to wear fake breasts; he didn't like women with small breasts. So it was very clear, I was a market product and I had to get fixed in order to be saleable because they were going to invest money in me. They never fixed my jaw, or my nose, but I did wear fake breasts, blonde hair and lashes for... ten years. This means that I, Jane Fonda, was here [big gesture with both arms towards her left] and that this image was there [big gesture with both arms to her right] and there was this alienation between the two.

As Susan Tyrrell, the actress in *Fat City* (John Huston, 1972) and later in *Cry Baby* (John Waters, 1990), bluntly puts it: "I don't know what I'll do but I won't be greater, or stronger, by playing the part of a blockhead. These blockheads they write about have little minds, and I... should I play the part of the good little woman to pay my rent?"

More than anything else, Delphine Seyrig fought against this degradation polemically affirmatively. Thanks to her critical elegance, her discernment and her fertile activism she managed to escape it by creating the complex and powerful characters of Hélène Aughain (in *Muriel* [Muriel ou le temps d'un retour, Alain Resnais, 1963]), Jeanne Dielman (in *Jeanne Dielman, 23 quai du Commerce, 1080 Bruxelles* [Chantal Akerman, 1975]), or Anne-Marie Stretter (in *India Song* [Marguerite Duras, 1975]); by creating the dreamlike silhouette of *Last Year at Marienbad* (L'Année dernière à Marienbad, Alain Resnais, 1961) or the very different burlesque allegory of Mary Magdalene in *Mr Freedom* (William Klein, 1969).

Carole Roussopoulos's last project was a film dedicated to Delphine Seyrig, who passed away in 1990. Roussopoulos herself died in 2009, leaving the film unfinished.

### 2. Invention of a mode of criticism: the Jack Smith/Andy Warhol/Nico constellation

Moving on a different stage from that of the real world gives the actor certain kinds of freedom. Moderation and excess, simplification, complexity, oblivion; acting is a protocol that enables any experience of expression, behaviour, feasibility, links between phenomena, or the intelligibility of things. This is one of the most profound issues affecting the actor (and especially the film actor): as they are the result of broad cultural processes, notions of person and personal identity are revealed through the actor's work, which exposes and lays bare the way in which the links between a creature of flesh and its *imago* (the ideal self, psychic projections in general) are tied and untied. Thus, our beliefs about identity, the individual, the self and others are clarified or given concrete form in the existential melting pot that is the work of an actor. The actor, an experimental laboratory of identity, redefines the accepted configurations or develops before our eyes specific prototypes of beings that can be inscribed, not only in the history of ideas and images, but also in our social reality.

### Mobility: the actor against impersonation

On a hypothetical array of human inventions, modern empiricism views personal identity as pure illusion, the imaginary synthesis of sensory impressions through the abusive transference of primary relationships (similarity, contiguity and causation). We "run into the notion of a *soul*, and *self*, and *substance*, to disguise the variation" writes Hume (1978: 254), who, to describe the disappearance of individual identity, creates that beautiful image of a theatre without a scene (in the sense of *scenium*). "The mind is a kind of theatre, where several perceptions successively make their appearance; pass, repass, glide away, and mingle in an infinite variety of postures and situations. The comparison of the theatre must not mislead us. They are the successive perceptions only, that constitute the mind; nor have we the most distant notion of the place, where these scenes are represented, or of the materials, of which it is composed" (Hume, 1978: 253). This leaves nothing but a specific dissociation, as the person dissolves into a flow of heterogeneous sensations conducive to illusions of continuity, and the actor can add the flow of his own variations to the great swell of appearances, contours, shadows of beings or phenomena that inhabit the psyche and our impressions of the world.

> **Moving on a different stage from that of the real world gives the actor certain kinds of freedom. Moderation and excess, simplification, complexity, oblivion**

One of the greatest poets of unstructured appearance was the US experimental performer and filmmaker Jack Smith. Like Kenneth Anger, Jack Smith lived in a state of fascination for the Hollywood imaginary and, also like Kenneth, through his imitations he breathed life, desire and madness into the industrial icons and made them truly beautiful. However, whereas Kenneth Anger worked on modern mythology with great seriousness, faithfully following the texts of the occultist Aleister Crowley much like Giotto adhered to the Gospel, the burlesque and fantasy-prone spirit of Jack Smith, who created wonderful texts in honour of Maria Montez (Smith, 1997), let loose a population of creatures whose purpose is not so much to exist but merely to appear. Consumed by the simple fact of appearing, thrilled by their improbable character, they strictly do nothing but dance, droop and fall away. The action of a story is not necessary to have direct access to the myth: what is needed is to invent the behaviour of what a living image would be, a kind of awkward bas-relief that still has a little substance. Jack Smith aptly called them *Flaming Creatures*, the title of his film (1963), in which the stage names of the actors are as parodic as the names of their characters: Mario Montez plays Dolores Flores, Joel Markman plays Our Lady of the Docks. Under her real name the great Judith Malina (the founder of The Living Theatre together with Julian Beck) plays The Fascinating Woman. The performances and films of Jack Smith, a pioneer of the gay-kitsch-camp aesthetic, had a great influence on Andy Warhol, whose films constitute the documentary version of this style.

In 1963, Andy Warhol played a part in Jack Smith's *Normal Love* and shot the film's "making of". Warhol adopted from Smith his actors (Mario Montez, Naomi Levine, Beverly Grant, etc.), the notion of "Superstar" and, above all, the principle that, in order to get to the heart of cinema, all that is needed is to document the presence of the bodies. Warhol's contemplative minimalist style allows the actors to develop their own *imago* and offers us a series of unforgettable portraits: sometimes pure documents (such as the *Most Beautiful* series), and sometimes simple portraits, such as the *Screen Tests* series (1965), in which Ronald Tavel, off camera, interrogates the actors. "I made my earliest films using, for hours, just one actor on the screen doing the same thing: eating or sleeping or smoking; I did this because people usually just go to the movies to see only the star, to eat him up, so here at last is a chance to look only at the star for as long as you like, no matter what he does and to eat him up all you want to. It was also easier to make" (Warhol in O'Pray, 1989: 57)[5]. Minimalist, fetishistic, contemplative, obsessive and literally *hungry* in every sense, the Warholian portrait produces incomparable epiphanic effects. With his program of scopic devouring ("eat him up"), Andy Warhol unwittingly realises Jean Epstein's dream: "Never before has a face been so close to mine. It follows me even closer and yet it is I who am following it, face to face. There is truly no space between us; I absorb it. It is within me even as the Holy Sacrament. My faculty of vision is at its keenest" (Mitry, 1997:71).

The films with Edie Sedgwick or even *Chelsea Girls* (Andy Warhol, Paul Morrissey, 1966), in turn inspired the contemplative and minimalist aesthetic of Philippe Garrel, an artist on a quest for epiphanies, who dedicated an immense fresco in celebration of Nico and several film essays to the exploration of the relationships between actors and characters: *Un Ange passe* (1975), *Elle a passé tant d'heures sous les sunlights* (1985) and *Les Baisers de secours* (1989). Thanks to Warhol's and Garrel's fascinating portraits (followed by those of Gérard Courant's Zanzibar group), cinema acquired a materialist and poetic *anima*.

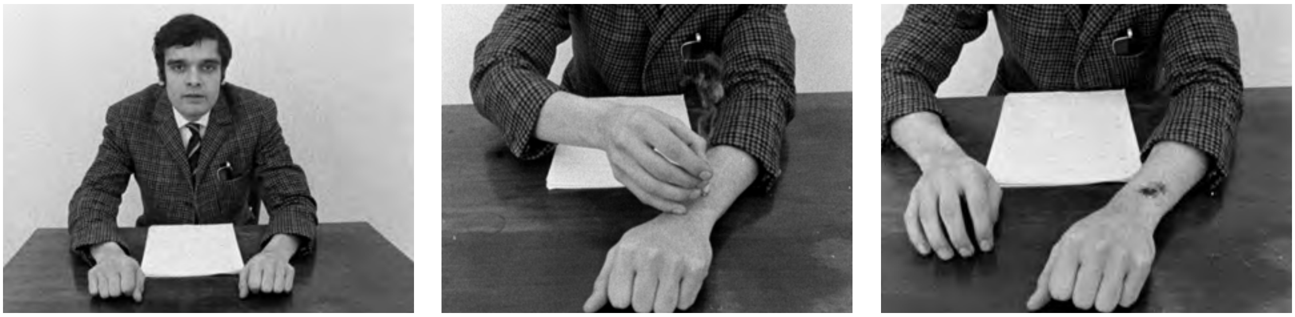
> Thomas Lescure: A critic, exasperated by the silent, almost motionless images of *Athanor* compared them to a series of slides.
>
> Philippe Garrel: Someone, no doubt who was ignorant of what a breath is. (Garrel, Lescure, 1992: 65).

Philippe Garrel's *Le Berceau de Cristal* (1976) depicts, mostly using still single-take scenes, a series of portraits of characters isolated from each other; Philippe Garrel himself, Tina Aumont, Margareth Clémenti… and especially Nico, who thinks, writes, composes; in her monumental countenance we witness the time of creation, as if we had entered the spiritual abyss of Sappho or of some other mythological poet. But in the last shot, Nico raises a revolver and shoots herself in the temple: what we had understood as creative self-absorption suddenly needs to be reconsidered in terms of a meditation on death, the work she was writing was a will, the portrait a *memento mori* and therefore also a conceit, the vibrant time of poetic duration, the documentation *sub specie aeternitatis* of an inevitable fleetingness.

## 3. Constructivism: the actor against illusion

The filmmaker and, frequently, actor who systematised throughout his work the question of the cinema actor is, undoubtedly, Jean-Luc Godard. Typically, instead of artificially building characters in *Pierrot le Fou* (1965), for their dialogues Godard gave Jean-Paul Belmondo and Anna Karina the exercises that Stanislavski had written in *Building a Character* (1930). Godard brought back planning into the film shot and, in consequence, the actor to his work (*A Woman Is a Woman* [Une femme est une femme, 1961]), the self-portrait of the extra in his status (the reflective "Eté André, cinema extra" from *Pierrot le Fou*), the lampoon of mimicry of a militant actress (*Letter to Jane: An Investigation About a Still*, 1972), the poetic essays on the direction of actors and the process of building figures (*Scénario du film Passion* [1982], *Petites notes à propos du film 'Je vous salue, Marie'* [1983]…), the exposure of the presence of the body as strict passage of bodies into the frame (*Grandeur et décadence d'un petit commerce de cinéma*, [1986])… Godard was constantly analysing the technical, historical and political factors that governed the work of the actor. His constructivist project recalls the poetics of sketching, such as that introduced to cinema by Jean Rouch, when one of the members of the Hauka movement declares to "the genius of strength" that he is going to possess him: "I'm listening to you, but I haven't got here yet" (*The Mad Masters* [Les Maître Fous, Jean Rouch, 1955]). Under this title, Godard's whole range of reflective propositions about playing constitute a theoretical version of a traditional Chinese practice, the variability of actor's positions in relation to his acting, which sometimes gets closer to and sometimes moves away from what he is playing: "there is nothing fixed, just a constant modification of the relationships; it is the show that constructs the main aspect, while the identification, the lived experience, is just a secondary aspect" (Banu, 1998: 85).

***A Woman Is a Woman* (Une femme est une femme, Jean-Luc Godard, 1961)**



***The Inextinguishable Fire* (Nicht löschbares Feuer, Harun Farocki, 1969)**

*La Chinoise* (Jean-Luc Godard, 1967) is a Marxist-Leninist adaptation of a Goethe novel published in 1796, whose original title was *Wilhelm Meister's Theatrical Calling* and which was later called *Wilhelm Meister's Apprenticeship*. Goethe organises a quasi-montage alternating between chapters of action (sentimental) and chapters with dialogues about art, its forms and functions, *Hamlet* being the privileged topic. In the same way, *La Chinoise* alternates between domestic scenes and scenes reflecting on representation, politics and action. Godard's Guillaume Meister, played by a Jean-Pierre Léaud at the height of his artistic prowess, offers us a definition of the actor explicitly inspired by Bertolt Brecht but also, more subtly, by the great movement of *happenings* practised and theorised by John Cage, Robert Rauschenberg and, especially, Allan Kaprow, who had just published *Assemblages, Environments and Happenings* (1966). The example of a Chinese student who calls the press to reveal his unharmed face under his bandages becomes the paradigm of an actor's job:

> Guillaume (*talks directly to the camera, hesitantly*): An actor, mmm, it's hard to explain. Yes, yes, yes. I agree (*laughs, confused*). Mmm... I'll try to show you something, it will give you an idea about what theatre is. [...] Then, of course, the reporters began to rail about it: "But these Chinese people are all story-tellers, comedians, what does all this mean?" and they hadn't... they hadn't understood a thing (*punctuates his phrases with a persuasive gesture*). No, they hadn't understood that it was theatre...
>
> *While Guillaume continues, a board appears with drawings and a typed text*: "Where is the new theatre? Theatre is a laboratory".
>
> Guillaume (*off*): ...real theatre is a reflection on reality. I mean it's like (*photo of a young Brecht*) Brecht or like... like... (*picture of Shakespeare*) Shakespeare![6]
>
> It is impossible not to recall the performance of Harun Farocki in *Inextinguishable Fire* (Nicht löschbares Feuer, Harun Farocki, 1969), who burnt himself with a cigarette to represent the violence of napalm on the bodies of Vietnamese.

Through this portrait of the actor as an activist responsible not only for reflecting the world but also for analysing it and changing it, Godard introduces us to what Claude Lefort called the *savage mind*: "The mind that makes its own law, not because it submits everything to its will, but because it submits to Being; it is awakened by contact with the event to contest the legitimacy of established knowledge" (Lefort, 1961: 286). Through his practice, through his energy, because he no longer wants to impersonate, the actor has the means to contest everything, to begin everything anew. In this sense, the work of performers-filmmakers is crucial.

## Conclusion: Imperative acting (imperative needs of acting): the little boy from Luanda; the man from New York

Dancers, visual artists, musicians and, of course, performers could be the source of powerful experimental initiatives in the acting field. This is the case, to name a few classic examples, of Yvonne Rainer, Carolee Schneemann, and Wolf Vostell in the United States; Yoko Ono in Japan; Valie Export and Otto Muehl in Austria; Maurice Lemaître, Sylvina Boissonnas and Ben Vautier in France; and in Germany, Joseph Beuys or Harun Farocki who, apart from his own performances and film essays, in 1984 made a beautiful portrait in *Peter Lorre – Das doppelte Gesicht* [Peter Lorre – The Double Face].

But I would like to conclude by quoting the work of those actors from whom acting means engaging in real activism, such as Lou Castel, Gian Maria Volonté, Tobias Engel or the actors filmed by the filmmaker Raymundo Gleyzer, both amateurs and professionals, who risked their lives by playing during the Argentinean dictatorship. Raymundo Gleyzer, a filmmaker who was a member of the Worker's Revolutionary Party (or PRT, for its Spanish acronym), started his career with anthropological films and reports (*Ceramiqueros de tras la sierra* [1965], *Nuestras Islas Malvinas* [1966]...). In 1971, he founded Grupo Cine de la Base [The Base Film Group] and began making interventionist films, such as *Swift, comunicados cinematográficos del Ejército Revolucionario del Pueblo n°5 et 7* (1971), *Banca nacional de desarrollo, comunicado cinematográfico del Ejército Revolucionario del Pueblo n°2* (1972), *Ni olvido ni perdón: 1972, la masacre de Trelew* (1972), *Me matan si no trabajo y si trabajo me matan: la huelga obrera en la fábrica INSUD* (1974). These films were shown for free in the streets and in factories: "Sometimes we showed them in theatres, for five dollars, for the bourgeoisie. It is necessary for them to know what the revolution looks like"[7]. In 1973, Cine de la Base made a fiction film based on actual events, *The Traitors* (Los traidores, Raymundo Gleyzer, 1973), about the corruption of the Peronist union bosses. The actors, aware of the risks they were taking, offered their presence, their gestures, their voices and their vulnerability so that this fiction film could do justice to history, because "they believed films could be a weapon to defend the rights of the people." Any one of these actors is more important to us than all the false stars put together. In 1976, when he was 34 years old, Raymundo Gleyzer was kidnapped, tortured and murdered by the military junta that had taken control of Argentina. He rejected any hierarchical distinction between director, crew, actors and extras. "We work collectively. Why should the director be the star? Before the stars were the actors, nowadays it is the director, next year it may be the extras... for us, poetry is not an end in itself. For us, poetry is a tool to change the world. We have to be useful, like the stone that breaks the silence or the bullet that triggers the battle".

**Beyond the narcissistic satisfaction experienced by the actor, beyond the socially organised entertainment institutions (built around the figures of the shaman, the priest, the orator, etc.), we sometimes find in a film an expressive impulse, the vital need for which inspires the construction of a symbolisation and the creation of a scene (in both the spatial and the narrative sense)**

Beyond the narcissistic satisfaction experienced by the actor, beyond the socially organised entertainment institutions (built around the figures of the shaman, the priest, the orator, etc.), we sometimes find in a film an expressive impulse, the vital need for which inspires the construction of a symbolisation and the creation of a scene (in both the spatial and the narrative sense). In *A Luta Continua* (Bruno Muel, Marcel Trillat and Asdrúbal Rebeleo, 1977), a little boy from Luanda, in an effort to deal with the grief of losing his brother during the war, composes a song for him and, standing in the dust, sings through his tears, screaming out his beautiful song which is both a homage, a combat against the tears, a catharsis and an ephemera.

Another of these rare occurrences, in this case more accessible, combines the power of argumentation and of conviction that symbolization can achieve in acting and is directed to an audience: in an episode of *Far from Vietnam* (Loin du Vietnam, 1967), shot by William Klein, a bearded man on a New York street stands on a corner and yells: "Napalm! Napalm! Napalm!" Passers-by begin crowding around him, and when the man stops shouting, they began talking to each other about the Vietnam War. Both the little boy who sings for himself or his dead brother and the bearded man in the crowd trying to get those around him to react, these two very different performers who to express themselves have nothing but their bodies, their energy and their knowledge of a situation, embody the need for acting.

***Nuestras islas Malvinas*** **(Raymundo Gleyzer, 1966)**

## Notes

* This text is a new transcription of "L'acteur experimental: 5 échantillons". A conference organized by the Groupe de Recherche sur l'Acteur au Cinéma (GRAC), directed by Christian Viviani, of the Institut National d'Histoire de l'Art, Paris, 7th of January, 2009.

** The following quote is an English translation of Jane Fonda's comment in the film, which was given in French.

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1 Interview with Lou Castel by David Pellecuer (unpublished in France).

2 T.N. Title ironically invented by the journalist who interviewed Marlon Brando.

3 Wendell Willkie, candidate against Roosevelt in 1940. The full transcription of the interview was published in the magazine *Squire* in February, 1965, and was reproduced by Albert Maysles: Kasher Gallery, Steven (2007) *A Maysles Scrapbook: Photographs, Cinemagraphs, Docu-*

*ments*. New York : Steven Kasher Gallery: 141.

4. Roussopoulos, Carole. Letter to the author. 25 October 2006.

5 Andy Warhol was interviewed by Gretchen Berg in "Cahiers du cinéma in English" (May, 1967), extract by Michael O'Pray: O'Pray, Michael (Ed.) (1989). *Andy Warhol. Film Factory*. London: BFI.

6 Transcription of *L'avant-Scène Cinéma*, 114, May 1971.

7 Interview by Terry Plane with Raymundo Gleyzer, Adelaide, Australia, June 1974.

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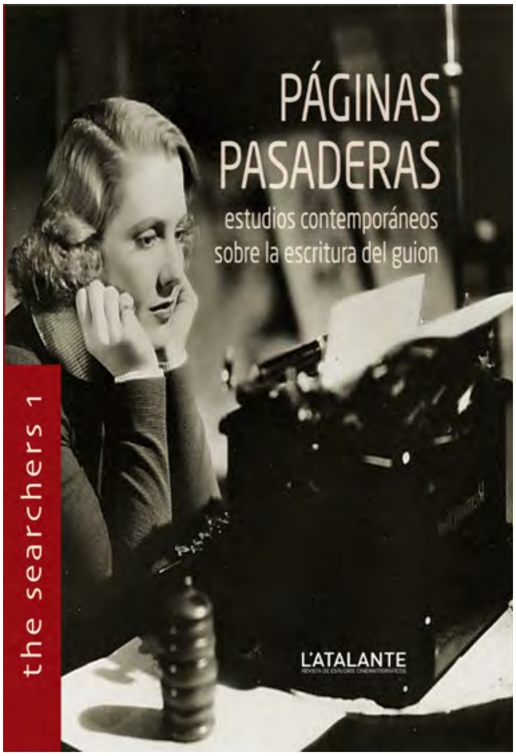
## PÁGINAS PASADERAS

### Estudios contemporáneos sobre la escritura del guion

Coordinado por Rebeca Romero Escrivá y Miguel Machalski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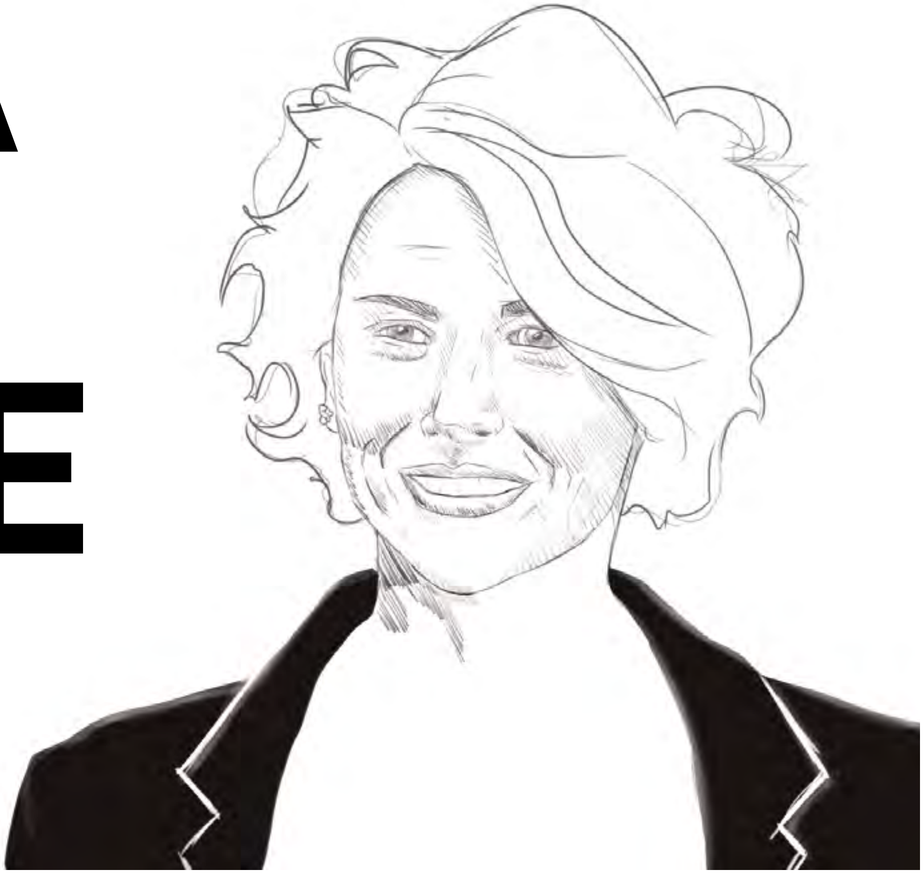

Each character in a film is the result of an extensive negotiation that can involve various crew members, from the cinematographer to the head of the makeup department, but in which the cornerstones are the screenwriter, the director and the actor. Although the end result tends to be completely personal and non-transferable, turning the actor *into* the character, the process for achieving it is as collective as it is fascinating, the result of agreements and tensions, of consensuses and conflicts, and we may thus conceive of it as a product of shared authorship.

Who better to reflect on this topic than Icíar Bollain (Madrid, 1967), whose career has allowed her to approach acting in all its dimensions and in its various conceptions? As an actress, she began her career when she was still a teenager, under the direction of Victor Erice. As an adult, and more aware of her craft, she has worked with other renowned filmmakers, representatives of antagonistic cinematic models, such as the classicism supporting the *mise en scène* of José Luis Borau, the abstract symbolism of Pablo Llorca, the Rohmeresque film-

Pablo Hernández Miñano
Nuria Castellote Herranz
Violeta Martín Núñez

# Filming/being filmed
## Acting according to
# ICÍAR BOLLAÍN
## filmmaker and actress

*“Actors are great scriptwriters because they come up with things that the scriptwriter should have written”*

making of Felipe Vega, or the centrality and organic quality of acting in the work of Ken Loach. These very different performing experiences have all shaped her learning as a filmmaker.

And in fact, despite her extraordinary career as an actress, Bollaín has achieved recognition primarily for her work as director. From the small intimate projects that she began with, such as *Hi, Are You Alone?* (Hola, ¿estás sola?, 1995) and *Flowers from Another World* (Flores de otro mundo, 1999), to major international co-productions like *Even the Rain* (También la lluvia, 2010), her work is notable for the brilliance of the performances. Her rapport with Luis Tosar, who has starred in three of her films (in addition to co-starring with her on many other occasions), has resulted in truly memorable performances like *Take My Eyes* (Te doy mis ojos, 2003).

Thus, with her profound understanding of the craft of acting, which she has given considerable weight in her work as a filmmaker and which has fed on her eclectic background as a performer, Bollaín brings together a diverse range of practices and expertise that make her ideal for exploring the questions that form the core of this interview, beginning with the relationship between the filming approach and the conception of performance, which forms the cornerstone of this exploration. Her background as a scriptwriter, director and actress is crucial to her approach to the transferral of the character in the script onto the screen, embodied by an actor as a result of the casting process and the problems that that process entails. It also enables her to consider, from both perspectives, the collaborative work between filmmakers and performers in defining the style of performance, and the construction of the characters in rehearsals or while filming, and how this construction can hold the film’s narrative together. And, thanks to her latest project, *En tierra extraña* (2014), she can also reflect on these issues in relation to documentary films.

For all these reasons, Bollaín’s career represents a privileged position from which to examine the task of the actor in cinema. With this in mind, we asked her to share her vision and her experience with us. ■

## THE ACTOR'S WORK AND THE FILMING APPROACH

**As a filmmaker, you've worked with highly experienced professional actors and actresses, and also with amateur performers. You yourself started your acting career when you were very young and without prior training, under the direction of Víctor Erice, Felipe Vega and Manuel Gutiérrez Aragón. Already in these early performances, your work not only had a wonderful freshness and spontaneity, but was also quite complex and rich in nuances, which might in a way support the theories of directors like Hitchcock, von Sternberg or Bresson, who viewed actors as mere marionettes in their hands. Could you comment on your position on this issue from your dual experience as a filmmaker and actress?**

I think there are two ways of working with actors. There are directors who construct the characters based on their image and the things that surround them. I have worked with a director like this, José Luis Borau, who had the image of the film in his head, shot by shot. I imitated Borau because he made all the characters in his films... even the dogs. So, I looked at him and thought, "ah, what he wants is that image" and I had to find a way of giving him that truthfully. But what he wanted was a visual expression rather than an emotion. With the *mise en scène*, the lighting, the set, the position of the camera, the editing of the shots, Borau was narrating and giving life to the performance, and you, as an actress, had to adapt.

There is another kind of director who works more with the actors, who relies more on the characters and what they communicate themselves. Of the people with whom I have worked, at the other end of the spectrum from Borau would be Ken Loach, who would do the opposite: leaving the actor alone in a context as natural and real as possible, so that his work is the least affected and *performed*, closer to truly living the part.

In this other type of work, you also have two choices: working with professional and non-professional actors. In my experience, when I look for non-professional actors it is because a professional is not going to give me the qualities of the character truthfully. For example, right now I am looking for a very old man from the country. Country people have a certain type of hands, body, leathery skin... which actors don't generally have, simply because they don't work under the sun. It also happened to me in Bolivia, where the industry is very small and the acting world is very limited: we were looking for the indigenous character in *Even the Rain* (También la lluvia, Icíar Bollaín, 2010) and there was no one with that profile among professionals. But when you look for that profile in the street, what you can't do is ask an actor who has never performed a role before to play someone very different from himself. What you are going to get, instead, is an overwhelming truth, because he is playing himself; but you have to find someone very similar to the character you're looking for, because he won't have the resources to do anything else. In *El Sur*, I was definitely very similar to the character of Estrella that Erice was looking for, an introverted, quiet girl... But when I decided to continue acting and I was asked to do different things, I really struggled with it. I remember once I had a role as a fifteenth century Anabaptist in a series with José María Forqué [*Miguel Servet. La sangre y la ceniza* (TVE: 1988)], which involved, in addition to period clothing, pre-modern dialogue... I had to start going to acting classes because I didn't know how to study, how to do a read-through or how to build a character. I think that the great actors are the ones who combine both things: they maintain their freshness, they keep in touch with themselves, and at the same time, they have resources.

My films rely heavily on the characters; it's the characters that tell the story in a way. But I've worked as an actress in both types of films; I have seen how Borau worked, which is perhaps a more artificial method, but extremely interesting and extremely valid too. Borau, for example, does nothing to make the environment favourable for your performance: he decided to shoot the whole film of *Leo* (2000) with a 40 mm lens, and that required lifting all the furniture so that it came into the frame... you had to work on a surreal set. It is the opposite of what Loach would do; he hides the crew, he almost lets you forget that you're filming. But I think both, each in their own way, communicate a lot of emotion.

**Borau's filming methods were, indeed, more at the service of precision of framing than at facilitating the work of the actors. For Borau, even the position and size of the actors in the frame, the duration of each shot... all this conveyed meaning and affected the viewer, and it was necessary to control these elements so that they worked for rather than against the story. Do you consider it the lesser of two evils to lose this meticulous control over the image if, in exchange, you get more authentic performances?**

It depends on the story you're telling and how you want to tell it. What you say about Borau is true: it was very different from the way that I have worked, but it was fascinating, because the colours he chose told the story, or the arrangement of the objects... which is a technique of classical cinema as well. There are elements, or lines, which suggest violence, or that the character is trapped. There is a whole hidden or suggested visual language, which also tells a story. I also take these things into account when I'm filming, but above all I've learned to keep them in mind from people like Borau and from good cinematographers who say: "look, rather than against a wall, which doesn't tell you anything, if you put this same thing here, you're saying much more." And now that I've done a documenta-

Icíar Bollaín and José Luis Borau in the shooting of *Leo* (José Luis Borau, 2000)

ry film, even more so: anything you can't tell with narration you have to tell with images, with visual metaphors. I have always given much more importance to words, to acting, to emotions, but, in fact, you can construct your story in other ways as well. And I don't dismiss them at all, as long as you're aware of what your elements are and you make good use of them. Because if you want a truly authentic, emotional and fresh performance, you can't subordinate it to the lighting: you're going to make the actor suffer and you won't have the emotion. Of course, in the end, you have to be able to see the scene, but if you want an actor to give you one hundred percent, you have to help him a little; he's going to give a lot of himself, but you have to create the conditions. And if you think that you are going to tell the story better with the lighting, then go for it. You can mix the two languages, but one is most probably going to hinder the other. I sometimes try to achieve a compromise: ideally, everything will be expressive, the actor, the set, the lighting... everything should express something. In *Mataharis* (Icíar Bollaín, 2007), I had a lot of discussions about this with Kiko de la Rica, because I wanted, then more than ever, to follow the actors without rehearsals and with a very free camera. And I found myself with scenes with insufficient lighting because I hadn't ensured the necessary conditions. It's always a tug of war. In other film industries, they make up for these problems with time and money and, if you don't succeed on the first try, you succeed on the fifth. But we don't have that option, we can't afford to do that.

**Luis Tosar, who took part in the filming of *Leo*, and also commented on the discomfort caused by all the artifice, was surprised to find his performance much more natural than he expected when he saw the finished film. As a result of this, he wondered whether he had a somewhat idealised notion about certain acting methods; whether certain ideas, like the idea of working organically, were maybe not as important when, in the end, what remains on screen works perfectly. Do you think that there is some idealisation of acting methods based on an organic approach, on the importance of feeling as an actor the same way as the character is feeling?**

I think that you don't have to be fanatical about anything and yes, there may be some idealisation. We were hugely surprised by *Leo*. During filming, the actors were laughing because Borau, as I said before, was determined to cram everything into a 40 mm lens. That meant, for example, that the actors were often nose to nose, less than a hand's span apart, a distance that is not natural for conversation, because you only get that close to someone when you want to intimidate them or kiss them. So we would say to him: "Borau, this is ridiculous". And Borau, who had a very strong character, would shout back: "No, it's not ridiculous! It's just fine!" And in fact, when you see it you have to take your hat off to him: it works, there is tension, and it's not ridiculous, as you felt it was during filming. So, yes, of course, the organic approach is a little bit overrated.

**I don't improvise; what I often do is let the scenes continue, to see what happens when the actors run out of lines. And sometimes things come up that can be included**

The question of improvisation is exaggerated too. I don't improvise; what I often do is let the scenes continue, to see what happens when the actors run out of lines. And then, if an actor is good, he goes on, because he is in character. And sometimes things come up that can be included. That's one way to work.

And, on the other hand, I thought that filming directly without rehearsing helped the actors, because that way they would feel freer, but in *Mataharis*, for example, the actors would say, "For God's sake, let's rehearse, because I don't know where I'm going." And they were right, because a set is an unnatural place, a set is not a house, things are not where they should be... We can't play at naturalness in an unnatural space. So it is also good for actors to rehearse, to learn how to move naturally around the set in a rehearsal in order to be more relaxed when the time comes to say their lines. Ultimately, I think what you have to avoid is being inflexible; the ideal approach is to incorporate different methods and techniques.

**A film is analysed as a finished product and it is impossible to know whether the performances were adjusted to the other elements of the *mise en scène* or vice versa. For example, in *Take My Eyes* (Te doy mis ojos, Icíar Bollaín, 2003), there is a clear relationship between the use of close-ups and the containment of Luis Tosar's performance, compared to the use of increasingly open shots when he makes more agitated gestures that lead to an outburst of violence. For the analysis of the film, it is easy to identify these patterns, but what is hard is to reconstruct the logic of the decisions behind them: was a close-up was used to capture Tosar's contained gestures, or did the actor perform in a contained way because he knew you were going to film him in close-up?**

Both answers are right. In the case of Tosar, who has a very good training in theatre and in film as well, he knows that a close-up is a matter of nuance, of really feeling what you're playing, because the camera is like a big magnifying glass they put in front of you and, if you lie emotionally, it will show. You don't have to do great things, but your gaze has to be real, because a close-up is mostly about the gaze and Luis knows that. So, usually, a great actor like Luis will know what to do when performing in a close-up.

And as for me, I choose how I tell the story in each scene. In this way I do what Borau does: I draw my storyboards, I do my homework and then I share it with the cinematographer. This homework at least includes coming to the film shoot with a proposal, because, like Chus Gutiérrez once told me, thinking with forty people waiting for you is much worse than doing it at home. So I try to visualise the *mise en scène* in advance, how I'm going to tell the story, what kind of shot I can use to express it better. For example, after watching *Mataharis*, Borau told me that I used too many close-ups, which are very dramatic and should be used only as punctuation marks, because if you use them all the time, they lose their dramatic force. *Mataharis* was filmed primarily in medium shots; the shot range in the film is quite limited. In the language of classical cinema, the close-up has a value, the medium shot has another, and the wide shot has yet another. That's the sort of thing that I think about beforehand and then share with the cinematographer, just in case there are better ways to tell the story that haven't occurred to me. It's always different when you're already on the set, with the lighting and with the actors; there are always new things that come up. And later, it is in the editing process where, again, you apply your cinematographic considerations and choose when you will use a close-up, when you go to *off* and when you go to *on*, what phrases you see being spoken and what phrases you don't see... You are always looking for what best expresses the story you want to tell, but you always have a prior idea.

**The filmmaker has a prior idea but, usually, the actor will also have prepared the character before arriving at the shoot: it is possible that he will have an idea in mind for how to approach a scene and that his idea proves unworkable. For example, he may find out that a scene in which he planned to introduce certain body gestures is going be filmed in close-ups, and he has to abandon his initial idea...**

Yes, of course, and vice versa. It has happened to me as an actress and I remember my frustration. In *Nos miran* (Norberto López Amado, 2002), my character was nice but it didn't have much substance; it was a supporting role to Carmelo Gómez's character. The most important scene I had was a very dramatic one, in which I had to go, crying, very distressed, to ask for help from a policeman – played by Karra Elejalde – because my husband was going crazy. And when I got there, the director had set up a tracking shot from miles away; we were a couple of ants at the end of the shot, the camera passed us and went on. I was astonished... I am very disciplined and I never turn directorial when I work as an actress, because I can see things from the director's perspective, but for the first and only time in my life I said: "Buddy, are you really going to do it that way?" He said yes and I answered: "Look, I can't do anything, you're the director; I understand that a tracking shot over a whole hospital hangar full of loonies is visually a very cool shot, but what are you talking about in this scene?" When he explained that what he wanted to reflect was the madness of Carmelo's character, I told him that it seemed fine to me, but, that, in that case, he didn't need me. However, I did it. And I cried my eyes out. But it's off the shot. So you prepare your role at home, but then the director does what he wants, logically.

## FROM SCRIPT TO CASTING: MATCHES AND MISMATCHES

**The casting process is usually understood as the search for the perfect actor or actress for the role, as it was written, but sometimes what was written is discarded completely in order to include a performer. Can a casting choice justify rewriting a whole character or even shifting the plot and the gist of the story away from what was initially intended?**

I think that, if you change too much, you end up doing another film and that is not in your interest, because you get into a mess where your script falls apart. The casting process is very close to the shooting; in fact, it is part of the preparation. If you pull your script apart just before shooting, you have no structure, so I don't think it's a good idea to change everything. But in the casting call some very interesting changes *can* be made, depending

Juan Carlos Aduviri in *Even the Rain* (Tambien la lluvia, Icíar Bollaín, 2011) / Courtesy of Morena Films

on the flexibility of the director and of the screenwriter. I've done it several times, but always keeping the spirit of the story. For example, in *Even the Rain*, we made two significant casting changes. One was the character of Columbus, played by Karra Elejalde. On paper, the character was older; he was sixty years old. We looked for actors that age but we were not quite convinced by any of them. And, suddenly, someone suggested Karra, who did a spectacular audition. I stood there with my mouth open, because the character fit him like a glove. And then you ask yourself: "Is it so important if the character is fifty or sixty?" The spirit is exactly the same, and perhaps even more heartbreaking, because such a cynical man, that's been there and done that, at fifty is harder than at sixty; so you're not going against what was written, you're reinforcing it.

The other big casting change in *Even the Rain* was the indigenous character. At first it was written as a single character, the leader, but then it was split in two, the leader and his bodyguard, which became the lead role. After a very long and very difficult casting call, where we saw no possibilities, we found Juan Carlos Aduviri, who is very short, and so could not be the bodyguard. And in addition, he had never acted before; he was a carpenter. But he had that dignity, that gaze, that strength ... So you bet on him and you adapt the character to him. The two roles were merged again into one. And what happened when we filmed with him? He was a man who had trouble making long speeches, so we made them shorter. We also discovered that had a devastating silence, that he was more eloquent silent than talking. Why use words if you have that? You have to be attentive to what you've got, but without sacrificing the essence of the story you're telling. When you make your choices without losing your sense of direction, ultimately, your choices will reinforce the story you're telling.

**Several filmmakers, like Pablo Llorca in *Jardines colgantes* (1993) or Borau in *Leo*, have chosen you to play roles bordering on the *femme fatale*. Although there are certain qualities of your image (smart, strong, not corny or sentimental) that would make you suitable for such characters, your core values as an actress (freshness, spontaneity, a frank smile) and your refusal to adapt to a stereotypical and hypersexualised femininity, make those characters, because you've been chosen to play them, brighter and nobler on the screen, more victims than victimisers. On the other hand, in *Mataharis*, as director you made a casting decision that might also seem risky: casting Najwa Nimri in an ordinary, unglamorous role when she is an actress whose previous roles and media image have given her that halo of the enigmatic *femme fatal*. How do you think such casting *mismatches* affect a film?**

In Borau's case, it's all his fault... Besides, he was like that, he always said: "I make my bed, I lie in it, and in it I have nightmares." And actually he did have nightmares, the poor thing. I have had the great fortune of suggesting to directors like Felipe Vega, Gutiérrez Aragón or Borau a type of character that I do not identify myself with but that I love, because they are beautiful, interesting, dark and luminous at the same time. I don't think it's something I have done; it's something that actors sometimes suggest. I suppose these directors would have in mind a type of woman who does not have a conventional beauty and who isn't entirely neat and dazzling. I imagine that I suggested this type to them because at that time I was very shy and quiet, with wide eyes watching everything, and I think that inspired them.

And as for Najwa Nimri, we asked her to come to the audition without makeup, because it was a character with two children, without the time even to cut her finger nails. And what I found was an actress eager to work in another direction, different from the sophisticated thing that she had been doing, with a physical appearance that is much more interesting without makeup, because it expresses much more. A very good actress, extremely interesting whatever she does, because she is not predictable: Najwa suddenly looks, gestures, changes the rhythm when she says something... She is constantly changing position and that is very enriching. And I intuit all this in the auditions, because I do auditions on a working basis, where we do the scene several times and we try a lot of things. It was really a sure bet. Actors don't usually like auditions, though I think they are less and less bothered by them, but they are very important, because it is not about deciding whether they are good or bad, but whether they can take on that particular character.

**One of the basic strategies of film casting is to find an actor who, with his very physical presence and gestures, fits the image of the character that he is to play. Sometimes, however, that fit between performer and role is problematic, because the character takes a 180-degree turn over the course of the film, because he evolves psychologically, or because he pretends to be one way at first and later reveals his true identity. This happens in two of your films as an actress, in which you are assigned a set of traits at the beginning of the film – shyness, puritanism, prudery - that do not fit at all with the image that we have of Icíar Bollaín, which makes the audience suspect that the character is lying (*Subjúdice*, Josep Maria Forn, 1998) or that she is going to transform, sooner or later, into another type of person (*Niño nadie*, José Luis Borau, 1996). In both cases, the performer tends to be chosen based on the final image of the character, which makes the film more predictable for the viewer. What do you think this tendency may be due to?**

I guess the tendency is to cast the character according to what he *is*, not what he appears to be, and in that sense you become predictable, of course. On the other hand, when you make that casting choice, when you have a contradictory character, who is fragile but strong, dark but luminous... you ask yourself: "What is easier to get, a luminous, energetic and charismatic actor to play someone dark, or an actor who, apart from the torment, also has the ability to give me that luminosity?" Because you'll have to choose one type of actor, and it is very difficult to find that needle in the haystack that *is* the character. You have to think about where it is easier to work from. And, from there, hiding that other trait that appears later will depend on your skill and the actor's.

**Another basic casting convention is to respect the correspondence between the hierarchy of characters in the film and the hierarchy of performers in the "star system". Choosing anonymous actors for leading roles or assigning supporting characters to renowned actors is a way to subvert this standard. In your career, we can find examples in both directions. As a director, on various occasions you have chosen unknown actors for starring roles, such as Luis Tosar in *Flowers from Another World* (Flores de otro mundo, Icíar Bollaín, 1999) and Laia Marull in *Take my Eyes*, where supporting roles were filled by actresses who were better known than her (Candela Peña, Rosa Maria Sardá, Kiti Manver). And, as an actress, you have played roles – for example in *La noche del hermano* (Santiago García de Leániz, 2005) or *Rabia* (Sebastián Cordero, 2009) – that were supporting roles on paper, but that gained weight by the fact of being performed by you. What effect do you think that this way of subverting the hierarchy of the characters in relation to the actors has on the story and its reception by the viewer?**

I personally always look for credibility, I don't select the actors according to any aesthetic, or to subvert a hierarchy. I just try to find who I think is the best actor for the role, whether he is a professional actor or not. There are other wars out there; broadcasters want names and the director is sometimes forced to include a famous actor, if not for the main character, at least to play a supporting role. But I have never been in that situation.

I do keep other things in mind. For example, I think that the fact that Tosar was unknown in *Flowers from Another Word* was good for the film, because he's very fresh and believable. What took us a long time to decide was who would play the character that José Sancho ended up portraying, because we had a group of actors that fitted perfectly in the village – both Luis Tosar and Chete Lera integrated very well – and I was reluctant to include a face as well-known as Sancho's. I was afraid of exactly what you're pointing out, because it could throw the cast completely off balance. But in the end, he was the best actor for the role. He was excellent, a wonderful actor, and he also fitted in: he is José Sancho, but, suddenly, he isn't José Sancho anymore, but a bachelor with his Cuban girlfriend bragging around the village.

Casting a film is a constant search for balance. Right now I am in a casting process and we have the same situation: I have seen well-known and unknown actresses. Do I think it would be better for the actresses not to be so famous? Yes, because the story takes place in a village and that would give it a certain authenticity. But it is also a pleasure to watch Cesc Gay's films, where all the actors are famous but the freshness isn't lost.

Marilyn Torres and Pepe Sancho in *Flowers from Another World* (Flores de otro mundo, Icíar Bollaín, 1999) / Courtesy of Santiago García de Leániz

## THE FILM SHOOT, ACTING AND ITS DIVERSIONS

**The film shoot is where the shared construction of the characters between the filmmaker and the actors begins. In *Hi, Are You Alone?* (Hola, ¿estás sola?, Icíar Bollaín, 1995), a key idea was to use the acting to emphasise the contrast between Candela Peña's character, who is funnier and more expressive, and Silke's, who is a little more serious and dull. The latter claimed that this was not exactly the vision that she had of La Niña, but that she had to adapt her performance to the contrast you were looking for. Moreover, you had been working with Ken Loach and you set out a filming process open to improvisation, which led to Candela's character gaining importance. As a result, a story centred on Silke's character in the script ended up becoming the story of the friendship between the two girls. To what extent do you think the actor can contribute on set to rewriting the script? Aren't you worried that your directorial point of view might be altered by the way in which each performer approaches his or her character?**

I have always worked, except once, with a script of my own, and I don't think of the script as set in stone; it's a work in progress that keeps evolving. When I write, I am clear about the story I want to tell, but in a very neutral way, trying to give the characters all the traits possible so they can be complex, but without imagining a face for anyone. Then, the actors give them a body, a voice and a soul. In the rehearsals, I always listen to what the actors have to say; I keep discarding and accepting suggestions. Sometimes, I feel their suggestions are very good; but, sometimes, the actors give you suggestions that distance you from the character and don't support the story you want to tell.

On the set of *Hi, Are You Alone?* Candela and Silke grew as friends and they contributed a lot to their characters; Candela was tremendously creative, bringing in a lot of things. The same thing happened with her as with Karra in the role of Columbus: their characters fitted them like a glove and it gave the impression that they had written them themselves. Actually, they made their dialogues sound so natural that it seemed like they came out of them.

I always avoid digressions, because you can end up nowhere, but I do film with a certain flexibility, trying to pay attention to what's going on. For example, you have a love story, you make a casting mistake and there is no chemistry between the actors, but the love story goes on regardless and to make up for the lack of chemistry you add violins and twilight to emphasise what the actors aren't providing. But in *Hello, are you alone?*, a film that could breathe a little more, when I was editing and I got to the end that we'd filmed (which was different from the final cut), I thought it was a happy ending in terms of the love story between the Russian and Silke, but it was also a bit claustrophobic because it ended in a hospital room. That ending, where they return on the train and La Niña finds the Russian, who has fallen off the roof and is in hospital with a broken leg, once shot and edited, seemed a little sad to me. And, at the same time, if you listened a little to your own story, you realised that the friendship between Silke's character and Candela's character had grown. So you ask yourself: "what is my film about? What have the characters done?" Well, the characters have created a very nice chemistry between them, and this, I think, is what the film is about. And I discovered it in the editing room. So I removed the scene of the Russian with Silke in hospital and went off to shoot a different ending. But I did it based on what had happened during the shoot.

The same thing happened with the subplot starring María Vázquez in *Mataharis*, which was a love story, but there wasn't any chemistry between the characters. I saw it in the scenes: the actors got on really well, but there was no spark between them. So I gave more importance to the moral decision made by the character than to the decision made for love. And in a way, if you listen to what is happening and you incorporate it into the film, it reinforces your story; because, in this case, the character seemed more dignified by making an ethical rather than a romantic decision. It was an unconventional solution; after all, we have seen the romantic story many times. But I can afford this because I have written the script, I have filmed it... And also because my films are not as closed as others, they are stories about people, small, and without a script tied to a thriller, comedy or mystery structure, which is like a clock, where all the pieces have to fit. So I can listen to what happens and I can be faithful to what unfolds with the characters, within certain limits.

It also depends on the director. Borau, who is the most extreme example, never changed a comma of the script. He added or removed things later, at the most, but it was all very controlled. On the other hand, as long as the meaning is more or less the same, I always let the actors say the lines in their own words. This turns the film shoot into a time to discover things.

**Although it is often not taken into account in film analysis, the use of one acting style or another is key to the classification of a film as belonging to a particular genre. The films that you acted in for your uncle, Juan Sebastián Bollaín, had a lot of humour in them and could be considered comedies. Yet, in the performing style, they avoided parodic gestures, the choreographic movement of bodies and other features of the comic acting tradition, that we see more clearly in another of your films, Felipe Vega's *An Umbrella for Three* (Un paraguas para tres, 1992). Is the acting style defined from the outset by the script, or do you think that the same script is always open to different acting styles?**

Well, sometimes it isn't, but supposedly the tone of the film should already be clear in the script: if it's a comedic tone, if it's a tragedy, etc. The thing is that there are more and more hybrids, more mixing of genres: there are tragicomedies, social dramas with a touch of comedy and a bit of magic realism... and to control the tone, so that it doesn't veer off, is perhaps one of the hardest tasks the director faces. There is nothing worse than a tragedy that ends up making people laugh, but it happens: there are actors who don't hit on the right tone. I have said actors, but, in reality, it's the director who is watching and whose role is to prevent that from happening.

Every script has a thousand interpretations, and the director's job is to make *one* film that does not have to be better or worse than another, but it is the one he has chosen. That is the job that a director is paid for, to go in one direction. And there are a thousand factors that keep pushing you away from the direction you've taken: in the end things are not like you thought they would be because there is no money or no time, because of the lighting, for a thousand reasons... And also actors, naturally, have a tendency to bring their roles round to the tone in which they feel most comfortable, or which they like best, or which they think is right. Actors who like comedy, for example, often give their lines that tone, if they can, because being funny is very gratifying. And the director has to constantly rectify the situation to keep the pulse and tone of the story he is telling, getting everyone to work in the same direction, and also convincing them that it is the right direction, and trying to make them fall in love with that direction, because there is nothing worse than a team of people who aren't enjoying their work.

**It will be even harder to keep that balance or that direction when, in the same film, there are different acting styles. For example, in *The Night of the Brother*, your performance contrasts with that of the two boys who play the protagonist brothers. Your performance is dazzling, earthy, straightforward, compared to theirs, which are mostly based on silences, on gazes, on mystery. Also, in *Hi, Are You Alone?*, La Niña and the Russian adopt a lower, more contained style compared to the characters constructed by Candela Peña and Alex Angulo, Trini and Pepe, who are over the top, at times even bordering on the ridiculous. How are these potential tensions between the different tones balanced?**

That is the job of the director, to balance everything very carefully. There are films that have good ingredients, but they aren't linked together... It's a soup in which everything floats separately: there are good actors, a good story, good lighting, but the result hasn't gelled. And conversely, there are other films that have fewer elements or elements that are not so spectacular, but that work well together, as if it were a good paella: the ingredients have set and the rice is just right. Why? Well, that's the art of the director, to know how to amalgamate all that. And to ensure contrast, so that the actors don't all go their own way or grate against each other when they're all together. And so that the scenes have the right tone, because sometimes the actors feel like being humorous and you have to say, "guys, no; it's very funny, but this scene can't be that funny yet." Or the opposite: there are very dramatic actors who turn the scene into a melodrama, and you think, "if I have this melodrama in minute fifteen, where am I going to end up in the minute fifty?" In each scene you shoot you have to keep the whole film in view. It is the opposite to the work of the actor. The director has to have it all in his head and make sure that each element fits with the rest. The actor needs to be focused on his scene, keeping his character in mind, but nothing else.

**But some actors want to have just that global view. In the documentary *El oficio del actor* (Mariano Barroso, 2005), Luis Tosar, Eduard Fernández and Javier Bardem explained that they needed to get an idea of the whole film to build their own characters beyond a particular scene.**
The actor needs to know a little about how everything goes. The thing is that there are things that are only in the director's head. It's your job to see the overall effect that the film is going to have, from the casting to the sets. I like the actors to watch a day of filmed material. But they shouldn't watch themselves too much because I think that it can mislead and obsess them. I myself, as an actress, would go crazy if I was constantly watching myself. But they should watch themselves a little bit, so that they can see how they look and how the film looks, so that they can relax. Because otherwise, the poor actor is the only one who doesn't see his own work. Everyone on the set sees his work: the sound team listens to it and the cinematographer, the costume team and the make-up team see it... all except the actor, who feels it and has the mirrors of the director and the rest of the crew to get some feedback, but doesn't see it for himself. Sometimes, it is an act of faith. So if you give them a little piece so they can see themselves, at least they have a picture of their work.

## CHARACTER PORTRAITS: THE CONCEPTION OF ACTING IN DOCUMENTARY FILM

**You have just released your first documentary film as director, *En tierra extraña* (2014). The work of the filmmaker with the people who are on the other side of the camera is different, of course, between fiction films and documentaries. But we would like you to tell us, instead, what they have in common, how your conception of acting and the decisions or strategies that you adopt to address a fiction film and a documentary film are alike.**
I had never done a documentary film before. I had made a mockumentary, *Amores que matan* (2000), which was the germ that led to *Take My Eyes*. I have learned a lot and it has given me a dose of humility, because there is a certain arrogant belief in the world of fiction that making documentaries must be easier. But I have found it more difficult. My first surprise was that it has many similarities with fiction: characters, story, narrative arc... It has the same elements but they are much more fragile, much more elusive... They are there and you have to catch them and build a structure, a story... unless you start with an existing story that already has a substantial structure. But, in my case, it was something open, about a huge issue, immigration and the economic crisis, and so it has been an incredible learning process. There came a moment when I thought, "I think I'm missing a lot, but I would like someone to tell me how much." Then I had the good fortune of attending a seminar on documentaries taught by Patricio Guzmán in Madrid. I spent a week captivated by him and I realised that, in effect, my project had none of the elements that a documentary should have. Because you have to have characters and your characters have to act in front of the camera, but the way of achieving it is different. You don't have a written dialogue, you can't tell them "go from here to there". You can't, as a scriptwriter, decide what to do, instead, they do things and you follow them. But you have to offer a portrait of them. And you have to find the images that portray them. Patricio Guzman described this really well: from their silences to their way of walking, their personal belongings, their home, their memories, all of that portrays them...

In a documentary film you have to have characters and your characters have to act in front of the camera, but the way of achieving it is different. You can't, as a scriptwriter, decide what to do, instead, they do things and you follow them. But you have to offer a portrait of them. And you have to find the images that portray them

**Did you do a casting call for the film? Did you select the people who were to be protagonists?**
There was a call on Facebook and people who were interested responded. Around a hundred people came. Of that hundred, some didn't do the interview, either because they didn't want to or because they didn't fit the profile. Everyone else did the interview, about sixty people. And from there, I cast the characters. I chose the most elo-

quent, the ones whose stories didn't repeat one another, the most representative... In the end, I think we edited twenty-two. The documentary is condemning a situation: the government says everything is great, but the reality is that some people don't have opportunities and have to go abroad, although I didn't want to leave out the people who were happy, because they're out there as well. If I don't dwell on them it's because they already have a whole TV show devoted to them, called *Españoles por el mundo* (TVE: 2005-).

**How did you work in the film shoot with these people? Did you encourage them or try to direct them towards certain moods?**

In a documentary film, you don't interfere, or you shouldn't interfere, but at the same time, you have to make it expressive. Gloria, the main character in *En tierra extraña,* started collecting gloves when she arrived in the U.K. Through these gloves, she expresses the frustration of many people who have left Spain and who ask themselves: "What am I doing here? How am I going to get back?" The first artificial thing that you do is to ask Gloria to look for some gloves while you're filming her. Then she'll go to look for gloves and she'll find them – in fact, she found ten in one morning, which are the ones shown in the documentary. That's not false, but you have to provoke the situation. You can't just follow her around until she decides to go out to look for gloves. There is a mixture of intervention/non-intervention. Of course you have to generate situations, but what is important is not to manipulate them, but that they happen and you film them.

## CONSTRUCTING THE CHARACTER: THE ACTOR AS PART OF THE FILM'S STORY

**The gestures that serve an actor to construct his character are, in turn, the same gestures that gradually build up the narration of the film. One of the key decisions related to the conception of acting in a film is, in this sense, the degree of expressive ambiguity of the performances, since this will largely determine the obviousness or the mysteriousness of certain scenes or even of the film as a whole. The intrigue of *Take My Eyes*, for example, starts with Antonio attending group therapy, which provokes doubt in the viewer about the possibility of his rehabilitation. In these therapy scenes, Luis Tosar maintains an ambiguity on his face that keeps the viewer guessing about whether or not he is taking in what he is listening to. Did you plan this expressive ambiguity as a strategy to delay the resolution of the intrigue, i.e., to control what the viewer should know, intuit or be unaware of at each moment of the story?**

More than ambiguity, what Luis and I wanted in this film was to control the intensity of his violence and aggressiveness. In fact, several times – not in the therapy scenes, which were, in this sense, quite easy – I asked Luis to repeat the same scene with graduations in the intensity of his bad temper, from high to low or from low to high. I knew that we had gone into difficult terrain. At that time, the way gender violence was spoken about turned the man into anathema; he was the devil with horns, and looking closely such a man was a sensitive issue. One thing was to understand him and another thing was to justify him, but it was a very fine line, and the scriptwriter and I were afraid that we might be misunderstood. Luis and I handled this in the performance, and I took the biggest amount of material possible with me to the editing room, to measure it carefully. I had one round of edits where Luis was much more aggressive, another round where he was less so... And I watched it with other people, always measuring, because his character couldn't be a "poor little dear", nor could it just be a "complete bastard"... he couldn't be either black or white; he had to be grey, that is, in relation to the aggressiveness and violence of the character.

Regarding the uncertainty that Luis conveys in the therapy scenes, we talked to a therapeutic specialist, Enrique Echeburúa, and he told us that the first thing that happens to these men is that they don't recognize themselves as abusers. So, in these therapies, Luis is in the phase of "I don't belong here, I just came because my wife told me to, but this is not for me, but, at the same time, what they're saying sounds familiar." He is processing, trying to understand, he's confused... he is in between "that's me" and "that's not me". And that's what his face is showing. I think Luis is acting out that confusion, that's how he feels. If afterwards, as a result, this has a "thriller effect", because we don't know whether he is going to change or not... all the better, because the film is founded on that question "will he be able to do it?" But, of course, it's very complicated, and probably no one knows, not even Luis.

**In a way, every narrative model is linked to certain types of characters: there are films that focus completely on the characters and their psychological condition; others whose characters are more clearly defined by their sociological characteristics; others in which the characters are shallow, because what matters is the plot, etc. One of the most unconventional films that you have starred in is Pablo Llorca's *Hanging Gardens* (Jardines colgantes, 1993), where we find characters whose psychological state is left undefined and who are also very difficult to locate sociologically, since the story takes place in an unspecified time and place. How does an actor construct a character that is more symbol than flesh and blood, and how do the different narrative models that you have faced as an actress affect your work when constructing a**

**character?There was no way to construct the character in *Hanging Gardens* because it was an abstraction, just like the rest of the film. There can be no character construction because none of the conventions that you work with as an actress (who am I, where am I, what do I want to achieve...) are present in the film. It is an act of faith in the director, who knows what he is doing. You don't have the sensation that you're doing a very demanding acting job; you try to imagine what he is seeing in you and what he wants from you. And that's what I do: I let myself be filmed, doing exactly what he asks me to do, which basically involves going from here to here, looking there.... As I am a bit of a non-conformist, I told the director: "Pablo, I'm walking around the frame, is that okay or do you want me to do something else?" And he told me, "No, it's great just like that." When you see it, it's magnetic, it's beautiful, it's interesting. I'm not sure what it's telling me, but I like it. And you become part of it.**

The character in *Leo* was also very difficult. I read the script over and over again, but I had trouble understanding the character. I never understood the one in *Niño nadie*. In both films I worked like crazy to get into every situation, every scene: now I fall for this guy, now my mother is dying... I didn't quite understand where it was going, but I tried be connected to the character in every scene, though Borau filmed the scenes out of order, shooting the end first... We had funny discussions, where I'd say, "but Borau, how can you make it so complicated?" And he would answer: "the trouble is that you think too much like Ken Loach." It was a real challenge.

Working with Felipe Vega, on the other hand, was wonderful, because he told me about the script while he was writing it. I also learned a lot from Felipe as a director, because he is a man who is very close to what he tells. He took us – the actors in *El mejor de los tiempos* (Felipe Vega, 1989) – to Almería before shooting, so we could meet the people who did the work that we would be portraying in the film. That allows you to do some really good research work, something that I have done since as a screenwriter and director. It's a kind of filmmaking that sticks very closely to the reality it's depicting, that doesn't invent anything but reformulates reality. It was very enriching work, because it wasn't about sitting at home thinking about where your character comes from or where she's going; instead, Felipe introduced you to your character: "you are her". So you could start talking to her and incorporating things into your character.

**Sometimes the actor or actress does not have all the information that he or she would need to construct the character.**

What happens is that often the character is not well written. I think the actors are great scriptwriters because they come up with things that the scriptwriter should have written. For example, Paul Laverty, my partner, writes a biography of the characters and shares it with the actors before shooting. That is something that few screenwriters do and that, ultimately, the actors have to do at home: to find the reasons, to look for the roots of their characters. The actor needs to hold on to something, he has to know what to do in each scene; otherwise, he is lost. These are questions that, sometimes, the scriptwriter has not asked himself: the character is there in the scene simply because it's in the writer's interest to provide the viewer with some information. But not because the character has the need or a reason to be there. Finding a motivation, discovering what drives the character... is a job that is ultimately always done by the actor.

Féodor Atkine and Icíar Bollaín in *Hanging Gardens* (Jardines colgantes, Pablo Llorca, 1993) / Courtesy of La Cicatriz-La Bañera Roja

**A very special case, in this regard, is found in the work of Ken Loach, who looks for more spontaneous reactions from his actors and, to achieve that, conceals some major events that are going to happen to them during the film. You have always argued that Loach's methods favour the work of actors, but, in this case, doesn't this lack of knowledge of what will happen in a particular scene or even in the story as a whole actually hinder their work?**

The truth is that, shooting with Ken, you have a very curious feeling: you feel that things happen to you, it's more like real life because in real life you don't know what's going to happen to you. And that is basically the principle. The thing is that Ken only uses this for certain moments and characters, when he is looking for an emotion in a particularly dramatic scene. In *Carla's Song*, the protagonist finds the Nicaraguan girl in the bathtub in which she had attempted suicide. In that scene, the actor didn't know what he was going to find. Ken surprised him. Why? Because there is a first reaction, a brutal initial surprise at something you don't expect. Then, the scene is repeated many times because the first time, as the actor doesn't know what he is going do and neither does the cameraman, you can even miss it. But, what Ken is giving you with this surprise is the gift of a very real emotion, which you can return to in every take. You have to reproduce it, but you actually felt it the first time.

As a director, I've often thought about it... it requires a kind of production logistics that everyone has to agree to. In addition, it means you can't work with the actor in the rehearsals, and I think that is a shame, because the actors have so much to contribute. So you win and you lose. But, of course, there are advantages with this way of working, especially with non-professional actors, because the surprise is genuine and it gives you something that is stunningly, overwhelmingly true.

On the one hand, advocating this method is like denying the actor's ability to perform that surprise, and represents, in a way, the denial of the actor. But, on the other hand, it is also the celebration of the actor, because you are placed in a different situation: you know you're shooting, and you have to make an effort to continue the scene when what you feel like doing is turning around and saying: "You bastard... you've messed me up!" You're surprised but, at the same time, you are forced to follow the rules of the game that have been laid down. In *Land and Freedom* (Ken Loach, 1995) I enjoyed myself a lot; it's fun not knowing what's going to happen. Because you don't know what they're going to say to you, you have to listen. That's a part of the actor's job that gets lost over time: you know exactly what others are going to say and you're so self-aware of your own lines that you don't listen. So, what does working this way force you to do? To be alert, you and the whole crew. Because even the crew ends up relaxing: "We are going to do this take again, he will get into the frame here and will go out there". But no, he'll come into the frame here or he might not; and he'll go out there or maybe not. So pay attention. And that turns out to be very truthful, because things *happen*. ■

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# (DIS)AGREEMENTS

## A shared task: filmmakers and actors faced with acting

Pablo Hernández Miñano
Violeta Martín Núñez

**Translated by**
**David Morsillo**
**Jessica Kish**

# _introduction

## To be or not to be... The dilemma of acting

Daniel Gascó

Acting is so impossible to generalise about, so extraordinarily diverse, that it is fair enough to exaggerate and say that there are as many types of actors as there are people, films or directors. To ignore the infinite number of approaches, tools and techniques that have been used to outline the figure of the actor, to vest it with a magnificent, infallible and seductive aura, is as impossible as defining the profession that it is. We need merely to trace a broken line through time to discover stories of cinema that often suggest the contrary. Acting has also consisted in not knowing, being unaware of the process and its meaning within the film, being a puzzled presence, and even a significant absence. In *Domingo de carnaval* (Edgar Neville, 1945), the protagonist wears and removes a mask depending on whether the actor Fernando Fernán Gómez, who was shooting several films at the same time, was present. For the same reason, one of the sequences in *The Spirit of the Beehive* (El espíritu de la colmena, Víctor Erice, 1973), in which the father goes to bed and his wife pretends to be asleep, expands its meaning when we perceive only his shadow – actually the shadow of a sound technician covering up an absence.

In 1961, the producers of *Accattone* did not trust that great newcomer, the poet Pier Paolo Pasolini, and decided to shoot the film again, replacing the cinematographer, Carlo Di Palma, with Tonino Delli Colli who, at the request

**Fernando Fernán Gómez in *Domingo de carnaval* (Edgar Neville, 1945)**

of the soon-to-be great filmmaker, filmed the same shots exactly the same way to demonstrate the originality of his style. Pasolini did not want actors; he sought faces, most often illiterate people from the street, kids barely capable of remembering lines and who, of course, do not know how to recite them. "Can you count from 50 to 100?" Delli Colli would ask them from behind the camera. They would nod, and... "Go!" Pasolini would approach them and say, "Can it be done this way?" One of his disciples, Bernardo Bertolucci, who in 1968 was in a Roman theatre shooting one of his most secret films, *Partner* gives us the answer: "In Italy there are no spoken films, we do dubbed films. A dubious tradition that this film aims to break." Italian cinema, like silent films, requires its actors merely to move their lips; others more gifted will dub them. For Pasolini, however, dubbing meant something else: bodies separated from their voices. The same year, a small crew filmed another lover of faces in action, Federico Fellini. Gideon Bachmann's documentary *Ciao, Federico!* (1970) contains a significant series of close-ups in which the actors of *Satyricon* (Federico Fellini, 1969) exchange impressions: "It's great to work without knowing what you have to do one minute before shooting." "Fellini plays all the roles in his films. From the last extra to the main character." "Being here is an illusion, Fellini takes you on a journey." "His world is imaginary; it has nothing to do with the world we live in." "Before and after, Fellini thinks that the world is a circus and all of us, the actors first, then the viewers, are its amusing inhabitants." Fellini's mother, Ida Barbiani, opens the documentary with a story from the filmmaker's childhood that best explains his relationship with the actor: "At the age of ten, he was passionate about puppet theatre. I made costumes for them as if I were a dressmaker and he improvised shows for his classmates and friends." Like Lang or Almodóvar, Fellini treated his actors like puppets, tying them to the mysterious strings of his precise vision.

Leap forward to England in the '90s. From the set of a conventional film, Robert Carlyle explains his work with Kenneth Loach[1]: "You have to forget [everything] because it's an entirely different process with Ken, because there is no script. You perhaps get a page the night before the scene or sometimes on the day, sometimes not at all. You have to be very, very open, and you have to just be prepared to, you know, experience anything that Ken is going to put in your path [...]. The last thing that Ken wants to see is someone acting. I think as soon as Ken Loach sees you acting, that's when he loses it, he doesn't see it any more after that. It has to be real, it has to be accurate. It has to be plausible. If it's not, then Ken will lose it." The British filmmaker also takes his position into account:

"The camera, the filmmaker should respect the characters and shouldn't be forever pushing in amongst them being obviously interventionist. The camera should show some discretion and respect [...]. The camera is not part of the scene [...]. The cinema is not important. What is happening away from the camera is important." In Sweden, however, Ingmar Bergman broke that distance, making the human face is the landscape most visited. For him, the camera is merely a clumsy and bothersome apparatus that one must master to reach the human being. In *Men filmen är min askalrinna* (Stig Björkman, 2010) we see him sitting, surrounded by actors and technicians, sharing his shooting schedule. But to the camera, he explains: "Over all these years, we have gradually developed a working method. I prepare carefully at home. I create precise instructions for direction and write them down to memorise them. But then, when I'm with the actors and the camera on the set, just before giving them the instructions, suddenly, during the first rehearsal, a tone of voice, a gesture or the suggestion of an actor makes me change everything, because it seems better." Mike Leigh's films, however, incorporate the actor into the creative process. The British filmmaker works with a group with nothing written down, except for a theme around which, through improvisation, the characters will be constructed. The director does not write a single line, but chooses certain remarks in this combat between actors that goes on for approximately six months. None of the participants know whether their role will be major or minor. Each character uses the same expressions and words that the actor gave him. There is no division between the two; the actor has engendered the character and, therefore, is a co-author, and plays the role infallibly during the three months of filming. Far from this authorship, the actor's work may fall apart when it is subjected to a precise shooting schedule that can destroy the individualities, that genuine quality that the actor can offer. In a break during the shooting of Javier Rebollo's *Lola* (Lo que sé de Lola, 2006), the actor Michael Abiteboul described to me his relationship with two eminent filmmakers: "Michael Haneke doesn't accept suggestions. He knows exactly what he wants. But then, shooting, he realizes that it doesn't work and in a burst of rage he changes everything. Lars von Trier, however, is very sweet with the actors." Stellan Skarsgaard[2] says of von Trier: "His first five feature films were total control. He designed every movement of the actress and everything and they were technically brilliant and, of course, dead. When I saw his first feature film, *The Element of Crime*, in a festival I said. 'I want to work with this director when he gets interested in people.'"

In a landmark document[3] Daniel Auteuil touches on the enigma of his profession: "Acting is a simultaneous action that happens very quickly. The audience will discover it months later, but the impression is the same. I gladly give myself up to careless abandon, allowing myself to be carried along by the situation. I never know what happens before or after; I try to be in the moment. But it is true that I'm the one who plays the characters, and so I necessarily and intentionally make them say the things that I want to say. And it is true that a part of the mystery, of the unsaid, is better explored or analysed in the films than in my life, because I use films to create an image of myself, to enhance my own worth with an image that I would like to have. The characters I choose are the ones that resonate with me, and, because it's an art, it's better expressed in my characters." Art… In 1996, the actor José Luis Gómez[4], greeting his master Jerzy Grotowski, took up the question again: "'Jerzy, Art as a vehicle for what?' He looks at me in silence. After a pause, I add: 'To Be?' He looks at me again and says: 'Yes'."

Spotlights illuminate, but the only true brightness that the camera detects is that of the performer who makes us forget that there is an actor, that we are witnessing a performance. In *La direction d'acteur par Jean Renoir*[5], the French filmmaker insists that the first script reading must be cold, monotonous, without expression, like reading a phone book. From the beginning, the goal is to relax, not to act, to be yourself, to put aside something already seen, a cliché. An exercise that seeks to find the mysterious connection between the person and the character that is in the lines, and reveals how to get at the truth of the character without preconceived ideas, how to achieve a true creation, an original character, unlike any other. Acting, Jeanne Moreau suggested, is related to subtle emotions. It is not putting on a mask. Every time an actor acts, he does not hide, but exposes himself. Acting is stripping oneself, overcoming prejudices, breaking down the barrier of the story, and its unfolding in a space can only be achieved in a duet between filmmaker and actor. ■

## Notes

* *L'Atalante* would like to thank Regia Films for permission to reprint the images from *My Life to Live* and *My Night with Maud* that illustrate this section. Acknowledgements are not included in the promotional images from films currently discontinued in Spain as we understand these images to be in the public domain since no distribution company has purchased the rights to market them in this country. In any case, images are only ever included in articles in *L'Atalante* in a manner similar to quotations, for analysis, commentary and critical assessment (Editor's note).

1 *Citizen Ken Loach* (1997), episode of *Cinéma, de notre temps* directed by Karim Dridi, edited by Intermedio.

2 Taken from an interview with Stellan Skargaard included in the Spanish DVD edition of *Nymphomaniac. Vol. 1* (Lars von Trier, 2013).

3 Taken from *Il mistero della fiction*, a model interview by Mario Sesti, included as an extra feature in the Italian DVD of *Sotto falso nome* (Roberto Andò, 2004).

4 Gómez, José Luis (1999). "Una búsqueda irrepetible." *El País*, 16, January 1999.

5 Directed and performed by Gisèle Braunberger, 1968.

# _discussion

## 1. For you, what is the essential stage in which you as a filmmaker intervene in the work of actors in your films (casting, prior planning, shooting, or post-production)? What are the main decisions you make and the main strategies you adopt at this stage of your work with the actors and actresses?

FILMMAKERS

**Mariano Barroso**

Really all four stages that you mention are essential, and they're also in that order of importance. You could say that casting decisions definitively mark a film. An error in casting can be irreparable, while the right choice can be the key to a memorable result. There are many examples, from *Casablanca* (Michael Curtiz, 1942) to any film that has marked the life of an actor. It's not so much a question of the *quality* of the acting (you always have to work with great actors), but that there may be problems with the *type* of acting that an actor delivers, which can result in a miscasting. What would've become of *The Bridges of Madison County* (Clint Eastwood, 1995)—I've just reviewed a few scenes—if, instead of Clint Eastwood playing the lead role, Robert Redford had done it, as was planned? Or if an actor in his forties had played the role, as the character's age should have been according to the script? Without question it would have been a completely different film. I really enjoy doing this kind of exercise, *re*-casting the films I watch, something that I can't let myself do with the ones I make (Kubrick, on the other hand, did let himself do that, or sometimes Woody Allen…).

Later, in the preparation stage before shooting, it's not so much the planning that would affect the work of the actors, but rather the staging, the movements, the physical actions… Helping the actors find the right actions and movements determines the result, the tension in a scene.

The same is true of the shooting stage, which is always the culmination of the previous one. And now, finally, in the calm and semi-solitude of the editing room, you can rethink a scene, give a character more prominence, push someone else into the background… You can even change the point of view of the scene, and in so doing, change how the audience identifies with it. There are many factors, decisions that are difficult but exciting.

Clint Eastwood in *The Bridges of Madison County* (Clint Eastwood, 1995)

**Celina Murga**

The casting stage is absolutely essential to me. In my first film, *Ana y los otros* (2003), I did it all myself, and it took me over a year. Now I do it with a casting director I really trust, whom I met while casting *Una semana solos* (2007), and with whom I share similar ideas about work methods. I'm not there all the time now, but I still try to be as involved as possible. I think it's key to get to know the actors; I usually meet with them a number of times before making a final decision. These meetings take on different forms, not always on a casting call; rather, the aim is to get to know the person behind the actor, beyond their professionalism as an actor. Also, because I often work with non-professional actors, I feel it's crucial to understand what qualities they may have in common with the character. In both cases, with trained and untrained actors, I feel it's important to get to know their nature as much as possible, what issues might be useful to them when they're acting, what will stimulate them to do this or that. Every actor is a world of their own, and may need different things to develop their potential to the maximum.

Casting also helps me to keep questioning the character and the script. I believe in *questioning* as a creative work method; it helps me to generate the process necessary to move forward artistically. There's a quote from Truffaut that I really like. He says: "it is important to film against the script and edit against the shoot." I've made this quote my own because I believe it contains the formula for moving forward: to constantly ask questions and create environments that are conducive to them. With each stage of the work you end up questioning the previous stage in some way, and this enriches it, makes it grow and strengthens it. I like the challenge of stretching the limits of the material, finding the things that can enrich it, even if that means risking unexpected or unlikely situations.

This questioning of the material doesn't have only one answer, nor does it involve excessive rationalizing; often it comes from intuition and it helps me to make decisions, to move forward. Casting is one of those decisions. What could this actor bring to the character? What about another actor? Even though the character is written in the script, each person who plays the role can take that character in one direction or another, can accentuate certain traits over others. This is why I really believe in this stage.

I also consider the rehearsal stage to be essential. It's the time when we start constructing the physical embodiment of the character together. Beyond the script readings, and the possible explorations that arise from them, I really believe in the actor giving a body to the character and to the story itself. And as a director, you also have to give it a body, and that means creating the work space, the conditions that allow the actor to try out things and find elements in a more intuitive way. I believe there are things that can only emerge from a place of intuition, which I consider very valuable. This doesn't mean improvising on the shoot, but simply allowing part of the *writing* of that character to emerge from the actor's body, to put it into action at an earlier moment.

**Felipe Vega**

I'd take something out of all those stages. And all of them definitely shape the final result. Choosing the right actor for me is more than fifty percent of the work. After that, the *method* that I try to pursue with the actors (it's not always possible because of *scheduling* issues, i.e., production) is a lot like what's used to prepare a play: read-throughs, script readings, short rehearsals, adapting the lines to the tone and voice of the actor…

Perhaps the planning might be the aspect that I've most lost interest in over the last ten years, more or less, precisely because I believe that the *staging* needs to revolve around the movement of the actor in relation to the set, and not the other way around. First the actor, then the camera. A *beautiful* frame shouldn't spoil the movement of a body. In short, I believe that the actor should not be restricted by the camera's position… no offence to Monsieur Bresson, of course.

The editing entails a reencounter with each actor. A critical reencounter that's sometimes filled with great loves and hates. Luckily, the editors are there to alleviate our crises and bring us back to the harsh reality of the material we've shot.

**Pablo Berger**

Without a doubt, all the stages are important, but if I have to highlight one in my work with actors, it would be the casting call. It's a stage that I enjoy immensely and that I like to do *hand-in-hand* with a casting director, one of my most intimate collaborators.

A great actor or actress can't play just any character. That's why the *perfect* pairing of actor-character is, without a doubt, one of the keys to a film's success. Not even the best director can fix a wrong casting decision in the filming stage.

I consider myself a cerebral director in many regards, but to choose my actors I only use my heart. If during an audition an actor excites me and gives me goose bumps, the role is theirs. I also firmly believe in the *group shot*. I like to imagine a picture with the protagonists all in the front row, the supporting cast in the second, and the extras in the back. I believe there are no small roles. For me, that picture of the whole cast has to make sense. During the casting stage, I also start defining the general tone for the performance, a decision that will mark the path for all the actors to follow, and which is my responsibility to maintain from beginning to end.

## 1. The actor's work on a film project unfolds over the course of various stages. In some of these stages, such as the casting stage, most factors are beyond the control of the actors and actresses. To what extent do casting decisions affect your performance? How do you approach your work in relation to the rest of the cast?

**Àlex Brendemühl**
Casting is a process of the job that can often be uncomfortable, because it involves preparing a character in a limited time, with limited information, and there are a lot of unknowns. It involves putting yourself to the test, and that means putting your nerves to the test. You learn to control them better as you gain experience, but they never completely go away. However, over time I've learned to look at it also as a kind of casting of the director and the fellow cast members, to decide whether I'm interested in taking part in the project and whether we're all going to get along. If the communication breaks down in this stage, you can save yourself from a nightmare filming stage. It's a critical moment to listen to your own intuition and not let yourself be blinded by projects that might be good but are perhaps not the right ones. Obviously, problems sometimes come up later on, during shooting, though in general the keenness to get the project off the ground and make it successful always prevails, both for your own good and for the good of the film. Generally speaking, if you're willing to learn, have fun, and commit yourself, then you'll usually end up with good projects.

**Eduard Fernández**
Working on a film is a question of teamwork. I can decide on things about my character, but I always have to remember that my job is to tell a story that someone else, the director, wants to tell, and I am helping him to tell it. In this sense, the casting choices that the director or producer makes for whatever reason will mark the direction of the work, and I have to adapt. Even if I think they haven't made the best artistic choice of actor, I have to accept that that's how it is and work with it to tell the story that's been presented to me.

**Emilio Gutiérrez Caba**
I believe that the casting call only serves to confirm the ability of an actress or actor to adapt to a given character, but in some way it also reveals the acting ability of the performer. Someone may be perfectly prepared for an audition, focus their limited ability on it and suggest a performing ability that they don't have when it comes to developing the character. Personally, I don't believe that casting calls give most actors the chance to show what they're really capable of, as real actors; on the other hand, as I said, they can mask a mediocre performer. So the casting call is only useful for introducing actors to directors or producers, who in most cases they should already know given their professional status. Casting calls have no effect at all on the subsequent task actors have in developing their characters.

The relationship that you need to establish with the rest of the cast depends, in large part, on the strategy that the filmmakers want to apply, although you can of course suggest a general or specific work method based on the scenes and their relative complexity. Every production is a world of its own.

**Tristán Ulloa**
Everyone has to focus on their own work. And ours is fatally prone to subjectivity. When you work on a film, you accept whatever vision the director may have, whether it relates to the cast or to the aesthetic and technical approach of the film. Placing yourself in the hands of a director is an act of trust, of faith, in many cases. When you go into a film project, theoretically speaking, you accept the conditions, at least the basic ones. My work is just one more cog in the machinery that the director imagines in his head—nothing more, nothing less. It will be the director who will assess my contribution to the film, whether that be during shooting or in the editing room.

## 2. In your films, to what extent is the form of a film conceived with the actors and actresses in mind, or, conversely, is the actors' work adapted to other staging decisions?

**Mariano Barroso**

I view a film as a global process. I wouldn't be able to say that one thing comes ahead of another. It is my firm belief that a film, like a television series or a play, is built on two pillars: the script and the actors. The idea, the script, the dialogues, what isn't said, the subtext…those come first, the origin of everything. And then come the actors. All the other elements are there to support one or the other.

The analysis of the script gives me the key to the scene and to the acting strategy. Then, the camera will come in to support these elements. The same goes for the set, the wardrobe, the editing, the music… But the primary emotion is in the actors. The camera and microphone have to capture that emotion. I belong to a school of thought that views the director as the one responsible for the emotional aspects of the film. All the other departments are responsible for everything else. We directors are very fortunate to be able to work alongside such great talents in visual, sound, and set design… I believe that, no matter how beautiful the music or the cinematography may be, if the actor isn't *plugged in*, that beauty won't get captured, it'll go to waste. In that sense, the people responsible for the areas misnamed "technical" (*technical* seems to imply a certain disdain) would do well to support the actors, because whether their work shines or not depends on them. Indeed, the most beautiful music can sound flat if it's accompanying the wrong actor. The subtlest lighting can be unbearably dim if the actor is not emotionally present.

**Celina Murga**

In my case, I think, it's a rare balance. I very much believe in the actor's expression, in filmmaking that gives importance to the actor's body, gaze and voice. There are directors, perhaps the most iconic example might be Godard, for whom the actor is really no more than just another element of the staging. And obviously that works perfectly fine for Godard.

In my work, I believe that actors are more important than any other element. Even so, I'm not one of those directors who has the camera freely following the actor… I'm interested in developing an idea of the camera that responds to an idea of staging in which the actor is included. What I'm really careful not to do is to let myself get carried away with visual or staging ideas, which in theory might be great, but ultimately aren't organic for the actor or the character. Directors face a great temptation to succumb to the siren call that their preconceived mental ideas can be. I think that you have to be present during each stage of the process of making a film and know how to recognise whether the idea is working or not, both in rehearsals for it and on the day of shooting it. And, if necessary, to know when to let go and have faith in what's being created in doing so.

**Felipe Vega**

Part of my previous answer applies to this one. They are years of changes, which others call "evolution of style."

**Pablo Berger**

My way of understanding filmmaking is as a whole. Staging, cinematography, art direction, wardrobe, music, hairstyling, makeup, effects, editing, and, of course, the actors, constitute the main bricks that make up the film. I think of the story as the cement that binds these bricks together, and the script is like the blueprints and instructions for the whole team to follow for the construction of a cinematic work. This is why I believe that actors shouldn't be at the service of the camera, or vice versa, since both have to be, above all else, at the service of the story that we want to tell.

For me, a day of filming starts with me meeting with the cinematographer and with the actors on location to do a "mini-rehearsal" of what we're going to shoot. Although I've already done storyboards, it's in that moment, in that rehearsal, that the scenes find their final form on film.

*My life to live* (Vivre sa vie, Jean-Luc Godard, 1962) / Courtesy of Regia Films

## 2. Does the film style of the director you work with on each film influence how you approach a character? To what extent do the staging decisions that depend on the film's director or the technical crew affect your work as an actor? What other crew members do you usually work with most closely?

**Àlex Brendemühl**

Every director not only has their own style of working but also their own way of relating to the cast and crew. Obviously, you're compelled to try to understand where they're going and how they express themselves. As actors, we are at the service of a story, and I don't think that you have to put yourself above the storytelling structure. The rest is the job of editing; it will ultimately be polished in the editing room and it's beyond our control. Finding the tone, the overall mood of the script is a mysterious and exciting game played by the whole cast and crew. A good atmosphere on the set, with mutual understanding and without unnecessary tension, always helps, although you learn to overcome all adversities; I try to learn from successes and failures. Mutual understanding with everyone on the crew usually helps me, although being in tune with the cinematographer is sometimes crucial, because when you don't get along with the director, he's the one who offers solutions and deescalates any problems.

**Eduard Fernández**

More than my performance affecting the director's style, I would say that the director's style marks or changes my ideas about the character. I love it when a director gives a clear "yes" or "no." I believe that an actor should be flexible, that inflexibility in an actor or actress is only a sign of fear. I usually work, firstly, with the production assistant (who decides on the work plan: what shot of the day will be filmed first, etc.), then with the focus puller, the cinematographer, wardrobe…

**Emilio Gutiérrez Caba**

I think that you have to show the director a proposal of how you're going to play the character, and settle any potential disagreements that might arise. Under no circumstances should the actor's opinions prevail over the director's, unless you find yourself faced with a monument to ineptness who has no clue what they want to film and how. The film's technical crew doesn't generally influence our work, except for three departments: makeup, hairstyling and wardrobe, whose work can either make ours easier or harder. I'm in favour of creating a good atmosphere of relationships with those three departments, and of speaking calmly about things if one of the aspects they propose in terms of the aesthetic composition of the character clashes with your point of view.

Nevertheless, once shooting has begun, I personally try to connect with the rest of the departments in a different way: with camera and sound, very frequently; with set design, to go over aspects that seem odd to me; and with direction and production, constantly.

**Tristán Ulloa**

Of course. Working with a fixed camera is not the same as working with a hand-held one. Similarly, it's not the same to work with very measured lighting as it is to work with more arbitrary lighting, or with certain depths of field, lens apertures, the importance given to focus… The combination of different production and lighting styles affects our work, which has to coexist with a technique inherent to cinema, and is closely linked to the work of the camera crew. Many of my best film crew friends are on camera crews. We're doomed to get along, to be dance partners and to *negotiate* everything together: focal lengths, respecting markers, lighting, keeping the scope of the shot in mind while we're working, eyeline matches (in a shot-reverse shot you look as closely as possible towards the camera axis), looking at false markers, looking at markers filling in for characters…

## 3. Could you name a filmmaker who is a role model for you, or for whom you feel a certain affinity in terms of their way of working with the actors and actresses in their films? Could you explain the similarities and differences between your respective approaches to film acting?

**Mariano Barroso**

There are a lot of examples. I love the depth and precision of directors like Elia Kazan and his successors, who are all directors who consider the actor's work to be the backbone and driving force behind a film. American and British directors are trained in this principle. There are some glorious exceptions, but most directors from Britain and the United States have received dramaturgical, theatre or acting training or a combination of all three. Beyond Elia Kazan there would be Nicholas Ray, in my opinion (an assistant of his, incidentally). Ray takes all the work and the acting tradition of Kazan, and adds a tremendous visual potential. Ray is a more cinematic, more visual Kazan.

There are many subsequent filmmakers who inspire me or whom I study closely. They generally have all had connections to theatre or the acting world. Outside the Anglo-American school, I am eternally grateful to Bergman, Fellini, Truffaut, Kurosawa, Ford, Renoir… to mention a few; of the Spanish directors, Borau, Fernán Gómez, as well as our immortal legends, Buñuel, Berlanga, Saura, Erice, and Almodóvar. And, more recently I have been impressed by the work of Linklater, Fincher, and Haneke… it's an endless list. Despite the fact that it is very difficult to make good films, we have numerous models to follow. As filmmakers we are privileged to have more than a century of film history behind us.

**Celina Murga**

I really admire Cassavetes's work with actors. I always enjoy his movies and writings. What we have in common, above all, is our desire to build a truly trusting relationship with the actor. And also to trust in what comes out of their particular work in relation to the character, to give it a body. I have heard that he could be very tyrannical in his search for a specific outcome. I don't feel that I am like that; I don't believe that the means are justified by the ends. I think that a director's talent in working with actors lies in finding a way to guide them without suffocating them, without imposition, like something gradually being revealed, something that emerges through collaboration, through give and take.

Sometimes actors get anxious and try to find rational answers which I don't think are very useful. Often, psychological explanations – saying: "the character does this because he's like this" –are statements that calm an actor down for a moment, but in reality they flatten the actor's work, take it to a more linear place. It's not interesting to explain behaviour. As J. C. Carrière says, "a film is anything but a conclusion."

Why should we *calm down* the actor if what we want is to create dramatic tension to construct the plot of a film? The tension is or is not in the actor's body, and this is the key to developing a scene.

I am interested in achieving real characters (although not necessarily realistic ones) that have substance, contradictions, ambiguities. I don't think it's important for the actor to take a moral stance, to determine whether the character is good or bad. On the contrary, that could even be a problem. What is important is understanding the character in all his complexity, without judging him. This is how the most powerful characters are created.

**Felipe Vega**

I have to acknowledge the fame I have received from so many critics over the years as a disciple of Éric Rohmer. And although these days film history forgets its creators overnight, I still feel a great affinity for the work of the auteur *of My Night at Maud's* (Ma nuit chez Maud, Éric Rohmer, 1969); for his approach to acting, his work with the actors or his adaptation of the dialogue to each cast member. It is a work that is full of patience and precision, values hidden in the folds of each scene in a film so apparently simple or even simplistic. I believe Rohmer's films contributed to laying the aesthetic foundations of a fascinating balance between classical and modern, artificially overcome by a postmodernity that is more cosmetic than ethical. In terms of parallels between Rohmer's work and my own, you can take it however you like, but I still take the word "modesty" very seriously.

***Mi noche con Maud*** **(My Night with Maud, Éric Rohmer, 1969) / Courtesy of Regia Films**

**Pablo Berger**

Of the great filmmakers, I feel a special affinity for Woody Allen and his way of working with actors. I feel embarrassed to put the master's name in the same paragraph as my own, as at his side I feel like a *lowly intern* in the world of the script and directing:

– The script. For Woody Allen, directing the actors starts with the script; I feel the same way. The keys to every film are in the script. It is the treasure map. Every adjective, every adverb, every action that describes the characters, and the actors should view the script as the first and most important link to the director.

– The casting. Woody Allen collaborates very closely and totally trusts his casting director; so do I. His casting director, is Juliet Taylor, with whom he has worked on over forty films. I have been fortunate to have worked with Luis San Narciso and Rosa Estévez.

– The film shoot. Woody Allen does not believe in giving excessive instructions to the actors during filming. He thinks, as do I, that if an actor has been chosen for a certain role it's because you completely trust that actor completely.

## 3. Could you name an actor who is a role model for you, or for whom you feel a certain affinity, in terms of their approach to performing?

**Àlex Brendemühl**

I don't have a clear role model for my work, but I tend to prefer European actors over American actors. Marcello Mastroianni, Vittorio Gassman, Fernando Fernán Gómez, Bruno Ganz, Klaus Kinski, Max von Sydow, and all of the great English actors inspire me. And Americans like Philip Seymour Hoffman. In terms of contemporary comedy, Adam Sandler or Ben Stiller.

**Eduard Fernández**

Which actors do I have as role models? It almost sounds like a trick question. Like everyone else, the good ones: Al Pacino, Philip S. Hoffman, Mastroianni, Paco Rabal, Javier Bardem, Robert de Niro, Ricardo Darín...

**Emilio Gutiérrez Caba**

It's hard to choose just one actress or actor who meets all of the expectations that I would like to have met. Of course there have been performers who were masters of their work: in comedy, Cary Grant, in drama, Fredric March, Franchot Tone, Gérard Philipe, Adrien Brody, Marlon Brando, and Paul Newman. There are so many. When I think about their work I am amazed by their abilities and I try to rationalise their way of making things so easy, so full of truth, their ability to transmit and connect with the audience, the consistency of their work, their vocal and body language. It is amazing to witness the infinite nuances that can be achieved in a good performance and the possibilities –ignored by most of society – of this great treasure, lost on so many because it doesn't satisfy our innate human instinct to play with emotions, situations and experiences.

**Tristán Ulloa**

Philip Seymour Hoffman, to mention one who recently passed away. His technique in front of the camera and his level of commitment to his work are worthy of study and admiration. ■

Philip Seymour Hoffman in *Capote* (Benett Miller, 2005)

## _conclusion

# The living map of Javier Bardem

Lola Mayo

Five years ago I met the actor Javier Bardem. Our conversation about acting was never made public, because he never authorised it. The interview remains stored away. I cannot show it to anyone, but the impressions that our encounter left me with are still very vivid, and define for me what since then I have come to believe it means to be "an actor".

What I remember of that meeting, and of his words, will form my conclusion to the words that other actors and filmmakers have shared on these pages. Not the words of Javier Bardem, but the memory of the words of Javier Bardem, who dazzled me with his insightful reflections on his craft, while as a person he seemed to me so very dark, so very fragile and, in his fragility, wounding.

Cinema is much more democratic than literature. Because cinema always gives the character a body. And if the actor portraying that character is Javier Bardem, the character not only has a body, but *is* that body. A character portrayed by Bardem is charged with emotions, with the past, with reasons and with language, but always, and above all, with physicality, with an inescapable physical presence. This is why when I came face to face with the real body of the actor Javier Bardem I had the sensation that I didn't know him. He is bigger, smaller, stronger or weaker than his characters. I knew his characters, not him. He is somebody else. Perhaps that is what makes him a real actor.

Javier Bardem has a strong, solid physique, and a uniquely photogenic quality. If he is in a shot, it is impossible to keep from looking at him. Because the quality of being photogenic is that miraculous phenomenon that determines whether a face will truly leave its mark on a film. And yet, Javier has dedicated his career to keeping his own body off the screen by making it totally present but transforming it into another, in spite of himself, hiding his own body in the shell of his roles.

Javier knows that the body doesn't lie, that it is reactions and not reasons that define the truth of a character. He has gone beyond imitation. This is not a contest; he himself says so. To capture the essence of a character, you have to imitate the inimitable. When he talks about his method of becoming a character, it seems to me as if he has entered a kind of priesthood, as if he has decided to dedicate his life to a complex, startling investigation, and that he has no idea where it will lead him.

Javier spoke to me of the two pillars of his work: observation and memory. He also spoke of his trouble with reading, with working with books; he has to force himself to read. His characters are born out of a gaze on the world. Javier always takes his models from the outside world. Although today it is obviously difficult for him to watch without being watched, this is what he does to distance his characters from the archetype. He knows that for an artist it is essential to continue to belong to the world.

When he talked about memory, he explained that it is a double-edged sword. You have to travel through your own memory to give a character emotions, but you need to be able to get out, to leave your own story out of it in order to tell the character's story. And it is here, in this revocation of vanity, that we find the work of a true master, Juan Carlos Corazza, a mentor and inspiration for so many actors of his generation. Few actors with a career like his continue to place themselves in the hands of another. Bardem believes that sooner or later, all actors develop their formulas, knowing just what works for them, and only someone coming from outside can deconstruct them, and compel the actor to work again with empty hands. It is a question of fighting against the paradox of the actor, who is by definition pure vanity and self-consciousness.

Javier Bardem began his career in the early nineties. Bigas Luna saw in him a strong man who could be broken. Together they managed to reveal the fragility of a body that only appeared strong. Too strong. His first films were *Las edades de Lulú* (1990), *Jamón jamón* (1992), *Huevos de oro* (1993). He then struggled with characters who because of their simplicity required an extraordinary effort: *El detective y la muerte* (Gonzalo Suárez, 1994) and *Carne trémula* (Pedro Almodóvar, 1997). With Mariano Barroso's Éxtasis (1996), for the first time he felt that it was the character rather than him who was in control. His first great mutation came in *Perdita Durango* (Dance with the Devil, Álex de la Iglesia, 1997). It is a visceral, violent character, which makes him bigger and heavier. But it is probably the characters that make him smaller that reflect the full extent of his talent: the junkie in *Días contados* (Running Out of Time, Imanol Uribe, 1994), the poet Reinaldo Arenas in *Before Night Falls* (Julian Schnabel, 2000), or the humble and loyal police officer in *The Dancer Upstairs* (John Malkovich, 2002). His personality is so strong that it would be easy to imagine that he was at risk of being limited to performing only big-name characters: Reinaldo, Ramón Sampedro, Santa, Florentino Ariza, or the great hypocrite Lorenzo Casamares in *Goya's Ghosts* (Milos Forman, 2006). The circle of big names closes with Anton Chigurh in *No Country for Old Men* (Ethan & Joel Coen, 2007), in which Bardem demonstrates his capacity for control, precision of movements, and, once again, explores a body the way an immense landscape might be explored with a magnifying glass.

The stature of his characters is so great that the films he stars in are even threatened with being crushed under the weight of his talent. And yet, this has yet to happen to him. No doubt he has also considered this danger. This is why he works continuously to better himself, to avoid shortcuts, to learn more, even though it would seem there could be nothing more for him to learn. It is perhaps for this reason, and not for some frivolous desire to make the banal "leap into Hollywood" that Javier began working abroad around 2000; perhaps this is why he decided at one point to accept roles in English, a language that is alien to him and in which he admits he is not really fluent. Language is another obstacle, another hurdle to jump over to prove to himself that he can walk further along the wire; that he can add yet another ingredient and still keep his balance.

My meeting with Bardem happened over two afternoons in the months of May and June. Javier welcomed me into his home, after a call from the director of the Alcalá de Henares Film Festival, who has known him for some time. On the day of the meeting I arrived a little early and bumped into him on the street. He was carrying a huge painting that somebody had given him as a gift. It was raining, and we entered his house with wet feet. I took off my shoes, as if I was at home. I accepted the soft drink he offered me. For many hours on those two days, we talked. We didn't talk about anything that I didn't have written down on paper; we didn't talk about anything other than acting.

I think Javier took the interview like a job, seriously, with dedication, never evading even one of my questions, making an effort to understand where I wanted to go with them. For the world of acting, so undefined, so hard to delimit, so ambiguous for anyone outside it, this actor has the exact words, having created a vocabulary to speak about his craft. He is sincere and bold; he makes an effort to explain himself and always achieves it.

I imagine him in that peaceful and orderly house in the heart of Madrid, writing ceaselessly in a notebook, preparing the indeterminable list of questions with which he will accost each director, drawing a map of scenes inch

Javier Bardem in *Jamón Jamón* (Bigas Luna, 1992)

by inch, a dense network of connections that run through a script from the top down and which, from a bird's eye view, would no doubt compose the face of his character.

He has taken on some big challenges; many more are probably to come. For one, it would be quite an event to see him on the stage. Javier is a man of the cinema; he has rarely acted live. This doesn't make him either a better or a worse actor. But the theatre would surely leave him naked in the wilderness. This, I thought then, is how Bardem starts all of his roles: defenceless in the woods, bewildered at a crossroads.

I don't know where Bardem is now. I learned a lot in that meeting now five years past. That closed, complete and unpublished interview is for me a whole universe, a whole capacity for reflection which it is sad that other actors, other readers, have never been able to see.

The universe of actors was completely unknown to me before I began the book *La piel y la máscara* (Madrid: Alcine 38, 2008), for which I did that interview with Bardem. With great generosity, the actors I interviewed constructed a world before my eyes in a matter of hours.

After meeting those people, those actors, I concluded that only through searching and uncertainty can something truly valuable be obtained. In the actor's equation there are always two unknowns, the same two of all human life: the body and the spirit. The rough breed of actors goes on trying to resolve them, travelling from one to the other, adding body and subtracting spirit, multiplying spirit and dividing body... rising up above the power of both. The result is always zero, or infinity. ■

**Daniel Gascó García** studied Business Administration at the Universitat Jaume I of Castellón, where he managed the Aula de Cine for three years. He was a member of the Editorial Board of the Valencian journal *Banda Aparte* (1993-1997). He has worked as film critic in various media (press, radio and television), has contributed to several anthologies, and has been a member of the jury in different film festivals (Alcala de Henares, La Cabina, Radio City, etc.). Currently, he writes articles for *Caimán Cuadernos de Cine* and *Lletres valencianes* and teaches the subject of Comparative History of Cinema at the Academia Idecrea. Since 2004 he has been the manager, together with his sister Almudena, of the video store Stromboli, which houses a significant catalogue of cinema history. He also organises film series for the Festival Cine Europa and for the Centro Galego de Arte Contemporánea (CGAC).

**Lola Mayo** is a screenwriter, producer and writer. She has written and produced the three films directed by Javier Rebollo: *El muerto y ser feliz* (2012), which received a Goya Award for Best Leading Actor and the FIPRESCI Prize at the Festival de San Sebastian; *La mujer sin piano* (2009), winner of the Silver Shell for Best Director at the Festival de San Sebastián and Best Film at the Los Angeles Film Festival; and *Lo que sé de Lola* (2006), FIPRESCI prize winner at the International Film Festival of London. She also co-wrote Javier Rebollo's fourth film, *La cerillera*, with the director himelf. She is currently writing the script for the Colombian film *Como cloro en tela negra* to be directed by Ana María Londoño, and directs documentaries for the programme *Documentos TV* (TVE). Since 1996 she has produced fifteen short films through her production company Lolita Films, which all together have received more than one hundred awards at festivals worldwide. She is the coordinator of the Documentary Department at the Escuela de Cine de San Antonio de los Baños in Cuba, and continues to teach Documentary Scriptwriting and Creation at the Instituto del Cine de Madrid and the Escuela Oficial de Cine de Madrid. She has written poems, a novel and a book on film.

**Mariano Barroso** (Sant Just Desvern, 1959) made his name in the film world upon receiving a Goya Award for Best New Director for *Mi hermano del alma* (1994). This interesting debut has been followed by films like Éxtasis (1996), *Los lobos de Washington* (1999) and *Todas las mujeres* (2013). He has alternated his cinematic presence with his work for television and a very active teaching career. Trained at the American Film Institute and at the William Layton Laboratory, he is the coordinator of the Diploma in Film Directing at the ECAM and has directed the Department of Film Directing at the Escuela de Cine de San Antonio de los Baños in Cuba. Acting is one of the key focuses of his films, as evidenced by the 2005 documentary *El oficio del actor*, which featured Javier Bardem, Luis Tosar and Eduard Fernández, actors who regularly appear in his films.

Since training at the Universidad del Cine in Buenos Aires, **Celina Murga** (Paraná, 1973) has worked in various capacities in the film industry. Director, screenwriter, producer and editor, she became known in the world of short films with titles such as *Interior-Noche* (1999) and *Una tarde feliz* (2002). *Ana y los otros* (2003) was her first feature film, and her second, *Una semana solos* (2007), premiered at the Festival Internacional de Cine Independiente de Buenos Aires. In 2009, she took part in a two-year sponsorship program that allowed her to work alongside Martin Scorsese. In addition to her creative work, she has worked as a teacher at the Centro de Investigación Cinematográfica de Buenos Aires.

The work of **Felipe Vega** (León, 1952) in the world of cinema has ranged from directing and scriptwriting short films, feature films or commercials to writing articles on film criticism for prominent journals and teaching cinema at the Escuela de la Cinematografía y el Audiovisual de la Comunidad de Madrid. Active since the late 1970s, he has received several awards at the el Festival Internacional de Cine de San Sebastián, for titles such as *Mientras haya luz* (1988) and *El mejor de los tiempos* (1989). Over the course of his film career, he has been associated with names like producer Gerardo Herrero Herrero (*Un paraguas para tres*, 1992; *Nubes de verano*, 2004) and writer and journalist Manuel Hidalgo, with whom he collaborated on *Grandes ocasiones* (1998), *Nubes de verano* and *Mujeres en el parque* (2006). His most recent work is the documentary *Elogio de la distancia* (2010), co-directed with Julio Llamazares, who had also written the screenplay for *El techo del mundo* (1995) fifteen years earlier.

Until the release of *Blancanieves* (2012), **Pablo Berger** (Bilbao, 1963) had only directed one short film (*Mama*, 1988) and the feature film *Torremolinos 73* (2003), although he had enjoyed a long career in the world of advertising and music videos and as a teacher at the New York Film Academy. With his second feature film he became one of Spain's most acclaimed filmmakers, as the film received a total of ten Goya Awards, including Best Film, Best Original Screenplay and Best Original Song, authored by the director himself. The actresses Maribel Verdú and García Macarena also received awards for their roles.

With a background in theatre and television, since his debut as the star of *Un banco en el parque* (Agustí Vila, 1999) and his consolidation in *The Hours of the Day* (Las horas del día, Jaime Rosales, 2003), playing the everyday serial killer, the roles of **Àlex Brendemühl** (Barcelona, 1972) in film have often been associated with the debuts of unknown directors or with filmmakers with a markedly independent quality. For example, he has worked under the direction of Pere Portabella (*El silencio después de Bach*, 2007), Óscar Aibar (*El bosc*, 2012) and, more recently, Lluís Miñarro (*Stella Cadente*, 2014) and Isaki Lacuesta (*Murieron por encima de sus posibilidades*, 2014). He combines his acting work in Spain with roles in the film industries of other countries such as France, Argentina or Germany.

Born into a family of actors, and with almost two hundred acting credits in film and television, **Emilio Gutiérrez Caba** (Valladolid, 1942) has been one of the essential faces of Spanish cinema and theatre since the early 1960s. He founded his own theatre company in 1968 and starred in some of the best-known titles of the new Spanish cinema of that decade, such as *Nueve cartas a Berta* (Basilio Martín Patino, 1966) and *La caza* (Carlos Saura, 1966). His career was revitalised in the early years of the new millennium thanks to directors like Alex de la Iglesia (*La comunidad*, 2000) and Miguel Albaladejo (*El cielo abierto*, 2001), and his presence in television hits such as *Gran Reserva* (TVE: 2010- 2013).

After beginning his career in theatre performing works of the classics (Shakespeare, Molière, Beckett), **Eduard Fernández** (Barcelona, 1964) began to make a name for himself as a film actor after his appearance in *Los lobos de Washington* (Mariano Barroso, 1999), for which he received the first of his eight nominations for a Goya Award. Known for playing characters with strong personalities, he made an impact as the lead actor in films *Fausto 5.0* (La Fura dels Baus, 2001), *Smoking Room* (Julio D. Wallovits, Roger Gual, 2002), *El método* (Marcelo Piñeiro, 2005), *Ficció* (Cesc Gay, 2006) and *La mosquitera* (Agustí Vila, 2010), and as a supporting actor in films like *Son de mar* (Bigas Luna, 2001), *En la ciudad* (Cesc Gay, 2003), *Alatriste* (Agustín Díaz Yanes, 2006), *Pa negre* (Agustí Villaronga, 2010) and *El Niño* (Daniel Monzón, 2014).

One of the most popular faces in Spanish film, television and theatre, **Tristán Ulloa** (Orleans, 1970) began his career in front of the camera in the late 1990s. His role in *Mensaka* (Salvador García Ruiz, 1998) catapulted him into the spotlight with a Goya Award nomination for Best New Actor. Since then, he has alternated leading roles (*Lucía y el sexo*, Julio Medem, 2001) and supporting roles, taking part in around thirty feature films and in television shows such as *El comisario* (Telecinco: 1999-2000), *Gran Reserva* (TVE: 2010-2013) and *El tiempo entre costuras* (Antena 3: 2013-2014). In 2007 he co-directed (with his brother David) his first film, *Pudor*, which was nominated for Best Screenplay Adaptation and Best New Director at the Goya Awards.

Biographical notes written by Héctor Gómez

# VANISHING POINTS

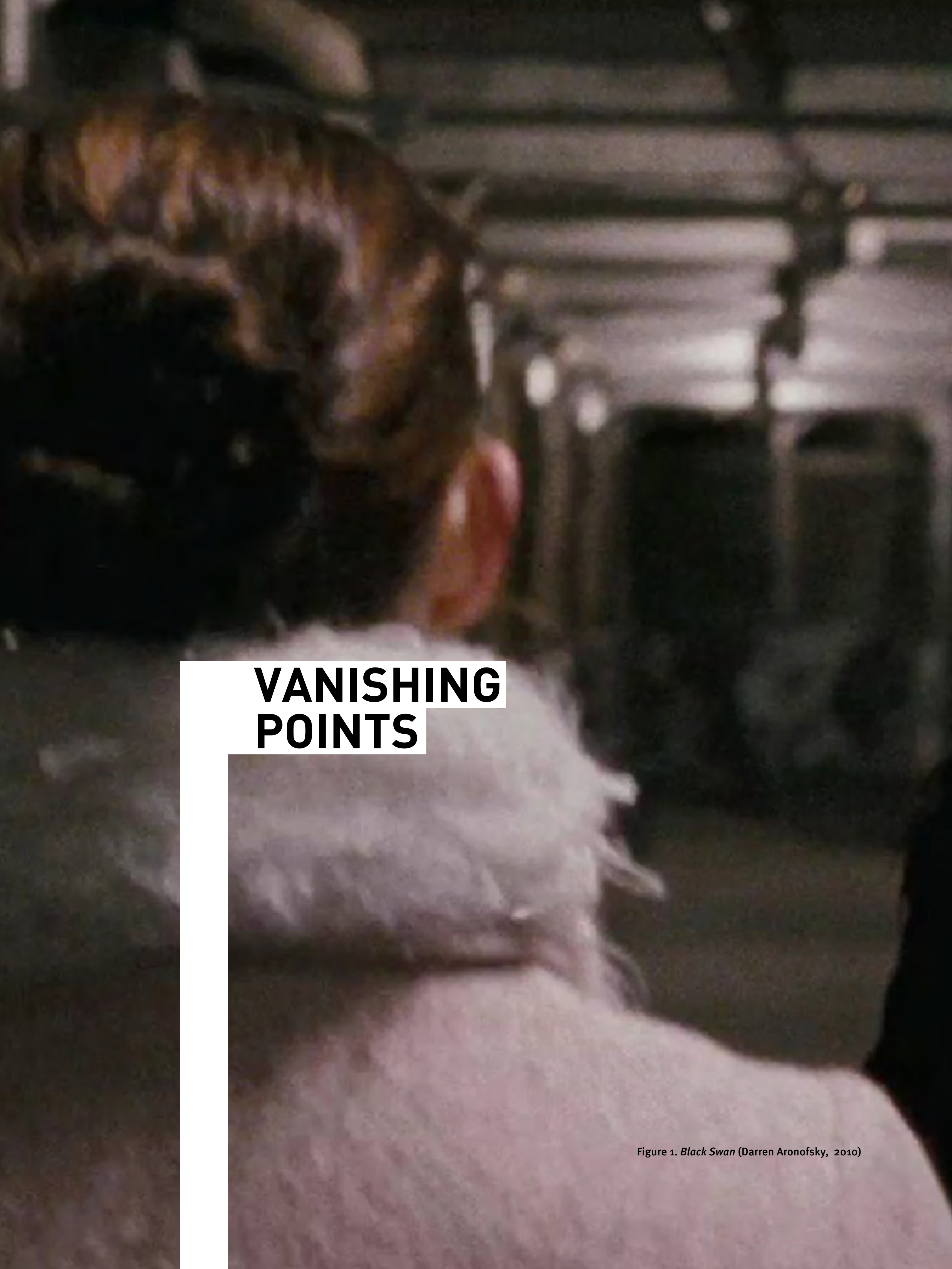


Figure 1. *Black Swan* (Darren Aronofsky, 2010)

# *Black Swan* or on how to turn a dream into a nightmare

Eugenia Rojo

Horror films, which in the past decades have tended to encourage self-parody, have recently experienced a revival that seems to be gaining strength. For H. P. Lovecraft, the fundamental condition of the fantastic tale is that the reader must fear the presence of the unusual (1984: 16). This idea posited by the master of horror narrative, transferred to the big screen, means that the power of the genre depends largely on the viewer's experience. The exploration of the mechanisms that cause real terror in the audience is nearly as old as cinema itself, but the horror revival has been accompanied by new approaches and the usual reinvention of traditional structures that characterises post-modernism.

The formula chosen by Darren Aronofsky in *Black Swan* (2010) to tackle the horror genre combines drama with a range of strategies aimed at inspiring terror which merit further analysis. The filmmaker draws on mythical and literary sources around the figure of the double, which has remarkable parallels with the *doppelgänger* model constructed by Dostoevsky. He reinforces the plot with the dose of verisimilitude offered by psychological theories. He also provides several elements that have become a hallmark of his style: the introduction into the plot of a twisted game between reality and fiction in which the characters are immersed; the wound as a sign of human degradation; and the use of POV to translate the character's experience. The finishing touch consists of several layers of special effects created both by traditional methods and by new technologies.

The film chronicles the vicissitudes of a member of the New York City Ballet who has been appointed *prima ballerina* to play the leading role in *Swan Lake* (Lebedínoye óziero, Pyotr Ilich Tchaikovsky, 1877). Aronofsky's basic plot is similar to that of Michael Powell and Emeric Pressburger's *The Red Shoes* (1948). The British motion picture also portrayed the tough atmosphere of professional ballet, in which a star is quickly replaced by new, innocent flesh at the whim of the producer. While The Archers' production adopts the well-known tale of Hans Christian Andersen to frame its *mise en abyme*, Aronofsky's film makes use of the classic ballet *par excellence*, the fairy tale created by Tchaikovsky.

The Russian oeuvre plays two roles in the film: on the one hand, the dance performance itself, crystallised in the rehearsals and the premiere at the end of the story; and on the other hand, the parallels between the double character in the story of the Russian ballet and the protagonist of the story of the film, as well as the fates of both. Nina Sayers (Natalie Portman) will be chosen to play Odette, the young queen. However, as the tradition since the mid-twentieth century requires, the same ballerina will have to wear the shoes of the black swan, Odile, the daughter of the wicked Baron von Rothbart.

## Between the tradition of the double and the Freudian personality

The character of Nina constitutes a new translation of the literary motif of the double. Lecouteux (1999: 147-157) locates the origin of this motif in the concept of the astral double derived from the triple conception of the soul in Germanic tradition[1]. The Scandinavian sagas would develop these notions, which can be found in many cultures, from Ancient Egypt and Classical Antiquity to Medieval Europe. Out of these mythical roots, stories of doubles would spread and become a popular theme in nineteenth century literature[2]. In the case of *Black Swan*, the director turns to the imaginary of his Russian roots and draws inspiration from Dostoevsky's *The Double* (1856). While the novel adopts a comical and decadent tone quite different from the terrifying atmosphere of the film, the psychological horror is made apparent in certain passages that can also be recognised on the screen.

In the general climate of paranoia that surrounds the story of the unfortunate protagonist of *The Double*, Mr. Golyadkin, the old man Anton Antonovich will warn him of what happened to an aunt of his: "she saw her own double before her death…" (Dostoevsky, 2008: 56). The psychiatric term *heautoscopy*, from the Greek "ó" (heautón) "himself" or "herself" and "σκοπός" (scopós) "to look", "to observe", was employed by Menninger-Lerchenthal and applied to patients who describe perceptions such as running into a replica of themselves. The psychiatrist related this phenomenon to that of the *doppelgänger*, which in German means "the one that walks beside oneself" (López-Ibor, 2011: 32).

After leaving a party to which he was never invited, Golyadkin takes a stroll on Ismailovsky Bridge. He shudders when he feels a presence: a mysterious pedestrian who disappears without a trace, and who later on will be revealed to be his own double, prompting him to exclaim "Why, have I really gone out of my mind, or what?" (Dostoevsky, 2008: 44). Nina will wonder the same thing when she encounters her dark *alter ego* for the first time [Fig. 1], who, like the protagonist in Dostoyevsky's novel, is a person notorious for her "treachery and brutal impulses" (2008: 105).

The double would be adopted as one of the motifs of German Romantic literature and subsequently of the fantasy film genre. According to the legend, seeing one's double is a bad omen, a warning or premonition of one's own death. In the triple conception of the soul in Germanic culture, the spiritual double, *Fylgja*, bids a person farewell as a harbinger of the end of that person's existence, generally appearing in the form of a woman or an animal (Lecouteux, 1999: 147-157). In Aronofsky's story, the vision of the double not only represents a dire prediction, but also marks a turning point in the character's psyche. As a result of the splitting of the personality, the *alter ego* begins to control the ballerina's life and tries to replace her, as Mr. Golyadkin Junior does in the Russian novel. In Freudian terms, we are witnessing the death of the ego at the hands of the id. The protagonist of *The Double* also exhibits clear signs of a schizophrenic suffering from a dissociative identity disorder, half a century before Freud's transformation of the psychiatric discipline.

Both the film and the novel deal with the death of a healthy mind in which the astonished spectator is presented with events which, on first sight, can only be explained by fantasy or magic. The use of the double and the subjective vision of the protagonist are established as resources that make it possible to present the events to the spectator with a certain ambiguity that is intended to provoke anxiety and confusion. Like Golyadkin, Nina will reach a state where she cannot distinguish between her dreams and reality, and her imagination and distress will meld into the events unfolding around her.

Metamorphosis is another distinctive feature that goes hand-in-hand with the tradition of the double. In *Swan Lake*, the transformation is the result of a spell. What we are witnessing during her final Dionysian dance, when Nina becomes a bird, is the product of her own deranged mind. St. Augustine's *The City of God* (412-426) describes the mutation of a man into an animal, which can only

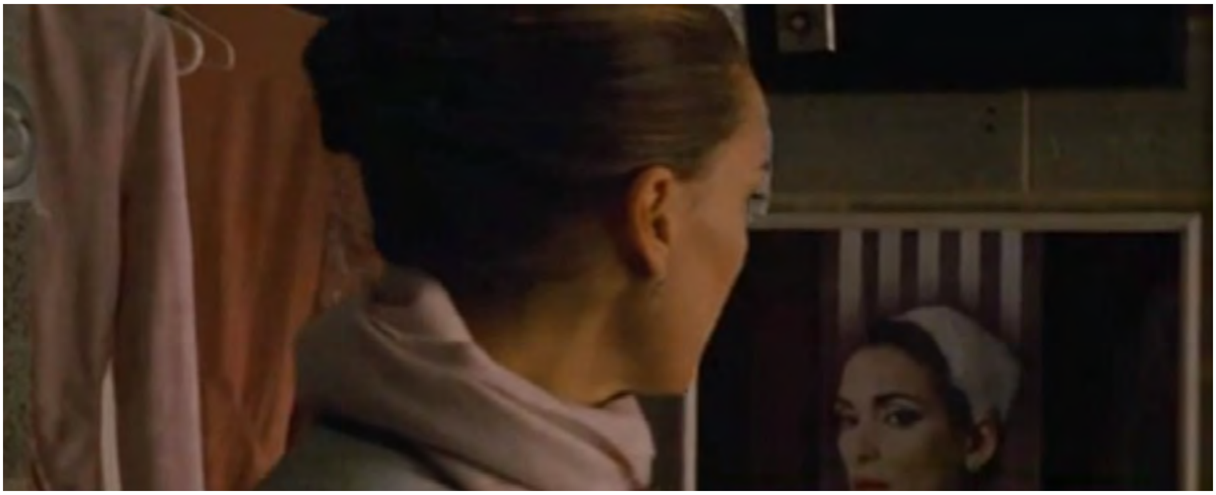


Figure 2. *Black Swan* (Darren Aronofsky, 2010)

be the work of the Devil because it constitutes a denaturalisation of God's image. All the classical descriptions of metamorphosis are interpreted by Augustine of Hippo merely as Satanic illusions capable of deceiving the human senses (Lecouteux, 1999: 124). In the film, the conversion is triggered by the force of what, in Nina's repressive upbringing, is identified with evil. Inevitably, the character ends up succumbing to her own antithesis, her most primitive and libidinous side which, until that moment, had been dormant.

Aronofsky finds a wonderful excuse here to develop a story about a *wereswan*, a hybrid form, half woman, half swan which, in turn, unfolds into a doubly black and white swan. Ultimately, the resource of the double is simply a way to present the character's internal contradictions and to position ideologies in contrast against one another. In this way, two opposing facets are exposed: the angelic girl who takes on a zoomorphic quality on screen, with her feet in second position and the white tutu serving as plumage; and the woman in a frenzy, revealing her darker side. For Bachelard, the swan symbolises the nude woman and her immaculate whiteness represents the innocence of a nymph. It also constitutes a secret object of desire, and its singing is a metaphor for the *petite morte* (2005: 53-59). The swan is the sublimated figure in which the poet, the director in the story, Thomas Leroy (Vincent Cassel), seeks to recognise himself. During a rehearsal he declares: "That was me seducing you. It needs to be the other way around", referring to Nina's lack of passion in her performance. In the denouement, this technical, stiff and predictable ballerina will turn into a seductive and impulsive being and her role in the ballet will begin to possess her. Leroy's message expresses this internal struggle: "The only person standing in your way is you". Golyadkin faces the same dilemma when he acknowledges: "I'm my own murderer!" (Dostoevsky, 2008: 99).

Aronofsky's characters suffer torments similar to Dostoevsky's. All are besieged by an obsession: for Max in *Pi* (1998), it is the number that can bring order to the universe; for the mother and son in *Requiem for a Dream* (2000), it is the fantasy of an unattainable bliss; for Tommy Creo, it is the idea of saving his wife from an incurable disease in *The Fountain* (2006); and for Randy Robinson in *The Wrestler* (2008), it is the obsession of an ageing wrestler fighting to recapture the glory days of his career. Nina longs blindly to achieve an impossible perfection in her art. When she is promoted, her director, who uses sex to control his ballerinas, informs her of his real purpose: to achieve that perfection at all costs. As the pressure increases, the young woman will become immerses in a private nightmare that will make her reality increasingly incongruous. In this identity crisis, her personality will begin to vanish, to split and drown in realms stifled by monotony and distress.

## Links within and outside the diegesis

A mother and child relationship similar to those in *Carrie* (Brian De Palma, 1976) or *The Piano Teacher* (La pianiste, Michael Haneke, 2001) can be found between Nina and Erica (Barbara Hershey). The scene where Erika offers Nina a succulent cake to celebrate her winning the leading role in the ballet alludes to the extraordinary tenderness contained in the pernicious love of a mother. The former dancer keeps her daughter trapped in an infantile state, as does her life imprisonment in the world of ballet. With the status of *prima ballerina*, Nina will turn from a young girl dedicated to pleasing others into a woman who exploits her ego in her quest for self-satisfaction. Because of her immature and over-protected condition, she is ignorant of the harsh reality of life, which will gradually be revealed to her, as it is on one of her trips on the subway when an old man makes obscene gestures at her. She will try to overcome her erotic inhibitions in the

ONE OF THE TECHNICAL KEYS OF ARONOFSKY'S CINEMATOGRAPHY IS SUBJECTIVITY: THE STORY FROM THE MAIN CHARACTER'S POINT OF VIEW

privacy of her room, as advised to do by Leroy, but the vituperative image of her mother will hold her back. Her degradation and the tug of war with her mother have an intimidating effect on the viewer, an awkwardness similar to that aroused in *Repulsion* (Roman Polanski, 1965) in its exploration of the alienated personality, resulting in an interesting generic hybrid that straddles the line between drama and the horror genre that Aronofsky's film falls into.

In addition to her double personality and role, Nina's character is also projected in others: for example, in the character played by Winona Ryder [Fig. 2], the usurped diva who recalls Irina from *The Red Shoes*. Aronofsky has a tendency of recycling his actor's personal life and intertwining it with the story to achieve a convincing effect while at the same time further complicating the plot. He does this with Ryder, the teenage superstar of the 1990s, as he did with the fallen idol Mickey Rourke in *The Wrestler*. And he also establishes a rivalry between the character played by Mila Kunis, the promising young hopeful, and the protagonist played by Natalie Portman, the established star.

Nina's personality feeds on her interaction with the other characters. Her theft of Beth's lipstick and earrings, among other belongings, is suggestive of a fetishist synecdoche of her venerated role model. Her visit to the hospital confirms that the two have points in common: self-destructiveness, a quest for excellence and a dismal fate. On the other hand, Lily, her onstage rival, on whom she projects her own jealousy and aspirations, represents what Eve Harrington represented for Margo Channing in *All about Eve* (Joseph L. Mankiewicz, 1950). Initially she appears to be a threat to Nina, since she is a potential candidate for the part of the black swan and represents the antithesis of repression and the epitome of passionate, unbridled commitment to her art. Yet she also constitutes the driving force behind the loss of inhibition that Nina needs to play the role of the impulsive and ruthless bird.

Lily has been described as the protagonist's *doppelgänger*, the unknown ballerina who, in the middle of a persecution crisis, attempts to take over by replacing her (España, 2010: 127). But in fact, Nina already has her double in herself, although on a psychic level, according to the Freudian logic, her Id is personified by Lily (Mila Kunis) and her Super-Ego by her mother (Barbara Hershey). Initially, Beth represents the ideal self who halfway through the story becomes instead the reflection of a dismal future, while Leroy embodies the trigger for the emergence of the Id (Freud, 1992: 135-214). Consequently, all these characters, while bearing some parallels with the characters of *Swan Lake*, constitute the organic, animated materialisation of the protagonist's mind. Acting in the realm of reality they set off a series of feelings and reactions in Nina, while at the same time they personify her insecurities, goals, failures and frustrations. This recourse to solipsism constitutes a means for the convergence of the points of view of spectator and protagonist, while at the same time expressing the progressive emergence of the dark side and contradictions of the ballerina.

In her process of inner exploration, the main character loses her sanity, like Mima, who confuses dreams with reality to the point of questioning her own identity in *Perfect Blue* (Satoshi Kon, 1998), of which Aronofsky's film is considered a remake. The need to mature ultimately becomes overwhelming, as it does in *What Ever Happened to Baby Jane* (Robert Aldrich, 1962) when Jane, who believes herself still to be a young girl, reacts with horror at the sight of her aged face in the mirror. In *The Double*, Golyadkin will deny himself, exclaiming: "I'm ... quite all right. It's not I, it's not I—and that is the fact of the matter" (Dostoevsky, 2008: 8). Nina will gradually accept the emergence of her *alter ego* until she finally understands that she cannot exist without it, and that it cannot coexist with her pious side.

## The imposing power of the camera

The story is set in a wintry New York City that we barely see, because Nina's life takes place entirely at her house or in the theatre. The spirit of the Big Apple can only be glimpsed in the scenes on the subway. The indoor sets are black and white rooms[3] captured with a baroque chiaroscuro photography. This aesthetic characterises the moments of terror and is contrasted by the naturalistic lighting used for the dramatic parts of the story. In addition, Vicon cameras are used because of their high resolution and great flexibility because of their small size, as well as steadycams. The handheld camera facilitates the freedom of its operator and suggests a certain degree of improvisation. Its use is intended to highlight the components of *verité* that balance the turbulent and artful visual elements of the horror genre.

One of the technical keys to Aronofsky's cinematography lies in narrative subjectivity: the story from the point of view of the protagonist. The POV constructs the inner monologue of the characters, who are framed in very specific contexts, such as the wrestling world or, in this occasion, professional ballet. At the beginning of the story, Nina is shown rehearsing some pirouettes. In this scene, shots of the ballerina are alternated with shots from her point of view as she turns and then stops, showing Leroy in the frame. This is another nod to *The Red Shoes* which, apart from communicating the anxious state of the ballerina, establishes a connection with the despotic figure of Lermontov. After a hard day, Nina comes back home to have a soothing bath. We relax with her before suffering a sudden shock, when after a few drops of blood fall into the water, the product of her self-mutilation, we are shown another heautoscopy from her POV.

At the end of the story is the premiere, which was shot using a specialised team of technicians and artists. Powell's approach for such a scene in *The Red Shoes* consists of a stunning series of shots that always give the spectator a privileged point of view of the action, pushing past the frontal limits of the theatre to perform a purely cinematographic exercise. Aronofsky seeks something similar by positioning the camera on the stage to dance in front of the dancers, in a kid of ballet within the ballet. The actors approach the camera suddenly and their unexpected turns vest the shots with dynamism, to which the music and make-up add an intriguing and disquieting quality.

## Digital enhancement and hyperbolic sound

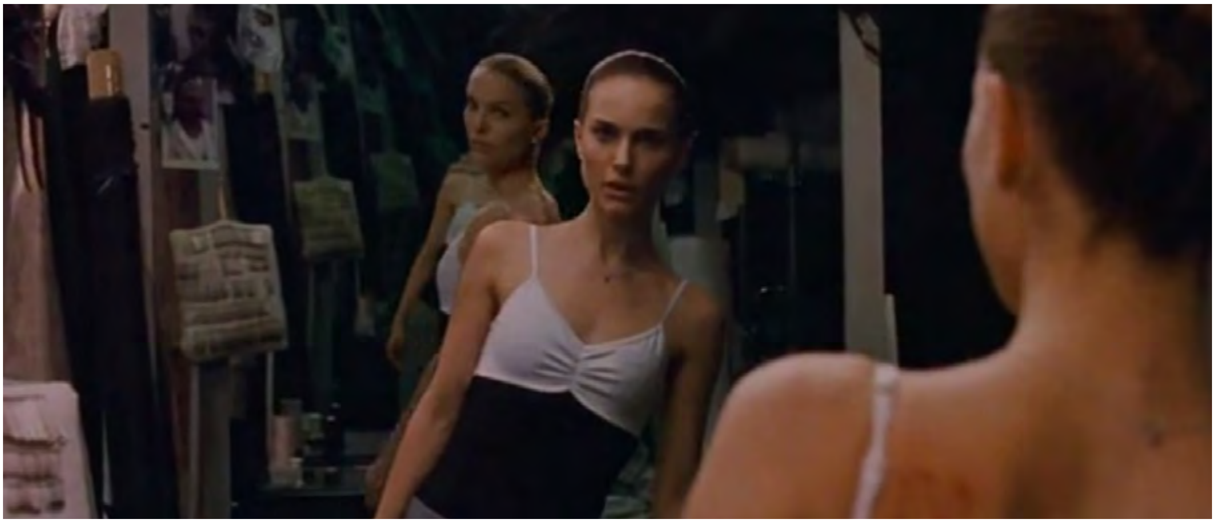
The raw footage was extensively manipulated in the postproduction phase by means of sound, music and edition, with elements ranging from the subtly strange to pure fantasy. Animation with After Effects, HDR computer rendering, keyframing and rasterisation are some of the digital editing techniques used. For independent filmmakers with small budgets, such effects offer a good opportunity to fully develop their aesthetic intentions. In *Black Swan*, even the most unlikely elements undergo computer editing. Beyond the indie label, the film falls within what Lipovetsky and Serroy call "trompe l'oeil" in the hypercinema age, the ultimate goal of which lies in the pursuit of visual impact, highlighted by increasingly sophisticated technologies that eliminate the distance of the observer. The result is a hybrid analogue-digital image derived from art for mass consumption: hyper-high tech cinema for the society of excess (2009: 43-53).

THE USE OF SOUNDS INITIALLY DISSOCIATED FROM THE OBJECT FROM WHICH THEY EMANATE PRODUCE ANTAGONISTIC SENSATIONS AND, ULTIMATELY, ELICIT TERROR

Examples of digital editing are scattered throughout the film. In the opening scene, during the protagonist's dream, a shining dance floor is digitally altered to achieve a dazzling effect. The same is done to the feather that comes through Nina's shoulder blade, modified to give it even more volume. All these obsessively computer-enhanced details are almost imperceptible and unnecessary, in keeping with the hypermodern aesthetic of saturation and the cinematic logic of excess. In other cases these effects are justifiable in scenes such as the moment during the premiere when the ballerinas pass fleetingly with the face of the star herself. Here, the recourse to solipsism is intensified, signalling Nina's complete loss of contact with reality and the beginning of her self-destructive stage, evoking the same anxiety in the spectator, whose eyes, desensitised by the media, are increasingly difficult to impress.

Aronofsky outdoes *The Red Shoes* in his obsession with mirrors, which play a key role in the dance scenes, forcing the protagonist to observe herself constantly, thus representing the loss of identity in her process of

**Figure 3.** ***Black Swan*** **(Darren Aronofsky, 2010)**



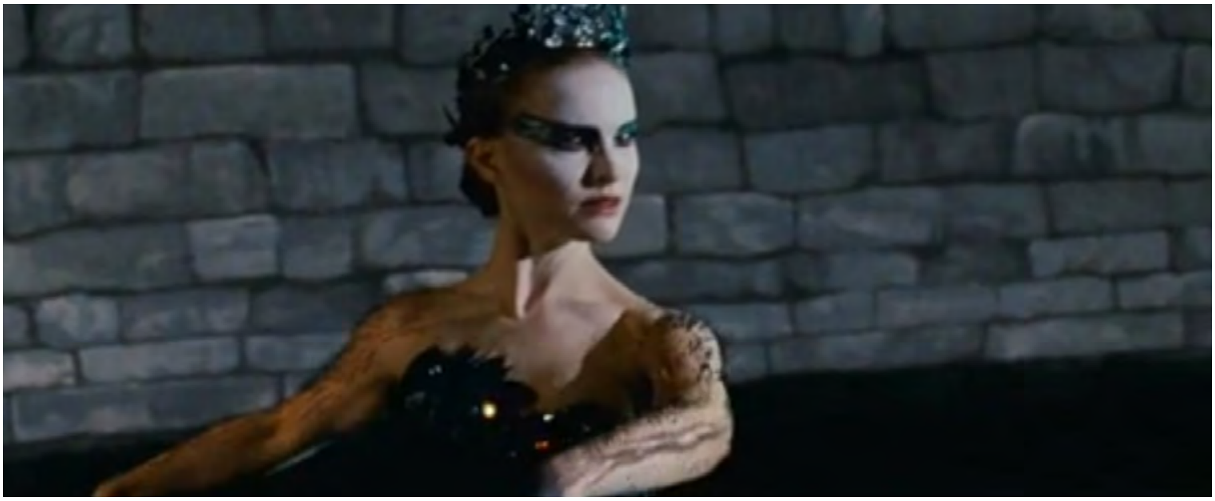


Figure 4. *Black Swan* (Darren Aronofsky, 2010)

mental degradation and essentially disorienting and unsettling the viewer. The use of mirrors constitutes one of the oldest tricks in horror cinema. Mythology, legend and literature are replete with stories in which an individual observes his or her own reflection and suffers the consequences of doing so. From Narcissus to Dorian Gray, the contemplation of one's own image has tragic results. For Lecouteux, the origin of this tragedy is associated with the belief that the soul can be totally or partially transferred to the representation of its owner. The reproduction of one's own image attracts and holds the double, acting as a catalyst for the curse, as well as representing a connection to death and the invisible world (1999: 167-170).

All the spaces in the film, filled with all kinds of mirrors and reflecting surfaces, are combined with physical and digital trick photography. One of the most striking scenes centres on Nina in the changing room, before the day of the premiere, when her reflection suddenly comes alive [Fig. 3]. The effect is created by filming behind a polarised mirror, allowing the insertion of the image filmed showing Nina's reflection moving independently and the infinite dimension of two mirrors facing each other.

Another of the more digitally complex scenes is the metamorphosis at the end of the film [Fig. 4]. The final product, rather than a monstrous image, results in a magnificent hybrid between swan and woman, a reformulation of the mythical harpy. Her anatomy is practically human, in accordance with the explicit wish of the director, who wanted to play with the beauty of the actress and the spectacular nature of the wings (whose plumage is part real and partly computer generated) to contrast it with the horrendous intensity of the moment of the transformation, when the feathers literally sprout from the epidermis.

The New York filmmaker does not eschew traditional techniques in his configuration of a repulsive universe verging on gore, as he also makes use of make-up, maquettes, puppets and prosthetic devices. Beth's injury to her own face or Nina's numerous wounds are a combination of make-up and prosthetics that form one of the director's hallmarks: the incision in the image of the bloody wound as an external expression of the state of mind. Nina virulently cuts the nails of an electronically articulated hand; Rothbart's make-up is based on a Michelangelo drawing of a satyr and enhanced with a prosthesis. The image-excess posited by the authors of *La pantalla mundial* (2009) is made evident by the emphasis on the spectacular and the detailed. The determination to achieve the perfect finish sometimes even results in the post-production digital enhancement of the already excellently executed make-up.

The whirls of the Bacchic dances, the tearing of the skin, the vivid apparitions and the creaking of the wood under the dancers' afflicted feet are all perceived acoustically in a disproportionate manner in keeping with the hyperbolic aesthetic of a hypermodern cinematic style. Nevertheless, the sonic exaggeration fulfils the needs of the horror genre. One strategy involves making use of sounds initially dissociated from the object from which they emanate, to produce antagonistic sensations and, ultimately, to elicit terror. Among the examples of this strategy are the director's stolen kiss, accompanied by the sound of grating knives, or the sigh we hear while Nina colours her lips with Beth's rouge. When the protagonist tries out her shoes for the first time, and she begins to tear and twist them to adapt them to her feet, image and sound evoke the condition of a discipline which, as in *The Wrestler*, the body is pushed to strain against its own nature.

The film's music is the work of Aronofsky's constant collaborator, Clint Mansel, both for the version of Tchai-

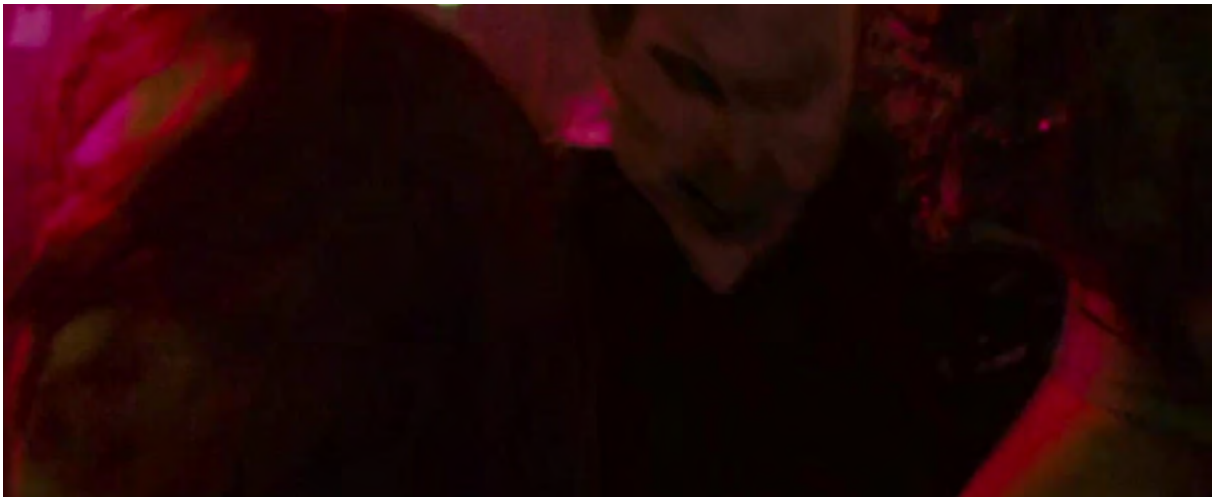


**Figure 5.** ***Black Swan*** **(Darren Aronofsky, 2010)**

kovsky's ballet and for the whole soundtrack. Music is employed as a conventional element of horror films, to provide atmosphere and to underscore dramatic tension. It is precisely its absence, accentuated by soft background noise, which gives certain scenes a naturalistic touch, generally in less emotionally charged moments in the story. Of note is the collage of very short shots on the nightclub dance floor, in which flashes, coloured lights, duplicated faces and even Rothbart himself are alternated with the images of the young girls [Fig. 5] dancing under the effects of ecstasy to the bacchanalian rhythm of the Chemical Brothers.

## Conclusions

Darren Aronofsky successfully takes on the tradition of the double, separating it from its magical connotations by drawing on ideas from the psychiatric and psychological disciplines. In this way he is able to increase the degree of credibility and, at the same time, the anxiety inherent to the suspense film. Riding the wave of the horror film revival, he can just barely maintain the balance between independent cinema and blockbuster production. The realistic element of the filming and the significant weight of the sound are accompanied by special effects typical of the digital age, not only as a mechanism for making an impact, but also to take full advantage of the symbolic power of objects, to highlight the classical phenomena of horror and to make the most of the basic tools of the audiovisual medium.

The film has been essentially conceived for visual enjoyment. However, its bombastic style is not at odds with intellectual commitment. In the plot, the art of dance conceals the wounds that are so caustically reiterated in the film and which, as in all of Aronofsky's work, foreshadow the impending doom and represent a soul in decay. The director has by this point begun to define his concerns and to reveal an aesthetic marked by some recognisable idiosyncrasies. In this particular story he portrays the mind of the artist, a figure on a constant quest for the impossible, with a perilous mission to bring out the wilder and darker side of the fragile and prudent self.

In this peculiar slasher in which the killer is at the same time the victim, the fable will be completed in the realm of reality: Beth's last role will be Melpomene, the Muse of Tragedy. Nina, like Odette, will only find the realisation of her dream in self-annihilation. Horkheimer and Adorno agree that the Freudian *death instinct* or Callois's *mimetisme* needs to be interpreted as an exegesis of the depth of the destructive impulses in modern society, and aggression would likewise constitute an intrinsic element of the human being (2007: 245-246). Perhaps it is more edifying to assume the more positive interpretative dimension that Marcuse gives the concept, when he suggests that *Thanatos* does not seek the destruction of life, but the elimination of its inherent pain (1955: 29). ■

ARONOFSKY HAS BY THIS POINT BEGUN TO DEFINE HIS CONCERNS AND TO REVEAL AN AESTHETIC MARKED BY SOME RECOGNISABLE IDIOSYNCRASIES

## Notes

* The pictures that illustrate this article have been provided voluntarily by the author of the text; it is her responsibility to localize and to ask for the copyright to the owner. (Edition note.)

1 In his detailed analysis of the figure of the double in the collective imaginary, the author suggests that *Fylgja* is a person's spiritual double, and it can leave its host while the latter sleeps. *Hamr* represents the physical double, the part suitable for metamorphosis and for the alter ego, which tends to make an appearance to

complete an unfinished act. Finally, *Hugr* is the universal active principle, which manifests in the *Hamr* and brings it to life.

2 Among other significant examples are E. T. A. Hoffmann and his tales *The Sandman* and *Automata*; Edgard Allan Poe with *William Wilson*; *The Portrait of Dorian Gray* by Oscar Wilde; and *The Terror* by Guy de Maupassant. It also extends into the twentieth century with *The Jolly Corner* by Henry James; *The Other* by Miguel de Unamuno; and *The Double* by José Saramago, and is expressed in diverse variations in Borges' work.

3 With the exception of Nina's bedroom, bathed in pink and full of stuffed animals, denoting her condition as an overprotected child in this claustrophobic apartment. A similar effect can be noted in her clothing, which will become darker and darker until, in the second part of the story, she is dressed completely in black for the first time, just when she decides to ignore her mother and spend time with Lily.

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# Kino Kino Kino Kino Kino: Guy Maddin's Cinema of Artifice

Sérgio Dias Branco

If Guy Maddin were a scientist, he would be a mad scientist. Perhaps, then, he is a mad artist, effusively mixing images that appear to come from the silent era and sounds that seem to come from the first talkies. The metaphor is apt —and not just because of the weird, frenzied scientist father in *Brand upon the Brain!* (2006). It is apt because it is in tune with his filmmaking, which uses archetypes, mental images inherited from previous generations that have become imprinted on our minds. Extending the metaphor, we could say that like Doctor Frankenstein, Maddin creates films out of parts, bringing to life that which has been temporarily forgotten or thought of as lifeless. His films constantly confront the ever-present risk that this monstrous creation may turn on him and destroy his art in the process. This article will briefly analyse the artifice that underpins his work, not because of its cleverness or deceitfulness, but because of the way it displays its own creation as film art and uses it as subject matter.

Maddin's films are immediately engaging and exhaustingly complex at the same time. They leave the enduring impression of a distanced, fleeting world, strangely close to our own — like a deep shadow of it. My purpose here is to reflect on this impression, giving an account of how the work of this Canadian filmmaker achieves this effect. His art may be understood as anti-naturalistic and anti-mimetic, since it does not represent our everyday life by simple imitation. *Dracula: Pages from the Virgin's Diary* (2002), a silent movie that tells Bram Stoker's tale through dramatic dance and in tinted black and white images, contains

*The Heart of the World* (Guy Maddin, 2001)

representational elements, but the filmmaker wants us to experience and comprehend it as an intentional and artificial construction. Yet this is a type of cinema in which the representation of the world (and its creatures) and the construction based on images of the past (and its artifice) are not opposites. Both features become meaningful because they rely on the imagination and the sedimentation of memory in order to trigger recognition. This study is therefore structured around the dialectical relationships between artifice and recognition, and film and memory, which are key aspects of Maddin's filmography. In the conclusion, I will focus on *My Winnipeg* (2007), a *docu-fantasy* about his hometown (as described in its subtitle) in which these characteristics are exacerbated and made to converge. After this I will offer a few final observations.

### 1. Artifice and recognition

Recognition need not be seen as the elementary and direct process of identifying what we have seen and heard before. Instead, it can also be defined as a complicated and indirect way of recognizing *how* we have seen and heard. Maddin's films deliberately deviate from stylistic traditions within film, such as continuity editing, naturalistic performance, and imperceptible alterations of sound and image. Maddin has a profound understanding of these conventions, but also of the stylistic features of the first melodramas, the first sound motion pictures, and surrealist films, among others. Consider *The Saddest Music in the World* (2003): its self-conscious and humorous playing, especially between silent cinema and the musical genre, draws on the filmmaker's knowledge of film history. Set during the Great Depression, the film re-examines ideas of fatalism, despair, frustration and anxiety: against a background of social misery, the flamboyant amputee Lady Helen Port-Huntley announces a competition to find the saddest music in the world. A story with such an immoderately absurd tone demonstrates that, as Caelum Vatnsdal suggests, "Maddin's films are more or less without subtext; they're hyper-aware of their own quirks and psychogenic baggage, and it's all there on the screen with no pretense whatever to latency or to the slightest subtlety" (2000: 13). These films are composed out of separable parts, but there is a match between their self-conscious style and their manifest meanings, connecting stylistic artifice with semantic acknowledgment. A case in point is *Sombra dolorosa* (2004), a short film about a girl who wants to join her recently deceased father in death. The reliance on Mexican myths and beliefs is accompanied by the use of a Latin American range of warm and lively colours. This connection between cultural context and aesthetic features is apparent when the attempt of the widow to save her daughter is depicted as a wrestling match with Death (also known as the *luchador* "El Muerto").

The director often employs stylistic elements that have developed in a different technological and historical context and these become fragments that lack a linear connection. Heather Hendershot notes in an interview with Zoe Beloff, an artist who also works with a variety of cinematic imagery, that Maddin "works with 16 mm [...] also in 8 mm, even two-strip Technicolor, which is about as obsolete as you can get!" (2006: 139). She adds that his films create a disturbed vision of the past where "there's no place for nostalgia" (HENDERSHOT 2006: 140). History becomes a spectral narrative that prompts educated viewers to try to recover their own memory in order to puzzle out what they are watching. In *Careful* (1992), for example, the sets, costumes, and props, create a deliberately unnatural effect, highlighted by the over-lit and saturated photography, alternating tinted monochromes with (what looks like) worn-out Technicolor. For Maddin, images are artefacts. Simultaneously handmade and mechanically produced, they have the force of the exclamation points that punctuate every other sentence in the title cards of his films. Furthermore, as reflected in *Careful*, the artifice of performances follows the artifice of images. Vatnsdal traces the lineage behind this affected acting, arguing that

> the grist for Maddin's stylistic mill comes from the early days of cinema; and his dramatic animus derives generally from nineteenth-century European literature. There is a level of tragedy which can only be expressed in broad, over-the-top terms, so melodrama, the more overwrought the better, is Maddin's primary nutritive. (2000: 13)

Similarly, George Toles, a film scholar and frequent collaborator with the filmmaker as a screenplay writer, confesses that he is "almost persuaded that the *only* way for narrative art to approach anything consequential is by accepting the following intractable condition: that art can't fully illuminate anything without falsifying or destroying it" (2001: 329). At the end of *The Heart of the World* (2001), the screen is intermittently filled five times with the word "Kino", which is Russian for "cinema". Indeed, one of the major stylistic influences of the film is the work of Soviet filmmakers. Darragh O'Donoghue calls attention to the fact that *Archangel* (1990) quotes from films like Yakov Protazanov's *Aelita* (1924), Sergei M. Eisenstein's *Battleship Potemkin* (*Bronenosets Potemkin*, 1925) and Aleksandr Dovzhenko's *Arsenal* (1928) (O'Donoghue, 2004: online). This influence is more ingrained and less dependent on explicit references in *The Heart of the World*. The flickering word indicates that the film is not calling attention to cinema as artifice just for the sake of it. This revelation of the artifice of cinema through a cinema of artifice is more of an acknowledgment —a way not to conceal the *expressive power* of the film, but to affirm this power, to appeal to an audience aware of it, and to invite an *aesthetic appreciation* from this audience. It is for this reason that it would be too easy and too hasty to classify Maddin as a postmodern artist. His intentional mixing of various artistic styles, media, and conventions, does not amount to a pastiche or homage. It is not even a re-appropriation, which would imply a decontextualisation. It is, on the contrary, a return to the past *as* present; that is, a route to the discovery of the *contemporariness* of ways of looking and listening through art that are often taken as old, obsolete, and irremediably distant. In contrast, the images and sounds of these films reveal the marks of the passage of time, leading us to reconsider the power of experiencing films and the culturally situated way in which we value their expressivity. This act of valuing film, as an expressive form that conveys thoughts or feelings, comes across as fundamental. To distracted ears and eyes, Maddin's films may seem to be imitating a cinematic past that seems too remote, even archaeological. But this is a misunderstanding. He does not imitate his predecessors so much as share their belief that film is an evocative and powerful tool for creating and preserving memory.

## 2. Film and memory

Maddin's work is marked by the intersection of various avant-garde film traditions from the silent era that reject naturalist and mimetic aesthetics. The transmission and exploration of the intricacies of human perception, feeling, and thinking, and the emphasis on the plasticity of images are related to French Impressionism. The constantly unsettling and charged atmosphere, and the use of high-contrast lighting, twisted sets, and histrionic performances are associated with German Expressionism. The dialogical structure, particularly the rhythmic and graphic articulation of images, and the quest to make a visual impact upon the viewer draws from Soviet editing and cinematic styles. Having said that, it must be added that Maddin's rejection of naturalism and mimetism does not amount to formalism. As we have seen and shall continue to see, his films do not divorce aesthetic ideas and specific techniques from thematic concerns, expressive dimensions, cultural awareness, and individual and collective history. Geoff Pevere sums up this interdependence, writing that

> Maddin makes films in which form isn't merely reflexively foregrounded. He makes films that take the form (the *forms* really) as their subject. Thus, if his style strikes one as off-putting, there's little recourse but rejection. Here, style is subject. (2009: 53)

It should be clear by now that in Maddin's films memory is akin to a treasure chest that contains images and sounds, figures and notes—in short, reminiscences of cinema. He draws a blueprint of his own films when he comments on his peculiar videotape collection, confessing his love of old classical film stars like Joan Crawford and his reverence for film-

***Cowards Bend the Knee [or The Blue Hands]***
**(Guy Maddin, 2007)**

makers like Ernst Lubitsch and Dziga Vertov (Vatnsdal, 2000: 137-145). He also admits to the influence of *Svengali* (Archie Mayo, 1931), a psychological melodrama about mind control, and his admiration for *The Blue Light* (*Das blaue Licht*, Leni Riefenstahl and Béla Balázs, 1932), a paradigmatic "mountain movie" that clearly influenced *Careful*. Yet memory is not just an archive, it is also a recurrent theme. In *Archangel* (1990), for instance, a Canadian officer named Boles cannot forget his dead lover, Iris, and confuses Veronhka with his lost love. Remembering is paired with forgetting in this drama set during World War I. Philbin, a Belgian aviator, does not remember his new bride Veronhka and abandons her on their honeymoon. A doctor tries using hypnosis to help both men, but is unsuccessful. The film also explores the medium as something hypnotic: Boles's and Philbin's memory lapses are presented through disembodied voices, recurring sounds, and blurry images. And these two male characters are no exceptions. Amnesic characters abound in Maddin's films: Narcissa in *The Saddest Music in the World* is another example.

In recent years, the director has developed a more personal engagement with his own memories in what he calls the *Me Trilogy*. *Cowards Bend the Knee or The Blue Hands* (2003) is the first of this series of films. Guy Maddin (Darcy Fehr), a hockey player for the Winnipeg Maroons, abandons his pregnant girlfriend Veronica to be with Meta. Meta is obsessed with her deceased father and persuades Maddin to let her cut off his own hands and replace them with the stained blue hands of her dead father. Once again, the ability to remember and memory loss are thematic concerns. Meta expects that Maddin's new hands will carry the memories of their previous body and kill her mother, her father's murderer. Maddin ends up forgetting not only his dying mother, who he desperately does not want to forget, but also the mother of his child, Veronica (Veronhka?). This first part of the trilogy provides images of memory preserved through appearances (for example, old hockey players are preserved as wax figures). Above all, it is explores the reinvention of memory through style: rapid editing, fleeting movements, repetitions and reiterations, or leaving entrancing and vibrant visual traces on the screen.

*Brand upon the Brain!* is the second film in the trilogy, a "remembrance in 12 chapters". It opens with images of clocks, which mark the passing of time, and brains, which store the memories of the time that has already passed. Guy Maddin (Erik Steffen Maahs) returns to the inhospitable Black Notch Island after an absence of thirty years. What is branded upon his brain? He recalls his parents, an oppressive mother and an unavailable father, and the orphanage they ran. The flashbacks to his childhood are a chain of fleeting images, as haunted as the man who has come home. The images are mainly in black and white, but occasionally in colour, as if connecting disparate elements or mixing the immiscible. There is no possibility of homogeneity or coherence in this depiction, which encompasses gender confusion, mistaken identity, sibling rivalry, oedipal tension, sexual envy, a whole host of ghosts and a zombie, making for an unsolvable puzzle that lays the ground for the final film.

## 3. His Winnipeg

In the context of a comparison between *The Saddest Music in the World* and *Cowards Bend the Knee*, James Hart remarks that "in making two very different films that complement each other so perfectly, Maddin almost seems to be asking critics and audiences to decide for themselves whether he is merely a stylish ironist or a living, breathing, feeling human being" (2004: *online*). This essay has called this dichotomy into question. There is only *one* Guy Maddin, whose fascination with old films and deteriorated copies is inseparable from his affection for the past (and from his attachment to his own past). My analysis has considered these two facets as complementary, giving singular meanings to a blend of fragments and forms. Nowhere is this more apparent than in *My Winnipeg*, the film that closes the *Me Trilogy*.

Winnipeg is the largest city in the province of Manitoba, where Guy Maddin was born in 1956 and where he still lives. It resembles the island of Black Notch in *Brand upon the Brain!* in its disconnectedness from the world. By naming the film *My Winnipeg*, Maddin inserts himself into the title and into the film, declaring that the point of view presented on this city is *his*. This time, the voice-over narration provides guidance and not just witty comments and narrative information. Mark Peikert writes that the filmmaker's hesitant and sincere voice "manages to walk a tightrope between utter earnestness and blackly comedic irony, turning his clunkiest lines into something approaching poetry and doing full service to his zingers" (2008: online). Artifice is acknowledged from the start when from off-screen he urges Ann Savage, who will play his mother, to repeat a line a "little angrier". All through this staged documentary, he says "Action!" many times before the fantasist re-enactments of his childhood in 1963 included in the film. His directions of a performance and calls for action reveal the artifice of Maddin's work, but this should not be confused with an ingenious kind of deceit or trickery. I have been employing the concept of *artifice* in a more primitive way, and in consonance with his film art, as simply the *making of art*. Acknowledging artifice is simply a means of disclosing art as made, but made with the purpose of producing penetrating aesthetic qualities, such as the incantatory repetition of phrases like "the forks / the lap".

Maddin's Winnipeg exists in a permanent winter, with a sleepy or sleepwalking population. The film frames and intertwines the tour around the city with Guy Maddin's (Darcy Fehr) delayed train journey. He is trying to leave Winnipeg and let go of his past, but not without looking back one last time. The film is an opportunity for him to imaginatively confront, record, and recreate his real and imagined memories. By remembering and documenting this memory on film he shows how these two types of memories, real and fantasized, are entwined and fused. From this perspective, *My Winnipeg* is a point of arrival, a work that sheds new light on Maddin's whole filmography, making full use of his stylistic convictions and explaining and exploring his vision. His universe was already unique, but here it is *personally unique*, in a generous rather than self-centred way. This generosity becomes evident when he nostalgically reminisces about the community life of Winnipeg that is being thoughtlessly erased, building by building, store by store. He calls this erasure a "blasphemy" and the religious language underlines the fact that these sites, where the shared history of the city have been inscribed, were worthy of respect, almost sacred. The colour images of the present radiate sadness and emptiness. Maddin's affection is felt even when he hilariously refers to the convent school he attended as the Academy of the Super Vixens ruled by "ever-opiating nuns".

Winnipeg comes alive in the film as though it is suddenly awakened. People and places are brought to life, like the spirits of great hockey players. Still, the resigned candour of Maddin's voice-over shows that he is aware that time cannot be turned back—perhaps only through the imagination. So he asks, "What if?" What if Citizen Girl were to rise from the pages of *The Winnipeg Citizen* and restore the lost sense of historical continuity? And what if Winnipeg was not Guy Maddin's hometown? The city has undoubtedly influenced his filmmaking, with its river over a river, its séances, and its reported paranormal activity. It is a place of snow fossils, skins beneath skins, old protected signs, forbidden lanes and alleyways; in short, a palimpsest similar to his films. It comes as no surprise that there are noticeable echoes of the first two parts of the trilogy. The mother who magnetically pulls him to her and to Winnipeg mirrors the bossy, enraged, and clingy matriarch in *Brand upon the Brain!* The beauty parlour where his mother works parallels the extravagant beauty shop in *Cowards Bend the Knee or The Blue Hands*. There are links with other films as well — the dancing sequence with an entranced Athea Cornish recalls the dance in *Dracula: Pages from a Virgin's Diary*. Despite this umbilical connection between Winnipeg and his films, Maddin wants to escape, to find a way out of the city. He is faced with the dilemma that closed the previous *Brand upon the Brain!*, "To stay... or to go...". He had made his decision when he embraced his memories and transformed them imaginatively. His attempt to leave tests his bond with his hometown. Looking afresh at old family photos, he now knows that he never left, that he never really wanted to leave.

***My Winnipeg*** **(Guy Maddin, 2003)**

*My Winnipeg*, a film about Maddin's heart and his city, on "the heart of the heart", also sheds light on the prominence of the word "Kino" in *The Heart of the World.* The word emerges as connected to the materialisation of film, that is, to that which film materialises as an affective blend of images, sounds, and, of course, words. "Kino" is *cinema*, but its presentation in *The Heart of the World* is as important as this meaning. It allows us to understand the significance of the word by treasuring its connection to the cultural heritage of cinema, through the foundational cinema of the Soviet Union. It also enables us to feel this significance more intensely because of how it appears. As an image of Maddin's filmography, this appearance is better described, not as intermittent, but as pulsating —as if we were referring to a mystifying, brooding, unwearying, giggling, throbbing heart. ■

## Notes

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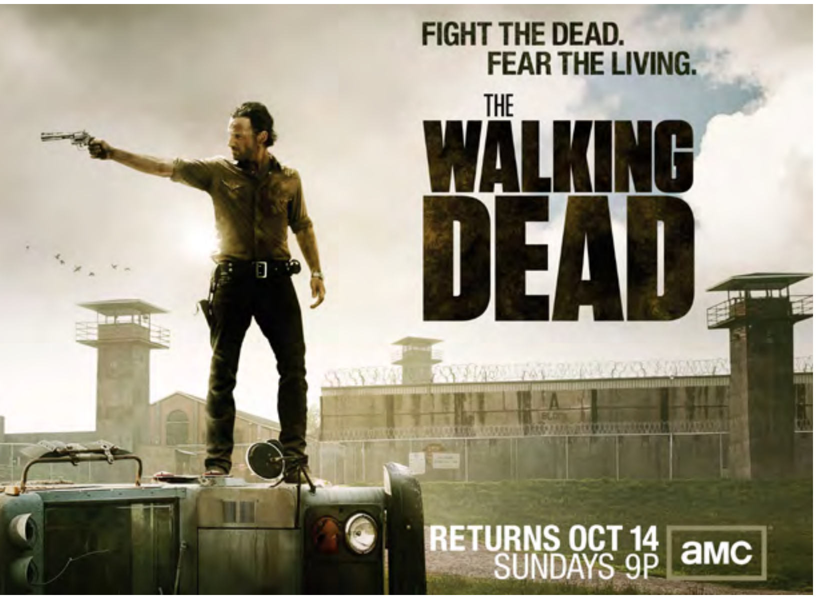
# Apocalyptic Visions of the Present: the Zombie Invasion in Post 9/11 American Cinema

Inés Ordiz Alonso-Collada

In his article "This Is Not a Movie" (2001) published in *The New Yorker*, Anthony Lane describes the reactions of New Yorkers and mainstream media journalists after the 9/11 attacks. Whilst some saw the incident as an invasion of horrific reality into the everyday life of a naïve nation, witness testimonies suggested a much more fictional interpretation of the event. Thus, in their descriptions of the terrifying sight of the attacks, people resorted to numerous cinematic similes: "it was like a movie", "it was like *Independence Day* [Roland Emmerich, 1996]", "It was like *Die Hard* [John McTiernan, 1988]", "No, *Die Hard 2* [Renny Harlin, 1990]", "'*Armageddon* [Michael Bay, 1998]." (LANE, 2001). Not only did these movies become a reality for New Yorkers, but a reverse process took place as well, as the visual nature of the attacks, combined with the real presence of horror in the everyday world, turned this terrorist act into a central theme for the film industry in the years that followed. Moreover, the change in political direction taken by the Bush administration after the attacks resulted in years of war atrocities, widespread paranoia, and staunch defence of the capitalist system. This new era of panic found an excellent means of expression in horror cinema, which has traditionally been a source of meaningful metaphors for a society's fears.

The horror genre has experienced a dramatic resurgence in the past decade[1] and, within the more general context of this trend, it is the zombie that seems to have had the most spectacular rebirth. Rising from the abyss of the B-movie series of the 1970s and 1980s to the paradise of the blockbusters, the zombie has become a central figure in present-day popular culture. From action role-paying games and themed walks down city streets, to a variety of merchandising, survival guides, volumes of criticism, cultural studies and philosophy[2], the figure of



**AMC's billboard of the third season of *The Walking Dead*: "Fight the dead. Fear the living"**

the walking dead seems to have *zombified* contemporary Western popular and academic culture.

Some authors have connected this invasion with the economic and human crisis of late-capitalist societies and the postmodern subject (FERNÁNDEZ GONZALO, 2011: 48), understanding the zombie in popular culture as the perfect metaphor for our frivolous human interactions, built upon a constant selfish yearning to own more, know more, eat more. The zombie is presented as an empty figure, as a signifier with a great number of potential signified which, having no meaning of its own, can serve as a metaphor for anything (FERRERO AND ROAS, 2011). Its representative value is updated with each new appearance, making it an excellent source of cultural allegory. George A. Romero, indisputable master of the genre, has equated the signifying capacity of zombie stories with that of children's fairy tales, concluding that both operate as "political stories" (LERMAN, 2008).

The figure of the zombie as a political allegory in the United States is reflected in the genre's increasing popularity in the country in recent years. Bishop (2010: 9) offers a plausible interpretation for the phenomenon in linking the zombie's resurgence with the terror and paranoia experienced by American society in the years following 9/11, when people realised that they were not as safe in their homeland as they once thought. According to this idea, the reappearance of the zombie in a post-9/11 context is directly related to these cultural fears and to some of the basic significations the character has been given in films. Thus, from a conservative perspective, the zombie appears as the ultimate representation of the Other. As Fernández Gonzalo (2011: 25) suggests, the living dead "are always alienated, foreign. And they bring out our fear of the outsider". This fear of alterity is reflected in recent films that radicalise the otherness of the monster, which is identified as the enemy of the *status quo* of conservative American society. On the other hand, from the more subversive perspective represented by filmmakers like Romero, the zombie is the image of capitalism, consumerism and media manipulation, operating as a critique of some of the actions taken by the Bush administration in the months following 9/11. Taking a historical and philosophical perspective to explain the persistent presence of the zombie in popular culture, this article will analyse these two faces given to the zombie in contemporary cinema. First, I will consider the presence of the zombie as a metaphor for the strange and monstrous which needs to be destroyed to preserve the conservative state of things; I will then offer an analysis of the use of this figure in films as a vehicle for caricature and social commentary.

## The zombie as the *Other*

The ability of the living dead to evoke the absolute otherness of the monster can be seen clearly in the zombie-vampires of the most recent film adaptation of Richard Matheson's novel *I Am Legend* (1954). The monsters in this homonymous version — *I Am Legend* (Francis Lawrence, 2007) — are "abject displays of horror" that are "unambiguously not human" (HANKTE, 2001: 170). The physical aberration of the monsters establishes a contrast between them and the humans at every level, and contributes to the development of a dualist perspective that locates morality at one end of the dichotomy. This strategy is also recognisable in the Bush administration's speeches following September 11, which emphasised the differentiation between Good and Evil in a Manichean reality in which "Americans were represented as 'good' people who are victims of 'bad' people, of those who are 'evil'" (ROCKMORE 2011: 5). In a public appearance following the terrorist attacks, President Bush himself asserted that "[o]urs is the cause of human dignity; freedom guided by conscience and guarded by peace. This ideal of America is the hope of all mankind. That hope drew millions to this harbor. That hope still lights our way. And the light shines in the darkness. And the darkness will not overcome it. May God bless America" (MORI, 2006: 62). This discourse of absolute concepts, along with a religious imaginary also reproduced in *I Am Legend,* portrays the United States as the Light, on the side of Good, while the country's enemy, the Islamic terrorist, the zombie, is irrevocably condemned to darkness.

From this perspective, the US government depicted its enemies as evil and of questionable humanity, identifying them with a widespread conception of Islamic extremism. The human protagonist of *I Am Legend*, played by Will Smith, is the personification of the other end of this opposition; the ordinary citizen turned hero, a representative of the American people, chosen by God to achieve great things. This idea, present in religious and political discourse in the US since the arrival of the first Puritan colonisers, is still apparent in the Bush administration's assumption that it is engaged in bringing democracy to a number of countries around the world, even if this means going to war (ROCKMORE 2011: 7).

The protagonist's sacrifice at the end of the film, bursting with Christian allegories, is essential to the preservation of conservative society, or for its transformation into a new traditionalist community free of the mistakes of the past. This new idealised traditionalist society is represented in the final scenes, in the community of plague survivors. Located in New England and referred to as "the colony", this new settlement evokes motifs of the colonial period as a metaphor for a new beginning. Surrounded by high walls that keep all foreigners out, protected by an armed guard, covered in American flags and built around a Christian church, this new community is a clear depiction of the conservative American dream.

### The zombie as us

However, as noted earlier, the zombie is also often associated with a critical vision of the society of the countries in which it appears. Fernández Gonzalo takes a philosophical perspective to sketch out a view of the living dead as a revolutionary being: "As opposed to conservative models, which develop formulas designed to reinforce essential ideologies, philosophical currents, lexical, scientific or technical concepts, the zombie suggests a change, the challenge of corroding traditional categories of thought and crossing the thin line separating a philosophy as conservation of established models from another as transgression and reformulation of everything we constantly take for granted." (2011: 103).

From this perspective, the zombie becomes an invitation to revise the *status quo* and acquires a potential for political satire. In the episode "Beside the Dying Fire" (#2x13, Ernest R. Dickerson, AMC: 2012) of the TV series *The Walking Dead*, we see Rick, the sensible hero and leader of the survivors of the zombie apocalypse, impose his judgement upon his frightened companions. "This is not a democracy anymore," he tells them. This warning (threat?) invites the audience to question the actions taken by the powers that be in emergency situations. To what extent can we justify violence, torture of prisoners of war, and the dictatorial decisions taken by governments to implement their ruthless, alienating policies as the only way of solving the economic, moral or national security problems of their countries? Whom should we fear: the Other, or ourselves? The poster for the third season of the series seems to offer an obscure answer to these questions with the caption "Fight the Dead. Fear the Living." In the US context, this proposal to question traditionally accepted truths is reflected in the zombie movies that have sought to offer a criticism of the Bush administration and its staunch defence of neoliberal capitalism, of the investment in national security and of the need for the Iraq war.

Zombie movies could be classified within the wider context of gore horror. Many horror films of recent years display a fascination for abject, dismembered, bloody bodies and the violence inflicted upon them, in a cinematographic approach rather less "underground" than that of the B-movies of the 1970s. As Tom Pollard notes, films "simply became more violent after 9/11, and horror films, among the most violent anyway, became even bloodier" (2011: 57) because "far from satiating public demand for violent entertainment, the events of September 11 only whet audience appetites for more torture, murder and mayhem" (56). Fernandez Gonzalo, adopting a more ideological perspective, directly connects the pornographic exhibition of the dismembered body with the existential crisis of the postmodern subject: "The paradigm of the zombie film plays with the iconography of the naked body, and its mutilation and its explicit carnality is always suggestive of what individuals in postmodern societies are lacking, the emptiness that makes each of us just another traveller wandering aimlessly and hopelessly through the media world" (2011: 55). Examples of this tendency are the *Saw* (James Wan, Darren Lynn Bousman, David Hackl, Kevin Greutert, 2004-2010) and *Hostel* (Eli Roth, Scott Spiegel 2005-2011) franchises, which fall within what critics since Edelstein (2006) have labelled "torture porn", and which have been linked to the torture inflicted upon prisoners of war in Guantanamo Bay.

THIS NEW ERA OF PANIC FOUND AN EXCELLENT MEANS OF EXPRESSION IN HORROR CINEMA, WHICH HAS TRADITIONALLY BEEN A SOURCE OF MEANINGFUL METAPHORS FOR A SOCIETY'S FEARS

The use of gore becomes especially suggestive when filmmakers use it consciously to achieve a typically ironic postmodern effect, as do Quentin Tarantino and Robert Rodríguez. In 2007, Rodríguez presented his own version of the zombie apocalypse with *Planet Terror,* a violent satire of US militarism and the War on Terror. The film offers a sort of miscellany of bodies disfigured by the zombie virus, all manner of amputations, and the ubiquitous carnality of its heroines, semi-naked *femme fatales* with remarkable skill in the use of any type of

*Planet Terror* © 2007 The Weinstein Company, LLC. All rights reserved.

firearm. The exaggerated aesthetic of Rodríguez's film is very much a conscious approach; according to Martínez Lucena, the intention is to use excess in order to "empty itself of ethical content, equating human life with nihilistic fiction" (2010: 158). Rodríguez's playful exaggeration is reflected in a comical use of staging and plot development which, according to Christopher González, continues a rich cinematic tradition of "blending what seems to be antipodal emotions: amusement and horror" (2012: 155)[3]. By presenting a group of zombies which, despite being physically revolting, are much less violent than the human protagonists, Rodríguez introduces a burlesque vision of the human condition. The criticism of war is presented through the film's depiction of the US army; its scientists are the ones responsible for the creation and subsequent release of the zombie virus, which was originally designed as a biochemical weapon to be used in the Iraq War. The lower-ranking soldiers are also caricatures, as reflected in the cameo role by Quentin Tarantino, who tries to abuse the heroine Cherry Darling. The parody reaches its climax when the militia leader and the story's villain (played by Bruce Willis) confesses to the murder of Bin Laden at the Afghan border, while he turns into a quivering mass of ulcerated flesh as a result of the virus.

As suggested above, the zombie has also been used as a metaphor for a capitalist economic system which, like the bodies of the living dead, although still walking, is rotting on the inside. Fernández Gonzalo also examines this dimension: "In this sense the zombie represents the brutality of an economic structure which allows a kind of Dionysian capitalism, of useless commodities, regulated leisure technology and hyper-codified spaces" (2011: 48). The US horror movie industry has successfully exploited this subversive meaning of the zombie to critique some of the basic pillars on which the neoliberal system advocated by the Republicans is founded.

As Aviva Briefel (2011) points out, some weeks after the 9/11 attacks, George Bush posited the combination of patriotism and consumerism as a national recipe to fight the Islamic terror: "We cannot let the terrorists achieve the objective of frightening our nation to the point where we don't – where we don't conduct business, where people don't shop" (2011: 142). The political discourse stressed the need to stock up on household essentials, like tape, canned food or mineral water, to be able to bunker down at home in the event of an attack (BRIEFEL, 2011: 142). This commercialization of terror is the idea behind Zack Snyder's 2004 homonymous remake of *Dawn of the Dead* (George A. Romero, 1978). The new film retains Romero's main premise: a group of survivors of the zombie pandemic find refuge in an abandoned shopping mall. In the original film, Romero had already highlighted the connection between the monster's instinct and the Western need to consume with images of zombies "pressed up against glass doors and windows, clamouring to get inside the shops, in a gross parody of early-morning-sale shoppers" (BISHOP, 2010: 139). The unconscious drive to consume is also mentioned as a reason for the presence of the zombies in the mall because it had been a place of great importance in their lives. This idea is reiterated in the remake:

> "Why are they coming here?"
> "Memory, maybe. Instinct."

The zombie and the human are placed on the same level in this assertion, both viewed as beings governed by the pure need to consume, whether goods or brains, which is essential to the development of the new patriotic model.

Indeed, the subversion enacted by Snyder is updated to a post-9/11 context; in addition to a number of criticisms of religious fanaticism contained in the film, the twenty-first century shopping mall is notable for the ubiquity of security cameras and guards not present in the original, including the security guard caricature C. J. The fact that this character with racist, sexist and homophobic tendencies should be the representative of authority in the shopping mall constitutes another allusion to an age of ineffective national leadership (BRIEFEL, 2011: 151-2). This critique is also suggested, in this and in other zombie films of the new millennium, by the references to the collapse of the government and the spread of the infection in the survivors' colonies due to mismanagement of a chaotic situation.

In a society ruled by fear, national and personal security become merely another commodity, a point explored in Romero's *Land of the Dead* (2005). According to Briefel, the film "blatantly critiques the Bush administration's exchange of individual freedoms for quixotic ideals of safety and wealth" (2011: 154). The motifs that Romero uses to make this critique are, on the one hand, the Fiddler's Green complex, a setting that satirises corporate America and big money, and, on the other hand, the slums far away from this safe haven, where the excluded masses reside. The criticism of the effect of the all-powerful economic system on the less fortunate classes and the suggestion that this situation constitutes a violation of human rights are part of Romero's attack on the dehumanising capitalism of neoconservative America. The movie also makes explicit reference to the War on Terror and its protagonists through the character of Kaufman, admitted by Romero himself to be a caricature of Donald Rumsfeld, and through dialogues such as "We don't negotiate with terrorists" and "I'm gonna do a jihad on his ass" (BRIEFEL, 2011: 154).

However, Romero's subversion is not limited to a mere caricaturing of the Bush administration; the filmmaker's characterisation of the zombies also serves as a critique. While in the director's previous films the figure of the zombie had been used to represent the most extreme state of otherness, unquestionably beyond the realm of the living, *Land of the Dead* depicts a type of zombie that blurs such absolute dichotomies. The living dead in this film retain part of their memories as humans, seem able to communicate among themselves with grunts, are organised in a society and gain the spectator's respect and sympathy when they manage as a group to breach the security of Fiddler's Green and eat the brains of the big business leaders. Contrary to the other versions of the zombie motif explored above, the living dead in this case do not represent the enemy of the United States, but are instead yet another victim of dehumanising capitalism. Both the marginalised humans and the zombies in the film are trying to survive in a harsh reality while they are exploited and massacred by the powers that be. Bishop (2010: 193) connects the explicit violence inflicted upon the zombies in the film to the inhumane treatment of prisoners at the Abu Ghraib prison in Iraq in 2004. This connection serves to underscore the brutal nature of the neoliberal US system and the incapacity of its leaders to govern according to the needs of the people.

In 2007, George A. Romero released *Diary of the Dead,* a film that offers a criticism of the manipulation of information by the media. Jason, the film's protagonist, is shooting a low-budget horror movie that ends up becoming a recording of his own experience of the zombie apocalypse. This playful shifting between the metafiction of the film that Jason is working on and the reality of the zombie pandemic reflects what Bishop (2010: 201) dubs "self-referential postmodernism", and constitutes a parody of the contemporary need to document the reality that surrounds us, which only seems real if we see it on a screen. The critique undertaken in *Diary of the Dead* is articulated with direct references to the media coverage of the situation following the 9/11 attacks. The media saturation of New York City turned the attacks into the most documented event in history, as noted in the HBO documentary *In Memoriam: New York City* (2002), which itself consisted of a *collage* of videos and photos taken by media professionals, film directors and amateurs who in some cases put their lives in danger to document the attacks (KELLNER, 2004: 4). This is just what happens to Jason who, when he can no longer hold the camera because of injuries inflicted by one of the zombies, asks his friend Debra to film his death.

***George A. Romero's Diary of the Dead*** **© 2007 Artfire Films**

Romero's film also offers a depiction of the manipulation of information by the Bush government in the months following 9/11. The radio and TV news seem to be tracking the experiences of the protagonists in *Diary of the Dead*, but they offer a false view of the situation, lying about the nature of the phenomenon and making constant references to a possible terrorist attack as the cause of the apocalyptic scene. This information, overlapped with images of the zombies attacking, constitute a hilarious parody of the disinformation and insistent focus on terrorism of certain media networks in the months after 9/11. The alarmist testimonies and repeated allusions to the possibility of biological or chemical warfare creates a state of panic among the American people, who see the multimillion government investments in weaponry as necessary and the War on Terror as justified.

## Conclusion

Both Romero's most recent films and *Planet Terror* and *Dawn of the Dead* attempt a deconstruction of the figure of the zombie as a mere portrait of a Satanic Other, instead inviting the spectator to reflect on the *status quo* of contemporary society. The dualistic discourse of the Bush administration, which is reflected by other films such as *I Am Legend,* is picked apart in these films in their exploration of the subversive capacity of the zombie motif. In her analysis of literary fantasy, Rosemary Jackson (1981) highlights the ability of literature –also applicable, in this case, to cinema– to expose a discourse that is conventionally silenced. According to the author, the fantastic "traces the unsaid and the unseen of culture: that which has been silenced, made invisible, covered over and made 'absent'" (1981: 4). This Freudian idea of the fantastic is directly related to the critique of the status quo made by the zombie movies analysed in this last section. In opposition to the dominant discourse of panic, of fear of the foreign Other, of consumerism and violence as the patriotic recipe that proliferated following 9/11, certain zombie movies have offered a subversive vision of contemporary American society, concealed among caricatured characters and metaphorical cadavers.

Whether it is used in defence of a conservative perspective or with a more unsettling view of reality, the zombie is a figure that has proven to be a valuable vehicle for a varied range of significations. Using Saussure's terminology, adopted later by Lévi-Strauss, the zombie is a "floating signifier" that can become a repository for a wide variety of social and psychological values in the context of Western patterns of thought (HOGLE, 2010: 3). In the post-9/11 society of fear, zombies became a means of recreating the American cultural trauma through the repetition of images of destruction, and a textual pretext for the radicalising of the otherness of the enemy. The postmodern zombie, on the other hand, is also the macabre foundation of a fierce criticism of George Bush's Republican regime and its discourse of panic, the inhuman capitalist system that continues to survive although it is rotting within, and the ultimate deconstruction of the border separating us from "the Other". In a constantly threatened post-9/11 reality, in which information is manipulated and power is in the hands of faceless or constantly changing entities –corporations, markets, the global economy– the zombie is the ideal distorted reflection of human society: horrific, consumed, decomposed, dead. ■

## Notes

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1 Notable among the texts analysing the resurgence of the horror genre in recent years are the articles included in Briefel and Miller's anthology (2011). For a more specific analysis of the figure of the zombie in this context, see Bishop (2010).

2 For a philosophical analysis of the zombie in popular culture, see Fernández Gonzalo (2011) and the collection of essays edited by Richard Greene's compilation (2006).

3 For a more detailed study of this tendency, see Carroll (1999).

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# Logic, poetics and ontology of *Alphaville*

Miguel Alfonso Bouhaben

Translated by Violeta Alarcón Zayas

It is indisputable that underlying *Alphaville* (Alphaville. Une aventure étrange Lemmy Caution, Jean Luc Godard, 1965) is a fierce criticism of all systems that seek to restrict individual freedoms. In the film, the city of Alphaville is controlled by Alpha 60, a sort of computerised Big Brother that watches, weighs and predicts any subversive element beyond its reach. This absolute control of Alpha 60 can be identified with the theory of determinism posited by Pierre-Simon Laplace:

> We may regard the present state of the universe as the effect of its past and the cause of its future. An intellect which at a certain moment would know all forces that set nature in motion, and all positions of all items of which nature is composed, if this intellect were also vast enough to submit these data to analysis, it would embrace in a single formula the movements of the greatest bodies of the universe and those of the tiniest atom; for such an intellect nothing would be uncertain and the future just like the past would be present before its eyes. (LAPLACE, 1951: 4)

In a manner similar to Laplace´s demon, the calculating and predictive logic embodied by Alpha 60 seeks to abolish the slightest hint of individual thought. Lemmy Caution, the protagonist of the film, played by the inscrutable Eddie Constantine, represents the philosopher who wonders about the causes of things, thus set against Alpha 60 representing a cold, inhuman mechanism that can only understand consequences:

> "The task of Alpha 60 is to calculate and project the results which Alphaville will subsequently enjoy."
> "Why?"
> "No one ever says 'why'; one says 'because'. In the life of individuals, as in the life of nations, all is linked, all is consequence."

However, Laplace´s demon and Alpha 60 both fall prey to the following illusion: if it is possible to know all the forces that set nature in motion, it would be possible to know all the past and all the future. Freedom would thus be eliminated and it would be impossible to escape the limits and determinations imposed by the Almighty Intelligence. Chance would be impossible. It could therefore be suggested that Alpha 60 operates as the Prime Mover of reality. The Prime Mover, the first letter of the Greek alphabet, the first movement that has the ability to draw out, flawlessly, any result: "We record, calculate, draw conclusions. [...] An order is a logical conclusion. One must not be afraid of logic. Simply that. Period."

What position should we adopt towards such deterministic logic, capable of the greatest massacres and brutality? Should we not be afraid of such a totalitarian system that imposes an equally totalitarian semantics? For Godard, this determination necessarily restricts freedom. The world of Alphaville is "the world of large urban concentrations intended to suppress adventure in the interests of planning" (GUBERN, 1969: 82). Only from the perspective of indeterminacy and freedom will it be possible to construct a logic, a poetics and an ontology beyond this planned universe to strive towards a libertarian, nomadic landscape. Godard is clearly closer to Heisenberg than to Laplace. In an interview with Serge Daney, he confesses it: "I really like *The Physicist's Conception of Nature*, where what Heisenberg says is not what he has seen. There is a great struggle between the eyes and language" (DANEY, 1997: 23). We must remember, at this point, that Heisenberg's uncertainty principle refers to the way of measuring subatomic particles and he asserts that a subatomic object cannot be observed without being changed by it. To observe is to transform. Hence the conclusion that we cannot know both the position of such an object and its velocity. And if we cannot know both the position and velocity, then we cannot predict whether two things will connect. It is thus impossible to maintain the logical order of Laplace based on the principle of causality. The French philosopher Gilles Deleuze suggests some keys for the construction of a new ontology critical of Laplace's causality and much more in keeping with the scientific theories of Heisenberg whom Godard admires so much: "No one, not even God, can say in advance whether two borderlines will string together or form a fiber, whether a given multiplicity will or will not cross over into another given multiplicity, or even if given heterogeneous elements will enter symbiosis" (Deleuze and Guattari 2004: 276)

ALPHAVILLE
SILENCE · LOGIQUE
SECURITE · PRUDENCE

***Alphaville*** **(Alphaville, une étrange aventure de Lemmy Caution, Jean-Luc Godard, 1965)**

These subatomic particles transformed by observation as defined by Heisenberg are referred to in Deleuzian ontology as individuating differences. These particles are also in a permanent state of indeterminacy, in total mutation, consequently impeding any prediction or logical conclusion about their past or future states. This new ontology requires the invention of a new logic, a new way of thinking, a new way of creating, but also a poetics. Lemmy Caution, Godard's metaphysical detective, will come from the Outlands to propose a new ontology, a new indeterminate logic and a new but far from fixed poetics that puts an end once and for all to the fascist hegemony of Alpha 60. As a starting point to explain his critical position, consider some of the answers that Lemmy gives to Alpha 60's questions:

> "What were your feelings when you passed through galactic space?"
> "The silence of infinite space appalled me."
> "Do you know what illuminates the night?"
> "Poetry."
> "What is your religion?"
> "I believe in the immediate data of consciousness." [quote from the philosopher Henri Bergson]

In the following section, I will offer a brief outline of the consequences of each of these questions in an effort to establish the logic, the poetics and the ontology of this film.

## Logic

I will begin by analysing the above questions and answers. Alpha 60's first question ("What were your feelings when you passed through galactic space?") is a question about sense. Following González Requena (1999: 25), sense can be defined in three different ways: linguistic (sense as meaning), logical (sense as direction) and sensory (sense/feeling as experience). In the case that

*Alphaville* **(Alphaville, une étrange aventure de Lemmy Caution, Jean-Luc Godard, 1965)**

concerns us here, sense/feeling refers to an act of transgression: stepping across the border into the Outlands and back into Alphaville. This transgression appears in the film itself according to the three types of sense indicated above.

Firstly, transgression of linguistic sense. In this film, Godard plays constantly with double entendres, decontextualisations and portmanteaus (constructs that fuse two meanings into a single word). In *Alphaville* we find this type of synthesis, for example, in the name of the newspaper that Lemmy reads: the *Figaro-Pravda*. These games with language played by Godard run counter to the totalitarianism that has invaded language theories, especially the Platonic totalitarianism of the name-idea that condenses a heteromorphous multiplicity into the domain of a single signifier. Faced with a portmanteau, Plato would have struggled to find its corresponding reasonable and logical idea. He would probably have dismissed it as a meaningless freak of nature. But Plato is not the only enemy to fight with. For Godard the greatest enemy is the dominant language and the mechanisms of propaganda that impose their power structures on minority languages. The dominant language is the one that *must* be spoken in Alphaville to avoid death. As Lemmy remarks:

> I walked through the theatre of executions. Usually, we would seat them in a room and electrocute them in their chairs as they watched a show. Then we'd dump them into huge rubbish bins and the theatre was ready for the next batch. If an individual showed hope of reclamation he was sent to a chronic illness hospital where mechanical and propagandistic treatments soon cured him.

This world of *Alphaville* is not so different from the one in which we live. Godard knows this and shows it with his usual sagacity and with a certain sarcasm in his repeated correlations between Nazi Germany's and Hollywood's methods of alienation. A world in which sense-meaning is gradually destroyed by man`s barbarity to man. This world is a world that has to be re-signified. And Godard produces this resignification with unprecedented depth and creativity.

Secondly, transgression of logic or of sense as direction. *Alphaville* is obviously not a film with a linear, predictable narrative direction. Although the content of the film revolves around modes of alienation and their subsequent logical and scientific organisation, it should be noted that the structure of the sense of the film in terms of direction is constantly being reoriented. In fact, Godard distributes a series of arrows that point in different directions. At the beginning of the film, Godard introduces an arrow pointing to the right, in the direction of Western writing. But just when Lemmy is arrested as an insurgent, Godard introduces a new arrow in the opposite direction. The typography of the symbol is different, suggesting the idea that each arrow outlines the direction of the confronting forces in the story. It may seem that the arrow of the beginning indicates the direction of Lemmy, while the other arrow indicates the direction of his opponents, Alpha 60´s arrow. However, the directions are not so clear and defined, as in the scene where Lemmy takes a taxi we find the following an enlightening dialogue:

> "Do you prefer I pass through the North Zone or the South?"
> "What's the difference?".
> "There's snow in the North and sun in the South."
> "Anyway, it's my journey to the end of the night."

Directions have lost their specific significance for Lemmy. He is adrift, a wanderer in a world of predetermined directions that cannot be transgressed. He is a genuine outsider in a hyper-encoded world. For him there is neither north nor south, neither east nor west. There is not even a world of ideas or a world of reality. All spatial location has been thrown to the wind. Yet Godard constantly inserts directional elements throughout the text; both the arrows pointing east and west, and the neon signs pointing north and south. In a sense, the posters are part of the expression of Alpha 60 and they seem to have the specific task of keeping Lemmy from drifting through this gridded city, to impose obstacles or predetermined directions on Lemmy´s aimless wandering. But Lemmy, like a good Nietzschean, does not submit to the ordinates and abscissas. Nor does Godard, whose films are, as David Oubiña suggests, "a visual heterotopy more than a dialectical montage" (OUBIÑA, 2000: 26)

Thirdly, transgression as sense experienced. It is true that Lemmy battles Alpha 60´s language of power and the legally approved dictionary that has erased all words deemed dangerous to its domination. His sense-direction is not prewritten or predefined, however much the forces in this dark and demonic city may try to restrain his freedom of movement. But it is also true that what Lemmy feels in this world, his experience in Alphaville, gives a new dimension to the word "sense". Lemmy's journey from beyond the Outlands and crossing infinite space to reach Alphaville has left him shaken: "The silence of infinite space appalled me." Lemmy´s answer here reveals how the infinite nature of space constitutes an extraordinary experience. Unlike Laplace´s space, which is finite, the infinite space beyond Alphaville always admits an outside world towards which to reach, a great beyond to be conquered: an open space without precise limits where meetings and intersections between things and beings are possible, where differences of differences are random and unpredictable. This unleashes a kind of Deleuzian nomadic distribution of being: an arrangement that means a leap over all fences and all barriers and involves the fusion of boundaries to dissolve the identity. Thus, if space is open and infinite, then it is not possible to determine things according to the orderly, totalitarian, fascist and predatory logic of Alpha 60. And it is just this nomadic distribution of space that appals Lemmy: the silence of infinite space which is nothing less than the sum of all possible sounds; sounds forbidden in Alphaville, censored with the violence with which Plato treated the poets. In this way, sense as experience is hinted at in this film as that unspeakable experience that is inscribed into Lemmy when he crosses the silence full of the sounds of infinite space, and his consequent devastation over the annulment of all feeling among the inhabitants of Alpha 60.

In conclusion, the narrative and expressive logic of the film is a logic contrary to dictatorial suppositions of Alpha 60: an alogical logic that operates through unpredictable alliances, a logic where sense as meaning, direction and experience calls into question the univocity of the Platonic idea. A logic of multiple senses.

## Poetics

Alpha 60´s second question, Lemmy´s second answer, that the night is transformed into light by poetry. This answer, without doubt, constitutes an inversion and perversion of Platonic logic. For Plato, the passage from the night of the cave –of shadows and of appearances– to the light of the world outside, that is, the world of ideas, does not happen through poetry but through dialectics. The Greek thinker argues that ideas cannot be grasped through poetry. Indeed, poetry is his fiercest enemy in the sense that the rhythmic images that poetry brings into play can never offer access to the world of perfect and universal ideas, or to the truth of reality. The images of poetry are copies of the objects of the real world, which, in turn, are copies of ideas, "they [poetry lovers] may not have remembered when they saw their works that these were but imitations thrice removed from the truth [...] they are appearances only and not realities" (Plato, 1892: 311-312). For this reason, and for other moral reasons, such as when he assumes that poetry imitates the irrational parts of the soul and is a pernicious example for youth and for a State founded on law and reason, Plato seeks to expel poets from the Greek *polis*: "we shall be right in refusing to admit him into a well-ordered State, because he awakens and nourishes and strengthens the feelings and impairs the reason" (Plato, 1892: 320) In Alphaville, a city that takes the ideal of the city-state proposed by Plato to the extreme, they are more emphatic: anyone who does not conform to the prescriptions determined logically by Alpha 60 is inevitably executed. And, logically, those who fail to adapt to the technocratic society of Alphaville tend to be those who have a different way of looking at reality: poets, artists, musicians. In one scene, Henry Dickson and Lemmy appear, and while they talk, Lemmy hits a light bulb, striking at the light as a Platonic symbol of truth, in a poetic gesture

LEMMY CAUTION, GODARD'S METAPHYSICAL DETECTIVE, WILL COME FROM THE OUTLANDS TO PROPOSE A NEW ONTOLOGY, A NEW INDETERMINATE LOGIC AND A NEW BUT FAR FROM FIXED POETICS THAT PUTS AN END ONCE AND FOR ALL TO THE FASCIST HEGEMONY OF ALPHA 60

IN THE CASE OF ALPHAVILLE, THE LOGICAL DEVICE BRINGS THE IMMEDIATE CONSEQUENCE OF ANNIHILATION OF ANYONE WHO REFUSES TO ADAPT

that provokes a stirring of shadows:

> “Alphaville is a technocracy, like that of termites and ants.”
> “I don´t understand.”
> “Probably one hundred and fifty light years ago, there were artists in the ant society. Artists, novelists, musicians, painters. Today, no more. “

Thus, the scientific-capitalist society of Alphaville needs to control its inhabitants to prevent them from immersing themselves in the illogic of poetry:

> “It controls them. How come? “
> “Because they write incomprehensible things. Now I know: it used to be called poetry.”

Poetry offers us another way of knowing, another truth in alliance with the future. Poetry transmutes all materials, transfigures all forms, moves in ambiguity, unleashes all meanings, transgresses all borders. In this sense, the limits of the world that Plato´s philosophy needs, and the firm, univocal, true and absolute knowledge to which it aspires, are broken by the inherent *hubris* of poetry and by its passion and vocation for the multiplicity of things in the world, for appearances and for movement. As María Zambrano astutely notes: “The philosopher wants oneness because he wants everything. The poet wants each individual thing without restriction, without abstraction or renunciation [...] He wants a wholeness through which each thing is possessed [...] he wants reality [...] the reality of being and non-being” (ZAMBRANO , 2000: 22). This difference between philosophy and poetry clarifies why Plato wanted to expel the poets: their passion for non-being could destabilise the civic republic.

Therefore, the light that Lemmy speaks about is very different from Plato's light: Lemmy´s love for each individual thing, his passion for paradox, has nothing in common with the logic and totalitarianism of Alpha 60. The world to which Lemmy aspires is not the world of the *polis* or the world of Alphaville, both of which are extremely codified worlds. Indeed, the structure that Plato advocated for the Greek *polis*, according to a caste system and a predetermined functionality, is the origin, or to be more precise, the inspiration of a State governed by the rule of law. The rule of law, developed to the extreme, has reached heights of subjugation and control of lives even more egregious than those of Alphaville. And the State does not understand poetry, because the poetic is something that is not subject to any law, something free from any ironclad structure of domination. It is no surprise that both Plato and Alpha 60 should hate poets and new ways of naming the world. Poets are dangerous because their way of naming is an act of creation. But they are also dangerous because they know no limits: they jump and breach boundaries without fear in search of a missing verse. For this reason, the State needs gods instead of poets, theology instead of poetics, a pure breed instead of mixed races, a border instead of the free flow of ideas and beings.

Hence the firm ban on travel to the Outlands, because people there are not subject to these regulations and poetry is not illegal. The Outlands are something like the non-place of the utopia of a poetic society. In Alphaville, however, words are subjected to all kinds of censorship, as the character played by Anna Karina explains: “Nearly every day words disappear, because they are forbidden. They are replaced by new words expressing new ideas.” And against this totalitarian regime, Godard makes poetic use of music as it enters into combat with the oppressive images of Alpha 60, music as a breath of life that brings Lemmy from the Outlands: “In Alphaville, music seems to be in counterpoint and even in contradiction to the image: it has a traditional side, romance, which disrupts the world of Alpha 60. It serves as one of the elements of the story: it evokes life, it is the music of the Outlands. And as the characters often speak about the Outlands, instead of filming them I let people hear their music” (GODARD, 2010: 44).

In short, poetics of the film is clearly and absolutely contrary to the movement of denial that sustains the predictive and legalistic structure of Alpha 60. Alpha 60 denies poetry in order to impose calculus. Godard, on the other hand, constructs a film that is open to the unpredictable, a film in which fiction and documentary become poetically indiscernible: “Alphaville is a completely fictional film [...] but at the same time it is developed very much in a documentary style” (GODARD, 1980: 116). But this is also a film where borders between genres are blurred, as “it is like a comic [in which Lemmy] comes to conduct an investigation and then goes away again [...] all Westerns are like this” (GODARD, 1980 117), and where what can and cannot be done in a film is constantly called into question.

It is a poetic film about the madness of instrumental reason. An anti-idealist film against the Platonic motto “expel the poets”. A revolutionary film against the narrative laws of causality. “It is, more than any other of Godard's films, a film of poetry” (VIOTA, 2003: 8).

## Ontology

Alpha 60´s third question, Lemmy´s third answer. When asked for his religious affiliation, Lemmy replies: ″the immediate data of consciousness″, a key text in Henry Bergson´s work. First of all, it should be noted that religion is only a symbolic system, a system of representations in which a god or several gods represent the ideal of a people, something highly consistent with Plato's philosophical framework. However, this ideal can be utterly predatory. In the case of Alphaville, the logical device brings the immediate consequence of annihilation of anyone who refuses to adapt. In the scene of the execution in the pool, we witness Lemmy´s surprise and indignation at such an absurd spectacle. When he asks what the accused had done, the answer is that "they behaved illogically". Thus, according to this argument, anyone who does not follow logic is executed, revealing how Platonic logic and its movement towards abstraction can feed all forms of Fascism.

On the other hand, following the ideas of the German philosopher Ludwig Feuerbach, God or gods are projections of Man, which constitutes a new inversion of Platonism, especially Christian Platonism. While previously God was the one who gave life to all beings, now it is the beings who make possible the existence of God. However, Deleuzian ontology establishes that beings are equivocal projections of a Univocal but Immanent Being. As Deleuze points out in *The Movement Image*, for Bergson Being is: Matter = Movement = Image = Light; i.e., a place of immanence where movement-images react to each other on all of their facets and parts, and in which the lines of material-light in motion are constantly propagating themselves and expanding in all directions (DELEUZE, 1984: 56-62). But if everything is in motion, how can there be a consciousness that *sees* the movement-images, this matter-light in mutation? Who perceives? In reality, we are in the pre-subjective field where subjects are conferred and, therefore, consciousness is merely a special image that reframes the metamorphoses. Each movement-image is a perception of the movement-images that act on it. In this sense, Lemmy's answer, his belief in the immediate data of consciousness, leads to Bergson's idea that consciousness is not something separate from the state of things in mutation. Consciousness, like the rest of things in the world, mutates and differs from others constantly. Therefore, Lemmy´s Bergsonian religion is fundamentally anti-theological. His religion is a religion of becoming and immanence opposed to unity and transcendence. It is an ontology without theology, an ontology adrift. Lemmy acknowledges this affiliation to an ontology without theology in one of the final scenes of the film, just when he is getting ready to remove the alienating veil that covers the face of Karina´s character:

> Increasingly I see the human form... as a lovers' dialogue. The heart has but one mouth. Everything by chance. All words without thought. Sentiments adrift. Men roam the city. A glance, a word. Because I love you. Everything moves. We must advance to live.

In this sense, Lemmy suggests that a different ontology is possible: a random, anti-Laplacean, rhizomatic ontology. Alpha 60, or Laplace´s God, or the Platonic Demiurge, are only a string of symbolic transcendent elements that enchain arborescent or circular structures. But the movement of life cannot be enchained. If the human form is a lovers' dialogue, there is no reason to set limits between what there is because all outlines are pierced by the positive power of love. It is a power not governed by any causality, but by coincidences; that does not determine or quantify feelings, but leaves them to float adrift; that does not allow things fossilise, but nourishes their becoming and their dynamism. And this fluctuation against the legal determinations and the general semantics of Alpha 60 are revealed by Godard in multiple ways: with the rupture of the narrative, the combination of genres, the play between music and images, and the assortment of references from domains outside cinema, such as those to Eluard, Pascal or Bergson (Liandrat-GUIDES AND Leutrat, 1994: 48).

*Alphaville* (Alphaville, une étrange aventure de Lemmy Caution, Jean-Luc Godard, 1965)

Like Lemmy, if we want to break out of the models of a predatory and alienating ontology that place beings in rigid compartments and classify and discipline them without allowing them a free will, if we want to escape this hyper-encoded system, we need to embrace the rhizomatic, to think adrift, to construct constantly changing dimensions, to jump the hieratic barriers of the State, the Market and the Religions. We need to dive into the new and the unknown. We need to avoid programs or recipes. Instead, we need to foster encounters, intersections and crossroads: love.

IN SHORT, WE NEED TO DO AWAY WITH UNIVOCAL METHODS AND RECIPES OF LOGIC (AND OF POETICS AND ONTOLOGIES) TO COMPOSE A LOGIC (AND A POETICS AND AN ONTOLOGY) UNDERSTOOD AS METAMORPHOSIS OF THE BOUNDARIES

In short, we need to do away with univocal methods and recipes of logic (and of poetics and ontologies) to compose a logic (and a poetics and an ontology) understood as metamorphosis of the boundaries. As Eluard, one of the repeated references in the film, puts it in *Capitale de la douleur*: "We live in a vacuum of metamorphosis'". That is, we live in a universe in motion which has to be defended against totalitarian regimes that seek to stifle life in scientific, economic and religious and legal structures. ■

## Notes

* The pictures that illustrate this article have been provided voluntarily by the author of the text; it is his responsibility to localize and to ask for the copyright to the owner. (Edition note.)

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# Aproximación a la definición de *hosted trailer* a través de la obra de Cecil B. DeMille, Alfred Hitchcock y William Castle

Javier Lozano Delmar

## 1. El contenido del tráiler. Un acercamiento a las estrategias comunicativas en la promoción de películas

El tráiler es una de las primeras formas publicitarias de naturaleza audiovisual. Su origen puede remontarse a comienzos del siglo XX y, más en concreto, a 1916. El tráiler cuenta con una estructura y morfología básica, con un triple componente visual, sonoro y textual, y su función principal —anunciar una película al espectador— ha permanecido inmutable hasta el día de hoy[1]. Además, según algunos estudios, se trata del formato de promoción cinematográfica más eficiente de cuantos existen (Klady, 1994: 13, 24). En vista de todo ello, resulta incomprensible la falta de atención académica en torno al formato y la escasez de trabajos que se ocupen de definirlo y de estudiar su origen y evolución histórica.

En el terreno internacional, destacan únicamente tres autores cuyo trabajo se conforma como un material imprescindible a la hora de estudiar cualquier aspecto relacionado con el tráiler cinematográfico. Por un lado, la profesora Lisa Kernan, de la University of California, Los Angeles (UCLA) de EE. UU., publicó en 2004 *Coming Attractions: Reading American Movie Trailer*, uno de los mejores trabajos sobre la cuestión, así como uno de los primeros que estableció una historia y abordó su origen, evolución y discurso retórico. Por otro lado, el profesor Vinzenz Hediger se doctoró en 2001 con una tesis al respecto (*Verführung zum Film: Der amerikanische Kinotrailer seit 1912*). Anterior y posteriormente a este trabajo, Hediger se ha dedicado a la elaboración de diversos artículos de investigación centrados en el tráiler cinematográfico, entre los que destaca uno particularmente interesante para esta investigación dedicado al concepto de tráiler de autor. Por último, cabe destacar la labor del profesor Keith Johnston de la East Anglia University, en el Reino Unido. Su libro, *Coming Soon: Film Trailers and the Selling of Hollywood Technology* (2009), estudia el uso de la tecnología como reclamo publicitario en el tráiler. También existe un documental realizado por The Andrew J. Kuehn Jr. Foundation en 2006 titulado *Coming Attractions. The History of Movie Trailers*, que ofrece una panorámica sobre la evolución del tráiler desde sus orígenes hasta la actualidad. En el terreno nacional, la investigación sobre el tráiler se limita a ciertas anotaciones o alusiones en algún manual de publicidad televisiva o cinematográfica. Destaca, no obstante, el trabajo del profesor Jon Dornaleteche de la Universidad de Valladolid, quien ha publicado diversas investigaciones sobre la materia y cuya tesis doctoral analiza la relación entre narrativa y retórica en el tráiler cinematográfico.

***Hosted trailer* de *Piratas del Caribe: En mareas misteriosas* (Pirates of the Caribbean: On Stranger Tides, Rob Marshall, 2011)**

Cuando se aborda la definición de tráiler, algunos autores tienden a calificarlo como un compendio de las mejores escenas y momentos de la película (Robnik, 2005: 59; Dusi, 2005: 38; Wells, 1993). Este tipo de definición es bastante frecuente y desvirtúa la esencia del tráiler, ya que reduce su composición a un simple resumen de la película, a un mero ensamblaje de imágenes ordenadas y editadas para dar a conocer la historia del film. Estas calificaciones no tienen en cuenta dos aspectos importantes relacionados con el contenido del tráiler.

En primer lugar, el tráiler no presenta en todos los casos un resumen de los hechos narrados en la película. Si bien es cierto que, en la mayoría de las ocasiones, funciona como una síntesis del film, también es cierto que resulta un error generalizar este hecho. Al fin y al cabo, como muy acertadamente precisa Pezzini, el resumen de la película es solo uno de los efectos posibles en la concepción de un tráiler (2005: 18). En segundo lugar, y como se verá a continuación, un tráiler no está formado única y exclusivamente por material procedente de la película. Así pues, el tráiler puede recurrir también a la utilización de imágenes en movimiento no extraídas del film.

El objetivo de este trabajo es ofrecer una visión diferente del tráiler a través del análisis del *hosted trailer* o tráiler presentado, entendiendo este como un subtipo particular de tráiler que comienza a surgir en la época del cine clásico de Hollywood y que centra su discurso en declaraciones directas de personas que han participado en la producción de la película. Tal y como se ha mencionado más arriba, el propósito y función principal del tráiler es clara: anunciar una película y, de ahí, su naturaleza publicitaria.

Algunos ejemplos de *hosted trailer* son los tráileres que se prepararon para las películas de *Ana Karenina* (Anna Karenina, Clarence Brown, 1935), *Tienda de locos* (The Big Store, Charles Reisner, 1941), *Background to Danger* (Raoul Walsh, 1943), *Estrellas en mi corona* (Stars in My Crown, Jacques Tourneur, 1950) o *La esclava libre* (Band of Angels, Raoul Walsh, 1957). Dos de los ejemplos más emblemáticos son los de *Ciudadano Kane* (Citizen Kane, Orson Welles, 1941) y *La gran ilusión* (La grande illusion, Jean Renoir, 1937). Lo interesante de este tipo de tráiler es que no recurren al reclamo del contenido de la película como estrategia principal de seducción, sino que construyen un discurso promocional en torno a la figura del presentador o invitado del tráiler. Hoy en día, la fórmula del *hosted trailer* sigue utilizándose en la campaña publicitaria de algunas películas. Los casos son mucho menos frecuentes y, exceptuando algunos ejemplos claros como *Juguetes (Fabricando ilusiones)* (Toys, Barry Levinson, 1992) o *Piratas del Caribe: En mareas misteriosas* (Pirates of the Caribbean: On Stranger Tides, Rob Marshall, 2011), en su mayoría funcionan más como entrevistas breves (fusionando su discurso con el del *making of*) que como tráileres presentados, como puede verse en *¿Por qué se frotan las patitas?* (Álvaro Begines, 2006) o *La pesca del salmón en Yemen* (Salmon Fishing in the Yemen, Lasse Hallström, 2012)[2].

Este estudio permitirá analizar la composición y estructura de los primeros *hosted trailers*, y las estrategias narrativas publicitarias que estos construyen para seducir al público. De este modo, queda claro que el interés de este trabajo se enmarca fundamentalmente dentro de los estudios de la publicidad. Además, pretende cubrir una parte de la hasta ahora poco explorada historia del tráiler, identificando una serie de patrones o características comunes que sirvan como punto de referencia para futuros trabajos dedicados a estudiarlo.

Con este objetivo, se llevará a cabo un análisis del contenido de los tráileres presentados de tres realizadores que, por su creatividad y originalidad, suponen un punto y aparte en la concepción y realización de estas piezas: Cecil B. DeMille, Alfred Hitchcock y William Castle.

## 2. El sello de autor. Los tráileres de Cecil B. DeMille

DeMille es uno de los realizadores prototípicos del emergente sistema de estudios que comienza en la segunda década del siglo XX en Hollywood. Su trabajo —más de cuatro décadas en las labores de dirección cinematográfica— se caracteriza, además de por sus películas de carácter épico y aventurero, o de temática contemporánea, por la espectacularidad con que trató diversos dramas bíblicos e históricos (Sánchez Noriega, 2003: 352). El cineasta prestaba un especial cuidado a la puesta en escena de sus producciones (figurantes, decorados, etc.) y en su empaquetado comercial.

Para el público de la época, DeMille no es únicamente un director de cine sino una personalidad reconocida con un poder de persuasión comparable al de cualquiera de las *stars* del cine clásico (The Andrew J. Kuehn Jr. Foundation, 2006). Entre 1936 y 1944, DeMille ejerce de presentador de un programa de radio sobre el medio cinematográfico, el Lux Radio Theater, en el que se dedica a entrevistar a estrellas de cine (Hediger, 2002: 44). Sus tráileres se integran en la línea de filmes que hablan sobre la producción de una película (2002: 53).

Un ejemplo de esto puede verse en el tráiler de *Por el valle de las sombras* (The Story of Dr. Wassell, 1944), donde se construye un discurso sobre la producción de la película[3]. La pieza comienza con DeMille escuchando una locución radiofónica en la que el presidente Roosevelt rinde homenaje a un héroe de guerra. Al terminar la intervención, a DeMille se le ocurre la idea de realizar la película y llama inmediatamente al presidente de Paramount para proponerle el proyecto. El resto del tráiler, de unos cuatro minutos de duración, sigue a DeMille trabajando en varias etapas de la producción: desde las entrevistas a los actores a la elección de los decorados y la elaboración del vestuario. A partir de un momento, el tráiler deja atrás esta escenificación y comienza a mostrar imágenes pertenecientes al film. Como apunta Hediger: «Cecil B. DeMille utiliza sus tráileres como plataformas al servicio de una *performance* [...]. DeMille se presenta a través de una puesta en escena de él mismo que representa una especie de metarrelato incorporado al relato fílmico, y que habla sobre la manera en que se hacen las películas» (2002: 52)[4].

En este tráiler, DeMille no se dirige aún de forma directa al espectador sino que muestra una puesta en escena teatralizada sobre la producción de la película, en la que él es el protagonista, sirviéndose del mismo sentido y tono épico por el que caracteriza su filmografía. En el tráiler de *Los diez mandamientos* (The Ten Commandments, 1956)[5], DeMille se sitúa de nuevo como figura esencial del discurso promocional y, esta vez, se dirige directamente al espectador, apelando a sus raíces históricas y religiosas. Partiendo de la estatua realizada por Miguel Ángel y, a través de diferentes materiales de referencia, como la Biblia, diversos mapas, cuadros o fotografías, DeMille concentra el discurso promocional en la vida de Moisés y su repercusión histórica. El realizador también se ocupa de mostrar otros objetos, como las tablas de los Diez Mandamientos usadas en el film así como la canasta en la que su madre puso a Moisés recién nacido.

DeMille presenta, de este modo, todos los elementos históricos que le sirven para reconstruir y definir la historia de su personaje principal. Esta fórmula también puede apreciarse en tráileres anteriores, como, por ejemplo, *Corsarios de Florida* (The Buccaneer, 1938). Con esta estrategia, el director consigue envolver su película de una veracidad histórica que solo se alcanza a través de una documentación rigurosa. Tal como ocurrió en el tráiler de *Por el valle de las sombras*, una película que se inspira en hechos reales o bíblicos exige un proceso de producción e investigación riguroso como solo DeMille sabe hacerlo. Según Hediger, con el tráiler de *Los diez mandamientos*, lo que explica el director, en última instancia, es hasta qué punto su película puede considerarse como una última etapa necesaria en el proceso de investigación bíblica (2002: 56). El tráiler para la película *El mayor espectáculo del mundo* (The Greatest Show on Earth, 1952) tiene una estructura similar, aunque de menor duración[6].

***Hosted trailer*** **de** ***Los diez mandamientos*** **(The Ten Commandments, Cecil B. DeMille, 1956)**

En definitiva, las películas realizadas por DeMille siguen un cuidadoso y riguroso proceso de producción y el realizador se dirige a la audiencia para certificar la calidad de sus obras. Además, DeMille no solo se contenta con la aparición física en sus propios tráileres sino que se ocupa personalmente de su realización. Así pues, el director es el responsable de la publicidad de sus filmes durante toda su carrera, convirtiéndose, por tanto, no solo en el autor de sus películas, sino, además, en el autor de sus propios tráileres (Hediger, 2002: 46 y 48)[7].

## 3. El maestro del tráiler: Alfred Hitchcock

Hitchcock, director de origen británico, al que se conoce popularmente como «el maestro del suspense», se mantuvo fiel en su carrera, construyendo una filmografía de intriga criminal. El realizador destaca por el ingenio, la técnica cinematográfica y su afición a lo macabro y escalofriante, sirviéndose de elementos visuales y psicológicos para mantener al espectador subyugado a la historia (Sánchez Noriega, 2003: 416-417).

**Arriba.** ***Hosted trailer*** **de** ***Con la muerte en los talones*** **(North by Northwest, Alfred Hitchcock, 1959)**
**Abajo.** ***Hosted trailer*** **de** ***Psicosis*** **(Psycho, Alfred Hitchcock, 1960)**

CARY GRANT
EVA MARIE SAINT
JAMES MASON
NORTH BY NORTHWEST
GO
NO
ALFRED HI
TRAVEL A

Hitchcock definió ya su figura pública durante la emisión de su serie *Alfred Hitchcock presenta* (Alfred Hitchcock Presents, CBS y NBC, 1955-1962). En los tráileres de sus películas, y como explica Debruge, «aparecía [...] haciendo el mismo tipo de anuncio irónico que sus *fans* esperaban ver en la serie» (2000). Al fin y al cabo, las apariciones del realizador en esta serie se concebían como parodias de campañas publicitarias del momento (Hediger, 2002: 58).

Uno de los primeros tráileres presentados por Hitchcock es el de la película *Falso culpable* (The Wrong Man, 1956)[8]. En él, la figura del realizador se desdibuja a lo lejos —en plano picado— en un claroscuro, mientras avanza hacia el espectador y declara: «Soy Alfred Hitchcock, en el pasado les he presentado a muchos tipos de personas: asesinos, ladrones, timadores... muchos de ellos maestros del negocio criminal. Ahora, me gustaría que conociesen a una persona completamente diferente: un tipo normal que lleva una vida corriente». Tras esto, el tráiler muestra una serie de fragmentos de la película, al mismo tiempo que la voz en *off* del realizador se convierte en el narrador del discurso, apoyado por los títulos publicitarios característicos de la época. Con su discurso, Hitchcock introduce al personaje principal de la película y presenta de manera sintética el primer arco de la historia, de tal modo que el espectador siente curiosidad por conocer la resolución de la trama.

En el tráiler de *Con la muerte en los talones* (North by Northwest, 1959), Hitchcock aparece en una oficina turística y se dirige al público para anunciar su nueva película[9]. En esta ocasión, el director aparece en plano medio justo delante del espectador y claramente identificado, al contrario que en su aparición en el anterior tráiler. La pieza comienza con unos títulos («Una visita guiada con Alfred Hitchcock») seguidos del propio Hitchcock diciendo: «¿Han planeado ya sus vacaciones...? Les sugiero un pequeño viaje de unos 3.000 kilómetros. Acabo de hacer una película [en este momento enseña el cartel del film], *Con la muerte en los talones*, para mostrarles algunas de las maravillas de este *tour*». Hitchcock mira directamente a la cámara y anuncia el film como si se tratase de un paquete de vacaciones (Gilbey, 2006).

Pero, sin duda, el que se constituirá como el tráiler más importante en la carrera del realizador es el de *Psicosis* (Psycho, 1960)[10]. En este tráiler, Hitchcock invita a los espectadores a seguirle en una visita por los decorados de su film: la mansión y el motel Bates. Para Goodwin, se trata de una solución brillante al desafío básico del tráiler: vender un film de suspense sin desvelar todas las sorpresas (1981: 86). El comienzo del tráiler lo conforman unos títulos que ocupan toda la pantalla y que apelan directamente al espectador: «El fabuloso señor Alfred Hitchcock está a punto de acompañarle en una visita por las localizaciones de su nueva película: *Psicosis*». Durante la visita, Hitchcock señala al público los lugares en los que han acontecido los asesinatos, situándose, de este modo, en un momento posterior a la acción transcurrida en el film y recreando los hechos como si se tratase de un documental.

El director inglés dota a su tráiler del mismo suspense que contienen sus películas. De esta forma, suscita el interés del público a través de lo «no visto» de una forma mucho más inteligente y elegante que algunos tráileres actuales. Así, el fuera de campo, por ejemplo, desempeña un papel esencial en la constitución del tráiler de *Psicosis*. En cierto momento, Hitchcock se dirige hacia el armario de la madre de Bates y lo abre. El director mira entonces dentro del armario y vuelve su mirada hacia el público como advirtiendo: «mejor no vean lo que hay aquí». El espectador, que no puede ver qué hay dentro del armario al encontrarse fuera de campo, se queda con la curiosidad de saber qué puede llamar tanto la atención del realizador. Como expresan Kerzonkuf y Bokor: «Hitchcock disfruta llamando la atención sobre diversas cosas y luego parando repentinamente, dejando a la audiencia a oscuras» (2009).

En los años siguientes, Hitchcock también aparecerá como el presentador de los tráileres de *Los pájaros* (The Birds, 1963)[11], *Marnie, la ladrona* (Marnie, 1964), *Frenesí* (Frenzy, 1972) y *La trama* (Family Plot, 1976). Todos ellos siguen las mismas pautas que los anteriores: el realizador certifica la calidad de la película insertándose como narrador principal del tráiler y creando un discurso irónico en torno al film.

## 4. El tráiler didáctico de William Castle

Castle no solo es el inventor del film de horror interactivo sino que, además, se sirve del tráiler para explicar, como si de un manual de instrucciones se tratase, el funcionamiento de sus películas (The Andrew J. Kuehn Jr. Foundation, 2006). Su cine es conocido por el uso de *gimmicks*[12] o trucos publicitarios que funcionan como gancho para atraer al público a las salas y que, al mismo tiempo, permiten cierta interactividad entre el espectador y la película.

Uno de los *gimmicks* más populares ideados por Castle fue el sistema Percepto, concebido especialmente para el film *The Tingler* (1959) y que consistía en la instalación de butacas de cine que vibraban en determinados momentos de la proyección. Estas vibraciones coincidían con aquellos momentos en que el ser conocido como *Tingler* se perdía entre el público de una sala de cine. En el tráiler[13], el propio Castle aparece frente al público para explicarle: «Me siento obligado a advertirle de la nueva película que podrá ver en este cine… Por primera vez, los miembros del público, incluido usted, formarán realmente parte de la película. Sentirán algunas reacciones físicas, sensaciones impactantes… Cuando vea la película se le explicará (y recuerde las instrucciones) cómo puede defenderse de un ataque del *Tingler*». Mientras se proyectan algunos fragmentos de la película, unos títulos avisan de nuevo al espectador: «¡Importante! Cuando entre en el cine, recibirá instrucciones y un equipamiento especial para protegerse contra el *Tingler*. ¡Úselos! ¡No sienta vergüenza por gritar! ¡Puede que salve su vida!».

Para la película *Los trece fantasmas* (13 Ghosts, 1960), Castle inventó el sistema *Illusion-O* que permite al espectador descubrir, mediante unas gafas denominadas *Ghost Viewer*, los diferentes fantasmas que aparecen en el film: «El *Ghost Viewer* permitía a la audiencia elegir entre ver o no los fantasmas […]. Los fantasmas de color magenta se superponían en un fondo azul. El papel de celofán rojo [del visor] eliminaba los fantasmas. El azul los hacía visibles. Si no se usaba el visor podían verse igualmente los fantasmas, aunque no de forma nítida» (McGee, 2001: 33). En el tráiler[14], Castle se dirige de nuevo a la audiencia: «Cuando vea *Los trece fantasmas,* se le entregará un visor supernatural como este [Castle enseña el artefacto], que le permitirá penetrar, por primera vez, en el mundo espiritual de los trece fantasmas». Tras mostrar unas imágenes de la película, unos títulos rezan: «Verá cómo vuelven a la vida los trece fantasmas… En color a través de *Illusion-O*… el nuevo *Ghost Viewer* que se le entregará en este cine».

Para la película *Homicidio* (Homicidal, 1961), Castle ideó una Cláusula del Susto, según la cual, si el espectador está lo suficientemente asustado como para abandonar la sala antes del final del film, este podrá hacerlo y recuperar el importe de la entrada. En el tráiler, Castle explica este sistema y enseña el Certificado de Cobarde que funciona como garantía en caso de que el espectador

***Hosted trailer* de *Los trece fantasmas* (13 Ghosts, William Castle, 1960)**

WILLIAM
CASTLE

***Hosted trailer*** **de** ***El Barón Sardónico*** **(Mr. Sardonicus, William Castle, 1961)**

decida abandonar la sala. La película *El Barón Sardónico* (Mr. Sardonicus, 1961), como el propio Castle certifica en el tráiler[15], «ofrece algo que la audiencia no ha tenido nunca: el poder para determinar el destino de un personaje en la pantalla. El poder para castigarlo». Para ello, en el cine se entrega a cada espectador una cartulina en la que aparece el dibujo de una mano con el pulgar hacia arriba (o hacia abajo, dependiendo de su orientación) en color fosforescente. Castle explica el funcionamiento de esta cartulina al final del tráiler: «Cuando vengan a ver *El Barón Sardónico* recibirán un papel como este [Castle enseña la cartulina al público], y, en cierto momento de la película, votarán sí o no (pulgar hacia arriba o hacia abajo). Su castigo [refiriéndose al personaje Mr. Sardonicus] dependerá del resultado de su voto».

Aunque Castle seguiría presentando muchos de sus tráileres, como *La vieja casa oscura* (The Old Dark House, 1963) o *Amor entre las sombras* (The Night Walker, 1964), los ejemplos analizados aquí constituyen los casos más destacados de este particular tipo de *hosted trailer*. Como puede observarse, estos tráileres se caracterizan por explicar a la audiencia el funcionamiento del film, presentando los diferentes instrumentos que se recibirían a la entrada del cine. El realizador introduce el objeto en cuestión, certifica su existencia y explica al público cómo usarlo.

## 5. Conclusiones

Partiendo del análisis de los *hosted trailers* de estos tres realizadores, puede observarse una serie de diferencias en función de la estrategia comunicativa utilizada en cada uno de ellos. Así, DeMille se sirve del tráiler para construir una pieza promocional que explica el proceso de producción y realización de la película, que certifica, en todo momento, la calidad del film. Los *hosted trailers* de Hitchcock se caracterizan, sobre todo, por una puesta en escena que ridiculiza la película, alejándose del género de terror y suspense y creando una falsa comedia que presenta y, al mismo tiempo, revela poco sobre el film. Por último, Castle recurre al tráiler como un medio para entrar en contacto con el espectador y explicarle la novedad de cada una de sus películas, detallando el funcionamiento de los *gimmicks* y subrayando la originalidad de su película. Estos tres realizadores recurren, por tanto, a diferentes narrativas publicitarias para vender sus películas. Sin embargo, pese a estas diferencias, se observan también diversas características o elementos comunes que definen de forma clara este tipo de tráiler:

- *Utilización de la figura testimonial como narrador principal del discurso.* Según lo analizado, la estructura del *hosted trailer* podría dividirse en tres partes. En un primer lugar, presenciamos una puesta en escena en la que aparece la figura testimonial, que se dirige al público mirándolo directamente e invitándolo a conocer la película que se está promocionando. Esta figura puede pertenecer al reparto técnico o artístico de la obra. Por lo general, para contextualizar su discurso, el espacio en el que se inserta es su propio despacho, los escenarios del rodaje o, incluso, el propio *set*. Tras esta primera parte introductoria, el *hosted trailer* suele presentar una muestra de imágenes de la película que pueden o no encontrarse acompañadas por la narración en *off* de la figura testimonial. Por último, en una tercera parte, la figura vuelve a aparecer en escena para cerrar su discurso e instar directamente al espectador a ver la película, o bien se recurre a títulos promocionales para subrayar este mismo mensaje de refuerzo.

- *Desarrollo de un discurso promocional a dos niveles.* Como indica Maier, la información proporcionada por todo tráiler parte, en esencia, de dos puntos de origen o contextos diferentes (2009: 161). Por un lado, del contexto diegético de la historia de la película y sus personajes y, por otro, del contexto no diegético de los creadores del film. En los *hosted trailers*, se establece por un lado un discurso comercial que habla sobre la película, representado por la figura testimonial que se dirige al espectador para avalar y ensalzar las bondades del producto, pudiendo revelar algunos puntos sobre la historia de la película. En otro nivel, se establece un discurso constituido por fragmentos de película que construyen una narración que intenta ofrecer una idea sobre la historia de la película. Este segundo nivel se encuentra, en la mayoría de los casos, acompañado por el discurso comercial de la figura testimonial en *off*.

- *Énfasis en la calidad de la película.* Durante el periodo de cine clásico, la industria cinematográfica necesitaba diferenciar sus películas de la competencia. Por ello, el discurso persuasivo del *hosted trailer* no se centra exclusivamente en mostrar el producto (imágenes de la película), sino que se dedica, sobre todo, a asegurar su calidad y persuadir al público para que la vea mediante el recurso de la figura testimonial. Esta composición del *hosted trailer* coincide con la segunda fase histórica de la publicidad que Casetti denomina *advertising* y cuya edad de oro va desde 1930 a 1950: «El objetivo que se persigue es certificar la legitimidad del producto [...]. Para lograr tal objetivo la *advertising* se estructura como una interpelación dirigida a quien es el destinatario del mensaje y [...] se apela directamente exaltando su presencia [...], desde las primeras apariciones de los *testimoniales* [...] hasta el uso de miradas frontales e índices dirigidos hacia quien se encuentra mirando el mensaje» (1994: 23-24).

- *Discurso persuasivo que utiliza el reclamo de la estrella.* Los productores del cine clásico pronto descubren que las celebridades son una de las atracciones más poderosas a la hora de atraer espectadores a la sala. A través de la estrategia comercial del *star system* o estrellato, la industria del cine clásico se sirve de una serie de valores y sensaciones que serán proyectados en los actores de las películas. Igualmente, los directores y los estudios constituyen poderosos argumentos de persuasión y la institución cinematográfica se vende a sí misma (Haralovich y Klaprat, 1982: 71). El reconocimiento de ciertas personalidades en el tráiler transmite al espectador una sensación de calidad y confianza. Según Bordwell, el recurso a la autoridad es uno de los más importantes: «El orador puede contar con que su público confía en individuos reconocidos, y entonces la apelación a nombres y escritos respetados es capital para la coherencia y continuidad de una institución» (1995: 233). La utilización de este reclamo se muestra de forma patente en los *hosted trailers* analizados, en que los tres directores son las auténticas estrellas de sus películas. De esta forma, el auténtico reclamo de seducción es la propia figura testimonial y su sello comercial.

- *Hiperbolización de la película.* Los *hosted trailers* exageran las cualidades de la película mediante el discurso de la figura testimonial. La propia aparición del director o estrella principal del film supone, ya de por sí, una exageración por su acercamiento y cercanía con el espectador. Además, por lo general, se tiende a presentar la película como una obra maestra de calidad inigualable, incitando al espectador a ver un espectáculo que supera, por su magnitud, a todos los demás. Esto puede apreciarse en los tráileres de DeMille donde queda patente la aventura que supone la producción y realización de sus filmes o en Castle que, mediante el reclamo de sus *gimmicks*, hace de cada una de sus películas una obra única y diferente al resto. En el caso de Hitchcock, la exageración sirve como técnica para ridiculizar la película.

Teniendo en cuenta estas características, y de acuerdo a las fases históricas de la publicidad de Casetti (1994: 23-24, 27-28), podría decirse que el discurso de estos tráileres se compone de manera parecida a otras formas publicitarias del momento, destacando, por encima de todo, la diferenciación del producto en el mercado a través de una interpelación directa al consumidor. Así pues, el *hosted trailer* constituye una puesta en escena que evita la mostración exclusiva de fragmentos de la película. Ya no se trata únicamente de certificar la existencia del producto, sino de apelar a la calidad de la obra a través del reclamo de la estrella. Para ello, se construye una puesta en escena que se sitúa en un universo diegético independiente al de la propia película. Se trata, en definitiva, de un programa independiente, presentado por la figura testimonial, que avala la calidad de la obra y que puede combinarse con las imágenes extraídas del film para conformar un discurso promocional más directo, original y, sobre todo, diferente del modelo de tráiler convencional. ■

## Notas

* No se acreditan en el pie de foto las capturas de fotogramas de las películas que actualmente están descatalogadas en España y entendemos que son de dominio público al no figurar distribuidora alguna que haya adquirido su licencia para comercializarlas. En cualquier caso, la inclusión de imágenes en los textos de *L'Atalante* se hace siempre a modo de cita, para su análisis, comentario y juicio crítico. (Nota de la edición).

1 Según los resultados obtenidos en Lozano Delmar, Javier (2012). *Contextualización y conceptualización del tráiler*. (Tesis Doctoral. Sevilla: Universidad de Sevilla). Este artículo recoge una parte de la investigación llevada a cabo en esta tesis.

2 Tráiler de *Juguetes*. Recuperado de <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=EwVqtzoBNSM>. *Piratas del Caribe: En mareas misteriosas*. Recuperado de <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ETAxIc-13aE>. *¿Por qué se frotan las patitas?* Recuperado de <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=XZFZJ4YSqq8>. *La pesca del salmón en Yemen.* Recuperado de <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=CEUwCX2UjJA> [28/01/2014].

3 Tráiler de *Por el valle de las sombras*. Recuperado de <http://www.tcm.com/mediaroom/video/154691/Story-Of-Dr-Wassell-The-Original-Trailer-.html> [25/02/2013].

4 En adelante, aunque no se indique, las traducciones al español de textos originalmente ingleses (escritos o audiovisuales) son del autor.

5 Tráiler de *Los diez mandamientos*. Recuperado de <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=sRGhOcnmChI> [25/02/2013].

6 Tráiler de *El mayor espectáculo del mundo*. Recuperado de <http://www.tcm.com/mediaroom/video/154682/Greatest-Show-On-Earth-The-Original-Trailer-.html> [25/02/2013].

7 Según Brad Stevens (2000), Howard Hawks dirigiría, casi con total seguridad, el tráiler para su película *Río Bravo* (1959). François Truffaut e Ingmar Bergman serían también, en un periodo posterior, artistas responsables en la creación de los tráileres de sus películas, de acuerdo con Rodolphe Pailliez (1977: 89), de la misma forma que Jean-Luc Godard o Federico Fellini.

8 Tráiler de *Falso culpable*. Recuperado de <http://www.tcm.com/mediaroom/video/105063/Wrong-Man-The-Original-Trailer-.html> [25/02/2013].

9 Tráiler de *Con la muerte en los talones*. Recuperado de <http://www.tcm.com/mediaroom/video/72824/North-By-Northwest-Movie-Trailer-Hitchcock-Tour.html> [25/02/2013].

10 Tráiler de *Psicosis*. Recuperado de <http://www.tcm.com/mediaroom/video/66193/Psycho-Original-Trailer-.html> [25/02/2013].

11 Tráiler de *Los pájaros*. Recuperado de <http://www.tcm.com/mediaroom/video/74071/Birds-The-Original-Trailer-.html> [25/02/2013].

12 Según el Oxford English Dictionary, un *gimmick* se define como «Un truco o mecanismo que, más que perseguir un propósito útil, pretende, sobre todo, atraer la atención o publicitar».

13 Tráiler de *The Tingler*. Recuperado de <http://www.tcm.com/mediaroom/video/178167/Tingler-The-Original-Trailer-.html> [25/02/2013].

14 Tráiler de *Los trece fantasmas*. Recuperado de <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=smki4Vupb9Q>.

15 Tráiler de *Mr. Sardonicus*. Recuperado de <http://www.tcm.com/mediaroom/video/248357/Mr-Sardonicus-Original-Trailer-.html> [25/02/2013].

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Javier Lozano Delmar (Córdoba, 1982), tras licenciarse en Comunicación Audiovisual con Premio Extraordinario Fin de Carrera y obtener una beca FPU, se doctora en Comunicación en 2012 y se incorpora como ayudante de investigación en la Universidad Loyola Andalucía en 2013. Actualmente, compagina sus tareas docentes con la realización de diversos trabajos de investigación. Estos trabajos, centrados en las áreas de la comunicación y la publicidad, han aparecido en diferentes publicaciones científicas y se dedican principalmente al estudio del tráiler cinematográfico, las tecnologías digitales aplicadas a la publicidad y las nuevas estrategias de promoción de contenidos ficcionales en cine y televisión.

# CON A DE ANIMACIÓN

Nº 5 2015 Revista anual de investigación

Con *A de animación* es una revista anual, dedicada a la animación en todas sus facetas. El número de 2015, "Animación: punto de encuentro", revelará el actual panorama de la producción y difusión de esta fascinante forma de hacer cine, a través de reseñas de películas, entrevistas a sus artífices, reflexiones y retrospectivas. El presente número incluye también artículos de investigación sobre los diversos aspectos humanos, técnicos e historiográficos de la animación: un arte cuya crónica se escribe en estas páginas.

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# ABSTRACTS [english]

## NOTEBOOK

### Faces, Voices, Bodies, Gestures. The Conception of Acting as the Core of Film Analysis

**Imitation, Eccentricity, and Impersonation in Movie Acting. James Naremore**

**Keywords:** imitation, impersonation, mimesis, stylistic influence, eccentricity.

**Abstract:** Louise Brooks once said that in order to become a star, an actor needs to combine a natural-looking behavior with personal "eccentricity." My presentation will explore some of the analytical problems raised by this phenomenon: What constitutes eccentricity and how is it balanced by naturalness in specific cases? What happens when a movie star acts in a film in which he or she impersonates the eccentricities of another star (Larry Parks as Al Jolson, Clint Eastwood as John Huston, Cate Blanchett as Bob Dylan, Meryl Streep as Julia Child, etc.)? How can we distinguish between impersonation as caricature and impersonation as dramatic illusion? What is the difference, if any, between impersonation and stylistic influence?

**Author:** James Naremore (1941) is Emeritus Chancellors' Professor of Communication and Culture, English, and Comparative Literature at Indiana University. Among his books are *Acting in the Cinema* (1988); *The Magic World of Orson Welles* (1989); *More than Night: Film Noir in its Contexts* (2008); *On Kubrick* (2008); *Sweet Smell of Success* (2010); and *An Invention without a Future: Essays on Cinema* (2014).

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**The Three Bodies of Narration: A Cognitivist Poetics of the Actor's Performance. Héctor J. Pérez**

**Keywords:** acting, narration, emotions, cognitivism, engagement, likeability, body, aesthetics.

**Abstract:** The purpose of this article is to take a cognitivist approach to achieve an adequate understanding of the actor's performance as a narrative an aesthetic factor. By way of introduction, a context is offered that explains what the actor's performance has nearly always been considered in audiovisual works and previously in theatre, as something separate from the narration, a category reserved for diegesis. This is followed by a presentation of the general cognitivist conception as the most suitable approach to achieve this purpose, based on the central features of the concept of recognition, from which arises the central proposal of viewing actors as generators of the spectator's attention, which is the first necessary condition for any story. The central part of the article is concerned with presenting the three main modes in which the actor's presence arouses the spectator's attention, elucidated with examples and an explanation of their narrative scope in each case. First, the value of the body in eliciting the neutral attention of the spectator to the character; secondly, the value of the exceptionality of the body in pertinent increments of spectator interest, which give rise to the emotions that are central to cognitivism, such as sympathy and empathy, which are thus determining factors in narrative processes; and finally, the article takes up one of the main debates in the field to offer an alternative to cognitivism and the main outcome of this research: acting, in its artistic sense, generates attention and emotions comparable with the most widely debated moral factors, such as allegiance. It is thus valid to consider that the actor's performance as an artistic practice is the element with the greatest narrative depth insofar as it constitutes the stablest basis for the spectator's attention.

**Author:** Héctor J. Pérez (Madrid, 1971) is Associate Professor of Audiovisual Narrative at the Universitat Politècnica de València (Escola Politècnica Superior de Gandia). He received a European Ph.D. in 1999 from the Universidad de Murcia, and undertook predoctoral studies at the Musikwissentschaftliches Institut of the Universität Leipzig and post-doctoral studies at the Università degli Studi di Milano (Dipartimento di Estetica). A main line of his research is the study of corporeal narration, especially in opera, and also works regularly in the cognitive aesthetics of television series and the relationships between mythology and cinema. His most recent book is *Cine y mitología: de las religiones a los argumentos universales* (Berna: Peter Lang, 2013). He is the editor of *SERIES, International Journal of TV Serial Narratives*.

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**Towards a Comparative Montage of the Female Portrait. The Theatre of the Body: Fictional Tears and Real Tears. Gonzalo de Lucas**

**Keywords:** actress, modern cinema, filmic portrait, images of tears, iconic portrait, indicial signs.

**Abstract:** This article explores the female portrait and the filming and performance of weeping. Taking as a starting point the distinction between fictional tears and real tears, the article proposes a study of filmic forms. The first part of this essay offers an analysis of the work of two filmmakers of the classical period (D. W. Griffith and Josef von Sternberg) in whose films the face of the Hollywood actress is presented as an *iconic* image. In the second part, the text examines the work of different European and American filmmakers (Nicholas Ray, Roberto Rossellini, John Cassavetes, Rainer Werner Fassbinder) in whose portrait of female faces tears are *indicial* signs of reality and the effects of time.

**Author:** Gonzalo de Lucas (Barcelona, 1975) is Professor of Audiovisual Communication at Universitat Pompeu Fabra. Editor of the academic Journal *Cinema Comparat/ive Cinema*. Director of the postgraduate pro-

gramme *Audiovisual Editing* (IDEC). Film programmer for Xcèntric (CCCB). He has written the books *Vida secreta de las sombras* (Paidós, 2001) and *El blanco de los orígenes* (Festival de Cine de Gijón, 2008) and co-edited *Jean-Luc Godard. Pensar entre imágenes* (Intermedio, 2010). He has written articles for twenty anthologies and publications such as *Cahiers du cinéma-España*, *Sight and Sound* and *La Vanguardia*.
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### Modernism Born Out of Classical Cinema: The Body of Marlene Dietrich in the Films of Josef von Sternberg. Núria Bou

**Key words:** star, body, acting code, classical Hollywood cinema, modern cinema.
**Abstract:** In the first films in which Marlene Dietrich starred under the direction of Josef von Sternberg in Hollywood in the early 1930s, we find a paradigmatic example of how classical cinema transgressed conventional forms of expression. While the *Dream Factory* continued to affirm the almighty power of love, Dietrich was debunking the myth of ideal passion that Greta Garbo had made the governing principle in the films of the era. Dietrich's ironic and distanced acting approach gave the relationship between spectator and star a more modern dimension. The main objective of this article is to explain how classical cinema operated through the gestural repertoire of Marlene Dietrich.
**Author:** Núria Bou (Barcelona, 1967) is a teacher and director of the Master's program in Contemporary Film and Audiovisual Studies at the Universitat Pompeu Fabra Department of Communication. She is the author of *La mirada en el temps* (1996), *Plano/Contraplano,* (2002) and *Diosas y tumbas* (2004). In the anthologies *Les dives: mites i celebritats* (2007), *Políticas del deseo* (2007) and *Las metamorfosis del deseo* (2010) she explores her current fields of research: the star in Classical Hollywood Cinema and the representation of female desire.
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### Who Am I? Acting Style in the Art of Anna Magnani. Marga Carnicé Mur

**Keywords:** acting style, neorealism, modernism, aesthetic approach, dramatic approach, gestural style, mask, limit, artifice, depiction, expression; *popolana*: approach to depiction.
**Abstract:** After her performance in *Rome, Open City* (Roma città aperta, Roberto Rossellini, 1945), Anna Magnani (Rome, 1908-1973) was established in the history of cinema as the muse of Italian neorealism. She inspired a dialogue among filmmakers, among whom, from Roberto Rossellini to Federico Fellini, her acting was monumentalised as a paradigm. This paradigm will be discussed in this article in the context of an acting style, to propose an analysis of that style through the actress's approach to depiction, and of how her main features gave rise to an aesthetic and a dramatic and gestural style that became a necessary hallmark of the cinema of an era.
**Author:** Marga Carnicé Mur (Barcelona, 1985) holds a degree in Audiovisual Communication and a Master's in Contemporary Cinema and Audiovisual Studies from the Universitat Pompeu Fabra, where she is currently completing a PhD in Communication. Since February 2013 she has been working as a trainee researcher for the CINEMA group for aesthetic research into audiovisual media. Her lines of research are acting style, the aesthetics and hermeneutics of cinema and the depiction of the female in modern cinema.
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### Acting: Central to a Director's Cinema such as American Independent Film. Cynthia Ann Baron

**Keywords:** film acting, screen performance, American independent cinema, naturalism, Prague semiotics.
**Abstract:** To illustrate that performances warrant the same attention given to other filmic elements, the essay demonstrates that acting can be crucial even in director-centered independent films. The analysis focuses on performances in *Matewan* (John Sayles, 1987), which belongs to the first "golden age" of American independent cinema and is by a recognized independent film director. It explores the neo-naturalistic conception of character that grounds *Matewan*'s performances. It also analyzes aspects of performance identified by Prague School theorists, *gesture-signs* (social gestures) and *gesture-expressions* (individual uses of gestures), showing that in *Matewan* key information about the characters and their world is conveyed by the gesture-signs selected and the qualities in actors' individual gesture-expressions.
**Author:** Cynthia Baron (Hollywood, 1954) is professor of film at Bowling Green State University. Author of *Denzel Washington* (2015), co-author of *Appetites and Anxieties: Food, Film, and the Politics of Representation* (2014) and *Reframing Screen Performance* (2008), and co-editor of *More Than a Method: Trends and Traditions in Contemporary Film Performance* (2004), she is editor of the Palgrave Studies in Screen Industries and Performance series.
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### Are We the Actors of Our Own Life? Notes on the Experimental Actor. Nicole Brenez

**Keywords:** experimental actor, political activism, Marlon Brando, Delphine Seyrig, Carole Roussopoulos, Jack Smith, Andy Warhol, Jean-Luc Godard, Raymundo Gleyzer.
**Abstract:** The film actor achieves a synthesis of the three dimensions of art according to Quintilian (theoretical, practical and poetic). By his nature, the actor challenges familiar existence, an existence that is needy even in its emotional habits, as his job involves transporting life to the territories of creation, beginning by turning to the possible or the impossible, by reaching towards or away from existence. Opposed to the immense mass of actors who agree to play and collaborate with the dominant ideology (whatever that ideology may be) and who are happy and proud to support it with their complacent reflections, there are initiatives by actors who rebel not only against the images, but also against the prevailing codes of symbolisation. Such would be the case of Marlon Brando and Delphine Seyrig. We can view the fulfilment of the actress' work as a political catalyst in Delphine Seyrig's collaboration with Carole Roussopoulos, which gave rise to three major cinematic essays. The actor, an experimental laboratory of identity, redefines the accepted configurations or develops before our eyes specific prototypes of beings that can be inscribed, not only in the history of ideas and images, but also in our social reality. One of the greatest poets of unstructured appear-

ance was the US experimental performer and filmmaker Jack Smith. Andy Warhol adopted from Smith his actors, the notion of "Superstar" and, above all, the principle that, in order to get to the heart of cinema, all that is needed is to document the presence of the bodies. Warhol's contemplative minimalist style allows the actors to develop their own *imago* and offers us a series of unforgettable portraits. The filmmaker and, frequently, actor who systematised throughout his work the question of the cinema actor is, undoubtedly, Jean-Luc Godard. The article concludes by quoting the work of those actors from whom acting means engaging in real activism, such as the actors filmed by the filmmaker Raymundo Gleyzer.

**Author:** Nicole Brenez is a historian, film critic, programmer and specialist in avant-garde cinema. She is Professor of Modern Literature and teaches film theory at the Université Sorbonne Nouvelle-Paris 3. She has been curator at several institutions, including the Cinémathèque Française, where she has been in charge of experimental and avant-garde cinema programming since 1996. Her most recent publications are: *Le cinéma critique. De l'argentique au numérique, voies et formes de l'objection visuelle* (2010)*; Chantal Akerman, The Pajama Interview* (2011); and *Cinéma d'avant-garde mode d'emploi* (2012). Nicole Brenez produces, along with Philippe Grandrieux, the *It May Be That Beauty Has Strengthened Our Resolve* collection, dedicated to those revolutionary filmmakers who have been forgotten or ignored by the history of cinema.

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## DIALOGUE

**Filming / Being Filmed. Acting According to Icíar Bollaín, Filmmaker and Actress. "Actors are great scriptwriters because they come up with things that the scriptwriter should have written". Pablo Hernández Miñano, Nuria Castellote Herranz and Violeta Martín Núñez**

**Keywords:** acting; cinema; directing actors; casting; acting styles; documentary film; Iciar Bollaín; José Luis Borau; Ken Loach.

**Abstract:** From the dual perspectives of actress and filmmaker, in this interview Iciar Bollaín (Madrid, 1967) discusses the key issues of performance on film and the direction of actors, such as casting strategies, the contribution of actors to the changes made during filming, the degrees of dependence between acting and the other elements of the *mise en scène*, the relationship between acting styles and narrative models or film genres and the construction of *characters* in documentary films. Her experience with filmmakers as diverse as José Luis Borau and Ken Loach enables her to approach two radically different ways of conceiving the direction of actors, which could be roughly summarised as acting at the service of the other elements of the *mise en scène*, in the case of Borau, compared to subordination of filming to the work of the actors, in the case of Loach. As a filmmaker, Bollaín owes much to both directors, but feels closer to Loach in his way of engaging actors in the process of film creation and facilitating their work in order to achieve the greatest degree of freshness and authenticity possible.

**Authors:** Pablo Hernández Miñano (Valencia, 1982) has a degree in Communication Studies from the Universitat de València and has completed a Masters in Film Screenplays from the Fundación para la Investigación del Audiovisual - Universidad Internacional Menéndez Pelayo (FIA-UIMP). He has been involved in various cultural association projects, and between 2003 and 2008 formed part of Cinefòrum L'Atalante and of the team that promoted *L'Atalante. Revista de estudios cinematográficos*. He has participated in the technical organisation of various conferences and seminars related to cinema and, between 2008 and 2013, he served as cultural management specialist in the communications department of the Filmoteca valenciana (CulturArts IVAC). Currently, he teaches monographic courses on film at the Universitat Politècnica de València and is the technical coordinator of the Aula de Cinema de la Universitat de València. / Nuria Castellote Herranz (Valencia, 1979) holds a degree in Communication Studies from the Universitat de València and has completed a Masters in Subtitling and Dubbing at the Universidad de Sevilla. She has been a specialist in the programming department of the Filmoteca de Valencia (CulturArts IVAC) since 2006 and, since 2013, has been teaching monographic courses on film at the Universitat Politècnica de València. She has contributed articles to the collective publication *Mujeres, culturas y literaturas* (Caracas: Escultura, 2001) and to the *Diccionario del Cine Iberoamericano* (Madrid: SGAE, 2009). / Violeta Martín Núñez (Valencia, 1982) has a degree in Audiovisual Communication and Journalism from the Universitat de València (UV) and a Masters in New Trends and Innovation Processes in Communication from the Universitat Jaume I (UJI). She is a member of the Association Cinefórum L'Atalante, which has been managing the Aula de Cinema de la UV since 2004 and is executive secretary of *L'Atalante. Revista de estudios cinematográficos*. She was also editorial board assistant at *Archivos de la Filmoteca*. She works at the company Projectem Comunicació.

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## (DIS)AGREEMENTS

**A Shared Task: Acting Faced by Filmmakers and Actors. Pablo Hernádez Miñano, Violeta Martín Núñez.**

**Introduction. To Be or Not To Be... The Dilemma of Acting. Daniel Gascó.**

**Discussion. Mariano Barroso, Celina Murga, Felipe Vega, Pablo Berger, Àlex Brendemühl, Eduard Fernández, Emilio Gutiérrez Caba, Tristán Ulloa.**

**Conclusion. The Live Map of Javier Bardem. Lola Mayo.**

**Keywords:** cinema, performance, acting, direction of actors, casting, Mariano Barroso, Celina Murga, Felipe Vega, Pablo Berger, Àlex Brendemühl, Eduard Fernández, Emilio Gutiérrez Caba, Tristán Ulloa.

**Abstract:** The actor's work is an element whose complexity is difficult for the spectator to perceive while watching a film. To reach that end result, a whole process is necessary, a process that starts even before filming begins. The casting, the selection of actors, the significance of which often goes unnoticed, is crucial to the success or failure of a project. This discussion attempts to shed some light on all of these inner workings of a film related to the work of actors and their symbiosis with the rest of the cast and crew who give shape to a film project. Through the opinions of four filmmakers —Mariano Barroso, Celina Murga, Felipe Vega and Pablo Berger— and four actors —Àlex Brendemühl, Eduard Fernández, Emilio Gutiérrez Caba and Tristán Ulloa— we will identify the key moments of the actor's work in a film production, the importance of methodology and intuition in the actor's craft, the relationship between performance and staging and the main role models on both sides of the camera for some outstanding representatives of Spanish cinema. This is, in short, a first-person, multifaceted perspective of what it means to act and to direct actors.

**Authors:** Daniel Gascó García studied Business Administration at the Universitat Jaume I of Castellón, where he managed the Aula de Cine for three years. He was a member of the Editorial Board of the Valencian journal *Banda Aparte* (1993-1997). He has worked as film critic in various media (press, radio and television), has contributed to several anthologies, and has been a member of the jury in different film festivals (Alcala de Henares, La Cabina, Radio City, etc.). Currently, he writes articles for *Caimán Cuadernos de Cine* and *Lletres valencianes* and teaches the subject of Comparative History of Cinema at the Academia Idecrea. Since 2004 he has been the manager, together with his sister Almudena, of the video store Stromboli, which houses a significant catalogue of cinema history. He also organises film series for the Festival Cine Europa and for the Centro Galego de Arte Contemporánea (CGAC). / Lola Mayo is a screenwriter, producer and writer. She has written and produced the three films directed by Javier Rebollo: *El muerto y ser feliz* (2012), which received a Goya Award for Best Leading Actor and the FIPRESCI Prize at the Festival de San Sebastian; *La mujer sin piano* (2009), winner of the Silver Shell for Best Director at the Festival de San Sebastián and Best Film at the Los Angeles Film Festival; and *Lo que sé de Lola* (2006), FIPRESCI prize winner at the International Film Festival of London. She also co-wrote Javier Rebollo's fourth film, *La cerillera*, with the director himelf. She is currently writing the script for the Colombian film *Como cloro en tela negra* to be directed by Ana María Londoño, and directs documentaries for the programme *Documentos TV* (TVE). Since 1996 she has produced fifteen short films through her production company Lolita Films, which all together have received more than one hundred awards at festivals worldwide. She is the coordinator of the Documentary Department at the Escuela de Cine de San Antonio de los Baños in Cuba, and continues to teach Documentary Scriptwriting and Creation at the Instituto del Cine de Madrid and the Escuela Oficial de Cine de Madrid. She has written poems, a novel and a book on film. / Mariano Barroso (Sant Just Desvern, 1959) made his name in the film world upon receiving a Goya Award for Best New Director for *Mi hermano del alma* (1994). This interesting debut has been followed by films like Éxtasis (1996), *Los lobos de Washington* (1999) and *Todas las mujeres* (2013). He has alternated his cinematic presence with his work for television and a very active teaching career. Trained at the American Film Institute and at the William Layton Laboratory, he is the coordinator of the Diploma in Film Directing at the ECAM and has directed the Department of Film Directing at the Escuela de Cine de San Antonio de los Baños in Cuba. Acting is one of the key focuses of his films, as evidenced by the 2005 documentary *El oficio del actor*, which featured Javier Bardem, Luis Tosar and Eduard Fernández, actors who regularly appear in his films. / Since training at the Universidad del Cine in Buenos Aires, Celina Murga (Paraná, 1973) has worked in various capacities in the film industry. Director, screenwriter, producer and editor, she became known in the world of short films with titles such as *Interior-Noche* (1999) and *Una tarde feliz* (2002). *Ana y los otros* (2003) was her first feature film, and her second, *Una semana solos* (2007), premiered at the Festival Internacional de Cine Independiente de Buenos Aires. In 2009, she took part in a two-year sponsorship program that allowed her to work alongside Martin Scorsese. In addition to her creative work, she has worked as a teacher at the Centro de Investigación Cinematográfica de Buenos Aires. / The work of Felipe Vega (León, 1952) in the world of cinema has ranged from directing and scriptwriting short films, feature films or commercials to writing articles on film criticism for prominent journals and teaching cinema at the Escuela de la Cinematografía y el Audiovisual de la Comunidad de Madrid. Active since the late 1970s, he has received several awards at the el Festival Internacional de Cine de San Sebastián, for titles such as *Mientras haya luz* (1988) and *El mejor de los tiempos* (1989). Over the course of his film career, he has been associated with names like producer Gerardo Herrero Herrero (*Un paraguas para tres*, 1992; *Nubes de verano*, 2004) and writer and journalist Manuel Hidalgo, with whom he collaborated on *Grandes ocasiones* (1998), *Nubes de verano* and *Mujeres en el parque* (2006). His most recent work is the documentary *Elogio de la distancia* (2010), co-directed with Julio Llamazares, who had also written the screenplay for *El techo del mundo* (1995) fifteen years earlier. / Until the release of *Blancanieves* (2012), Pablo Berger (Bilbao, 1963) had only directed one short film (*Mama*, 1988) and the feature film *Torremolinos 73* (2003), although he had enjoyed a long career in the world of advertising and music videos and as a teacher at the New York Film Academy. With his second feature film he became one of Spain's most acclaimed filmmakers, as the film received a total of ten Goya Awards, including Best Film, Best Original Screenplay and Best Original Song, authored by the director himself. The actresses Maribel Verdú and García Macarena also received awards for their roles. / With a background in theatre and television, since his debut as the star of *Un banco en el parque* (Agustí Vila, 1999) and his consolidation in *The Hours of the Day* (Las horas del día, Jaime Rosales, 2003), playing the everyday serial killer, the roles of Àlex Brendemühl (Barcelona, 1972) in film have often been associated with the debuts of unknown directors or with filmmakers with a markedly independent quality. For example, he has worked under the direction of Pere Portabella (*El silencio después de Bach*, 2007), Óscar Aibar (*El bosc*, 2012) and, more recently, Lluís Miñarro (*Stella Cadente*, 2014) and Isaki Lacuesta (*Murieron por encima de sus posibilidades*, 2014). He combines his acting work in Spain with roles in the film industries of other countries such as France, Argentina or Germany. / Born into a family of actors, and with almost two hundred acting credits in film and television, Emilio Gutiérrez Caba (Valladolid, 1942) has been one of the essential faces of Spanish cinema and theatre since the early 1960s. He founded his own theatre company in 1968 and starred in some of the best-known titles of the new

Spanish cinema of that decade, such as *Nueve cartas a Berta* (Basilio Martín Patino, 1966) and *La caza* (Carlos Saura, 1966). His career was revitalised in the early years of the new millennium thanks to directors like Alex de la Iglesia (*La comunidad*, 2000) and Miguel Albaladejo (*El cielo abierto*, 2001), and his presence in television hits such as *Gran Reserva* (TVE: 2010- 2013). / After beginning his career in theatre performing works of the classics (Shakespeare, Molière, Beckett), Eduard Fernández (Barcelona, 1964) began to make a name for himself as a film actor after his appearance in *Los lobos de Washington* (Mariano Barroso, 1999), for which he received the first of his eight nominations for a Goya Award. Known for playing characters with strong personalities, he made an impact as the lead actor in films *Fausto 5.0* (La Fura dels Baus, 2001), *Smoking Room* (Julio D. Wallovits, Roger Gual, 2002), *El método* (Marcelo Piñeiro, 2005), *Ficció* (Cesc Gay, 2006) and *La mosquitera* (Agustí Vila, 2010), and as a supporting actor in films like *Son de mar* (Bigas Luna, 2001), *En la ciudad* (Cesc Gay, 2003), *Alatriste* (Agustín Díaz Yanes, 2006), *Pa negre* (Agustí Villaronga, 2010) and *El Niño* (Daniel Monzón, 2014). / One of the most popular faces in Spanish film, television and theatre, Tristán Ulloa (Orleans, 1970) began his career in front of the camera in the late 1990s. His role in *Mensaka* (Salvador García Ruiz, 1998) catapulted him into the spotlight with a Goya Award nomination for Best New Actor. Since then, he has alternated leading roles (*Lucía y el sexo*, Julio Medem, 2001) and supporting roles, taking part in around thirty feature films and in television shows such as *El comisario* (Telecinco: 1999-2000), *Gran Reserva* (TVE: 2010-2013) and *El tiempo entre costuras* (Antena 3: 2013-2014). In 2007 he co-directed (with his brother David) his first film, *Pudor*, which was nominated for Best Screenplay Adaptation and Best New Director at the Goya Awards.

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## VANISHING POINTS

### ***Black Swan*** **or On How To Turn a Dream Into a Nightmare. Eugenia Rojo**

**Key words:** Darren Aronofsky, horror film, *doppelgänger*, hypercinema, hypermodernity, Freudian theory, special effects.

**Abstract:** Horror films have recently regained an audience. The critical and commercial success of Aronofsky's *Black Swan* lends itself to an analysis of its aesthetic and narrative mechanisms, as well as of the strategies employed to construct its characters and the cinematic language of this genre. The American director offers a cocktail of influences: nineteenth-century literature and ballet, Freudian theories, and lessons from the great masters of the cinematic art. It also takes up the tradition of the *doppelgänger*, which originated in the Scandinavian sagas and achieved its greatest splendour in nineteenth-century European art. Finally, although it has been labelled an independent film, it exhibits some characteristics of the hypermodern age, in which new technologies constitute key instruments in the development of a hyperbolic aesthetic.

**Author:** Eugenia Rojo was born in Buenos Aires in 1978. She has a Degree in Translation and Interpreting from the Universitat Jaume I, Castellón, and a Degree in History of Art from the Universitat de València. She took a Master's Degree in History of Art and Visual Culture, and her final project was a relational study of the photographic corpus of Diane Arbus (1923-1971) and Nan Goldin (1953), presented at the International Congress *«Me veo, luego existo», mujeres que representan, mujeres representadas*, from 5 to 7 November, 2013. She currently holds a research fellowship granted by the Ministry of Education and is studying her Ph. D. at the History of Art Department, Universitat de València.

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### Kino Kino Kino Kino Kino: Guy Maddin's Cinema of Artifice. Sérgio Dias Branco

**Keywords:** Guy Maddin, artifice, film criticism, memory.

**Abstract:** Guy Maddin's films are at once immediately engaging and exhaustingly complex. They leave the enduring impression of a distanced, fleeting world, strangely close to our own — like a deep shadow of it. My purpose in this essay is to briefly reflect on this impression, giving an account of how the work of this Canadian filmmaker achieves this effect. His art may be understood as anti-mimetic, since it does not represent our everyday life by simple imitation. Yet these are films in which the representation of the world (and its creatures) and the construction based on images of the past (and its artifice) are not opposites. Both of these features become meaningful because they rely on the imagination and the sedimentation of memory in order to trigger recognition. In recent years, Guy Maddin has developed a more personal engagement with his own memories in what he calls the *Me Trilogy* and this is also an aspect that is worth analysing.

**Author:** Sérgio Dias Branco (Lisbon, 1977) is Invited Assistant Professor of Film Studies at the University of Coimbra, where he coordinates film and image studies (in the Art Studies course). He is a researcher at the Centre of 20th Century Interdisciplinary Studies at the University of Coimbra and an invited member of the film analysis group *The Magnifying Class* at the University of Oxford. He co-edits the journals *Cinema: Journal of Philosophy and the Moving Image* (http://cjpmi.ifl.pt) and *Conversations: The Journal of Cavellian Studies* (https://uottawa.scholarsportal.info/ojs/index.php/conversations). His research work on the aesthetics of film, television, and video has been presented at Yale University, the University of Glasgow, and New York University, among others. His writings have been published in refereed journals like *Fata Morgana* and *Refractory*.

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### Apocalyptic Visions of the Present: the Zombie Invasion in Post 9/11 American Cinema. Inés Ordiz Alonso-Collada

**Keywords:** 9/11, zombie apocalypse, otherness, capitalism, George A. Romero.

**Abstract:** The 9/11 attacks triggered a change in America's conception of its own national reality, mainly as a consequence of the social trauma and collective paranoia experienced by its citizens. This change is reflected in the films produced in the US in the twenty-first century, and particularly in the horror genre and in the zombie subgenre. Apart from the proliferation of apocalyptic settings that evoke the chaos of New York City after the attacks, these new films reflect a radical conception of the *other* instigated by the picture

of the enemy presented by the Republican government of George W. Bush. On the other hand, the zombie motif has also been used as a vehicle by some filmmakers to elaborate a macabre critique of the capitalist system and of Republican neoliberal policy.

**Author:** Inés Ordiz Alonso-Collada was born in Oviedo (Asturias, Spain) in 1985. She recently completed her PhD at the Universidad de León (Spain), where she has also given classes in English language and literature. Her thesis, titled “Manifestaciones ficcionales del terror. El gótico contemporáneo de las Américas” (Fictional Manifestations of Terror: the Contemporary Gothic of the Americas) offers an analysis of Gothic fiction in both the United States and Latin America. Her current research interests include Latin American fantastic and horror literature and film, gender studies and the Gothic.

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### Logic, Poetics and Ontology of Alphaville. Miguel Alfonso Bouhaben

**Keywords:** logic, poetics, ontology, Godard, Alphaville, Plato, Laplace.

**Abstract:** The intention of the present article is to outline the logical, poetical and ontological devices employed in Jean-Luc Godard's film *Alphaville* (Alphaville. Une *étrange* aventure de Lemmy Caution, 1965). To do this, I will attempt an evaluation of both the different logical transgressions committed by Godard in terms of sense-meaning, sense-direction and sense-experience, and his criticism of Platonic and Laplacian absolutism through a defence of the poetry as an anti-normative and anti-scientistic domain. To conclude, I will further explore this critique of Platonism by applying Deleuze's notion of an ontology of difference to my reading of the film.

**Author:** Miguel Alfonso Bouhaben (Madrid, 1974) holds a PhD in Communication Studies for the Universidad Complutense de Madrid (UCM) and a degree in Literary Theory and Comparative Literature and Philosophy (UCM). Film lecturer in the Educational Innovation Projects of the UCM and in the Masters in Theory, Criticism and Valuation of Contemporary Art of the Instituto Superior de Arte. He has contributed to the journals *Cine Documental, Sans Soleil, Fotocinema, Toma Uno* y *Metakinema*.

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### Approach to the Definition of Hosted Trailer Through the Work of Cecil B. DeMille, Alfred Hitchcock and William Castle. Javier Lozano Delmar

**Keywords:** trailer, cinema advertising, promotion, Cecil B. DeMille, Alfred Hitchcock, William Castle.

**Abstract:** The object of study of this text is the film trailer and, specifically, a subtype known as hosted trailer. The content of these works is characterized by combining the use of images from the film with others filmed specifically for the trailer in which a testimonial figure belonging to the technical or artistic cast of the film speaks directly to the viewer with the purpose of presenting and advertising the film. The purpose of the paper is twofold: on one hand, to analyze the composition and structure of the first hosted trailers, which begin to appear during the era of classical Hollywood cinema as an alternative to conventional trailers that promoted the film by showing fragments of it; on the other, to cover a significant part of the hitherto unexplored history of trailer, reflecting on its promotional discourse and setting a benchmark for future research. To conduct the study, hosted trailers by three pioneer directors are discussed in the realization of these parts : Cecil B. DeMille , Alfred Hitchcock and William Castle.

**Author:** Javier Lozano Delmar (Córdoba, 1982), after graduating in Audiovisual Communication with Distinction and obtaining a FPU scholarship, he completed a PhD in Communication in 2012 and joined the Universidad Loyola Andalucía as a Research Assistant in 2013. Currently, he combines teaching with the performance of various research tasks. These works, focused on the areas of communication and advertising, have been published in various scientific journals and are mainly dedicated to the study of film trailers, digital technologies applied to advertising and the new promotion strategies for fictional contents in film and television.

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# ABSTRACTS [español]

## CUADERNO

## Rostros, voces, cuerpos, gestos. La concepción del trabajo actoral como núcleo del análisis fílmico

### La imitación, la excentricidad y la caracterización en la interpretación cinematográfica. James Naremore

**Palabras clave:** imitación, caracterización, mímesis, influencia estilística, excentricidad.

**Abstract**: Louise Brooks dijo una vez que, para convertirse en una estrella, un actor necesita combinar un comportamiento en apariencia natural y una «excentricidad» personal. El presente artículo explora algunos de los problemas de análisis que plantea este fenómeno. ¿Qué es la excentricidad y cómo, en ciertos casos, lo natural logra equilibrarla? ¿Qué ocurre cuando una estrella cinematográfica actúa en un film en el que debe caracterizar las excentricidades de otra estrella (Larry Parks como Al Jolson, Clint Eastwood como John Huston, Cate Blanchett como Bob Dylan, Meryl Streep como Julia Child, etc.)? ¿Cómo distinguir entre la caracterización como una caricatura y la caracterización como ilusión dramática? ¿Cuál es la diferencia, si es que existe alguna, entre la caracterización y la influencia estilística?

**Autor:** James Naremore (1941) es profesor emérito de Comunicación y Cultura, Inglés y Literatura Comparada en la Indiana University. Es autor de, entre otros libros: *Acting in the Cinema* (1988); *The Magic World of Orson Welles* (1989); *More than Night: Film Noir in its Contexts* (2008); *On Kubrick* (2008); *Sweet Smell of Success* (2010); y *An Invention without a Future: Essays on Cinema* (2014).

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### Los tres cuerpos de la narración: una poética cognitivista de la interpretación actoral. Héctor J. Pérez

**Palabras clave:** interpretación actoral, narración, emociones, cognitivismo, empatía, simpatía, cuerpo, estética.

**Abstract:** El objetivo de este trabajo es proponer desde el cognitivismo una comprensión adecuada de la interpretación actoral como factor narrativo y estético. Introductoriamente se ofrece un contexto que explique qué ha llevado casi siempre a considerar la interpretación actoral, en el audiovisual y en el teatro previamente, como algo ajeno a la narración, reservando esta categoría para la diégesis. Tras esto, presenta la concepción general cognitivista como la línea más adecuada para acometer el objetivo, en base a los rasgos centrales del concepto de reconocimiento, y así viene la propuesta central de considerar actrices y actores como generadores de la atención del espectador, primera condición de cualquier relato. Su parte central se ocupa de presentarnos, debidamente ejemplificadas, las tres principales modalidades en que la presencia actoral despierta la atención del espectador y explica en cada caso su alcance narrativo. Primero el valor del cuerpo para provocar una atención neutral del espectador hacia el personaje; en segundo lugar el valor de la excepcionalidad del cuerpo en relevantes incrementos del interés del espectador, que dan paso a las emociones centrales para el cognitivismo, como simpatía y empatía, determinantes por tanto en procesos narrativos; finalmente, se entronca con uno de los principales debates para ofrecer una alternativa al cognitivismo y resultado principal de este trabajo: la actuación, en su sentido artístico, genera tal atención y emociones como para equipararse con los factores morales más discutidos, como la *allegiance*. Cabe, por tanto, considerar que la interpretación actoral como práctica artística es el aspecto con mayor plenitud narrativa en la medida en que es la base más estable de la atención del espectador.

**Autor:** Héctor J. Pérez (Madrid, 1971) es profesor titular de narrativa audiovisual en la Universitat Politècnica de València (Escola Politècnica Superior de Gandia). Doctor europeo en Filosofía en 1999 por la Universidad de Murcia, se ha formado en la etapa predoctoral en el Musikwissentschaftliches Institut de la Universität Leipzig y postdoctoral en la Università degli Studi di Milano (Dipartimento di Estetica). Una línea principal de su investigación es el estudio de la narración corporal, especialmente en la ópera, y trabaja también asiduamente en estética cognitiva de la serialidad y en las relaciones entre mitología y cine. Su libro más reciente es *Cine y mitología: de las religiones a los argumentos universales* (Berna: Peter Lang, 2013). Es editor de *SERIES, International Journal of TV Serial Narratives.*

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### Hacia un montaje comparativo del retrato femenino. El teatro del cuerpo: lágrimas ficcionales y lágrimas reales. Gonzalo de Lucas

**Palabras clave:** actriz, cine moderno, retrato fílmico, imágenes de las lágrimas, retrato icónico, signos indiciales.

**Abstract:** Este artículo se centra en el retrato femenino y la filmación e interpretación de las lágrimas. A partir de la distinción entre lágrimas ficcionales y lágrimas reales, se propone un estudio de las formas fílmicas. En la primera parte, se analiza la obra de dos cineastas del clasicismo, David Wark Griffith y Josef von Sternberg: en sus películas, el rostro de la actriz hollywoodiense es filmado como una imagen *icónica*. En la segunda parte, se comenta la obra de diferentes cineastas europeos y americanos (Nicholas Ray, Roberto Rossellini, John Cassavetes, Rainer Werner Fassbinder): en sus retratos de los rostros

femeninos, las lágrimas son signos *indiciales* de la realidad y los efectos del tiempo.

**Autor:** Gonzalo de Lucas (Barcelona, 1975) es profesor de Comunicación Audiovisual en la Universitat Pompeu Fabra. Editor de la revista académica *Cinema Comparat/ive Cinema*. Director del posgrado *Montaje audiovisual* (IDEC). Programador de cine en Xcèntric (CCCB). Ha escrito los libros *Vida secreta de las sombras* (Paidós, 2001) y *El blanco de los orígenes* (Festival de Cine de Gijón, 2008) y ha co-editado *Jean-Luc Godard. Pensar entre imágenes* (Intermedio, 2010). Ha escrito artículos en una veintena de libros colectivos, y en *Cahiers du cinéma-España*, *Sight and Sound* o *La Vanguardia*.

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### La modernidad desde el clasicismo: el cuerpo de Marlene Dietrich en las películas de Josef von Sternberg. Núria Bou

**Palabras clave:** star, cuerpo, código de interpretación, cine clásico de Hollywood, cine moderno.

**Abstract:** En las primeras películas que Marlene Dietrich protagonizó en Hollywood, dirigidas por Josef von Sternberg a inicios de la década de los treinta, encontramos un ejemplo modélico de cómo el cine clásico transgredía sus formas de expresión convencionales. Mientras la *fábrica de sueños* insistía en la grandeza todopoderosa del amor, Marlene Dietrich desmitificaba la pasión ideal que Greta Garbo había hecho reinar en las ficciones de la época. La propuesta actoral de la actriz, irónica y distanciada, provocaron que el espectador tuviera una relación más moderna con la *star*. El objetivo principal de este artículo es explicar el funcionamiento del cine clásico a través de la gestualidad corporal de Marlene Dietrich.

**Autora:** Núria Bou (Barcelona, 1967) es profesora y directora del Máster en Estudios de Cine y Audiovisual Contemporáneos en el Departamento de Comunicación de la Universitat Pompeu Fabra. Es autora de *La mirada en el temps* (1996), *Plano/Contraplano,* (2002) y *Diosas y tumbas* (2004). En los libros colectivos *Les dives: mites i celebritats* (2007), *Políticas del deseo* (2007) o *Las metamorfosis del deseo* (2010) se encuentran sus líneas de investigación: la *star* en el cine clásico y la representación del deseo femenino.

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### ¿Quién soy yo? La política del actor en el arte de Anna Magnani. Marga Carnicé Mur

**Palabras clave:** política del actor, neorrealismo, modernidad, propuesta estética, propuesta dramática, estilo gestual, máscara, límite, artificio, figura, expresión, *popolana*, propuesta figurativa.

**Resumen:** A partir de su interpretación en *Roma, ciudad abierta* (Roma città aperta, Roberto Rossellini, 1945), Anna Magnani (Roma, 1908-1973) se erigió en la historia del cine como musa del neorrealismo italiano. Su caso plantea un diálogo entre cineastas, entre los cuales, de Roberto Rossellini a Federico Fellini, se establece una monumentalización de su paradigma interpretativo. Un paradigma que pretende ser abarcado aquí bajo las coordenadas de una política del actor. Este ensayo plantea la observación de esta política a partir de la propuesta figurativa de la actriz, y de cómo sus rasgos principales generaron una estética y un estilo dramático y gestual necesarios para la inscripción del cine de una época.

**Autora:** Marga Carnicé Mur (Barcelona, 1985) es licenciada en Comunicación Audiovisual y Máster en Estudios de Cine y Audiovisual Contemporáneos por la Universitat Pompeu Fabra, donde actualmente cursa el Doctorado en Comunicación. Desde febrero de 2013 trabaja como investigadora en formación en el grupo CINEMA (Colectivo de Investigación Estética de los Medios Audiovisuales). Sus líneas de investigación son la política del actor, la estética y hermenéutica del cine y la figuración femenina en el cine moderno.

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### El trabajo actoral como fundamento para el cine de autor. El cine independiente americano como ejemplo. Cynthia Ann Baron

**Palabras clave:** trabajo actoral, interpretación en la pantalla, cine independiente americano, naturalismo, semiótica de Praga.

**Resumen:** Para ilustrar que el trabajo actoral merece la misma atención que se le da a otros elementos fílmicos, el presente artículo demuestra que actuar puede ser crucial incluso para el cine independiente de autor. El análisis se centra en las interpretaciones de los personajes de *Matewan* (John Sayles, 1987), que pertenece a la primera «edad de oro» del cine independiente americano, y que está realizada por un director de cine independiente reconocido. Explora la concepción neo-naturalista del personaje sobre la cual se basan las actuaciones en *Matewan*. También analiza aspectos de los actos identificados por los teóricos de la Escuela de Praga como *signos gestuales* (gestos sociales) y *expresiones gestuales* (uso individual de los gestos), para demostrar que, en *Matewan*, la información clave sobre los personajes y su mundo se transmite a través de los signos gestuales seleccionados y de las cualidades de las expresiones gestuales idiosincrásicas de cada actor.

**Autora:** Cynthia Ann Baron (Hollywood, 1954) imparte clases de cine en Bowling Green State University. Es autora del libro *Denzel Washington* (2015), co-autora de *Appetites and Anxieties: Food, Film, and the Politics of Representation* (2014) y de *Reframing Screen Performance* (2008), co-editora de *More Than a Method: Trends and Traditions in Contemporary Film Performance* (2004) y editora de la serie *Palgrave Studies in Screen Industries and Performance*.

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### ¿Somos los actores de nuestra propia vida? Notas sobre el actor experimental. Nicole Brenez

**Palabras clave:** actor experimental, activismo político, Marlon Brando, Delphine Seyrig, Carole Roussopoulos, Jack Smith, Andy Warhol, Jean-Luc Godard, Raymundo Gleyzer.

**Resumen:** El actor de cine asegura una síntesis entre las tres dimensiones del arte según Quintiliano (teorética, práctica y poética). Por su estatus, el actor arremete contra la existencia conocida, la existencia menesterosa hasta en sus costumbres emocionales, puesto que su trabajo consiste en transportar la vida a los territorios de la creación, empezando por consagrarse a lo posible o a lo imposible, por decantarse o no hacia la existencia. Frente a la inmensa masa de actores de recreo que colaboran con la ideología imperante, con independencia de cuál sea, y que se muestran orgullosos y felices de apuntalarla con sus reflejos complacientes, se alzan iniciativas de actores en contra, no solo de las imágenes, sino también de los códigos de simbolización dominantes. Tales serían los casos de Marlon Brando y Delphine Seyrig. El trabajo de la actriz se expande cual levadura política en su colaboración con Carole Roussopoulos, siendo esta el origen de tres ensayos cinematográficos importantes. El actor, laboratorio experimental de la identidad, reconduce las configuraciones admitidas o elabora ante nuestros ojos ciertos prototipos de seres que pueden inscribirse, no solo en la historia de las ideas y las imágenes, sino también en la realidad social. Uno de los grandes poetas de la apariencia desestructurada fue el intérprete y cineasta experimental americano Jack Smith. De Smith, Andy Warhol adopta a los actores, retoma la noción de «Superstar» y, sobre todo, el principio según el cual, para acceder a lo esencial del cine, basta con registrar la presencia de los cuerpos. La estilística minimalista contemplativa de Warhol deja que los actores se espabilen con su propia *imago* y nos ofrece una serie de retratos inolvidables. El autor y, con frecuencia, actor que sistematiza a lo largo de su obra la cuestión del comediante de cine es sin duda Jean-Luc Godard. El artículo concluye citando el trabajo de aquellos actores para los cuales actuar implica materializar un activismo concreto, tales como los actores del cineasta Raymundo Gleyzer.

**Autora:** Nicole Brenez es historiadora, crítica de cine, programadora y especialista en cine de vanguardia. Es catedrática de Literatura Moderna e imparte clases de teoría del cine en la Université Sorbonne Nouvelle-Paris 3. Ha sido comisaria en distintas instituciones, entre ellas la Cinémathèque Française, donde se ha ocupado de la programación de cine experimental y de vanguardia desde 1996. Sus publicaciones más recientes son: *Le cinéma critique. De l'argentique au numérique, voies et formes de l'objection visuelle* (2010)*; Chantal Akerman, The Pajama Interview* (2011); y *Cinéma d'avant-garde mode d'emploi* (2012). Nicole Brenez produce, junto con Philippe Grandrieux, la colección *It May Be That Beauty Has Strengthened Our Resolve*, dedicada a aquellos cineastas revolucionarios que han sido olvidados o ignorados por la historia del cine.

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## DIÁLOGO

**Filmar / ser filmada. El trabajo actoral según Icíar Bollaín, cineasta y actriz. «Los actores son grandes guionistas porque se inventan cosas que el guionista tendría que haber escrito». Pablo Hernández Miñano, Nuria Castellote Herranz y Violeta Martín Núñez**

**Palabras clave:** interpretación, cine, dirección de actores, *casting*, estilos interpretativos, cine documental, Icíar Bollaín, José Luis Borau, Ken Loach.

**Abstract:** Desde su doble faceta de actriz y cineasta, Icíar Bollaín (Madrid, 1967) reflexiona en esta entrevista sobre cuestiones clave de la interpretación cinematográfica y de la dirección de actores, tales como las estrategias de *casting*, la aportación de los actores a la modificación de la película durante su rodaje, los grados de dependencia entre el trabajo actoral y el resto de elementos de la puesta en escena, la relación entre los estilos interpretativos y los modelos narrativos o géneros cinematográficos o la construcción de los *personajes* en el cine documental. Su experiencia con cineastas con métodos tan dispares como los de José Luis Borau y Ken Loach permite una aproximación a dos formas de concebir la dirección de actores radicalmente distintas y que podrían resumirse, a grandes rasgos, como la interpretación al servicio del resto de elementos de la puesta en escena, en el caso de Borau, frente a la supeditación del rodaje al trabajo de los actores, en el de Loach. Como cineasta, Bollaín se confiesa deudora de ambos, aunque más próxima a Loach en su forma de involucrar a los intérpretes en el proceso de creación de la película y facilitar su trabajo para lograr la mayor frescura y autenticidad posibles.

**Autores:** Pablo Hernández Miñano (Valencia, 1982) es licenciado en Comunicación Audiovisual por la Universitat de València y ha cursado el Máster en Guion de Cine de la Fundación para la Investigación del Audiovisual-Universidad Internacional Menéndez Pelayo (FIA-UIMP). Vinculado a diferentes proyectos de asociacionismo cultural, entre 2003 y 2008 formó parte del Cinefòrum L'Atalante y del equipo impulsor de *L'Atalante. Revista de estudios cinematográficos.* Ha participado en la organización técnica de diferentes jornadas y seminarios relacionados con el cine y, entre 2008 y 2013, ha desempeñado funciones de técnico de gestión cultural en el departamento de comunicación de La Filmoteca valenciana (CulturArts IVAC). Actualmente, imparte cursos monográficos sobre cine en la Universitat Politècnica de València y es coordinador técnico del Aula de Cinema de la Universitat de València. / Nuria Castellote Herranz (Valencia, 1979) es licenciada en Comunicación Audiovisual por la Universitat de València y ha cursado el Máster en Subtitulación y Doblaje por la Universidad de Sevilla. Es técnica de programación de La Filmoteca de Valencia (CulturArts IVAC) desde 2006 y, desde 2013, imparte cursos monográficos sobre cine en la Universitat Politècnica de València. Ha contribuido con artículos en la publicación colectiva *Mujeres, culturas y literaturas* (Caracas: Escultura, 2001) y en el *Diccionario del Cine Iberoamericano* (Madrid: SGAE, 2009). / Violeta Martín Núñez (Valencia, 1982) es licenciada en Comunicación Audiovisual y Periodismo por la Universitat de València (UV) y tiene un máster en Nuevas Tendencias y Procesos de Innovación en Comunicación por la Universitat Jaume I (UJI). Es miembro de la Asociación Cinefórum L'Atalante, que gestiona el Aula de Cinema de la UV, desde 2004, y secretaria de redacción de *L'Atalante. Revista de estudios cinematográficos.* También fue adjunta a la redacción de *Archivos de la Filmoteca.* Desarrolla su actividad profesional en la empresa Projectem Comunicació.

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## (DES)ENCUENTROS

**Una tarea compartida: cineastas e intérpretes frente al trabajo actoral. Pablo Hernádez Miñano, Violeta Martín Núñez.**

**Introducción. Ser o no ser... El dilema de la interpretación. Daniel Gascó.**

**Discusión. Mariano Barroso, Celina Murga, Felipe Vega, Pablo Berger, Àlex Brendemühl, Eduard Fernández, Emilio Gutiérrez Caba, Tristán Ulloa.**

**Conclusión. El mapa vivo de Javier Bardem. Lola Mayo.**

**Palabras clave:** cine, interpretación, trabajo actoral, dirección de actores, *casting*, Mariano Barroso, Celina Murga, Felipe Vega, Pablo Berger, Àlex Brendemühl, Eduard Fernández, Emilio Gutiérrez Caba, Tristán Ulloa.

**Abstract:** El trabajo de los actores es un elemento cuya complejidad es difícil de percibir por el espectador cuando se enfrenta al visionado de una película. Para llegar a ese resultado final, es necesario todo un proceso que da comienzo incluso antes del rodaje del film. El *casting*, la selección de actores, cuya importancia pasa muchas veces desapercibida, se convierte así en factor decisivo para el éxito o fracaso de un proyecto. Esta discusión trata de arrojar algo de luz sobre todas esas piezas del engranaje de una película que están relacionadas con el trabajo actoral y su simbiosis con el resto del equipo técnico y artístico que conforma un proyecto fílmico. A través de la opinión de cuatro realizadores —Mariano Barroso, Celina Murga, Felipe Vega y Pablo Berger— y cuatro intérpretes —Àlex Brendemühl, Eduard Fernández, Emilio Gutiérrez Caba y Tristán Ulloa—, conoceremos los momentos clave del trabajo actoral en una producción cinematográfica, la importancia de la metodología y la intuición en el oficio de actor, la relación entre interpretación y puesta en escena o las principales referencias delante y detrás de la cámara para algunos representantes destacados de nuestro cine. En definitiva, una perspectiva poliédrica y en primera persona de lo que significa la interpretación y la dirección de actores.

**Autores:** Daniel Gascó García estudia Ciencias Empresariales en la Universitat Jaume I de Castelló, donde se encarga tres años del Aula de Cine. Forma parte del Consejo de Redacción de la revista valenciana *Banda Aparte* (1993-1997). Colabora como crítico en diversos medios (prensa, radio y televisión), así como en varios libros colectivos, y es jurado en diversos festivales cinematográficos (Alcalá de Henares, La Cabina, Radio City, etc.). Actualmente, escribe en *Caimán Cuadernos de Cine* y *Lletres valencianes* e imparte la asignatura de Historia del Cine Comparada en la Academia Idecrea. Desde el 16 de agosto de 2004 se hace cargo, junto a su hermana Almudena, del videoclub Stromboli, que atesora una parte importante de la Historia del Cine. Organiza ciclos para el Festival Cine Europa y el Centro Galego de Arte Contemporánea (CGAC). / Lola Mayo es guionista, escritora y productora. Ha escrito y producido los tres largometrajes dirigidos por Javier Rebollo: *El muerto y ser feliz* (2012), Goya al Mejor Actor y Premio FIPRESCI en el Festival de San Sebastián; *La mujer sin piano* (2009), Concha de Plata al Mejor Director en el Festival de San Sebastián y Mejor Película en el Festival de Cine de Los Ángeles; y *Lo que sé de Lola* (2006), Premio FIPRESCI en el Festival Internacional de Cine de Londres. Asimismo, ha escrito con Javier Rebollo su cuarta película, *La cerillera*. Actualmente, escribe el guion de la película colombiana *Como cloro en tela negra*, de Ana María Londoño, y dirige documentales de gran formato para el programa *Documentos TV* (TVE). Desde 1996, a través de su productora, Lolita Films, ha producido una quincena de cortometrajes, que reúnen más de cien premios en festivales de todo el mundo. En estos momentos, es coordinadora de la Cátedra de Documental de la Escuela de Cine de San Antonio de los Baños en Cuba, mientras continúa enseñando guion y creación documental en el Instituto del Cine de Madrid y en la Escuela Oficial de Cine de Madrid. Ha escrito poemas, una novela, y un libro de cine. / Mariano Barroso (Sant Just Desvern, 1959) se dio a conocer al recibir el Goya al Mejor Director Novel por *Mi hermano del alma* (1994). Tras este interesante debut, le han seguido filmes como *Éxtasis* (1996), *Los lobos de Washington* (1999) o *Todas las mujeres* (2013), alternando su presencia en el cine con la realización de series de televisión y una labor docente muy activa. Formado en el American Film Institute y en el Laboratorio William Layton, es coordinador de la Diplomatura de Dirección en la ECAM y ha dirigido la Cátedra de Dirección de la Escuela de Cine de San Antonio de los Baños en Cuba. El trabajo actoral es uno de los puntos clave de su filmografía, como demuestra el documental de 2005 *El oficio del actor*, en el que intervienen habituales de su filmografía como Javier Bardem, Luis Tosar o Eduard Fernández. / Tras su formación en la Universidad del Cine de Buenos Aires, Celina Murga (Paraná, 1973) ha desarrollado su carrera en varios oficios del ámbito cinematográfico. Directora, guionista, productora y editora, se dio a conocer en el mundo del cortometraje con títulos como *Interior-Noche* (1999) y *Una tarde feliz* (2002). Debutó en el largometraje con *Ana y los otros* (2003), y su segunda película (*Una semana solos*, 2007) fue estrenada en el Festival Internacional de Cine Independiente de Buenos Aires. En 2009, participó en un programa de mecenazgo bianual que le permitió trabajar junto a Martin Scorsese. Además de su labor como creadora, ha ejercido como docente en el Centro de Investigación Cinematográfica de Buenos Aires. / La labor de Felipe Vega (León, 1952) en el mundo del cine abarca desde la dirección y el guion de cortometrajes, largometrajes o anuncios publicitarios hasta el ejercicio de la crítica en revistas especializadas y la docencia en la Escuela de la Cinematografía y el Audiovisual de la Comunidad de Madrid. En activo desde finales de la década de 1970, ha sido reconocido en varias ocasiones en el Festival Internacional de Cine de San Sebastián por títulos como *Mientras haya luz* (1988) y *El mejor de los tiempos* (1989). En su carrera en el largometraje ha estado unido a nombres como el productor Gerardo Herrero (*Un paraguas para tres*, 1992; *Nubes de verano*, 2004) o el escritor y periodista Manuel Hidalgo, con quien ha colaborado en *Grandes ocasiones* (1998), la mencionada *Nubes de verano* o *Mujeres en el parque* (2006). Su último trabajo hasta la fecha es el documental *Elogio de la distancia* (2010), realizado junto al novelista Julio Llamazares, quien ya escribiera quince años atrás el guion de *El techo del mundo* (1995). / Hasta el estreno de *Blancanieves* (2012), Pablo Berger (Bilbao, 1963) apenas contaba en su filmografía con un cortometraje (*Mama*, 1988) y el largo *Torremolinos 73* (2003), aunque también con una amplia trayectoria en el mundo de la publicidad, el videoclip y la docencia en la New York Film Academy. Con su segundo largometraje, se convirtió en uno de los cineastas más premiados de nuestro cine, al recibir el film un total de diez Goyas, incluyendo el de Mejor Película, Guion Original y Canción Original, firmados por el propio realizador. También fueron premiadas las actrices Maribel Verdú y Macarena García. / Procedente de la cantera del teatro y la televisión, desde que debutara como actor protagonista en *Un banco en el parque* (Agustí Vila, 1999) y se consolidara en *Las horas del día* (Jaime Rosales, 2003) dando vida al *serial* *killer* cotidiano, los papeles de Àlex Brendemühl (Barcelona, 1972) en el cine han estado muchas veces asociados a óperas primas de directores desconocidos o a obras de cineastas con un marcado carácter independiente. Así, ha trabajado a las órdenes de Pere Portabella (*El silencio después de Bach*, 2007), Óscar Aibar (*El bosc*, 2012) o, más recientemente, Lluís Miñarro (*Stella Cadente*, 2014) o Isaki Lacuesta (*Murieron por encima de sus posibilidades*, 2014). Además, combina su trabajo actoral en el cine español con papeles en otras cinematografías como la francesa, la argentina o la alemana. / Procedente de una familia de actores, y con casi dos centenares de trabajos acreditados como actor de cine y televisión, Emilio Gutiérrez Caba (Valladolid, 1942) es uno de los rostros imprescindibles del cine y el teatro españoles desde principios de la década de 1960. Fundó su propia compañía teatral en 1968 y fue protagonista de alguno de los mejores títulos del nuevo cine español de aquel decenio, como *Nueve cartas a Berta* (Basilio Martín Patino, 1966) o *La caza* (Carlos Saura, 1966). Su carrera se revitalizó en los primeros años del nuevo siglo gracias a directores como Álex de la Iglesia (*La comunidad*, 2000) o Miguel Albaladejo (*El cielo abierto*, 2001) y a su presencia en éxitos de televisión como *Gran Reserva* (TVE: 2010-2013). / Después de iniciar su carrera en el teatro con textos de los grandes clásicos (Shakespeare, Molière, Beckett), la trayectoria cinematográfica de Eduard Fernández (Barcelona, 1964) empezó a despuntar tras su aparición en *Los lobos de Washington* (Mariano Barroso, 1999) y recibir la primera de sus ocho candidaturas a los premios Goya. Conocido por interpretar personajes de carácter, ha destacado como protagonista en títulos como *Fausto 5.0* (La Fura dels Baus, 2001), *Smoking Room* (Julio D. Wallovits, Roger Gual, 2002), *El método* (Marcelo Piñeiro, 2005), *Ficció* (Ficción, Cesc Gay, 2006) o *La mosquitera* (Agustí Vila, 2010), y también como actor de reparto en cintas como *Son de mar* (Bigas Luna, 2001), *En la ciudad* (Cesc Gay, 2003), *Alatriste* (Agustín Díaz Yanes, 2006), *Pa negre* (Agustí Villaronga, 2010) o *El Niño* (Daniel Monzón, 2014). / Uno de los rostros más conocidos del cine, la televisión y el teatro en España, Tristán Ulloa (Orleans, 1970) empezó su carrera delante de las cámaras a finales de la década de 1990, siendo *Mensaka* (Salvador García Ruiz, 1998) el papel que le catapultó a la primera línea al recibir una nominación al Goya como Mejor Actor Revelación. Desde entonces, ha alternado papeles protagonistas (*Lucía y el sexo*, Julio Medem, 2001) y secundarios, participando en cerca de una treintena de largometrajes y en series de televisión como *El comisario* (Telecinco: 1999-2000), *Gran Reserva* (TVE: 2010-2013) o *El tiempo entre costuras* (Antena 3: 2013-2014). En 2007 debutó como director junto a su hermano David con la película *Pudor*, por la que fue nominado al Goya al Mejor Guion Adaptado y a la Mejor Dirección Novel.

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## PUNTOS DE FUGA

### *Cisne negro* o de cómo convertir un sueño en pesadilla. Eugenia Rojo

**Palabras clave:** Darren Aronofsky, cine de terror, *Doppelgänger*, hipercine, hipermodernidad, teoría freudiana, efectos especiales.

**Abstract:** Recientemente, el cine de terror ha recuperado a su público. El éxito de crítica y espectadores del oscarizado film de Aronofsky, *Cisne negro*, se presta a un análisis de sus mecanismos estéticos y narrativos, así como de las estrategias para la conformación de personajes y del lenguaje cinematográfico relativo a este género. El director americano ofrece un cóctel de influencias: la literatura y el ballet decimonónicos, las teorías freudianas y las lecciones de los grandes maestros del arte cinematográfico. Asimismo, recoge la tradición del doble, que se origina en las sagas escandinavas y que adquiere su máximo esplendor en el arte europeo del siglo XIX. Por último, aunque ha sido etiquetado como cine independiente, presenta algunas de las características de la era hipermoderna del cine, en la que las nuevas tecnologías se erigen como instrumentos clave de una estética hiperbólica.

**Autora:** Eugenia Rojo nació en Buenos Aires en 1978. Es Licenciada en Traducción e Interpretación por la Universitat Jaume I de Castellón y Licenciada en Historia del Arte por la Universitat de València. Ha realizado un Máster Universitario en Historia del Arte y Cultura Visual, y su proyecto final consistió en un estudio relacional de los corpus fotográficos de Diane Arbus (1923-1971) y Nan Goldin (1953), expuesto en el Congreso Internacional *«Me veo, luego existo», mujeres que representan, mujeres representadas*, del 5 al 7 de noviembre de 2013. Actualmente cursa el Doctorado en Historia del Arte en la Universitat de València.

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### Kino Kino Kino Kino Kino: el cine de artificio de Guy Maddin. Sérgio Dias Branco

**Palabras clave:** Guy Maddin, artificio, crítica de cine, memoria.

**Abstract:** Las películas de Maddin absorben al espectador inmediatamente al mismo tiempo que su complejidad resulta agotadora. Dejan una impresión perdurable de un mundo efímero y distanciado, extrañamente cercano al nuestro —como una sombra profunda de él—. Nuestro propósito es reflexionar sobre esta impresión, dando cuenta de cómo la obra del cineasta canadiense logra este efecto. Su arte puede entenderse como anti-naturalista y anti-mimético, ya que no representa nuestra vida cotidiana por simple imitación. Sin embargo, este es un cine en el que la representación del mundo (y sus criaturas) y la construcción a partir de imágenes del pasado (y su artificio) no son opuestos. Ambos rasgos se vuelven significativos porque se basan en la imaginación y la sedimentación de la memoria con el fin de activar el reconocimiento. Recientemente, Guy Maddin ha desarrollado un compromiso más personal con sus propios recuerdos en lo que él llama la *Me Trilogy*, un aspecto que vale la pena analizar.

**Autor:** Sérgio Dias Branco (Lisboa, 1977) es profesor adjunto invitado de Estudios Cinematográficos de la Universidade de Coimbra, donde coordina los estudios de cine y de imagen (en el Grado en Arte). Es investigador en el Centro de Estudios Interdisciplinarios del Siglo XX de la Universidade de Coimbra y miembro invitado del grupo de análisis fílmico *The Magnifying Class* en la Oxford University. Co-edita las revistas *Cinema: Journal of Philosophy and the Moving Image* (http://cjpmi.ifl.pt) y *Conversations: The Journal of Cavellian Studies* (https://uottawa.scholarsportal.info/ojs/index.php/conversations). Su investigación sobre la estética del cine, la televisión y el vídeo ha sido presentada en la Yale University, la Glasgow University y la

New York University, entre otras. Sus escritos han sido publicados en revistas con revisores ciegos como *Fata Morgana* y *Refractory*.
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### Visiones apocalípticas del presente: la invasión zombi en el cine de terror estadounidense después del 11-S. Inés Ordiz Alonso-Collada

**Palabras clave:** 11-S, apocalipsis zombi, otredad, capitalismo, George A. Romero.

**Abstract:** Los ataques del 11 de septiembre de 2001 implicaron un cambio en la manera de concebir la realidad nacional por parte de los ciudadanos americanos como consecuencia, principalmente, del trauma social y la paranoia colectiva a la que se vieron expuestos. Este cambio se refleja en las ficciones fílmicas que el país produce durante este siglo XXI, y particularmente en el género de terror y en el subgénero del cine zombi. Además de la proliferación de escenarios apocalípticos, que evocan el caos de una Nueva York recién atacada, las nuevas películas reflejan una concepción radical del *otro* instigada por las visiones del enemigo que presentaba el gobierno republicano de George W. Bush. Por otro lado, la ficción zombi sirve de vehículo a determinados autores para elaborar una crítica macabra al sistema capitalista y a la política neoliberal republicana.

**Autora:** Inés Ordiz Alonso-Collada nació en Oviedo (Asturias) en 1985. La autora acaba de completar su doctorado en la Universidad de León, donde también ha impartido clases de literatura y lengua inglesa. Su tesis, titulada *Manifestaciones ficcionales del terror. El gótico contemporáneo de las Américas* se centra en el análisis de las ficciones góticas en Estados Unidos e Hispanoamérica. Actualmente su investigación se centra, entre otros temas, en la exploración de la literatura y cine fantásticos y de horror hispanoamericanos, los estudios de género y el gótico.
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### La lógica, la poética y la ontología de *Lemmy contra Alphaville*. Miguel Alfonso Bouhaben

**Palabras clave:** lógica, poética, ontología, Godard, Alphaville, Platón, Laplace.

**Resumen:** El presente artículo pretende exponer los dispositivos lógicos, poéticos y ontológicos cristalizados en el film de Jean-Luc Godard *Lemmy contra Alphaville* (Alphaville, une étrange aventure de Lemmy Caution, 1965). Para ello, nos esforzaremos en evaluar tanto las diversas transgresiones lógicas que ejerce Godard sobre el sentido-significado, el sentido-dirección y el sentido-experiencia, como la crítica al absolutismo platónico y laplaciano a través de la defensa de la poesía como dominio antinormativo y anticientificista. Para finalizar, abundaremos en la crítica al platonismo aplicando las propuestas deleuzianas de una ontología de la diferencia a la lectura del film.

**Autor:** Miguel Alfonso Bouhaben (Madrid, 1974) es doctor en Comunicación Audiovisual por la Universidad Complutense de Madrid (UCM) y licenciado en Teoría de la Literatura y Literatura Comparada y en Filosofía (UCM). Profesor de Cine en los proyectos de innovación educativa de la UCM y en el máster en Teoría, Crítica y Valoración del Arte Contemporáneo del Instituto Superior de Arte. Ha colaborado con las revistas *Cine Documental, Sans Soleil*, *Fotocinema*, *Toma Uno* y *Metakinema*.
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### Aproximación a la definición de *hosted trailer* a través de la obra de Cecil B. DeMille, Alfred Hitchcock y William Castle. Javier Lozano Delmar

**Palabras clave:** tráiler, publicidad cinematográfica, promoción, Cecil B. DeMille, Alfred Hitchcock, William Castle.

**Abstract:** El objeto de estudio de este trabajo es el tráiler cinematográfico y, en concreto, un subtipo de tráiler conocido como *hosted trailer* o tráiler presentado. El contenido de estas obras se caracteriza por combinar el uso de imágenes procedentes de la película con otras rodadas ex profeso para el tráiler en las que una figura testimonial perteneciente al reparto técnico o artístico del film se dirige de forma directa al espectador con el propósito de presentar y anunciar el film. El propósito del artículo es doble: por un lado, analizar la composición y estructura de los primeros *hosted trailers*, que comienzan a aparecer durante la época del cine clásico de Hollywood como alternativa a los tráileres convencionales que promocionaban la película mostrando fragmentos de esta; por otro, cubrir una parte importante de la hasta ahora inexplorada historia del tráiler, reflexionando sobre su discurso promocional y estableciendo un punto de referencia para futuras investigaciones. Para llevar a cabo el estudio, se analizan los *hosted trailers* de tres directores pioneros en la realización de estas piezas: Cecil B. DeMille, Alfred Hitchcock y William Castle.

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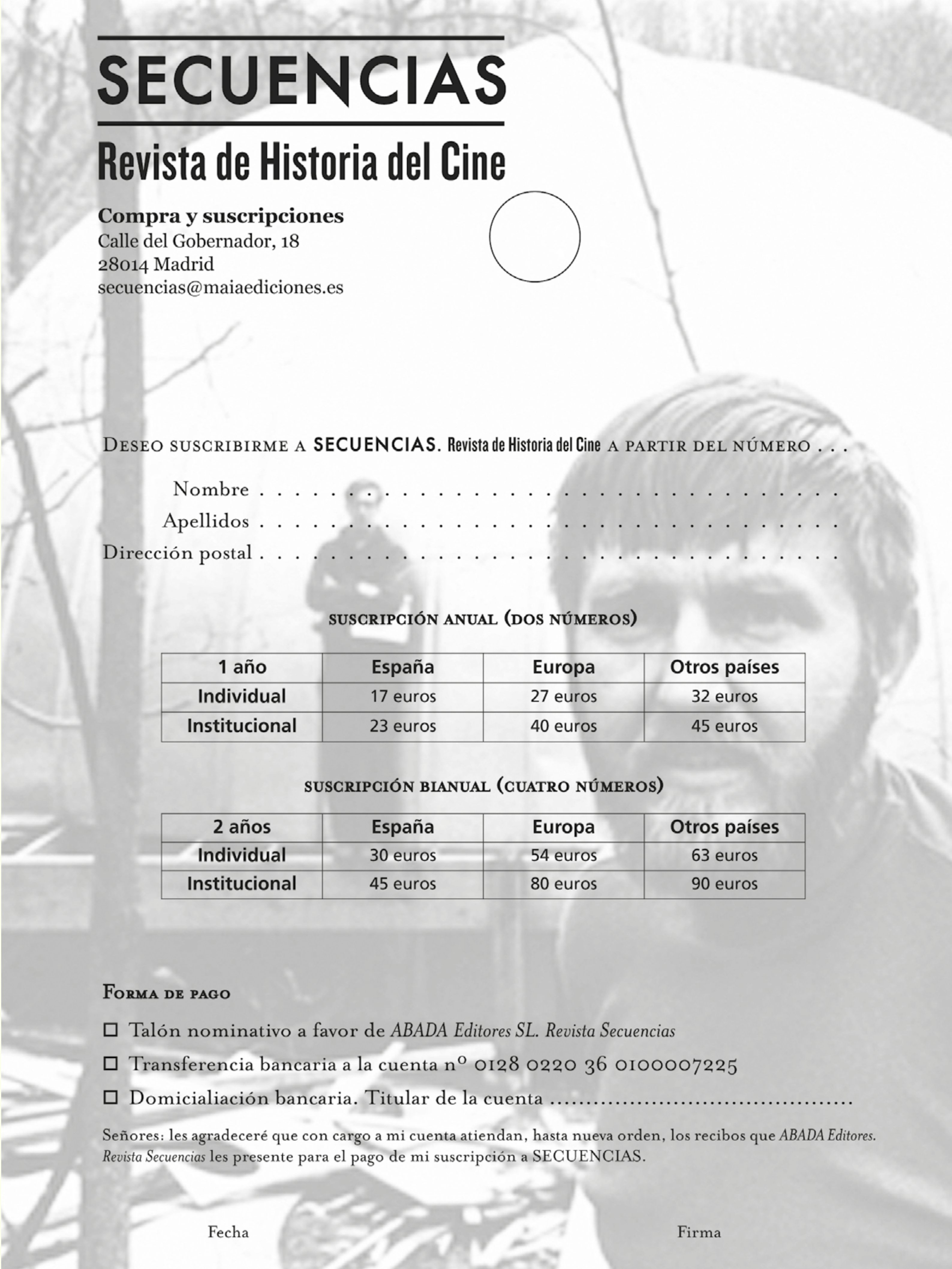

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