

(DIS)AGREEMENTS

Undoing topics.
A five-voice discussion about
post-war Spanish cinema

Santos Zunzunegui

_introduction

The retrospective reappraisal of the Spanish past

Although best known to us for his outstanding work as a theorist and critic of contemporary art, Arthur Danto was, above all, a highly accomplished analytical philosopher whom we have to thank for the most important of the many texts written in the last decades of the twentieth century on the debate of the role that *narration* has to play in our understanding of past events¹. To sum up his core theories, Danto argues that historical narration does not convey *information* to us about the past, but rather fulfils an *explanatory* function; that this narration is always the work of a *subject* who is historically located in a time subsequent to the events narrated; and that a history of the present is impossible because the future remains open. Indeed, because the future is yet to come, the past is irremediably unresolved, since historical events only acquire meaning when they are related to later events to which the scholar attributes importance based on current concerns.

That a retrospective reappraisal of the past was especially necessary in the case of Spanish cinema was something that began to become clear at the end of the 1970s when, coinciding with the political transition following Franco's death, a movement began that sought to rehabilitate a film tradition which until then had warranted only sporadic attention from the most accomplished historians. The beginning of this sea-change was marked by the failed at-

tempt, led by Román Gubern, to produce a history of Spanish cinema in several volumes written according to modern and scientifically sound criteria. Unfortunately, only two of the volumes originally planned saw the light of day, both published by the Lumen publishing house in 1977: *El cine sonoro en la República 1929-1936* and *Cine español en el exilio*. A little later the doctoral thesis by Félix Fanés, defended in 1981 and published in 1982, brought the work of the film studio CIFESA out of “the aquatic fog of mystery” in a volume entitled *CIFESA, la antorcha de los éxitos*. This was also the period of the works of scholars such as Francisco Llinás (who, through his journal *CONTRACAMPO*, from 1979 to 1987, encouraged a sensible rereading of our cinematic past without losing sight of the present) and Julio Pérez Perucha, who exhumed from the Valladolid International Film Festival the forgotten figures of Edgar Neville (1982), Luis Marquina (1983) and Carlos Serrano de Osma (1983), while in the same years (1979-1981) Bilbao’s documentary cinema festival gave visibility to an substantial proportion of the republican documentaries made during our civil war.

This movement reached its peak in 1995 with the appearance of the excellent critical anthology titled *Antología Crítica del Cine Español* sponsored by the Spanish Association of Film Historians and coordinated by Julio Pérez Perucha. It would not be an exaggeration to assert that this publication marks a milestone in the historiography of Spanish cinema for its comprehensive scope, its effort to combine perspectives from the academic world with voices from the film industry and its application of innovative methodologies. Later works such as the *Diccionario del Cine español* (1998), sponsored by the Academia de Cine and edited by José Luis Borau, or the *Diccionario de Cine*

Iberoamericano (2011), promoted by the Spanish Society of Authors and Publishers (SGAE), continued to explore the same terrain.

But now, twenty years after the publication of the *Antología*, it seems that the time has come to delve once again (with new perspectives) into some of the ideas explored in it, ideas which, in more than a few cases, were merely implicit in that collection in the absence of a programmatic text that could bring them out into the open. Moreover, many of these ideas concerned the films made in the bleak decades following our Civil War. We may now be in a better position to conduct a retrospective reading of our past that is more open and less loaded down with prejudices. The questions and answers that follow reflect something of the state of the question with respect to some key issues. ■

Notes

1. In 1965, Arthur Danto published his *Analytical Philosophy of History* (Cambridge University Press). Three of the chapters of this book (1, 7 and 8) were translated into Spanish in 1989 by the Barcelona publisher Paidós under the title *Historia y narración. Ensayos de filosofía analítica de la historia*.

Cerca de la ciudad (Luis Lucia, 1952)



_discussion

1. Did Spanish cinema in the Francoist period remain immune to the influences of world cinema—both European and American?

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Juan Miguel Company

In spite of the economic and political isolationism marked by the so-called autocratic period of Francoism from 1939 to 1959, the permeability revealed in many films of that era with particular forms, emblematic styles and characters of other film traditions is actually quite obvious. This is true as much due to the special sensitivity of certain filmmakers as to the subjection of certain studios (CIFESA) to the approaches and operations of the serial production of Hollywood studios. In my opinion, Spanish cinema in the Francoist period was influenced by Hollywood to a much greater extent than by Italian neorealism, in spite of the considerable debate this question has inspired. It is worth recalling the restricted and marginalized nature of the screenings of neorealist films (or films adopting a neorealist style) in the two weeks that the Istituto Italiano di Cultura dedicated to them in Madrid in November 1951 and March 1953. The exclusion of Rossellini's work (*Rome, Open City* (1945) had just one semi-clandestine screening and the film was shipped into Spain in a diplomatic pouch) meant that prominence was given to Zavattini's more easily assimilated style of neorealism. Thus, a film that is normally considered something of a pioneer in the hybridization of neorealism and *costumbrista* comedy such as *The Last Horse* (El último caballo, Edgar Neville, 1950) is at the same time an ecological fable *avant la lettre*, especially in its ending, which owes so much to Chaplin's *Modern Times* (1936). The same is true of the new trend of contempt for the big city and praise of the village reflected in *Furrows* (Surcos, José Antonio Nieves Conde, 1951), in which Italian post-war cinema is cited ironically (the treacherous black marketeer goes with his lover to see "one of those neorealist films that are in fashion now") and served as a guide in its production and design.

Alejandro Montiel

No, because it could not have been otherwise. None of the social, political or ideological forces that united for the uprising led by General Franco had, among their hyper-nationalist delusions, the least notion of how to invent a totally autocratic and uncontaminated film tradition. As reliably as in previous decades, Spanish audiences and film-makers saw, with very few exceptions, the most acclaimed films at the cutting edge of the cinematic art that were shown around the rest of the world and for which Europe and the United States held the industrial and commercial hegemony, and they imitated the formal techniques adopted in these films.

In short, in spite of the censorship, in spite of the same old tired mantra of a New Spain (one, great and free), Spanish filmmakers did not stop looking to the immediate (republican) past, or *outside* the country, just as the filmmakers most favoured by the regime, such as Sáenz de Heredia or Rafael Gil, confessed repeatedly in their interviews. Among other reasons, this was because those were the films they were watching *inside* Spanish theatres, which had already been colonised (and have remained so since then) by U.S. producers and distributors and other prominent European film studios, against whom it was and is impossible—apparently—to impose protectionist measures.

Jean-Claude Seguin

The political and historical situation of Spain after World War II was an undeniable conditioning factor of what we could call the "Spanish cinematic autocracy". The break with a significant number of intellectuals, those who had supported the republic, the ideological isolation of Francoism and different forms of censorship had an indisputable repercussion on Spanish film production. Nevertheless, Spanish cinema could not invent itself *ex nihilo* and had to look for models, both in its own artistic past and in other European or American cultures. I believe that there were three main influences on Spanish cinema in the 1940s.

The political circumstances meant that it was always easier to explore aesthetic rather than ideological questions and, from this point of view, the most significant influence came, without any doubt, from a *post-expressionism* identifiable in both the cinematography and the artistic direction and due, at least partly, to German artists who had settled or who taken refuge in Spain. Outstanding in this respect is the central role of Enrique Guerner, the cinematographer for *Raza* (José Luis Sáenz de Heredia, 1941), and *La aldea maldita* (Florián Rey, 1942), and of his school, but also that of Sigfredo Burmann, who also worked on *Raza*, and on several films by Edgar Neville, such as *Life on a Thread* (La vida en un hilo, 1945) and *The Crime of Bordadores Street* (El crimen de la calle Bordadores, 1946), and his family. As a counterpoint to this expression of the terrestrial and the deformed, we could consider the influence of an American model (or, more precisely, a Hollywood model) of comedy, but without forgetting the importance of its French precursor René Clair, a model of the "clear line" in cinematography, with such essential films as *Sous les toits de Paris* (1930), *Le Dernier milliardaire* (1934) or *C'est arrivé demain* (1944). The supposedly *trivial* come-

dy, which could be labelled *escapist*, had the advantage of offering an open, sometimes frivolous space far removed from the social reality. This type of comedy represented a bourgeois middle-class that was still a minority in the Spain of that time, but that served as a model for a population who aspired to such *luxury*. Paraphrasing Stanley Cavell, the expression “comedy of remarriage” could be coined to designate this subgenre of Spanish production that was a key feature of the 1940s.

The third influence, which emerged by the end of the 1940s and especially in the early 1950s, would be neorealism. There is a certain ambiguity in appraising the real influence of this Italian-born movement in the 1940s. We know how José María Escudero advocated *reality* in cinema, and sought to promote it in Spain. The results, however, were quite limited and looked more to the French pseudo-neorealism of *Antoine and Antoinette* (Antoine et Antoinette, Jacques Becker, 1947) than to the devastating and desperate *Germany, Year Zero* (Germania, anno zero, Roberto Rossellini, 1948). With the exception of *Furrows* (Surcos, José Antonio Nieves Conde, 1951), the films that are usually included in this subgenre sweeten, almost completely, the ideological message of neorealism. Nobody doubts that there was an effort to introduce neorealism from above, but that it came to constitute a Spanish subgenre has yet to be demonstrated.

Jenaro Talens

I don't think so. One thing is that the official censorship used every means at its disposal to hinder the distribution to mainstream theatres of anything that was deemed harmful or unadvisable according to its particular and perverse moral criteria, and another thing is that films could not be circulated like books were, in a more or less semi-clandestine way. Another issue is that many Spanish filmmakers preferred to follow certain modes of representation drawn from traditional Spanish theatrical forms like the *sainete* or the *zarzuela* and that this has been considered by critics—rather simplistically, it must be said—to be a handicap and a mistake, but I do not think that it was due to ignorance of what was being done outside Spain at all. Confusing the *official* logic of a culture with the individual practices of those working within that culture is an inappropriate generalization. I personally find a great number of Spanish films of the forties and fifties very interesting, and I do not understand how, for example, *El destino se disculpa* (José Luis Sáenz de Heredia, 1945) can be considered inferior to *It's a Wonderful Life* (Frank Capra, 1946). I prefer Sáenz de Heredia's film, even if the director was a reactionary through and through. The effects of meaning of his film are not reactionary, and that is what matters, I believe. There is a certain simple-mindedness in accepting the distinction between unbelievable stories—with angels, demons, vampires, reincarnations, etc.—and

staging when discussing Hollywood films, and in not doing so, underlining instead the national Catholicism of many screenplays and forgetting or sometimes criticising the staging when discussing Spanish cinema. We already know that the stories told in *Harka* (Carlos Arévalo, 1941) or in *A mí, la legión* (Juan de Orduña, 1942) are rubbish, but the rather perverse gaze used by Arévalo or Orduña, respectively, to evoke the homosexual perspective in the army is a different matter and seems to me more transgressive than Raoul Walsh's in so many Westerns, even if we like them more—which has nothing to do with what we are discussing now.

Santos Zunzunegui

It is clear that both World War II and the isolation suffered by the Franco regime during the years that followed our Civil War and, of course, the strict censorship that was imposed to any expression that might potentially influence, one way or another, the minds of the Spanish people, significantly obstructed contact with some of the most brilliant cinema that emerged at the end of the world war. This was very specifically the case for neorealism, which had an extraordinarily selective presence on our screens, with the almost complete absence of the works that would reveal themselves to be the most important for the future of this movement. I'm thinking especially of the work of Rossellini, whose most important films could only be seen later and only by certain privileged groups. For this reason the cliché that the most brilliant of Spanish cinema in the 1950s has to do with the neorealist influence needs to be reviewed closely once and for all. It is important to take note of the superficiality of that influence and, moreover, to specify which neorealism we are talking about.

Another more complex question is the mark that American cinema (or certain U.S. films), whose presence in Spain was regularised (although with notable absences) quite quickly, left on our films in genres that were more permeable to less compromising influences. For some Spanish filmmakers who cultivated a more or less sophisticated comedic style, attention to practices refined by directors like Capra or Lubitsch (already very active and visible before the Civil War) was an undeniable fact that contributed to giving some of the most representative films of the period a certain (albeit limited) formal substance.

2. Is the notion of *auteur*, as it was coined in *Cahiers du Cinéma* in the early 1950s, relevant to the study of a cinematic tradition like Spain's? If so, what are the limitations or particular nuances of this notion for Spanish cinema?

Juan Miguel Company

The concept of *auteur* introduced by *Cahiers* suffers from a certain romantic idealism that pits the individual figure of the filmmaker, anointed by his muses, against the regulatory machine of the film industry in general and of Hollywood in particular. Against this conception, which goes from the *auteur* to the work he creates, it is worth opposing the analysis of the work and deducing therefrom certain particular features that suggest a style unique to the filmmaker. The congenital industrial weakness of Spanish cinema means that the concept of authorship needs to be treated with special caution. Working within the Spanish tradition of the *sainete costumbrista*, the Ferrer-Azcona-Berlanga trio achieved a certain kind of grotesque cinema, straddling the decades of the 1950s and 1960s, with films as unique and recognizable as *El pisito* (1959), *El cochecito* (1960), *Plácido* (1961) and *Not on Your Life* (El verdugo, 1963), which all had a certain choral character in common, where the comings and goings of a group of individualists were observed through the impassivity of increasingly elaborate sequence shots. It would be thirty years before we would see another take on the *sainete*, this time with surreal and dreamlike tinges, in José Luis Cuerda's film *Amanece, que no es poco* (1988), a title that creates a sort of diptych together with *Así en el cielo como en la tierra* (1995), inscribing both in the realm of re-writings of certain cultural traditions that identify Spanish cinema.

Alejandro Montiel

It may be that the notion of *auteur*, as coined in *Cahiers du Cinéma* in the early 1950s, is not even relevant for studying a film tradition like the Spanish, or for studying anything at all, because it hides a whole set of evaluative biases without offering an even moderately useful instrument of analysis.

The truth is that to study Spanish cinema (or the cinema of any other nation), it is not enough merely to highlight the most notable *auteurs*; rather, it is imperative to describe or map out the norm to be able to distinguish the exceptional. Any attempt to declare *something true* and not exceedingly obvious as an invariant of a vast corpus of films (such as the profuse number of Spanish films) will come up against a myriad of hurdles; on the other hand, to do the same thing, for example, with a few films by a filmmaker as superb as Edgar Neville, directed in the 1940s and 1950s, does not seem to me such an unachievable or elusive enterprise. If we acknowledge that the peculiarities of classic Spanish cinema are so innumerable that

they challenge the very concept of peculiarity (to bring it closer to the idea of canon, since one could exaggerate, not without irony, by asserting that the typical and distinctive of the best of the usual mainstream Spanish films in the 1940s and 1950s is that, all too often, they seem eccentric or outlandish), the list of particular styles of Spanish film *auteurs* (directors) could be no less than endless, with variations ranging from those who consolidated a reasonable although occasionally tempestuous long and varied career (Eusebio Fernández Ardavín, Antonio del Amo, Luis Marquina, Luis Lucia, Antonio Román, Arturo Ruiz Castillo, Jerónimo Mihura) to those who stumbled all too often (Eduardo García Maroto, Antonio Lara *Tono*); those who achieved but one or two exceptional works (Carlos Arévalo, Llorenç Llobet-Gràcia) to those consecrated very briefly as masters of a genre (Quadreny, Delgrás, Castellví, in 1940s comedy; Julio Salvador, Juan Bosch, Antonio Santillán and *tanti quanti* in the 1950s Barcelona police films); from the *auteurs* who were so considered by decree (the *dixit* of the critics) from their first films (Bardem, Berlanga), to those who in effect were or were going to be *auteurs*, irrevocably and on their own merit with their high level of self-discipline (José Antonio Nieves Conde, Manuel Mur Oti, Carlos Serrano de Osma, Enrique Gómez); from those who, imperceptibly, surreptitiously, consolidated an admirable filmography (Ladislao Vajda) to those who fell from grace after having hit the mark and won acclaim in an early era (Juan de Orduña).

But in my opinion, what should be highlighted is the many other less recognised *auteurs*, who have crafted magnificent films: Antonio Momplet, Luis Saslavsky, Ana Mariscal, Francisco Rovira-Beleta, Joaquín Romero Marchent, Rafael J. Salvia, Luis César Amadori, and many others, among whom we should include scriptwriters of the calibre of José Luis Colina.

Jean-Claude Seguin

The role of *Cahiers du Cinéma* has perhaps been exaggerated in appraisals of the notion of *auteur* as the young Turks defined it. The Spanish case unquestionably raises a problem for determining whether this notion is relevant and whether it can be applied in the same way as in France, for example. To consider the *auteur* is, first and foremost, to assess the relationship established between *producer* and *auteur*. In the Hollywood model, studios played a decisive role, not only in funding the films, but also in orienting the ideology and the aesthetic of the production (the case of Irving Thalberg, for example). Overlooking



Verbena (Edgar Neville, 1941)

the differences, CIFESA could be defined according to the American model, but the Spanish producers of the Francoist era who achieved a certain continuity (such as Cesáreo González and Suevia Films) were not at all concerned about *auteurs*, except in a few cases (Mur Oti or Bardem, in the aforementioned example). Indeed, to consider film production in terms of *auteur* would be to brush aside important figures who did not claim such a title and who were not recognised in their day as *auteurs*. Without generalising excessively, it could be said that the *auteurs* have ultimately been the directors who had some impact outside Spain, as in the case of Luis Buñuel (so Spanish, and so universal), Juan Antonio Bardem, Luis García Berlanga, Carlos Saura, and but a few others. From this point of view, we could argue that, looking from the outside, every director who had any commitment to Francoism, or even the ones who *resisted* from within, were pushed aside and were not judged as *auteurs*. Thus, figures as acclaimed as Edgar Neville or Fernando Fernán-Gómez never came to be considered as *auteurs* until well into the 1960s.

Jenaro Talens

The notion of *auteur* is an invention that worked very well at a particular time to define certain directors and careers undervalued by the industry, but theoretically it is still an outlandish term quite empty of content. If by *auteur* we are referring to a *signature*, the result of finding the main common denominator of a group of films, in terms of theme, style, staging, etc., every filmmaker is an *auteur*, a better or worse one, but an *auteur* all the same. The problem is that normally *auteur* does not usually mean an *a posteriori* discursive construction but a particular entity existing prior to the creation of specific films that would leave its mark on the production. While this way of understanding the concept doesn't make much sense when applied to disciplines that are more or less individual, like literature, music or painting, it is all the more inappropriate in the

case of cinema, which is always a collective endeavour by definition. From this perspective, my answer to the first half of the question is affirmative. Regardless of the place we assign to them in a hypothetical hierarchy, José Luis Sáenz de Heredia is as much an *auteur* as Ernst Lubitsch—who, indeed, did not consider himself one, according to his collaborator Samson Raphaelson in *Amistad, el último toque Lubitsch* (Intermedio, 2012) and he was sure that nobody would remember him or his work after some time, since cinema is an ephemeral thing. The rest is just beating around the bush and positing mere evaluations as analysis.

It is obvious that stylistic and textual marks are different from one case to another and should therefore be studied within distinct cultural traditions.

Santos Zunzunegui

Although this question should be answered with all kinds of cautions, I tend to think that the response is negative. Especially if we consider the decade of the 1940s. It is not easy to find filmmakers in those years with the features that the *Cahiers du Cinéma* critics would preach a few years later, of what would be called an *auteur*, perhaps with the exception of Edgar Neville.

This notion of *auteur*, which, without any doubt, served important functions for the introduction of a new vision of the cinematic art and set up a new canon, does not work very well in film traditions with a weak and unstructured industry like the Spanish was then, an industry which, as if its weakness were not enough, was also closely overseen by implacable censorship. I have always thought that, beyond the mental convenience its use offers, the notion of *auteur* is of little relevance for understanding much of the works that make up the world of Spanish film insofar as the famous distinction suggested by Umberto Eco between the *empirical author* and the *model author* works wonderfully in this field and which, translated in the common vernacular, means only that an empirical author can hide (especially in very weak film industries) both model authors and the circumstances he is forced to adopt. In other words, it is not the *auteurs* but the films (and, of course, a multitude of related elements) that have to be studied very carefully, leaving aside the apriorisms that the “theory (?) of the *auteurs*” can lead us to.

3. Are there reasons that can explain the late emergence in Spanish cinema of some of the most representative aspects of the Spanish cultural tradition (for example, the grotesque *esperpento* tradition)?

Juan Miguel Company

Certain minor theatre forms, like the *sainete* or the *zarzuela chica madrileña*, have been the basis of the popular substratum of Spanish cinema since its origins, and clear proof of this is the exemplary nature of a title like *La verbena de la Paloma* (Benito Perojo, 1935), a republican and popular front work. Certain forms and categories of the picaresque tradition are crystallised in some films of the 1950s like *Segundo López, aventurero urbano* (Ana Mariscal, 1952), *Mi tío Jacinto* (Ladislao Vajda, 1956) or *Los tramosos* (Pedro Lazaga, 1959). The conversion of the gods into *sainete* characters as Valle-Inclán noted, is at the basis of the literary genre of the *esperpento* and implies a form of demiurge who watched its characters from the air. If the critical dimension which this operation entails—and which for the writer was already present in Goya's paintings—made possible the representation of his *esperpentos* during the military dictatorship of Primo de Rivera, the emergence of this tradition in the nationalist-Catholic years of Francoism could occur with few hindrances or interventions by the censors. I am thinking, for example, the shocked reaction of the Catholic (and moderately progressive) film critic José María Pérez Lozano who, after the premiere of *El pisito*, writing in *Film Ideal*, wondered whether the film's scriptwriter might have some connection with the Madrid funeral home Azcona given his gruesome familiarity with death. The difficulties the censors imposed on the script of *Plácido* (one of its members, Patricio González, was in favour of banning the film) and the accusation of pro-communist sentiments made by Alfredo Sánchez Bella two years later against *Not on Your Life* (*El verdugo*) speak for themselves.

Alejandro Montiel

The exact nature of the *esperpento* (the specific idiolect of a single dramatist who used this word to define his own work in the 1920s, which is why it would perhaps be better to talk about a caricaturising of an expressionist mould) is something I would not dare to tackle on the spot. Nevertheless, the claim that the grotesque—the grotesque tradition, if you wish—did not appear at the very birth of Spanish cinema and has not played a major role in our classic cinema is a rather daring assertion that requires some nuancing. Much of the comicality of Spanish cinema is decidedly grotesque, from *El heredero de Casa Pruna* (Segundo de Chomón, 1904) to *Not on Your Life* (*El verdugo*, Luis García Berlanga, 1963). It seems to me that we could define as grotesque the humour of the most stimulating film of Spa-

nish cinema in the silent period: *El sexto sentido* (Nemesio M. Sobrevilla, 1929), or the self-reflexive parodies of the filmmaker in our first talking film (*El misterio de la puerta del sol*, Francisco Elías, 1929). We could label as grotesque the dirty old man Don Hilarión (Miguel Ligeró) in a milestone of our republican cinema (*La verbena de la Paloma*), based on Ricardo de la Vega's script (1894), and many other characters of that period, such as Don Nuez (Antonio Gil Vari-llas) in *La Reina Mora* (Eusebio Fernández Ardavín, 1936), based on the lyrical *sainete* of the Quinteros (1903).

In relation to the cinema of the 1940s, José Luis Castro de Paz has recently distinguished a *sainete-costumbrista* model, which he identifies “almost absolutely with one of those four outstanding creative traditions in Spanish cinema established [in 2002] by Zunzunegui”, based on Ortega y Gasset's notion of *purist popularism*, and including the most celebrated works of Neville, such as *Madrid Carnival* (*Verbena*, 1941), *The Tower of the Seven Hunchbacks* (*La torre de los siete jorobados*, 1944), *Carnival Sunday* (*Domingo de carnaval*, 1945) or *The Crime of Bordadores Street* (*El crimen de la calle de Bordadores*, 1946); but the same author maintains, in effect, that the *esperpentisation* of Spanish cinema only took root in the following decade, with *That Happy Couple* (*Esa pareja feliz*, Bardem and Berlanga, 1951), in which a “profound and edgy point of view” was already evident in the staging.

Although it may be a hackneyed cliché in Spanish historiography (which does not make it any less true), it seems to me that only the appearance of the scripts of the Riojan Rafael Azcona make it possible speak of a new twist in the *carnivalisation of a tendentious humour* in Spanish comedy, even suggestive of a need to push back the birth date of a hypothetical *esperpentisation* of Spanish cinema to films like *El pisito*, *Se vende un tranvía* (Juan Estelrich, 1959), *El cochecito* or *Plácido*, without ignoring the fact that precedents of this decisive aesthetic phenomenon can be traced back through the previous decade—I'm thinking here of the episode based on *La mona de imitación* by Ramón Gómez de la Serna in *Manicomio* (Fernando Fernán Gómez, Luis María Delgado, 1952)—or note the strict contemporaneity with other films with a similar humour, as is the case of *Entierro de un funcionario en primavera* (José María Zabalza, 1960), as recently pointed out to me by a researcher at Filmoteca Española, Luis E. Parés; or, as Javier Maqua reminded me, a “squatter's *sainete-esperpento*”—*Historias de Madrid* (Ramón Comas, 1958), a film narrated by the very same Madrid statue of La Cibeles, which starts with the prayer to a saint by the (diminutive) owner/

speculator of a dilapidated building ("Let the house sink, Saint Nicolas!"), and which displays an eroticism that is very well contextualised and very fitting to the reality of the period, moving from the cheerful to the mournful.

Jean-Claude Seguin

The question asserts that only in its later stages did Spanish cinema manage to inscribe itself in a "Spanish cultural tradition". In my opinion, this is a debatable position for several reasons. The first thing to consider is whether, during the thirty-five years of silent films and in the periods immediately thereafter, all the films produced were completely outside any Spanish tradition. The second thing would be to determine what we mean by a "Spanish cultural tradition". This has to do—or would have to do—with an endless and absurd debate involving a search for what is "genuinely Spanish". What defines a culture, any culture, is that it is a sum of works or of acts. Why would Valle-Inclán idol of all the intellectuals reflect a native approach that says more about Spanish identity than Pérez Lugín's? I refuse to think that Spanish identity is only the sum of Goya, Buñuel and Lorca, which, to put it another way, could replace the *charangas* and the *tambourines*. In this sense, I do not believe that there was a "late emergence", but quite the contrary. By way of example, we know very well that Spanish silent cinema—and subsequently Spanish talking cinema as well—included in its production a very significant number of films inspired by the *zarzuelas*. Why should the different versions of *La Verbena de la Paloma* be excluded from a Spanish tradition? On the other hand, the rich cinematic production of the 1920s, unfortunately still barely known, offered social dramas, and even political films like the fascinating *El Jefe político*, made in Spain in 1925 by the French director André Hugon and adapted from the novel *El Caballero Audaz* by José María Carretero, a future pro-Francoist. There is no "eternal tradition" into which the Spanish tradition could be inserted; it is being constructed day by day. For these different reasons, I believe that the culture and tradition of Spain were already present from the first silent films.

Another thing would be to work out why, at certain moments, an aspect or a specific tradition is activated or re-activated. If we consider the period of the dictatorship, the question would be why certain cultural traditions appeared or reappeared. What was, at the end of the day, the problem faced by the regime? The invention of a reality. What will be the problem faced by film directors? The representation of reality. *Invention* and *representation* are the two poles of the debate. Francoism reclaimed some traditional genres of Spanish culture, as in the case of the *zarzuela* or historical cinema and, on the opposite pole, certain genres aimed at counterbalancing the invention. Thus, we could say that here too there were mainly two focal points: the *presentation* of reality and the *distortion* of reality. This was

a debate that went on in the 1940s (*neoaestheticism*), in the 1950s (*neorealism*), in the 1960s (Barcelona/Mesetas school) and in the 1970s (*metaphorism*). The appearance or reappearance of certain genres (black humour, *esperpento*, etc.) of the Spanish tradition has to do with the different forms of representation mentioned above, which undoubtedly stimulated creativity.



La verbena de la Paloma (Benito Perojo, 1935)

Jenaro Talens

The assertion that the grotesque-*esperpento* tradition is highly representative of the Spanish cultural tradition is something that should be parenthesised a little. Quevedo, Goya, Solana or Valle-Inclán were never the majority, even if it seems that way to us today. Galdós, who knew a lot about theatre, wrote an excellent and very timely text on Ramón de la Cruz, in which he highlighted as characteristic of Spanish culture, not so much what we call the grotesque today, but what was associated with the *sainete*, considered too popular by some intellectuals. Since the medium was invented, films have been made to compete on the leisure market with other forms of entertainment to attract the people who paid at the box office. In Spain, the popular forms were related to the *sainete* and the *zarzuela*, and thus the norm was that these models were the obligatory reference from the beginning. Valle-Inclán was greatly admired (by a previous few), but never represented. They say that in 1933, when Rivas Cheriff put on *Divinas palabras* starring Margarita Xirgu, the diva invited the author to the general rehearsal, and at the end she asked him: "What did you think, *maestro*?" to which Valle-Inclán replied: "That if I wished to make a *zarzuela*, I would have written it." Whether the anecdote is true or a mere urban

legend is unimportant, but it is meaningful. Already in the famous centenary of Góngora in 1927, there was an alternative campaign to honour Goya (in which Valle himself, Buñuel, Dalí and Gómez de la Serna were involved) but it was unsuccessful. The grotesque-*esperpento* would still take many years to be accepted with a certain normality, and its delay in being incorporated into Spanish filmic discourse, I believe, finds its explanation there.

Santos Zunzunegui

I have to confess that this question is one of the ones that have surprised me most without, for the moment, having a clear answer. It might be thought that the ferocity expressed in the films of the Azcona-Ferreri-Berlanga trio at the end of the 1950s (it should be remembered that humour—black humour, but humour nonetheless—could contribute to mask the violence of the critics) was made possible because the regime had become much *softer*

than it had been in the previous decade, facilitating the emergence of a cinema which, on the other hand (it must be remembered once again), awakened many ideological doubts within the left-wing directly opposed to Francoism.

Of course, we can engage in the scholarly but relatively sterile exercise of looking for precedents in the history of the Spanish cinema for this movement which, without doubt, draws from the *costumbrismo* of the *sainete*, but which, at the same time, very clearly goes beyond it. On the other hand, it is worth remembering that the Spanish cinema is not especially cultured (in the sense of being associated with “high culture”) nor concerned with interactions with other art forms, and that the examples of Goya or Valle-Inclán—to mention only the two great names that are usually associated with this tradition—did not seem to be in the sights of our filmmakers (with the well-known exceptions; Neville once more, especially in relation to Goya).

4. Are there genres or subgenres that are *genuinely* Spanish within our cinematic tradition? Could *black humour* or a progressively *esperpented* *sainete* be thought of in these terms?

Juan Miguel Company

Insofar as the concept of film genre arises from a rationalization carried out by the big Hollywood producers to plan audience demand for their production, its existence in Spain can only be conceived from the perspective of one studio, CIFESA, which took Hollywood modes of production as its point of reference in making its films. The cycle of historical films released by the Valencian studio from 1947 to 1952 constitutes a whole brand image, immediately recognizable in some titles directed—with an undeniable stylistic intention—by Juan de Orduña: *Madness for Love* (Locura de amor, 1948), *Agustina de Aragón* (1950) and *Dawn of America* (Alba de América, 1951). Also in the productions by Aureliano Campa for CIFESA in the 1940s—especially the ones filmed by Ignacio F. Iquino: *El difunto es un vivo* (1941), *Boda accidentada* (1942) and *Un enredo de familia* (1943)—we find an atypical generic singularity based on the eccentric traditions inherited from the U.S. vaudeville style—exemplified by the Marx Brothers in their work prior to signing their contract with MGM—combined with the mainstream versions of the outrageous farcical comedies of Barcelona’s Paralelo, in which the frantic action was constantly interrupted by musical numbers.

In his *Anthologie de l’humour noir* (1940) André Breton defined a certain kind of humour that aims at things that would provoke, if considered from a different perspec-

tive, pity, terror, sorrow or similar emotions, questioning social situations that are normally serious through satire. From this perspective, it makes sense that in 1965 *Not on Your Life* received the Grand Prize of the French Academy of Black Humour. But the *esperpented* of the *sainete* is something more than just a point of view to observe reality, because it is based on a systematic distortion of that reality and it affects types and environments. In this sense, the productive collaboration of Rafael Azcona, first with Ferreri in *El pisito* and *El cochecito* and then with Berlanga in *Plácido* and the aforementioned *Not on Your Life*, gave rise to a homogeneous collection of films that could be considered an important subgenre in the regions frequented by the cinematic *sainete*.

Alejandro Montiel

There are, without doubt, Spanish genres and/or subgenres; I do not know if they are exclusive to Spanish cinema, but in our country they were produced with special intensity and breadth (over time, but also in terms of the number of films of the same kind), as a consequence of the obstinacy of firmly established themes (I am thinking, for example, of the character of the rogue), formulas repeated as a necessary condiment for the multifarious cinematic spectacle (I am thinking of the extremely popular musical numbers) and the need of certain producers (CIFESA, Suevia Films) to optimise and prolong their (economic) suc-

cesses by building the loyalty of the audience captured in our domestic market.

On the other hand, it is rather doubtful that black humour is in itself a genre or a subgenre. If we consider it as it is, a stylistic feature, it is fair to say that it undoubtedly appears very early and very brilliantly in our earliest sound films (*Land Without Bread*; *Las Hurdes, terre sans pain*, Luis Buñuel, 1933) and is distinguishable in our most sordid masterpieces (*Viridiana*, Buñuel, 1961; or *Not on Your Life*). But, although it appears with differing degrees of acidity and in diverse registers, until our times it is a mere rarity in our classic cinema in the early years of the Francoist period (1939-1959), at least in statistical terms. It is not that it fails to achieve the category of a genre, but that its infrequency would allow us to conjecture that it was actively proscribed by the more prudish and influential forces of the regime—I am thinking, of course, of the (national) Catholic Church, may God condemn it—and that was consequently eliminated from scripts and films.



Agustina de Aragón (Juan de Orduña, 1950)

Jean-Claude Seguin

The clichéd Unamuno quote —Let someone else do the inventing!— could perhaps be considered the slogan of Spanish cinema, if a finer analysis would not come to question, at least in some respects, the idea that Spanish cinema has never invented anything. The *Cartelera Turia* team was the first to coin the very accurate expression “Spanish Cinema, a Cinema of Subgenres”, although they viewed Spanish production as subordinated to foreign production. It seems to me that it is about time we introduced some nuances to the familiar formula. If we take the example of the Spanish western, nobody doubts that the invention was, of course, of U.S. origin. Should we consider then that it is definitively an American genre? The first thing to determine is whether the genre, as practised in the United States, did not sometimes have southern components (the influence of Mexican styles in particular). The second would be to consider the Spanish western as heir also of the *bandido* tradition which, as a genre, was already present in Spanish silent film; some examples could be *Diego Corrientes* (José Buchs, 1924), or, in later years, *Luis Candelas* (Fernando Roldán, 1936), and later still Carlos Saura’s undervalued film *Weeping for a Bandit* (*Llanto por un bandido*, 1963). Moreover, many Spanish

westerns have a strong identity: the Hispanic element is fundamental. It may be worth reconsidering *subgenres* as expressions of a cultural syncretism, as they are defined in anthropology.

In this delicate balance, the so-called black humour film has a strong Hispanic dose very present in its culture. This genre needs to be redefined precisely to the extent that, in almost all cases, it is really *macabre* cinema, from which the film *Entierro de un funcionario en primavera* (José María Zabalza, 1958), admired by Luis García Berlanga, could be considered a precursor of the genre. It is clear

that Spain has a long *macabre* tradition, traceable back to the *Dance of Death* (15th century), and the familiarity with death marks the works of Quevedo, Goya and, of course, Luis Buñuel. The authenticity of *macabre cinema* cannot be questioned, but a detailed analysis would undoubtedly reveal Italian and even British influences.

Jenaro Talens

I think so, but I return to the same thing: black humour as a discursive mechanism took a long time

to be established. Arniches or Fernández Flórez himself are too soft, to my taste. *El malvado Carabel* by Fernán Gómez, for example, is more acid and black than the original novel, and this is true too of *Main Street* (*Calle mayor*, Juan Antonio Bardem, 1956), in comparison with the play *The Lady from Trevélez* (*La señorita de Trevélez*), although the latter had very little humour. And the same can be said of the authors of the magazine *La Codorniz*, like Miguel Mihura. Even Neville’s films, as critical as they were (I’m thinking, for example, of *Life on a Thread*, 1945), still have a certain amiable tone, of a *sainete*, never the nastiness of Valle-Inclán’s *esperpento*. Until *El pisito*, *El cochecito* and *Plácido*, all of them with Rafael Azcona as scriptwriter, we cannot talk properly of black humour and *esperpento* in Spanish cinema. And there we are already at the end of the 1950s. From then on, it would be possible to speak of a very typically Spanish genre. I could not imagine *El extraño viaje* (Fernando Fernán Gómez, 1963), *Not on Your Life*, *Duerme, duerme, mi amor* (Francisco Regueiro, 1975), *Padre nuestro* (Francisco Regueiro, 1985) or *Pasodoble* (José Luis García Sánchez, 1988) in a British, German or French film tradition. Not even Neapolitan cinema (in the style of Eduardo di Filippo) manages to be so openly *black*.

Santos Zunzunegui

Elsewhere (*Historias de España. De qué hablamos cuando hablamos de cine español*, 2002), I have proposed a series of guidelines (which I referred to then as *creative veins*) to attempt to organise the multifarious territory of Spanish cinema, tracing a rough map. It was not my intention then to lay down impenetrable boundaries, or to suggest supposedly transhistorical national specificities. It was something much more modest: to organise the mutations suffered by our films over more than a hundred years of existence by refusing to leave them outside the evolution of Spanish culture (high or low). Based on a brief analysis of those ideas, a couple of conclusions can be drawn that I do not feel the need to modify more than ten years after their first formulation: that the most interesting aspects of our cinema come from the hybridisation of spectacular forms used in the first years of filmmaking with some literary and dramatic traditions that form a kind of line running throughout Spanish literature; and that these forms, far from being immutable, are merely the adaptation (that is, the alteration), in keeping with the times, of some elements that are clearly present in the history (is it necessary to repeat it again?) of Spanish culture.

I have to say that I do not think that it is either convenient or necessary to assert the *authenticity* of certain forms or themes, or argue for the *specificity* of one or another way of doing things. This does not mean that we have to dissolve these *forms* into a generalisation that tends to brush aside their peculiarities (due as much to growing globalisation as to inevitable hybridisation) under the declaration of a non-existent (at least in my case) ahistorical vision of cinema and culture. So that it can (not) be made clear once and for all, I will point out that an interesting task is to look at other national film traditions close to our own (I am thinking of the Italian, but also the French) for works that can engage in a dialogue with these Spanish *veins*. To take a surprising example, I will say that there is no harm done in comparing some of the outstanding works of our cinema with films as suggestive as, for example, Jean-Pierre Mocky's *Heaven Sent* (*Un drôle de paroissien*), made in France in 1963, in the midst of the explosion (although very much on the margins) of the French New Wave, while here in Spain, we were promoting the *Nuevo Cine Español*.

5. Where can we look for and how can we find in the Spanish films of the years immediately after the Civil War the signs of the trauma left by it? Is it embodied in any specific kind of film?

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Juan Miguel Company

The self-imposed silence on the fratricidal military conflict meant that, in the cinema of the 1940s, it emerged in the form of a symptom, as a resurgence of what had been repressed, to torment its victim. Félix Fanés, in his study on the Valencian studio CIFESA, detects a certain split of the social "I", halfway between the awareness of the reality and the guilt complex, which is expressed thematically in the recurring motif of identity confusion, characteristic of many films of the period. The generic mode of the melodrama conforms perfectly to the anguish resulting from the absence and mourning for the deaths of loved ones: the meaningful sublimating gesture of the old woman Mariquita (Camino Garrigó), throwing the medals won in the war by her deceased son into the fire of a pot where a bell is being melted in *Malvaloca* (Luis Marquina, 1942), is perhaps the first explicit allusion to the pain caused by the war in the cinema of the 1940s. In *Porque te vi llorar* (Juan de Orduña, 1941), the confusion of personality established between the rapist militiaman and the victorious,

lauded gentleman includes the castration of the latter as a quintessential expression of the mutilations and injuries inflicted during the conflict. Carlos Durán would display his irremediable sorrow in *Vida en sombras* (Llorenç Llobet Gràcia, 1948), already at the end of the decade, in an effort to find closure, through cinema, for the mourning for the woman who was snatched from him by the war.

Alejandro Montiel

It might be best to start by expressing some surprise at the very few ideological propaganda films produced by the rebels during the Civil War; very few, of course, compared to the abundance produced on the republican side. Of course, the first and most important reason for this is that the main cities where Spanish cinema was produced (Madrid, Barcelona and Valencia) remained loyal to the Republic almost to the end of the war, but there is another reason that I don't think is negligible (although it is much more debatable, of course): the rebels, the National Front as a unitary but disparate force, had few and only poor

arguments. The most significant film, in my opinion, of the collection of productions produced the nationalist zone was *España heroica*, the “sensational film” (sic) made by Hispano-Film-Produktion (Berlin), directed by Joaquín Reig Gozálbis. What are the rhetorical reasons supporting Franco’s insurrection, according to the film? The imperial past “of a magnificent race” which saw itself attacked at the roots; the chaos that is exemplified by the murder of José Calvo Sotelo. In short, delusions of grandeur and de-contextualised nonsense.

Of course, the best-known film of the post-war era dealing with the topic directly (*Raza*) is no less deluded in its interpretation of history and its appeals to the Honour of the Homeland, reeking of the fustiest traditionalism of the 1898 Generation. The conflicts we know of with respect to a lost film, *El Crucero Baleares* (Enrique del Campo, 1941), whose screening was suspended by the naval authorities and definitively banned on 6 November 1948, at least illustrate the slippery nature of a political discourse that had to offer a version of the Civil War that would satisfy all the different factions (the military, Falangists, priests) on the winning side. Or consider the utterly bizarre, controversial and premature Falangist discourse of National Reconciliation in *Rojo y negro* (Carlos Arévalo, 1942), wrapped up in the moving excesses of a frightening melodrama. The *defalangistation* (if you’ll pardon the odd expression) of *Raza* in its second version, expurgated after the defeat of the Axis powers, also indicates that, in hindsight, it was extremely difficult to defend the Crusade, all of its actors and all of its actions.

It is precisely in this unexpected vacuum that we can find clues of what really happened: there were few (surprisingly few?) films that dealt with the Civil War directly: is this—this silence—not symptomatic of a genuine *trauma*? For many historians, and especially for our best expert of the cinema of the 1940s, José Luis Castro de Paz, this trauma had to appear as a symptom in filmic texts, and the Galician professor offers a good number of convincing examples, invoking the pain of dark wounded characters. It occurs to me that it is in this desire *not to tell* (in *Nada*, Edgar Neville, 1947) or to tell in a very confused way (in *Vida en sombras*, Llorenç Llobet Gràcia, 1948) where the *trauma* (*strictus sensu*) of the Civil War can be seen.

Jean-Claude Seguin

Every war is a trauma for a country, and thus a civil war can be considered the military conflict that can traumatise a nation the most. I would start with a triple distinction: the *mark*, strictly speaking, in the sense Charles Peirce gave it (a film about a real civil war cannot exist if there has not been a civil war), the *transfer* to that to which psychoanalysis refers (the reproduction of the conflicts at the individual level) and the *metaphor* (absence of continuity between the event and the film). The *mark* is imme-

diately identifiable in the so-called “crusade cinema”, a questioned expression today. Although they are without doubt cases of a *representation*, films like *Raza* or *Rojo y Negro* make the Civil War an essential component. For its obvious nature, the *mark* can be seen, essentially, in historical and ideological terms that respond to the question of how the war was represented.

Nevertheless, Spanish cinema also implicitly referred to this historical drama in the form of *transfer*. The representation of the family made it possible to acknowledge a trauma which, in a significant number of films, called parents into question. Perhaps where this is most noticeable is in films with children. In these, there is a latent conflict between parents and children in which the weight of culpability is huge: abandonment (*Miracle of Marcelino*; *Marcelino, pan y vino*, Ladislao Vajda, 1954), single mothers (*El pequeño ruiseñor*, Antonio del Amo, 1957), irresponsibility (*Pequeñeces*, Juan de Orduña, 1950), etc. The forms of conflict that exist among parents appear as a possible transfer of the historical tensions, as if a progressive discourse were being established. After the immediate post-war period, when triumphalism was the standard, there began a progressive process of *reconciliation*, probably illusory but effective, that sought to erase the marks of the fracture.

Jenaro Talens

The Civil War is present even if it is not named, beyond the films explicitly dedicated to the issue, from *Raza* onward. *Nada*, for example, by Neville-Laforet (and Conchita Montes) cannot be understood without the unnamed presence of the war, not to mention more marginal films like *Vida en sombras*, and it continues to be necessary as a background to understand later titles like the previously mentioned *Plácido* or *La caza* (Carlos Saura, 1965) or *The Spirit of the Beehive* (*El espíritu de la colmena*, Víctor Erice, 1973); in other words, it runs through the whole period of the dictatorship, of course in a way that is much more subtle and less coarse than in the films made after the transition, with notable exceptions—I am thinking of *Pim, pam, pum... ¡fuego!* (Pedro Olea, 1975), *To an Unknown God* (*A un dios desconocido*, Jaime Chávarri, 1977), *Las cosas del querer* (Chávarri again, 1989) or *The Sea and the Weather* (*El mar y el tiempo*, Fernán Gómez, 1989).

Santos Zunzunegui

If you go searching, directed by a heuristic hypothesis, you have to be prepared *not* to find anything. Many of the mistakes that scholars make arise from our desire to confirm our initial hypothesis at all costs, without modifying or adapting them to the real material analysed. In this sense, we can affirm that it is reasonable to propose the hypothesis that, in one way or another, an event like the Civil War should necessarily have left a significant mark on the body

of Spanish cinema. Having said this, the important thing is to identify as precisely as possible how this mark is (or is not) made evident. It is important not to lose sight of the fact that the works celebrating the victory of the rebels are also fruit of this trauma (although they present it in inverse form). If we go over the other side, it is evident that a part of this mark is presented in the form of a wound that cannot be healed and that is expressed (among other forms) through the physical disappearances and the forced exile of many people following the victory of the military uprising and that has led to works made outside Spanish cinema which, although late, are as notable as *En el balcón vacío* by Jomí García Ascot and María Luisa Elío (1961). Another expression of this *trauma* can be detected

in some of the films made in Francoist Spain during the 1940s in which, sometimes cryptically, it can be glimpsed in the survival of some “ways of doing things” and some behaviours that arise from a populist republican imaginary that is never really firmly established. The same is true of the melancholic sliding from the collective to the individual and the aesthetic tension of certain works, in which it is not an absurd exaggeration to identify a (perhaps unconscious) way of preserving the “historical memory” of a past that the official levels of a merciless regime sought to erase completely. Works of (the) art are well-known for concealing carefully guarded treasures within their folds. It is time to bring them out into the light. ■



Plácido (Luis García Berlanga, 1961)

_conclusion

Re-viewing, re-thinking

Santos Zunzunegui

Although it may at first seem to have nothing to do with the issues addressed in the discussion, an implicit conclusion can be drawn from a number of the arguments set forth: many of the changes that the new historiography of Spanish cinema has been placing on the table are due to the existence of an increasingly clear awareness of the need for a *re-viewing* (or a first viewing in many cases) of the greatest possible number of films that form the corpus of what we have been calling Spanish cinema. This *re-viewing* inevitably entails a re-positioning of the pieces that make up the puzzle of our cinema and that makes it possible to interrelate works that are sometimes distant in time but close in their significant orientation. This *close look* does not have to be at the expense of raising the gaze to be able to locate each particular piece of information, each specific analysis, in an explanatory framework that will open up a dialogue between elements which would otherwise run the risk of remaining a combination of merely juxtaposed components. Although we live in bad times for theory, it does not seem sensible to give up on conducting a set of syntheses (albeit partial) into which we could integrate and interrelate points of view that may offer elements of understanding and debate on the main lines that have historically defined a film tradition as unique as the Spanish. Without doubt, cinema is not only the films that supposedly give it shape, but it can be argued that it is in the films that the marks of a social, political and cultural context are indelibly inscribed.

In the same way, another conclusion would point to the fact that it is not possible to study Spanish cinema without acknowledging its (industrial, aesthetic) peculiarities and the links it maintains, for better or worse, with certain cultural practices that filmic discourse recycles and updates in a particular way. The same is true of the questioning

of certain clichés, such as the assertion of the influence of neorealism on the *regenerationist* cinema of the 1950s or the debate on the greater or lesser weight of the grotesque *esperpento* movement in our cinema. Otherwise, beyond the usual commonplaces, there is still a need for a *re-thinking* of the notion of *national cinema* to re-establish it on new basis that leave behind the outdated formulas that have buried the knowledge of our cinema over the years. It may not be necessary to renounce this notion, but it is absolutely necessary to choose the elements (beyond the convenience they offer) which by its development and transformation would make it possible to continue making use of it.

It seems no less significant that (at least among the scholars participating here) there is an evident general agreement on the main features of Spanish cinema immediately after the Civil War. From this point of view, it is especially important to acknowledge the *roughness* of a scene marked by some main lines which, although still in need of a precise definition, of a particular mapping out that we are working on, seem to display a more complex appearance than has been assumed until now, even if this is only because, in one way or another, the mark of the trauma remains even in the works whose purpose seemed to be to place a veil over a horror that people do not wish accept. Having staunching the wounds, the scars are still visible. And the cinema has a privileged place in outlining its most singular features. ■

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