

# L'ATALANTE

INTERNATIONAL FILM STUDIES JOURNAL

ISSUE 20 JULY-DECEMBER 2015 6 €

## WOUNDS, SURVIVALS, TRANSFORMATIONS

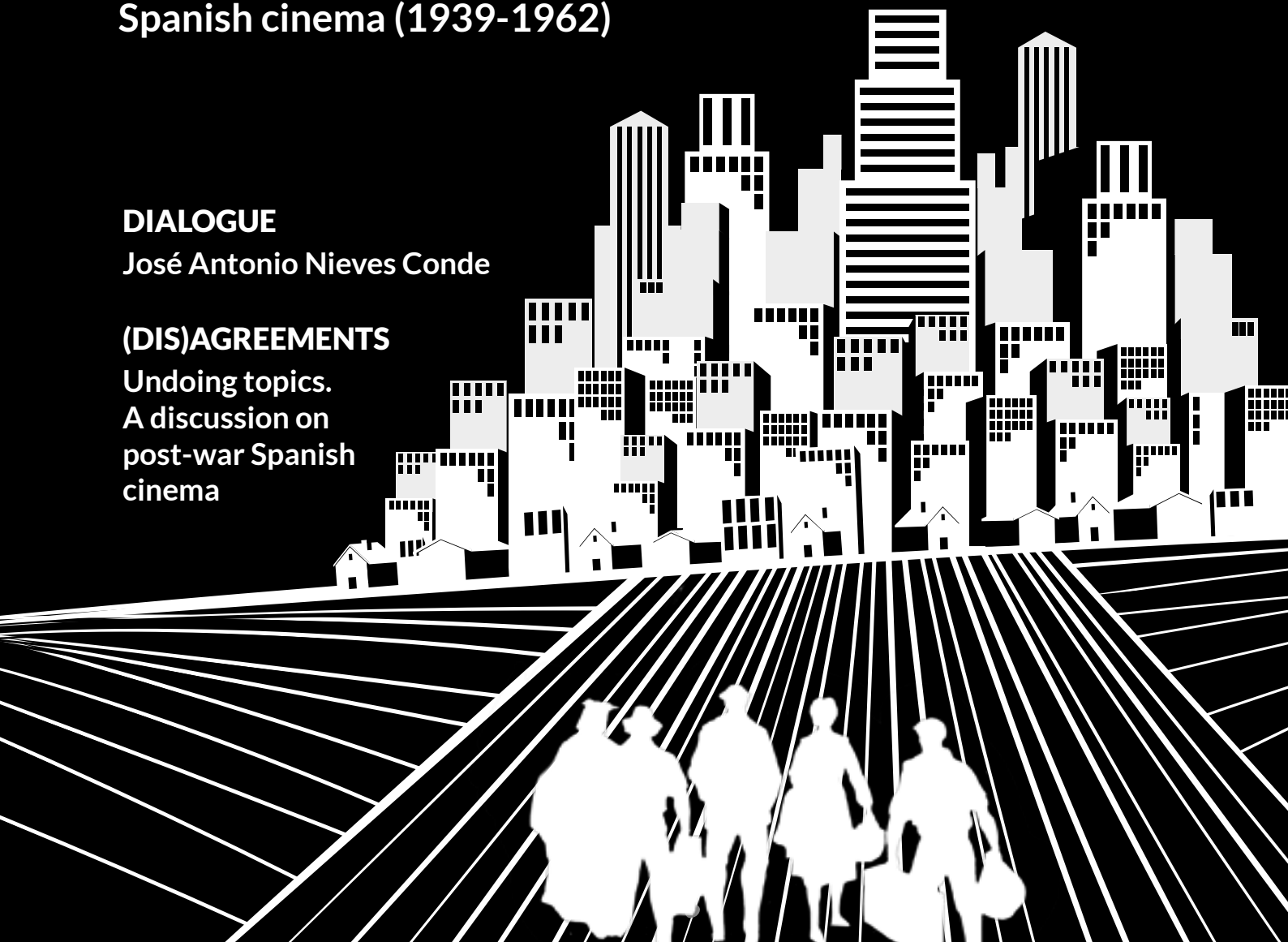
Styling models in postwar  
Spanish cinema (1939-1962)

### DIALOGUE

José Antonio Nieves Conde

### (DIS)AGREEMENTS

Undoing topics.  
A discussion on  
post-war Spanish  
cinema



# L'ATALANTE

REVISTA DE ESTUDIOS CINEMATOGRAFICOS

This issue is also available in Spanish in print and digital editions: [www.revistaatalante.com](http://www.revistaatalante.com)

*L'Atalante. Revista de estudios cinematográficos* is a biannual non-profit publication founded in 2003, published in Valencia, Spain by the Associació Cinefòrum L'Atalante with the collaboration of various institutions, and distributed in print form all over Spain and Latin America. The journal is a vehicle of expression for both professionals and theorists in the discipline and it covers, in addition to cinema praxis, a diverse range of topics within the contemporary audiovisual field. Its intended readership is made up of people whose work, research or interest is related to film studies.

At least 80% of the papers published are original articles. In the interests of promoting research carried out in other institutions and countries, 60% of the papers are by external authors not associated with the publisher. In addition to the internal review process, *L'Atalante* employs external evaluators with the arbitration system of peer review.

*L'Atalante* is indexed in numerous catalogues, directorates, summaries and databases of research and scientific dissemination journals. At the international level, it is included in the Arts and Humanities Citation Index® and in Current Arts and Humanities® maintained by Thomson Reuters (Philadelphia, USA); in Latindex (Regional System of Online Information to Scientific Journals from Latin America, Caribbean, Spain and Portugal); in SCOPUS by Elsevier (Amsterdam, Netherlands); in MIAR (Barcelona, Spain); and in the Library of Congress (Washington, USA). In Spain it is included in the CSIC database of Revistas de Ciencias Sociales y Humanas ISOC; in the bibliographic portal of Spanish scientific literature DIALNET; and in REBIUN (Red de Bibliotecas Universitarias). ■

**Director:** Rebeca Romero Escrivá (Universidad Internacional de la Rioja).

**Issue Editors:** José Luis Castro de Paz (Universidade de Santiago de Compostela) y Santiago Barrachina Asensio (divulgador cinematográfico).

**Coordinator of the Vanishing Points Section:** Melania Sánchez Masià (CSIC-Universitat Autònoma de Barcelona), Elisa Hernández Pérez (Universitat de València).

**Editorial Board:** Nancy Berthier (Université Paris Sorbonne), Núria Bou (Universitat Pompeu Fabra), Quim Casas (Universitat Pompeu Fabra), Juan Miguel Company (Universitat de València), José Antonio Hurtado (CulturArts IVAC), Jordana Mendelson (New York University), Julio Montero (Universidad Internacional de la Rioja), Áurea Ortiz-Villela (Universitat de València), Isabel Santaolalla (Roehampton University).

**Professional Board:** Albertina Carri (directora y guionista), L. M. Kit Carson (productor, director y guionista), Isaki Lacuesta (director y guionista), Miguel Machalski (guionista y asesor de guiones).

**Executive Editorial Board:** Pablo Hernández Miñano (Universitat Politècnica de València), Marta Martín Núñez (Universitat Jaume I), Violeta Martín Núñez (Projectem Comunicació), Pedro Molina-Siles (Universitat Politècnica de València), Jordi Revert (Universitat de València), Héctor Gómez Santaolalla (Universitat de València).

**Executive Secretary:** Elisa Hernández Pérez (Universitat de València).

**Contributors:** Óscar Brox Santiago (escritor cinematográfico), Enric Antoni Burgos Ramírez (Universitat Politècnica de València), Elpidio del Campo (Universidad Miguel Hernández de Elche), Juan Miguel Company (Universitat de València), Susana Díaz (Universidad Carlos III de Madrid), Emeterio Díez Puertas (Universidad Camilo José Cela), Marta Fernández Morales (Universitat de les Illes Balears), Manuel de la Fuente (Universitat de València), Sonia García López (Universidad Carlos III de Madrid), Fernando Gómez Beceiro (Universidade de Santiago de Compostela), Juan Gorostidi (Universidad Miguel Hernández de Elche), Iñigo Larrauri Garate (Euskal Herriko Unibertsitatea), María Isabel Menéndez Menéndez (Universidad de Burgos), Alejandro Montiel (Universitat Politècnica de València), Javier Moral Martín (Crítico e historiador cinematográfico), Héctor Paz Otero (Universidade de Santiago de Compostela), Julio Pérez Perucha (Crítico e historiador cinematográfico), Juan Carlos Piquer-Cases (Universitat Politècnica de València), Fernando Redondo Neira (Universidade de Santiago de Compostela), Jean-Claude Seguin (Université Lumière-Lyon II), Jenaro Talens (Université de Genève, Universitat de València), Sergio Villanueva Baselga (Universitat de Barcelona), Santos Zunzunegui (Euskal Herriko Unibertsitatea).

**External reviewers:** Mercedes Álvarez San Román (Université Paris-Sorbonne), Marianne Bloch-Robin (Université Charles de Gaulle - Lille 3), Iván Bort Gual (Centre d'Ensenyament Superior Albert Giménez), Fernando Canet Centellas (Universitat Politècnica de València), Antonia Cabanilles (Universitat de València), Carmen Ciller Tenreiro (Universidad Carlos III de Madrid), Carlos Cuéllar Alejandro (Universitat de València), Luis Deltell Escolar (Universidad Complutense de Madrid), Antonia del Rey (Universitat de València), Pablo Ferrando García (Universitat Jaume I de Castelló), Clara Garavelli (University of Leicester), Luis Alonso García (Universidad Rey Juan Carlos), Francisco Javier Gómez Tarín (Universitat Jaume I de Castelló), Isadora Guardia (Universitat de València), José Luis Higón Calvet (Universitat Politècnica de València), Anne-Marie Jolivet (École Polytechnique), Susan Larson (University of Kentucky), Javier Marzal Felici (Universitat Jaume I de Castelló), Lidia Merás (University of London), Jorge Nieto Ferrando (Universitat de Lleida), Luis Pérez Ochando (Universitat de València), Iván Pintor (Universitat Pompeu Fabra), Antonio Piza de Nanno (Universitat Politècnica de Catalunya), Jordi Puigdomenech López (Universitat Internacional de Catalunya), Vicente Ponce (Universitat Politècnica de València), Aaron Rodríguez Serrano (Universitat Jaume I de Castelló), Agustín Rubio Alcover (Universitat Jaume I de Castelló), Gemma San Cornelio (Universitat Oberta de Catalunya), Daniel Sánchez Salas (Revista Secuencias), Antonio Santos (Universidad de Cantabria), Imanol Zumalde Arregi (Euskal Herriko Unibertsitatea).

**Translators:** Margarita Bogoslovskaya, Martin Boyd, Alessia Graziano.

**Aknowledgments:** Carmen Cano García (CulturArts IVAC), Amelia Falcó Tortosa (Universitat de València), Olga García de Fez (Universitat de València), Carles Gómez Alemany (Universitat de València), Nieves López-Menchero Martínez (CulturArts IVAC), Juan Miguel Nieves y hermanos (familia de José Antonio Nieves Conde), Alicia Potes (Filmoteca Española), Raquel Zapater (CulturArts IVAC).

**Original design and layout:** Carlos Planes Cortell.

**Printing:** Martín Impresores, s.l.

**Publisher:** Asociación Cinefòrum L'Atalante (CIF: G-97998355) con la colaboración de la Universidad Internacional de la Rioja, la Universitat de València (Servei d'Informació i Dinamització dels Estudiants [SeDI], Departament de Teoria dels Llenguatges i Ciències de la Comunicació y Aula de Cinema) y la Universitat Jaume I de Castelló (Departament de Ciències de la Comunicació). Este número ha sido posible gracias al apoyo del proyecto de investigación I+D+i «Hacia una reconsideración de la cultura posbélica: análisis de los Modos de Representación en el cine español (1939-1962) a partir de la impronta de Wenceslao Fernández Flórez» (CSO2012-34648), Ministerio de Economía y Competitividad, Gobierno de España.

**Place of publication:** Valencia (España).

**Distribution company:** Servei de Publicacions de la Universitat de València.

**E-mail:** [info@revistaatalante.com](mailto:info@revistaatalante.com).

**Website and subscriptions:** <http://www.revistaatalante.com>.

**ISSN:** 1885-3730 (edición impresa), 2340-6992 (edición digital). **Legal Deposit:** V-5340-2003  
Biannual journal.

*L'Atalante* will not accept liability for the opinions expressed in its articles or interviews.

All texts and the images are the intellectual property of their respective authors. The inclusion of images in the texts of *L'Atalante* is always done as a quotation, for its analysis, commentary and critical judgement.

The texts published in *L'Atalante* are, unless otherwise stated, protected under the Creative Commons Licence: Licencia de Reconocimiento-No Comercial-Sin Obras Derivadas 3.0 España. They may be copied, distributed and disseminated publicly but always citing their author and the name of this publication, L'ATALANTE. INTERNATIONAL FILM STUDIES JOURNAL. They may not be used for commercial purposes or to produce derivative works. To see a copy of this licence, consult: <http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc-nd/3.0/es/> or send a letter to Creative Commons, 171 Second Street, Suite 300, San Francisco, California 94105, USA.



## Cover image

Cover by Carlos Planes Cortell based on the poster of *Surcos* (José Antonio Nieves Conde, 1951) designed by Francisco Fernández-Zarza Pérez, alias Jano.



# table of contents

L'ATALANTE. ISSUE 20. JULY-DECEMBER 2015

## EDITORIAL

- 5 Wounds, survivals, transformations. **José Luis Castro de Paz, Santiago Barrachina Asensio.**

## NOTEBOOK

### **Wounds, survivals, transformations. Styling models in postwar Spanish cinema (1939-1962)**

- 7 Love, loss, melancholy, delirium: an obsessive-delusional styling model in the Spanish cinema of the forties. **José Luis Castro de Paz, Fernando Gómez Beceiro.**
- 15 Humor and metadiscourse: definition of a styling reflective-parodic model in the Spanish cinema. **Héctor Paz Otero.**
- 23 From pictorial to film, basis for a definition of a styling model for the Spanish cinema of the forties. **Javier Moral Martín.**
- 32 When the face hides the mask: the role of supporting actors in *Los que no fuimos a la guerra*. **Iñigo Larrauri Garate.**
- 38 The route of invisible voices. Narrative voice in Spanish fiction cinema of early Francoism. **Fernando Redondo Neira.**
- 46 *La ciudad perdida*. Reconciliation spaces and dissidence in the Spanish Literature and Cinema of the 1950's. **Sonia García López.**
- 54 Eslabones perdidos del imaginario popular. Aproximaciones al cine de Ladislao Vajda. **Susana Díaz, Manuel de la Fuente.** [Full text in Spanish only]

## DIALOGUE

- 66 **Realism(s), tragedy and irony. José Antonio Nieves Conde:** "I wanted to make films, but I found myself in a world where the director was constantly being pushed around". **José Luis Castro de Paz, Julio Pérez Perucha.**

## (DIS)AGREEMENTS

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

- 76 Introduction. The retrospective reappraisal of the Spanish past. **Santos Zunzunegui.**
- 78 Discussion. **Juan Miguel Company, Alejandro Montiel, Jean Claude Seguin, Jenaro Talens, Santos Zunzunegui.**
- 89 Conclusion. Re-viewing, re-thinking. **Santos Zunzunegui.**

## VANISHING POINTS

- 92 The Heroic in Mainstream Cinema: Gender and Bravery in *The Hunger Games*. **María Isabel Menéndez Menéndez, Marta Fernández Morales.**
- 101 Rescuing the Last Grains of Truth: On Metacinematic Elements in *The Idiots*. **Enric Antoni Burgos Ramírez.**
- 109 Ephemeral Architectures, Colossal Sets. The *Intolerance* of the Taviani Brothers and Identity Recovered. **Pedro Molina-Siles, Óscar Brox Santiago, Juan Carlos Piquer-Cases.**
- 116 Collaborative Practices in the Contemporary Documentary: A Proposed Analysis and Revision of the Participatory Mode in Documentary Theory. **Sergio Villanueva Baselga.**
- 124 Ozu by Hou Hsiao-hsien: The Poetics of Bodies and Emptiness. **Elpidio del Campo, Juan Gorostidi.**
- 131 Women and labor idyll in Manuel Romero's films and their reception under early Francoism. **Emeterio Díez Puertas.** [Full text in Spanish only]

AHORA **TAMBIÉN** EN

## EDICIÓN DIGITAL

Siempre al alcance de su mano



- Busque el texto que desea y márkelo como favorito
- Comparta textos en las redes sociales
- Guarde los recortes de lo que le interesa
- Lea o escuche los textos
- Amplíe el contenido para una mejor lectura

Ahora puede leer también **Caimán Cuadernos de Cine** en su ordenador (PC o Mac) y, si lo desea, descargarlo y llevárselo consigo a donde quiera que vaya en iPad, iPhone o todo tipo de dispositivos Android (tablet o smartphone).



## SUSCRIPCIÓN ANUAL

11 NÚMEROS (uno gratis)

**35,99**  
euros

**EJEMPLAR INDIVIDUAL 3,59 EUROS**



### NÚMEROS ANTERIORES EN DIGITAL

Desde enero de 2012 hasta la actualidad (**Caimán Cuadernos de Cine**) se pueden comprar a través de nuestra web:

[www.caimanediciones.es](http://www.caimanediciones.es)

Año 2011: en nuestra web y en ARCE



Suscríbase o haga su pedido en nuestra web:

**[www.caimanediciones.es](http://www.caimanediciones.es)**

y también en:

VISUAL  
MANIAC

KIOSKO  
y más

## Wounds, survivals, transformations

José Luis Castro de Paz and Santiago Barrachina Asensio

Recent polemic approaches to Spanish cinema of the 1940s and 1950s show a growing interest in the historical and formal study of a period of our film history which is still as reviled and misunderstood as it is fascinating. The first of these two decades is traditionally considered a pure product of Franco's regime and therefore unworthy of thorough analysis, whilst in the second decade true value was only recognised in certain titles associated with a supposed *Regenerationism* very superficially linked to Italian Neorealism. The detailed study of the surviving films from this period, carried out from new analytical and historiographical perspectives by a number of historians in and outside Spain since the late 20th century, has outlined a new panorama in which the possibilities of study are constantly multiplying and growing richer.

It is clear, then, that we are dealing with a period of cinema as variable as it is full of titles of indisputable aesthetic and cultural quality, which cannot be critically assessed using the hackneyed dualistic prism applied until recently (Italianising *communist* dissidence vs. Francoist *costumbrismo*), and that, in short, there are not only isolated and *exceptional* films of interest, but trends, movements and *generations* which, once the Civil War was over, strived to continue a cultural project as problematic as it was meritorious that had already begun to bear fruit in a small number of excellent films in the tragically brief Republican period.

In this context, the Notebook section of *L'Atalante's* issue 20 presents a series of articles that delve thoroughly into the at once comical, melancholic, rough, dense and desolate movements of Spanish post-war cinema, conducting an analysis of the films themselves, but also of their literary sources (for example, the undeniably popular style of the writer Wenceslao Fernández Flórez), of the importance of theatrical and painting traditions—which continue to exert themselves *in spite of everything*—derived from the silent era and the Republican period and of their complex *rubbing up* against the narrative and visual devices of the prevailing “International Model”, of the existence of hybrid films resulting from unexpected mixtures of apparently contradictory elements...

These are also articles that highlight the filmic (and historical) transformations of the period studied. Thus, for example, certain “Stylistic Models” that emerged in the 1940s (such as the model for which we propose the name “Obsessive-Delusional,” closely associated with a war wound, whose features are clear in films characterised by a masculine gaze obsessed with the loss of his object of desire, well exemplified in *La sirena negra* [Carlos Serrano de Osma, 1947] or *Vida en sombras* [Llorenç Llobet-Gràcia, 1948]) disappear almost completely in the next decade, in which, nevertheless, a progressive tension would emerge between the enunciative approach and the *costumbrista* materials only barely maintained in the 1940s—thanks above all to Edgar Neville's exemplary filmography—that would result in a *modern*, grotesque and caricaturesque Model, best represented in the films of Fernando Fernán-Gómez, Luis García Berlanga or Marco Ferreri.

This issue of *L'Atalante* is rounded off, in the Dialogue section, with the reproduction of an interview with the filmmaker José Antonio Nieves Conde—a key figure in post-war cinema, one of the so-called reformists or *renovadores*—which presents a consideration of his filmography that goes beyond the clichés and superficial reviews; and in the (Dis)agreements section, where the voices of five film historians engage in an exercise of theoretical and historiographical reassessment of this period of Spanish cinema that is the focus of this 20th edition of the journal.

Of course, there is also a space in *L'Atalante* for the diverse perspectives offered by the Vanishing Points section. In this section, we cover the role of the woman and gender readings of the blockbuster epic film; the metacinematic aspects of films that challenge the hegemonic model, as in the case of Lars Von Trier's *The Idiots*, (Dogme #2: Idioterne, 1998); the close connections between architecture and cinema based on a study of the interrelated films *Intolerance: Love's Struggle Throughout the Ages* (D.W. Griffith, 1916) and *Good Morning, Babylon* (Paolo and Vittorio Taviani, 1987); new forms of participatory production in the contemporary documentary; the shared filmic heritage of Yasujiro Ozu and Hou Hsiao-hsien; and the contradictions of the process of proletarianisation of women in Argentinean cinema of the late 1930s and early 1940s which, moreover, had a particular impact on Francoist Spain at that time.

We conclude with an important note: this issue 20 of *L'Atalante* will be the last print edition. Budgetary issues are obliging us to abandon this format which, beyond nostalgia, pragmatism and different modes of consumption and entertainment, allows physical contact with the words and the thinking that lies behind them. This last print edition is offered to those who think of the cinematic medium as a celebration of this physical intimacy and its aim—hopefully successful—to engage the reader/spectator. ■





# NOTEBOOK

*La sirena negra* (Carlos Serrano de Osma, 1948)

## Wounds, survivals, transformations

Styling models in postwar  
Spanish cinema (1939-1962)

"[T]he supremacy of love over knowledge leads to the creation of a new delusional reality where the departed beloved returns in the form of a ghost."

Juan David Nasio<sup>1</sup>

José Luis Castro de Paz  
Fernando Gómez Beceiro

# LOVE, LOSS, MELANCHOLY, DELUSION: AN OBSESSIVE-DELUSIONAL STYLISTIC MODEL IN SPANISH 1940S CINEMA\*

## Introduction

In a recent study (CASTRO DE PAZ, 2013)—and based on a detailed historical analysis of a large number of preserved films conducted over the course of more than two decades of research and publications (CASTRO DE PAZ, 2002 y 2012)—we proposed a theoretical and historiographic articulation of certain stylistic models for Spanish cinema in the period 1939-1950, resulting from the diverse and aesthetically productive intersections between the narrative and visual norms internationalised by that time by Hollywood and Spanish cultural traditions (in theatre, literature, art and music) that had constituted the most fertile material—transformed upon contact with the new medium—for Spanish cinema since the silent era, but which in this period came under the pressure

of a particularly gloomy and complex historical and political context. These models are merely methodological instruments that attempt to give a discursive order to elements that nearly always appear blended together in the films studied (Sánchez Biosca, 1991: 29), and to contribute to a deeper understanding of a wave of anguished cinema that is at once humorous and devastating, *Costumbrista* and melancholy, reflective and spectral.

There are four models that we have been able to identify and characterise in the Spanish cinema of the period, marked, as noted above, by the complex hybridisation after the Civil War of the international institutional mode of representation (to use the now clichéd and debatable term coined by Burch) with cultural traditions that had fed Spanish cinema since its origins: a

*Sainete-Costumbrista* Stylistic Model (SCSM), resulting from the influence on the filmmaker of some of the more deeply-rooted social traditions of Spanish stage and theatre shows (sainete, *género chico*, zarzuela, etc.), which are best represented by certain films of Edgar Neville's; a Parodic-Reflective Stylistic Model (PRSM), essentially based on a comic, absurd, eccentric and artificial style that parodies the apparently realistic authenticity of the classical model; a Formalist-Pictorial Stylistic Model (FPSM), associated with films whose diegesis is usually centred on great historic events and characterised, in particular, by its tendency towards a succession of live-action frames that draw on a visual tradition—chiefly pictorial, often referencing a painting quite literally—almost always well-known to the audience (*Locura de amor*, directed by Juan de Orduña in 1948, would be the emblematic example in this case); and, finally, the model that is the object of analysis in this article, an Obsessive-Delusional Stylistic Model (ODSM), tendentially linked to the genre of melodrama and comprising films dominated by the gaze of a male subject wounded by the loss of his love object and which, as the film unfolds, will present a basic formalisation of the delusional state of the subject.

### Obsession and delusion

The Obsessive-Delusional Model is, without doubt, the model most clearly marked by the historical moment in which it arose, having been employed almost exclusively in the period studied and disappearing in the following decade, when—with the possible exception of the extremely interesting *¡Buen viaje, Pablo...!* (Ignacio F. Iquino, 1958)—it becomes extremely difficult to identify examples of any of its defining characteristics. Moreover, many of this model's most representa-

tive films—*Las inquietudes de Shanti Andía* (1946) and *Obsesión* (1947) by Arturo Ruíz-Castillo; *Embrujo* (1947) and *La sirena negra* (1948) by Carlos Serrano de Osmá; *Cuatro mujeres* (1947) and *El huésped de las tinieblas* (1948) by Antonio del Amo; *La fiesta sigue* (1948) by Enrique Gómez; *Vida en sombras* (1948) by Lorenzo Llobet-Gràcia; and *Ha entrado un ladrón* (1949) by Ricardo Gascón (Paz Otero, 2013)—also belong to the mythical

## The films that would comprise the ODSM would be those formally structured around a gaze obsessed with and wounded by the loss of the love object, incapable of dealing with the grief, and depressed to the point of delusion

movement identified by Santos Zunzunegui (2005: 488-504), given that the reflections they posit—such is their aesthetic and semantic achievement on occasions—would fully capture, even beyond the significant degree to which they are historically anchored in the time of their production, the psychic wounds of male desire associated with the Oedipal conflict and castration complex described by Sigmund Freud and reformulated by Jacques Lacan.<sup>2</sup> It is also no accident that most of these films are works by directors who began their careers in the second half of the decade, forming part of generations (the "*Renovadores*") and groups (the "*Telúricos*") that were singularly concerned with the cinematic aesthetic and a long way from a cinematic approach inclined towards the interests of the Franco regime.

Without abandoning the use (or even predominance) of devices typical of the IMR, the films that would comprise the ODSM posited above would be those formally structured around a gaze obsessed with and wounded by the loss of the love object,<sup>3</sup> incapable of dealing with the grief, and depressed to

the point of delusion. On occasions the loss is a clear and gloomy metaphor for the Civil War, as in the case of one of the most famous and complete examples of the Model, the aforementioned *Vida en sombras*. Llobet-Gràcia's film, through its cinematic (and cinematographic) techniques, actually offers a dramatic reflection on the impossible nature of the fulfilment of the desire, but profoundly and very subtly imbued with the trauma of the Civil War,

so that the film's structure convincingly links the loss of the love object (Ana) with (at another significant level) the death of that character during the first skirmishes of July 1936 in the streets of Barcelona, later directly identifying the bleak post-war period with the wound, the scar borne by the sub-

ject. A single shot, while at the same time serving as a transition between the two parts of the film (which itself is divided in two by the brutal conflict elided from the action), masterfully encapsulates what we are describing. In the midst of the war, and after resigning from his position as a film reporter on the conflict, a close-up of Carlos Durán captures—in Fernando Fernán-Gómez's meticulous performance—all of the pain that the simple reference to a camera causes him. Then, with the close-up of his face still superimposed, we see documentary fragments of the combat that give way to the appearance, in the lower right corner of the screen (while the clouds over the battlefield are still visible), of Ana's name etched on her gravestone. The music and the soundtrack accompanying the images of war continue, but are gradually transformed as the scene lights up and the camera pulls away. It is the soundtrack that informs us of the end of the war. Franco's *peace* (dramatic music mixed with the unmistakable sound of a few chords from the national anthem imposed by the new regime), a *peace* of graveyards, founded



upon the death of innocents, thus coincides with the final frame: Ana's grave, with the shadow of a cross violently looming over it. Then, Durán comes into the frame to place some flowers there. And it fades to black.

Almost always set in a heavily charged urban night-time, films associated with the ODSM are also notable for their search for extreme visual formulations of a space (and atmosphere) that is dense, unwholesome, stifling and painfully unbreathable, with clear psychoanalytical resonances. Complex sequence-shots and highly visible camera movements and/or positions, montage sequences, overlays and all kinds of attention-grabbing visual effects pushing beyond all classical constraints connect the Model—even if some of its admitted references are found in the work of the most “experimental” (and nearly always European) filmmakers in Hollywood, like Orson Welles, Alfred Hitchcock, Fritz Lang or Robert Siodmak—with the *visualist* traditions of the 1920s and ‘30s avant-garde (German expressionism, Soviet montage, or French “impressionism”). Indeed, the narrator appears to share with his wounded and deeply melodramatic character a certain passionate agitation so that, even while he attempts to disassociate himself from the character’s emotional instability, he ends up irremediably caught up in it.

These films are generally associated with melodrama—although even comedies as important as *Huella de luz* (1942) or *Eloísa está debajo de un almendro* (1943), both directed by Rafael Gil, or films with a historical setting like the extremely dark *Inés de Castro* (1944, two different Spanish and Portuguese versions, directed by Leitao de Barros and M. A. García Viñolas), with the madness of the king and his necrophiliac act of love for the woman’s corpse, present its more serious constants in some of their scenes, and even anticipate formal solutions developed in the Model—and always present, in one or more moments of their development, the filmic formali-

sation of a male subject who experiences delusions of his lost love object, sometimes through photographic, cinematic or pictorial representations of the beloved. The first two cases occur, once again, in *Vida en sombras*, a film in which everything revolves around cinema, as a realm with which the desire of the subject (filmmaker, protagonist and spectator) is essentially concerned. Fascinated with a female

image, only through his amateur films (and after the ghostly shot-reverse shot with Mr. de Winter from *Rebecca* [Alfred Hitchcock, 1940], in which he fully recognises himself) will Carlos Durán, the film’s protagonist, be able to understand, though no longer evade, the limits of his imaginary passions. Delusional after being directly confronted with the living face of his dead wife and *seeing* her smile in the photograph

Figures 1 and 2. *Vida en sombras* (Lorenzo Llobet-Gràcia, 1948)





Figures 3 and 4. *Obsesión* (Arturo Ruiz-Castillo, 1947)

(figures 1 and 2), he can then show his first *opus*, not because of the patient help of Clara (an inadequate substitute for the beloved, unrelated to the cinema; “What am I doing here?” she asks while Carlos and David talk about their project), but because it is the (only) *means* in his reach to achieve a precarious balance: to commit the absence to celluloid and thus to return, in a misshapen circle, to the beginning, to his own birth.

But even in the case of stories set in the 19th century—*El clavo* (Rafael Gil, 1945); *La sirena negra*, *El huésped de las tinieblas*, *Las inquietudes de Shanti Andía*—or set outside Spain and apparently unrelated to the armed conflict—*Cuatro mujeres*, *Obsesión*—the female presence/absence (as the ghost of the dead or vanished woman continues to be forged in fire on the subconscious of the subject) and, in short, the impossible nature of the fulfilment of the desire are inextricably linked, more or less explicitly, to the painful present of the post-war period when the film was shot, to speak to us, metaphorically and to varying degrees, of

the sexual misery of Francoism. Arturo Ruiz-Castillo’s extraordinarily unique *Obsesión*, for example, with radical virulence and beyond its colonial setting, narrates the progressive and irremediable mental degradation of the engineer Sánchez del Campo (Alfredo Mayo) from the moment of his soli-

anguish. His obsessive anxieties will grow more intense after he marries a woman he has known only by letter, but whom he confuses with the one who appears in the photograph accompanying the correspondence (Lidia, the stunning woman, an *imago pedes-*

*tal*) but who is not in fact the writer of the letters. A productive blend of melodrama and film noir, the story begins *in extremis* in the moments of the protagonist’s total psychological breakdown, so that from the beginning—his figure being initially constrained by the oppressive absence of deep focus, forced foreshortening and gloomy lighting—we witness the representation of his delusions, firstly through the viewing of the photograph of the Woman he loves—the unattainable object of desire—which ends up vanishing (figures 3 and 4), and immediately thereafter with the gloomy sounds of his wife’s ghost (we will later discover that

she drowned in a swamp and he failed to intervene to save her, in a potential act of homicide) drawing him powerfully towards death.

As can be seen, the *gap* or yawning abyss between desire and reality

**The female presence/absence (as the ghost of the dead or vanished woman continues to be forged in fire on the subconscious of the subject) and, in short, the impossible nature of the fulfilment of the desire are inextricably linked, more or less explicitly, to the painful present of the post-war period when the film was shot, to speak to us, metaphorically and to varying degrees, of the sexual misery of Francoism**

tary and forlorn arrival in Equatorial Guinea, oedipally disturbed after abandoning post-war Spain, which appears to be home to the origin of the *absence* that operates as a narrative *gap*—although clearly insinuated—of his real

can also affect the narrative structure, as tends to occur in the Model, often concealing (the diegetic presence of) the *primordial scene*, either situating it prior to the beginning of the plot (although it completely determines the plot's outcome), or eliding it brusquely through the use of ellipses that are both distressing and puzzling, and often cleared up by the apparent resolution and false healing of a flashback. Some good examples of this formula are the urban, dark and mournful *thrillers* written by Miguel Mihura and directed by his brother Jerónimo—*Siempre vuelven de madrugada* (1949)—or by Rafael Gil—*La calle sin sol* (1948), *Una mujer cualquiera* (1949)—which always include a brutal elliptical fracture (only explained in the final flashback), a growing narrative black hole that turns the film into a sickly and tangled web of evasive glances, tensions and fears between the characters.

Although optical subjectivity does not tend to occupy a notable quantitative role in the development of this melancholy and delusional gaze, the subjective point of view of the man is sometimes employed, often to be immediately cut off or subverted, thereby turning it into an exception of heavily marked intentionality (that even encapsulates the onset of the delusion itself). This is what happens in *Cuatro mujeres* and in *El huésped de las tinieblas*, the notable first two films of the republican Antonio del Amo, produced by Sagitario Films with screenplays by the Galician Manuel Mur Oti and meticulous cinematographic work by Manuel Berenguer, which seem to constitute (we would argue *consciously*) clear *mythical* renderings of the unresolvable conflict of desire posited by the Model. In the first, set in Tangier a few years before the Civil War, we meet four men—the eight hands playing a

shadowy game of poker in one of the opening shots, the eight eyes that think they see Her in the woman who enters the “El Ancla” dive where all four will narrate in flashbacks how they came to know *her*—as the camera sweeps through the packed bar in constant motion, pushing open the doors and the curtain at the entrance, in the style of a Western saloon. This invisible character, without stopping, focuses first on the woman on the right, who is singing a melancholy song (“you left, without looking back...”) and ends up *looking* towards the upper floor, on a

**Although optical subjectivity does not tend to occupy a notable quantitative role in the development of this melancholy and delusional gaze, the subjective point of view of the man is sometimes employed, often to be immediately cut off or subverted, thereby turning it into an exception of heavily marked intentionality**

raised wooden platform, where at one of the tables the poker game is taking place. The narrator then seems to introduce himself abruptly, as one of the various drunks hanging out in the bar in the fictional universe, and his gaze falls on a woman, before then framing the protagonists, interlinking *his* gaze with theirs. From this moment, the arrival of Her and the subjective gaze through which she is presented to us is at first dual (since the high Dutch angle POV shot of her already seated responds to a medium shot of the painter and musician looking at her) and then swiftly followed by the gaze of the soldier, captured in the final frame with the camera in motion from the previous POV shot (showing the point of view of the other two characters) and

continues it with a delirious dolly shot towards Her, bringing the gaze up to the female body in a significantly similar way to that which—as discussed below—will be used by Serrano de Osma in certain scenes of *La sirena negra* (and *revived* by Buñuel in *Él* [1952] and Hitchcock in *Vertigo* [1958], each in his own way, in the following decade). A gaze that is “composed” and spliced, obsessive and delusional, multiplied and expanded from one eye to another, as a kind of metastasis of the longing search for a phantasmal figure which the sailor will identify directly with the “prostitute-mother”. On the other hand, in *El huésped de las tinieblas* (“The Guest of Darkness”, whose title is taken from an expression used by Rafael Alberti to refer to Gustavo Adolfo Bécquer, the great poet of Seville whom the film portrays), Bécquer sees his lost Dora (who reproduces *another* earlier, *eternal* loss, represented symbolically in an extinguished oil-lamp that can only be lit intermittently) reflected in the water, and will then imagine her in a beautiful central frag-

ment, festive and sinister, the fruit of his anguished mind, until the narrator finally gives up his arms to the lovers so that they can melt together in an impossible double close-up of unprecedented beauty.

In any case, partly continuing the openly demonstrative tendency of Spanish cinema since the silent era, partly to avoid resemblances to the Hitchcockian subjectivity of *Rebecca*, harshly judged to be morbid, materialist and heretical by the most powerful official film criticism of the day, the most restrained and least radical filmmakers would seek alternatives to the “dangerous” orthodoxy of the POV shot through a treatment of the space of the shot (size, “pictorial” composition, lighting, highly stylised sets, etc.) that

imbued it with a metaphorical charge associated with the character's melancholy, without actually being from his perspective. Strictly speaking, this peculiar *atmospheric subjectivity*—which the triumvirate made up of the director Rafael Gil, cinematographer Alfredo Fraile and set designer Enrique Alarcón would take to its most sublime expression in the “dance” scene of the Judge (hallucinating) with Gabriela in *El clavo* (1945)—was characterised more by a focus on the character and an indirect free point of view than by the (very restricted) use of the POV shot and, at the same, interacted with the notable and constant presence of a narrator who participates in and comments on the narrative events, sometimes giving the sensation—as noted above—of a torment equal to or greater than that of the protagonists.

### La sirena negra

Finally, we will turn our attention, as an outstanding example of the Model analysed here, to *La sirena negra*, directed in 1948 by Carlos Serrano de Osma, the godfather of the group that called themselves the “*Telúricos*”, whose work today is well-known thanks to the research of Asier Aranzubía (2007). A filmmaker of exposition—as defined by José Luis Téllez, to whom we also owe some brilliant analyses of his work—and of point of view, his films of the period “integrate the inheritance of Eisenstein or Pabst into a dense corpus of native literary or iconic references, creating an essentially poetic narrative style of exacerbated Romanticism with a strong psychoanalytical quality” (Téllez, 1998: 814-815), which, however, have another of their main external points of reference in the (no less passionate and innovative) films of Orson Welles. Dense and masterful, *La sirena negra*, which would suffer the repression of censorship and would not be shown

in Madrid until 1950, is an adaptation of one of the last novellas (of the same title) of Emilia Pardo Bazán—a writer who was certainly not favoured by Franco's regime, but whose literary prestige would have made it seem ludicrous and counterproductive to ban her—that sets to images the passionate and melancholy wanderings of Gaspar de Montenegro (magnificently portrayed by Fernando Fernán-Gómez in a register very close to the no less exemplary *Vida en sombras*), marked like many other protagonists in the ODSM by the wound of lost and essentially irretrievable love that would lead to an obsessive and vain search in which the



Figure 5. *La sirena negra* (Carlos Serrano de Osma, 1948)

gaze, incapable of giving into the pain of the absence, would turn repeatedly to delusional visions of the vanished love (figure 5) and believe fleetingly to have found other *bodies* onto which the ghost may be projected.

It is, in my view, in connection with this intention of the filmmaker that we should interpret the decisive inclusion of the flashback that narrates the tragic suicide of the Woman (the beloved, the departed, the *sirena negra* or black mermaid) whose loss, the lucid confirmation of the real absence of the object of desire, turns Montenegro into a castrated character, incomplete and empty, melancholy; a character thus ultimately incapable of closing the wound caused by the loss of the mater-

nal object (the first loss), making the film itself a clear metaphor for unconscious male desire and the impossible nature of its fulfilment, as analysed in psychoanalytic theory.

Thus, the choice of the beloved (the dead young woman and Rita) depends less on the beloved herself than on the *ghost* that Gaspar projects onto her, a *pedestal image* constructed out of psychological images associated with that *first figure*. The expectations placed upon the person of the beloved are so excessive, and the consummation of the desire is so impossible, structured over this original absence or emptiness, that the *disillusion* and pain of living is always the final result of this vain enterprise of wandering *from one representation to another*. In the same sense, the elimination from the story of the rape of Miss Annie, present in the novel, not only responds to the censor's ban, but also coincides *essentially*—thus indicating the highly personal transformation that Serrano de Osma's film text constituted in relation with the source material—with the absolute impossibility that the girl would be desired by Gaspar in spite of

her beauty (portrayed by the gorgeous Isabel de Pomés). This impossibility is perfectly understandable in the textual logic of the film given that she was completely unsuitable to become an object of Gaspar de Montenegro's desire. Active and enterprising, flirting with him constantly, her positive attitude towards life blocks the desire of the male protagonist. In short (and we will return to this shortly), *she does not need to be saved*. It is thus clear that it is not because he does not rape her, but because he will ignore each and every one of her attempts to approach him.

In fact, Montenegro's journey seems to be marked by the conditions for that essential type of object on the part of the male analysed by Freud in



his “Contributions to the Psychology of Erotic Life” (Freud, 1967). Here, the “prejudice of the third party” would be embodied—fully clarifying the oedipal origin of the choice—by the paternal prohibition of the consummation of the relationship with the young Galician girlfriend, as well as Rita’s condition as a mother. Otherwise, she is not only “sexually suspect” and of doubtful “purity and fidelity” (a single mother), but also *needs to be saved* and, as she is identified with the lost “mermaid”, she must be rescued from the water (and, Freud tells us, “when a man dreams of rescuing a woman from water, it means he makes her a mother, *his* mother”). Rescue and birth would thus be joined in this appearance of water, whose presence in the film it does not appear necessary to overstate, given the obsessive repetition of the *Imago* in which the delusional Gaspar sees the *black mermaid* reflected in the water from which “he could not save her.”

But in spite of the obvious interest of the extremely unique *reading* that the filmic text *La sirena negra* gives of its literary source, drawing it towards the heartrending and moving “reflection on the jurisdictions of desire projected onto an object with no features other than those conferred upon it by the delusions of passion” which, in the words of Pérez Perucha (1995: 90), had given his previous film *Embrujo* its extraordinary filmic density and historical transcendence, had to come from the extreme meaningful brilliance of its visual resolutions, from a *structure* of gloom and asphyxiating opaqueness, constructed through a portentous exposition unmistakably influenced by the films of Orson Welles, but also by Alfred Hitchcock or even Robert Siodmak.

Serrano de Osma himself, many years later, would confirm these sty-

listic influences with respect to Welles (“...[in *La sirena negra*] I tried to create camera experiences, to play Welles in *The Magnificent Ambersons*, to shoot the film in 175 shots and things like that; there were a series of technical issues that I brought up as we worked: the third dimension, the infinite shot; subjective composition...” [CASTRO DE PAZ, 1974: 406]), but just as eloquent were his passionate words at the time of making the film, at a conference in which, in addition to pointing to the topic of the Civil War as one of the core themes of the cinema of the period, he asserted that the sequence shot, depth

formal solution that Hitchcock came up with for *Vertigo* in giving shape to the male gaze which, *recognising* the body that he cannot help but be drawn to, pounces upon it, attracted and fearful. Both Serrano and Hitchcock make use of a semi-subjective shot from the POV of the protagonists in order to pan over the face of the woman; then, leaving the eyes behind, a dolly shot signals the beginning of that irreversible process of assembly between the chosen body and the fragments of primordial images that weave together our unconscious desire to give new (and no less fleeting) life to the ghost.

Only then is her face (con)fused with that of the *black mermaid*. And although, unlike Hitchcock, Serrano de Osma never tries to construct the rigid process of protagonist-spectator identification developed in *Vertigo* through the hypertrophic use of the POV of James Stewart’s character, this does not stop him from resorting repeatedly to the POV of Gaspar de Montenegro, thus drawing us closer to the protagonist’s anxiety by forcing us to share his gaze. However, unlike the Hitchcockian resolutions, Serrano

always anticipates (whether through camera movements or through *ad hoc* shorts) the centre of dramatic attention of each scene, even before turning to the delusional gaze of the protagonist.

By dissolving the sole point of view in this way, the tension and density of the text is taken to unprecedented extremes. Romantic(s) to the point of exhaustion, protagonist and expositor constantly interweave gazes which, however, never converge. Both pass through the diegesis, sometimes brushing past each other, other times diverging, always in search of that longed-for *infinite shot*. It is not surprising when Gaspar, *forced* by the censors to marry the bland Trini (for whom of course

**Extreme meaningful brilliance  
of its visual resolutions, from a  
*structure* of gloom and asphyxiating  
opaqueness, constructed  
through a portentous exposition  
unmistakably influenced by the  
films of Orson Welles, but also by  
Alfred Hitchcock or even Robert  
Siodmak**

of field, and the dramatic use of light and shadow were the formal codes of cinematic modernity.<sup>4</sup> And just as well-known is his fervent admiration for the films of Alfred Hitchcock, whom, long before the as-yet non-existent *Cahiers du cinéma*, he would acclaim as “probably the compass for a whole generation of filmmakers of all nationalities.” Such a predilection is far from surprising, because in both cases (Welles and Hitchcock) they are filmmakers, like him, with an obsessive expository authority.

It is thus interesting to observe how Serrano de Osma, exploring Antonio del Amo’s intuition in *Cuatro mujeres*, is able to anticipate by a decade the

he feels no desire), that the narrator should use his camera and his power to escape in a painful, and metaphorically fatal, drop to the rocks.

### Final coda

In short, as we have observed above, the Obsessive-Delusional Stylistic Model owes its singular specificity to the conjunction of certain universally melodramatic themes with concrete solutions of *mise-en-scène* through which certain filmmakers after the war addressed the formal problems that such themes entailed in the context of the Spain of their day. Its formal unorthodoxy, the influence of the avant-garde (and of the latest Hollywood cinema) and its consequent eccentricity in relation to the IMR, shaped the strange network of a fabric on which the wound of the Spanish Civil War achieved what was perhaps its most relevant, striking and sublime stylisation. ■

### Notes

\* This study has been completed in the context and with the support of the R+D+I research project: "Hacia una reconsideración de la cultura posbélica: análisis de los Modos de Representación en el cine español (1939-1962) a partir de la impronta de Wenceslao Fernández Flórez" (CSO2012-34648), promoted by the Ministry of the Economy and Competitiveness of the Government of Spain. The images illustrating this article have been contributed voluntarily by the author of the text, who was liable for locating and requesting the proprietary rights of reproduction. In any event, the inclusion of images in the texts of *L'Atalante* is always done by way of citation, for their analysis, commentary and critical assessment. (Editor's note).

1 Cf. NASIO (2004: 39).

2 Although we are aware that delusion is closely associated with psychosis and is extremely rare in obsessive neurosis, the terms are not used here in their strictly psychoanalytical senses. Nevertheless, there are many cases of non-psychotic hallucinations and acute delusions also due to symbolic castration anxiety which, therefore, could be clarified by the hypothesis of foreclosure. In our Model, the recurring representation is

still a representation of the ego, symbolic in nature, while in psychosis denied and recurrent representations are profoundly heterogeneous (NASIO, 1996).

3 A universally melodramatic thematic core but also significantly present in many other films of the decade that are only partly "affected" by the Model, such as the remarkable and very different *El frente de los suspiros* (Juan de Orduña, 1941), *La casa de la lluvia* (Antonio Román, 1943, based on a story by Wenceslao Fernández Flórez) or the first film by Manuel Mur Oti, *Un hombre va por el camino*, shot in 1949.

4 Conference given at the Cúpula Coliseum in Barcelona, January 1947.

### Bibliography

ARANZUBIA COB, ASIER (2007). *Carlos Serrano de Osma. Historia de una obsesión*. Madrid: Filmoteca Española.

CASTRO DE PAZ, JOSÉ LUIS (2002). *Un cinema herido. Los turbios años cuarenta en el cine español (1939-1950)*. Madrid: Paidós.

— (2012). *Sombras desoladas. Costumbrismo, humor, melancolía y reflexividad en el cine español de los años cuarenta (1939-1950)*. Santander: Shangrila.

— (2013). De miradas y heridas. Hacia la definición de unos Modelos de estilización en el cine español de la posguerra (1939-1950). *Quintana*, 12. Recuperado de <http://www.usc.es/revistas/index.php/quintana/article/view/2279>.

FREUD, SIGMUND (1967). *Tres ensayos sobre la vida sexual y la teoría de la neurosis*. Madrid: Alianza.

NASIO, JUAN DAVID (1996). *Enseñanza de 7 conceptos cruciales del psicoanálisis*. Barcelona: Gedisa.

— (2004). *El libro del dolor y del amor*. Barcelona: Gedisa.

PAZ OTERO, HÉCTOR (2013). "Aportaciones melodramáticas de Fernández Flórez en la configuración del Modelo de estilización obsesivo-delirante." In J. Pérez Perucha and A. Rubio Alcover (eds.), *Actas del XIV Congreso de la Asociación Española de Historiadores del Cine. De cimientos y contrafuertes. El papel de los géneros en el cine español*. AEHC/UPV.

PÉREZ PERUCHA, JULIO (1995). *Embrujo*. In Various Authors, *Los mejores cien años de nuestra vida* (p. 90). Madrid: Asociación Cien Años de Cine.

— (ed.) (1997). *Antología crítica del cine español (1906-1995)*. Madrid: Cátedra, Filmoteca Española.

TÉLLEZ, JOSÉ LUIS (1998). Carlos Serrano de Osma. In J. L. Borau (ed.), *Diccionario del cine español* (pp. 814-815). Madrid: Alianza Editorial.

ZUNZUNEGUI, SANTOS (2005). "Epílogo: La línea general o las vetas creativas del cine español." In J. L. Castro de Paz, S. Zunzunegui and J. Pérez Perucha (eds.), *La nueva memoria. Historia(s) del cine español* (pp. 488-504). A Coruña: Vía Láctea.

José Luis Castro de Paz (A Coruña, 1964) is a film historian and Professor of Communication Studies at the Universidade de Santiago de Compostela. He has published numerous articles in scientific journals, participated in collective works and coordinated books on various aspects and leading figures related to cinema. Some of his most remarkable books are *El surgimiento del telefilm* (1999), *Alfred Hitchcock* (2000), *Un cinema herido. Los turbios años cuarenta en el cine español* (2002), *Fernando Fernán-Gómez* (2010), *Del sainete al esperpento. Relecturas del cine español de los años 50* (2011) and *Sombras desoladas* (2012).

Fernando Gómez Beceiro (Ferrol, A Coruña, 1983) has a degree in Advertising and Public Relations from the University of Vigo, with Diploma of Advanced Studies in the research History and Aesthetics of Spanish Cinema. Now he is finishing, at the University of Santiago de Compostela, his doctoral thesis on the filmmaker Arturo Ruiz-Castillo, an aspect on which he has already presented some approaches in various conferences and publications.



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

## Introduction

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

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

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

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

### The new humour

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

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

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

## Outside the theatrical genre, the members of the "Other Generation of '27" did not lose sight of the contribution to humour of the Galician writers Julio Camba and Wenceslao Fernández Flórez

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

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

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

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

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

### The model

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

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

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

## ***Humor nuevo engages in a battle against the solemnity of certain customs not only with the aim of transgressing that solemnity, but also to shift the frontal point of view from a classical perspective towards pluriperspectivism***

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

**Jardiel’s pre-war novels are filled with these kinds of techniques; in order to show readers the scaffolding of the story, to engage them in an uninhibited reading, the author, doubling as an ironic commentator on his own writing, creates a hybrid, original and anomalous narration**

sible.” (LLERA, 2003: 66).

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

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

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

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

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



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

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

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

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

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

## Iquino expels us as spectators from the place that belongs to the audience and drops us backstage, or, translating this idea to the cinema, makes the pro-transparent rigidity of the Institutional Mode of Representation more flexible

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

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

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

doubt when Daniel moves away from the window.

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

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

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

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

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

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



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



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

## Coda

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

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

## Notes

\* This study has been completed in the context and with the support of the R&D+I research project "Hacia una reconsideración de la cultura posbélica: análisis de los Modos de Representación en el cine español (1939-1962) a partir de la impronta de Wenceslao Fernández Flórez" (CSO2012-34648), promoted by the Ministry of the Economy and Competitiveness of the Government of Spain. The images illustrating this article have been contributed voluntarily by the author of the text, who was responsible for locating and requesting copyright for the purposes of reproduction. In any event, the inclusion of images in the texts of *L'Atalante* is always done by way of citation, for their analysis, commentary and critical assessment. (Editor's note).

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

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

to the Spanish Royal Academy on 5 June 1983.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

## Bibliography

- CASTRO DE PAZ, José Luis (2002). *Un cinema herido. Los turbios años cuarenta en el cine español (1939-1950)*. Madrid: Paidós.
- (2012). *Sombras desoladas. Costumbrismo, humor, melancolía y reflexividad en el cine español de los años cuarenta (1939-1950)*. Santander: Shangrila.
- (2013). “De miradas y heridas. Hacia la definición de unos Modelos de estilización en el cine español de la posguerra (1939-1950).” *Quintana* 12, 2013.
- FERNÁNDEZ FLORES, Wenceslao (1956). *Obras completas. Tomo V*. Madrid: Ed. Aguilar.
- GONZÁLEZ-GRANO DE ORO, Emilio (2004). *La otra generación del 27. El “Humor Nuevo” español y “La Codorniz” primera*. Madrid: Ediciones Polifemo.
- GUBERN, Román (1977). *El cine sonoro en la II República (1929-1936)*. Barcelona: Ed. Lumen.
- JARDIEL PONCELA (1973). *Obras completas. Tomo IV*. Barcelona: AHR.
- LLERA, José Antonio (2003). *El humor verbal y visual de “La Codorniz”*. Madrid: CSIC.
- MIHURA, Miguel (1948). *Mis memorias*. Madrid: Temas de Hoy.
- (1962). “Solos, sin Camba” in *ABC*. 1 March 1962, 38.
- ORTEGA Y GASSET, José (1948). *The Dehumanization of Art and Notes on the Novel*. Trans. Helen Weyl. Princeton: Princeton University Press.
- PÉREZ PERUCHA, Julio (1998). “Territorio de encrucijada”. In J. L. Castro de Paz and Jaime J. Pena Pérez (coords.), *Wenceslao Fernández Flórez y el cine español* (pp. 49-59). Ourense: III Festival Internacional de Cine Independiente de Ourense.
- SÁNCHEZ SALAS, Bernardo (2002). “Jardiel se explica: Los Celuloides rancios.” *Archivos de la Filmoteca*, 40, 26-43.

VILAS, Santiago (1968). *El humor y la novela española contemporánea*. Madrid: Guadarrama.

ZUNZUNEGUI, Santos (2005). “Epílogo. La línea general o las vetas creativas del cine español.” In J. L. Castro de Paz, S. Zunzunegui and J. Pérez Perucha (eds.), *La nueva memoria. Historia(s) del cine español* (pp. 488-504). A Coruña: Vía Láctea.

Héctor Paz Otero (Cangas do Morrazo, 1976) has a degree in Audiovisual Communication (Universidad Complutense de Madrid, 1999) and a PhD from the Universidade de Vigo with a thesis entitled *Adaptaciones cinematográficas de la década de los cuarenta de las novelas de Wenceslao Fernández Flórez ambientadas en Galicia* (2008). He has published contributions in collective books: *Rafael Gil y CIFESA: el cine que marcó una época* (2006) *El destino se disculpa y la estilización fantástica, costumbrista y reflexiva de Sáenz de Heredia y Fernández Flórez* (2011), articles in specialized journals (*Lecturas: imágenes, Área Abierta*) and the following books. *El malvado Carabel: literatura y cine popular antes y después de la Guerra Civil* (2013) and *Muerte de un ciclista: una firme mirada opositora* (2015). He worked as a remunerated researcher in the project «Galicia en NO-DO: Comunicación, Cultura e Sociedade (1942-1981)». Currently he works in the project «Hacia una reconsideración de la cultura posbélica: análisis de los Modos de Representación en el cine español (1939-1962) a partir de la impronta de Wenceslao Fernández Flórez» (CSO2012-34648), Ministerio de Economía y Competitividad-Gobierno de España.

# FROM THE PICTORIAL TO THE FILMIC: BASES FOR THE DEFINITION OF A POSSIBLE STYLISTIC MODEL IN SPANISH CINEMA OF THE 1940S\*

## 1. Films with a pictorial tradition

It is a well-known fact that most Spanish historical films of the 1940s,<sup>1</sup> especially those directed by Juan de Orduña for the CIFESA film studio—but also others such as *El abanderado* (Eusebio Fernández Ardavín, 1943) and *Reina Santa* (Rafael Gil, 1947) from Suevia Films, or *El doncel de la reina* (Eusebio Fernández Ardavín, 1944) by the ONUBA S.L. studio—made use of pictorial images extensively in the construction of a historically realistic atmosphere. Bombastically proclaiming the spectacular nature of their film productions, these studios brought to the screen immense and complex *mise-en-scènes* in which the story was displayed in all its splendour—and all its tragedy—through its most significant events and protagonists.

Such references to paintings are numerous and they have been conveniently identified. In *El abanderado* appears a representation of *Defensa del púlpito de la iglesia de San Agustín* (César Álvarez Dumont, 1880). *La leona*

*de Castilla* (Juan de Orduña, 1951) begins with an explicit allusion to the painting *Los comuneros Padilla, Bravo y Maldonado en el patíbulo* (Antonio Gisbert, 1860) (figures 1 and 2). *Alba de América* evokes *La rendición de Granada* (Francisco Pradilla, 1882) first, and then a little later, at the climax of its story, gives a nod to one of the most emblematic images of the conquest of the New World, the painting titled *Primer desembarco de Cristóbal Colón en América* (Díoscuro Teófilo Puebla Tolín, 1862). In *Agustina de Aragón* (Juan de Orduña, 1949), in addition to the explicit reference to *Los fusilamientos del 3 de mayo* (Francisco de Goya, 1814), there is a glimpse, from the very beginning of the story onwards, of all of the 19th-century images of the character who appeared in paintings like *La heroína Agustina Zaragoza* (Marcos Hiráldez Acosta, 1871) and *Agustina de Aragón* (Juan Gálvez, 1810), but especially in *Ruinas de Zaragoza*, a series of 32 etchings and aquatints (by Juan Gálvez and Fernando Brambila,



Above. Figure 1. *Los comuneros Padilla, Bravo y Maldonado en el patíbulo* (Antonio Gisbert, 1860)



Below. Figure 2. *La leona de Castilla* (Juan de Orduña, 1951)

1812-1813), deployed with great effect throughout Orduña's film. This is not to forget the veritable succession of *tableaux vivants* that is *Locura de amor* (1948). In addition to the recognition of Flemish Gothic painting noted by Jean Claude Seguin (1997: 230-232), there is also *Doña Juana la Loca* (Francisco Pradilla, 1877) (figures 3 and 4), *Demencia de doña Juana de Castilla* (Lorenzo Vallés, 1866), and *Doña Isabel la Católica dictando su testamento* (Eduardo Rosales, 1864).

The profusion of these explicit pictorial references, which became the iconographic foundations of the cinematic imaginary of the cycle of historical films produced in this period, but especially, and still more importantly, its core function in the discursive cohesion of the films that employed them, lends credence to the constitution of a singular formal model, differentiated from others that were active during the 1940s. While José Luis Téllez (1990) and Javier Hernández (2001) have doc-

umented its general features, José Luis Castro de Paz (2013), giving it the name "Formalist-Pictorial Stylistic Model", has described it in detail in the following terms:

"Its *mise-en-scène* tends towards a static and pictorial composition of the shot, resulting in difficulties for the usual structural interaction with other visual compositions typical of traditional film editing. [...] It is presented like a succession of living paintings and prints, elaborated on the basis of a chiefly pictorial tradition, often referenced literally. The result of an extremely powerful and authoritative statement, this formalist pictorial shot that dominates the Model seeks autonomy and self-sufficiency."

## 2. Some pictorial sources and their cinematic implications

While it is obvious that the painting forms the very foundation for the theoretical construction of the model, it is worth assessing this intrusion duly on the basis of two preliminary assumptions. First of all, to consider the painting referenced, and secondly, to analyse how it operates in the discursive apparatus of the Formalist-Pictorial Stylistic Model.<sup>2</sup> In other words, to analyse the visual and figurative (but also thematic, narrative and declarative) features of the painting cited, so that we may then assess how it affects the thematic, narrative and declarative (but also visual and figurative) structures of the audiovisual discourse of which it forms a part.

In this sense, apart from the presence of the Flemish painting in *Locura de amor* (which is actually an unusual device of realist legitimation in the historical cycle), it is interesting to note the preference—if not exclusivity—given to the referencing of 19th-century Spanish historical paintings; a striking and clearly intentioned choice from among all the pictorial possibilities. The presentation of a legendary Spain offered by these historical paintings reflected the interests of the more recalcitrant sectors of Franco's regime,

who demanded the presence on the big screen of a *Spanish* cinema anchored in its history, as noted by Félix Fanés (1982) and José Luis Castro de Paz (2012)<sup>3</sup>, among others.

The prestige in Spain of 19th-century historical paintings, which were largely derivative of aesthetic movements of other countries (firstly French Neoclassicism and then Romanticism), was the product of the 19th-century nationalist *zeitgeist* that was crystallised in a whole range of discourses which, conveyed in disparate expressive fields, as pertinently analysed by Álvarez Junco in *Mater dolorosa* (2001), contributed to the dissemination of the modern concept of the Nation-State. In this context of identity construction, painters were supported and promoted by different government authorities that had understood perfectly the importance of vesting the concept of Spain with some primordial images that could provide the new national consciousness with iconographic sustenance. As José Caveda would recall in his famous memoirs, *Memorias para la historia de la Real Academia de San Fernando y de las Bellas Artes en España* (Madrid, 1867-1868: 137), it was a period when the Academy extolled compositions that depicted “the great national endeavours, the memorable features of heroism and virtue of our forefathers, reconciling the inspirations of patriotism with those of art.”<sup>4</sup>

But beyond the obvious ideological implications in the appropriation and use of depictions that nourished the traditionalist, nostalgic vision of the imperial myth, it is worth considering here the rhetorical and visual framework that establishes them qua images, the armature that makes them function and serve to underpin their filmic counterparts.

We should note at once that, by definition, historical paintings depict actions. This means that it is a genre that represents events that took place in the past, that tells what happened and how it happened and which, therefore, depends on history and especially



Above. Figure 3. *Doña Juana la Loca* (Francisco Pradilla, 1877)

Below. Figure 4. *Locura de amor* (Juan de Orduña, 1948)

the stories that construct that history.<sup>5</sup> This narrative imperative conditions the genre. It could be argued that the image in the historical painting is an equivalent of the *event* depicted; its mission is merely to illustrate it, to turn the written tale into a visual tale or, in other words, to make the readable visible. The illustrative function is thus a core element of its purpose. As heir to a positivist conception of history, the aim of 19th-century historical painting is merely to anchor the meaning of the event onto the canvas, to freeze it and turn it into a kind of *total image*: everything is said there, within its bounda-

ries. No shadow, no region of darkness can be left out of the frame: it is the truth, pure and whole.

For this reason, all of its rhetorical strategies are subordinated to the guiding discourse that organises it from within. As the visual representation a text, it is under obligation to include the most meaningful aspects, those facts that enable the correct (i.e., true) reading of what happened. In other words, the historical painting depicts on the canvas the key moments of the event, the narrative *core* that facilitates the illusion of a unified and collective vision through their skilful combination on



the pictorial surface. The exact moment when Christopher Columbus leads his troops before the astonished gaze of the indigenous people peeking out expectantly from the bushes on Dióscoro Teófilo's canvas, or the dramatic moment when the lead rebels against Emperor Charles V are executed in *Los comuneros Padilla, Bravo y Maldonado en el patíbulo*, are no more—nor less—than idealised representations encapsulating the different views and times of the event depicted.

This obvious abundance of meanings imposes a visual signification that likewise tends towards abundance. The total image is a hypertrophic image that closes in on itself in visual terms as well: within it or beneath it, history unfolds in a space and time that operate towards a closure of the event. The *mise-en-scène* in this genre is thus configured under the principle of readability, and the space is articulated as a kind of proscenium on which the characters are organised according to their narrative and dramatic function. Hence, although the compositional possibilities are numerous, stateliness and frontality become the visually dominant elements. The historical truth can only be *viewed frontally*, a view that conceals nothing, that places the spectator in front of the action but outside it, as in a spectacle that can only be approached from the outside and viewed as a whole, in the totality of its meaning.

### 3. From the canvas to the screen

If the historical cycle of films has any privileged meeting point between the pictorial rhetoric and the cinematic image in the terms outlined above, it is without doubt the opening shots. Indeed, these films often begin to reveal their conclusion in a frame that encapsulates the semantic codes of the plot. *Locura de amor* does so with the dramatic force of Francisco Pradilla's painting, showing a taciturn Juana at the feet of her dead husband while the wind batters his haggard body, a privileged figurative motif and at the same time a

narrative prolepsis that encapsulates in its pathos all of the melodramatic density of Orduña's film. Similarly, under a stormy sky inspired by the painting *Vista de Toledo* (El Greco, 1597-1607), we see the terrible decapitation depicted in *Los comuneros Padilla, Bravo*

**Paradoxically, this total image can only be accommodated at the extremes of the spectrum defined by the framing possibilities: the furthest away and the closest**

*y Maldonado en el patíbulo*, a striking background over which the credits are superimposed. Once again, the narrative foreshadowing of the gruesome scene like the previous one will reveal its full meaning when we witness the macabre presence of Doña María de Padilla watching her husband's execution.

In spite of the importance and function that these explicit and recognisable pictorial references acquire, their presence is not enough to characterise this Model (it may even be debatable as to whether such presence is a necessary condition). This is because, first of all, other films, other filmic formulations active in the period, also make use of paintings to serve different discursive needs. The recognised inspiration of Goya and Solana in Edgar Neville's work, especially privileged and evident in *Verbena* (1941) and, above all, in *Domingo de carnaval* (1945), makes this unquestionably clear.<sup>6</sup> Without going further than the limits of space would allow here, I will merely note that the paintings used by Neville construct a popular universe that frontally engages the regal universe that acts as the point of reference in the cycle of historical films.

Secondly, the reference is often inscribed in the historical cycle in a manner that is barely perceptible, if not relegated to the background of the image. In these cases it seems as if the filmmaker wanted to show the painting, but without drawing excessive attention to it so as not to cloud the diegetic universe. Consider, for example, the depiction of the death of Isabel, a *flash* of a primordial scene that crosses the screen and gives visual form to the memories of Captain Álgar de Estúñiga, the story's narrator. On the one hand, the reference is presented as of secondary importance, as if included merely in passing, while on the other, the cadence of the device highlights the unbridgeable distance between the fixed image and the image in motion. The opening shots of *La Leona de Castilla* are the same in this respect, although in this case the allusion is also quite remote; it is only its presence within the story that will ultimately confirm the similarity. This could also be said of the painting *Rendición de Granada* in *Alba de América*. Neither the point of view adopted by the camera (much more distant than the perspective of the painting) nor the subsequent fragmentation of the scene in the delivery of the keys to the city makes it possible to establish a clear equivalence.

Therefore, what ultimately defines the Formalist-Pictorial Stylistic Model is not the presentation of paintings familiar to the spectator, but rather their establishment as a formal reference in the visual articulation of the drama. Or, put another way, with the overflowing of the cultural effect, this space of knowledge shared between film and spectator, the pictorial—in reality, a pictorial conception hinted at as a total image—assumes the responsibility of organising and defining the image. This is what seems to distance certain productions that use painting as a historical anchor (falsely historical, it should be added) or as a mere cultural accessory from the Formalist-Pictorial Stylistic Model. In *Goyescas* (Benito Perojo, 1942), for example, the



recurrent presentation of Goya's paintings operates merely as a decorative backdrop to the musical performances. Once the allusion is made, the image resumes its figurative and visual course, which is closer to classical film narrativity than to Goya's pictorial rhetoric.

Contrary to this exceptional case in which the pictorial is re-absorbed by the discourse without further complications, there is a model which imposes an image that resists narrative integration and, like 19th-century historical paintings, is vested with attributes of that representation attempted through a momentous display of a primordial scene. This is a saturated, overflowing image that proclaims its autonomy with declarative violence, as José Luis Téllez would note, apropos of the succession of "*tableaux-vivants* narcissistically closed in on themselves" (1990: 54) that constitute the film *Alba de América*; nothing seems to matter to such an image beyond the image itself. In rather more formal terms it could be argued, paraphrasing Sánchez-Biosca in his definition of the *metaphorical-hermetic model* that would include films like *The Cabinet of Doctor Caligari*, that the negative of the image to be expanded and related to the other images that precede it and replace it occurs here as well by virtue of a particular "virtual identity between the visual form of the space and the visual form of the shot" (1991: 58). However, modernity has taught us, among other lessons, that such identity does not necessarily constitute the self-sufficiency of the shot as exemplified by Bresson, but that it can also operate in the opposite direction: towards the most basic fragmentation. The homology between the visual form of the space and the visual form of the shot in the organisation of such a shot considered as an autonomous whole can only occur on the basis of a non-fragmentary image, a total and self-contained image that renounces its relational value, its narrative condition. This consideration makes it possible to identify certain films which, while they belong to the historical cycle, nevertheless

do not subscribe to the Formalist-Pictorial Stylistic Model. *La princesa de los Ursinos* is one of these. Consider the remarkable staging of the meeting between the spy and the French ambassador in the hostel on crossing the Pyrenees. The ulterior motives of the foreigners and their machinations unfold in a partitioned and fragmentary space, accentuated by the inclusion of mirrors that duplicate the angles and points of view.

Against such a conception of the scene based on fragmentation and editing, the Formalist-Pictorial Stylistic Model described here advocates the subordination of the edit to the unity of the scene. The event must be presented in all its fullness. This is why films like *Locura de amor*, *Alba de América* and *Doña María la Brava* hardly even need medium-long shots, fragmentary images par excellence that acquire their meaning through their placement in succession. Only reframing makes it possible to alter the space without splitting it up; therein lies one of the main principles established by pictorial and theatrical approaches in the visual formulation of the film model, the same consideration of a *mise-en-scène* that presents the event in its entirety.

Paradoxically, this total image can only be accommodated at the extremes of the spectrum defined by the framing possibilities: the furthest away and the closest. As I will discuss the particular nature of the close-up later, for now I will focus on the general and overall staging of the film, which is without doubt one of the most active declarative instruments in the closure of the image. It could be argued that such an image is doubly closed if we consider Jacques Aumont's argument that both the *limit-frame* and the *window-frame* are deactivated, lacking any rhetorical purpose that would undermine the action unfolding on the screen (1997: 88-90).

With respect to the *window-frame*, the boundary that opens the image to the three-dimensionality of the represented world, its lack of concern (if

not outright contempt) for anything out-of-frame is evident. Making the compositional principle of historical painting its own, the framing operates in favour of the *mise-en-scène* of a *theme* that plunges the spectator's gaze into it: the constable discovering the palace intrigues that have been orchestrated against the will of Doña María la Brava and the king himself; the terrible scenes that will lead to Lieutenant Torrealta's realisation in *El abanderado* (it is no accident that the film follows the Model more closely when history takes the centre of the action); Napoleon's arrogance expressed to his lieutenants that he will easily vanquish the "louse-bitten and pride-bitten nation" that is Spain; or the meeting in the same film of the leaders of Zaragoza with the Countess of Bureta to prepare for the city's uprising against the invading troops, are constructed as absorbing images: everything is said within their frames.

Operating in the same direction is the *limit-frame*, which governs and hierarchically positions the image in compositional terms. There is no twist and barely any foreshortening in the presentation of the drama; nothing that could upset the perfect readability of the screen: frontality is its hallmark. The compositional dimensions tend towards the stasis, verticality and horizontality of their projective axes by virtue of the minimisation (if not open elision) of perspective markers. Hence the noted spatial rigidity that has been a source of critical disdain for the historical cycle, described as "plasterboard" cinema, with an almost *kitsch* aesthetic (GONZÁLEZ, 2009), an undeniable charge in which various factors play a role. The first of these is the actors, whose physicality, performances and choreography "respond to the formalist-pictorial challenge with well-calculated histrionics, achieving a declamatory tone with a marked operatic theatricality, in keeping with certain subtly choreographed movements" (CASTRO DE PAZ, 2013: 60). While Amparo Rivelles and Tina Gascó, in their portrayals of the "Lion-

ess of Castile” and Doña María la Brava, respectively, offer perfect examples of this kind of theatricality, the actress who stands as a performative emblem of the Model is without doubt Aurora Bautista, who embodies more than anyone else the essence of a dramatic type: a woman of unbridled passion for her husband (Joanna of Castile), or a dedicated fighter for liberty (Agustina de Aragón).

Another is the construction of sets “of extraordinary iconographic complexity”, displayed in all their splen-

decorating Agustina de Aragón, whom he defines as a “symbol of all the heroes of Spain”.

The articulation of this space enclosed upon itself, together with the arrangement and movements of the bodies it contains, ultimately defines an affected and meticulous frame, a veritable piece of scenic craftwork that openly declares its illusory nature. Far from being projected into the background, the set is projected towards the spectator as a representation in relief. Background and figure thus converge

figures, supporting a discourse that is both visible and readable and that establishes a spectator very different from the classical film viewer. Like the historical painting, like classical theatre, the representation announces the essential externality of the viewers, indicating their position outside a closed spectacle.

Few images are as revealing in this respect as the first meeting between the Catholic Monarchs and Columbus to share his colonising intentions in *Alba de América* (figure 5). The frontal staging frames the King and Queen in front of the camera, sitting on their thrones, while they interview Columbus before the attentive gaze of the court made up of nobles, ladies-in-waiting, monks and servants, under a profusely decorated canopy on which is written the famous motto of the monarchs, “tanto monta, monta tanto”. There is no contrast between the set and the actors, no hierarchically positioned combination of gaps and reliefs, but rather the opposite, a positioning on equal terms through an arrangement that defines the figures while at the same time separating them.

#### 4. From history to melodrama

The tendency of the Formalist-Pictorial Stylistic Model towards closure and visual self-absorption creates a density in the depth of the narrative, an overflowing of the approach described here into the folds of meaning that can be considered in metaphorical terms. While the spatial consideration distinguishes those films in the historical cycle that only barely participate in the Model, a narrative sanction establishes another dimension at the level of content: in the Model, the metaphorical prevails over the metonymic or, using a classical narratological distinction, priority is given to stories in which “the functionality of being” prevails over those defined by a “functionality of doing” (BARTHES, 1972: 19).

Rafael Gil’s narrative focus perfectly exemplifies the tension that occurs between the two ways of understand-



Figure 5. *Alba de América* (Juan de Orduña, 1951)

dour and referential saturation, which impose their opaqueness of meaning to the point of exposing their artificial nature, their status as stage machinery. Occupying a special place in this privileged stage for great historic moments is the palace: the Catholic Monarchs listening to the dreams of Christopher Columbus, and then later witnessing the evangelisation of the *savages*; the “Lioness of Castile” in the Council Chamber, subduing the misgivings of the commoners after the death of her husband, leader of the uprising, so that they would continue the fight and not surrender the city of Toledo; and even King Ferdinand VII in the Royal Palace,

on a single superficial plane.

This conversion of the set into a kind of ornamental tapestry creates a striking perceptive alteration: the gaze is vested with that particular tactile condition whereby the eye sees and at the same time touches the image. Unlike the optical space defined by the classical view, the *haptic* image that appears to characterise the Formalist-Pictorial Stylistic Model in its extreme, does not establish any spatial homology with the spectator that would bring image and spectator together in the same fictitious topography, but confronts the spectator like the page of a book in which sets and bodies are transformed into text-

ing the story; the filmmaker does not appear to opt decisively for the metaphorical, at least when it might most be expected. Consider, for example, the presentation of the miracle performed by the protagonist in *Reina Santa*. An essential moment in the construction of her *functionality of being* (her holiness), the whole episode is marked by the narrative project of the king. It is because of the betrayal of his son that he has gone to seek her out, to know whether he can rely on her support. Indeed, if Isabel's supernatural character is concealed from her husband it is due to the needs of the approach to the narrative: if Pedro I had recognised the holiness of his wife at that very moment, he could not oppose her subsequent attempts to protect the life of her rebel son.<sup>7</sup>

This narrative sanction reveals the heterogeneous nature of the historical film genre of the period, as has been demonstrated by authors such as Javier Hernández (2001) and Vicente Sánchez-Biosca (2012). The familial air depicted by this group of films vanishes once we begin examining their textual uniqueness. In spite of their obviously historical subject matter, for example, the *bandolerismo* cycle of outlaw films adheres more to the codes of the metonymic genres of the adventure film and even the Western, while many of Luis Lucía's films during the period appropriate codes from the comedy of errors with dashes of the swashbuckler and the musical. Moreover, the undeniable confrontation between the folkloric approach of Luis Lucía and the historicism of Juan de Orduña can be complemented from this narrative perspective. In the first, history plays out in the outskirts; it is not the great figures who engage in the action, but colourful *secondary characters*, while at the narrative level priority is given to sequentiality and causal connection, as perfectly illustrated by *La princesa de los Ursinos*: the plot progresses through a narrative dynamic based on a process of action-reaction revolving around the trickery and deceit of the protagonists.

Conversely, Orduña's films veer decisively towards the metaphorical, to explore fully the black hole opened up by the drama, in an incessant search for the primordial images that will give shape to the major themes and characters presented. Few images exemplify this better than the opening of *Agustina de Aragón*, as highlighted by the voice that initiates the narration. The film "does not seek to offer an exact historical process detailing the legendary feats that took place in Zaragoza, but rather a fervent and exalted gloss of the mettle

formless background, a hazy, half-made space out of which a body emerges, abstracted from its historical conditions, a body that is placed firmly in the terrain of myth.

This tendency towards the metaphorical seems to favour the participation of melodrama in the Formalist-Pictorial Stylistic Model, as suggested by Castro de Paz apropos of *Altar Mayor* (Gonzalo Delgrás, 1943) and *El milagro del Cristo de la Vega*. This is a classification that could also be extended to the *cine de retablos* ("tableau cinema")



Figure 6. *Alba de América* (Juan de Orduña, 1951)

and valour of its sons and daughters, its heroes and heroines united in the unequalled figure of Agustina de Aragón, a symbol of the valour of the people and of the incorruptible spirit of independence of all Spaniards." Such an impeccable prologue could only introduce the portrayal of a symbol, the very essence of Spanishness, the figure of the nation made woman, rising up beside the canon launching her fiery harangues at the enemy. The most striking aspect of this approach lies perhaps in the absence of any spatial or temporal reference. There is no set or decoration, but only a figure with no background or, to be more precise, a figure in front of a

advocated by Florián Rey and perhaps best illustrated by the second version of *La aldea maldita* (1942), a veritable "parade of stasis"<sup>8</sup> that is also a parade of the melodramatic style in a *Costumbrista* disguise. It also allows the inclusion of Rafael Gil's *La pródiga* (1946), which, not coincidentally, begins and ends with a painting which on a symbolic level stands in for the wound that distinguishes the protagonist: a gloomy tree on a promontory under which he will mourn the loss of his beloved. And it confirms, as José Luis Téllez noted, that if Juan de Orduña exemplifies better than any of the other filmmakers discussed here the spirit and form of

the Formalist-Pictorial Stylistic Model it is because, purely and simply, his films are consolidated “on their powerful and captivating melodramatic foundations” (1990: 53).

Unsurprisingly, the saturation of visual signification and the engrossing quality of the story are not exclusive prerogatives of historicist discourse; they are equally, if not even more so, prerogatives of melodrama. The hypertrophy of the historical sign finds its symmetrical reflection in the hypertrophy of the melodramatic sign. And while the total image, in its historicist version, seemed to be better displayed in the carefully crafted mosaic, in its melodramatic version it finds its main visual expression in its compositional opposite: the close-up. It may be worth remembering that, as Gilles Deleuze has suggested, the close-up is also in itself an “entity”, an image that only emerges by plucking an object out of a composition of which it forms a part, without abstracting it from its spatio-temporal coordinates; a frame turned into an autonomous whole (2001: 142).

This capacity of the close-up to offer an “affective reading of the whole film” (Deleuze, 2001: 131), to concentrate onto it all of the other images that surround it, to suspend, in short, its narrative fate, is what places melodrama fully in the Model. Thus, the intense irrational excess of *Locura de amor* is encapsulated in the self-absorbed face of Juana demanding Felipe’s love, but also in the infinite compassion of Teresina covering over the dead face of Leonor in *Altar mayor*, or in the dimly lit faces of Juan and Acacia while he passes judgement on his wife’s dalliances in *La aldea maldita*, and especially in the face of Christopher Columbus and his lost gaze to a point off-screen that is, above all, out-of-frame: the hero facing his narrative destiny, but also the hero facing history, which is the same as facing the virtual spectator who updates his story with each viewing (Fig. 6). It is in this infinite gaze that *Alba de América* encapsulates all of its power of persuasion, but also its spectacular failure:

the presumptuous attempt to achieve the unconditional adherence of a subject submitted to such a great vision of history only serves to unmask the delusional unreality of an outdated ideological project sustained by a ghost. ■

## Notes

\* This study has been completed in the context of the R+D+I research project: “Hacia una reconsideración de la cultura posbélica: análisis de los Modos de Representación en el cine español (1939-1962) a partir de la impronta de Wenceslao Fernández Flórez” (CSO2012-34648). Ministry of the Economy and Competitiveness. Government of Spain.

The images illustrating this article have been contributed voluntarily by the author of the text, who was responsible for locating and requesting copyright permissions for their reproduction. In any event, the inclusion of images in the texts of *L’Atalante* is always done by way of citation, for their analysis, commentary and critical assessment. (Editor’s note).

1 This is a cycle encompassing a wide variety of genres (from adventure dramas to musicals, and including melodrama) comprising approximately twenty titles. It began in the early 1940s, with films like *El abanderado* (Eusebio Fernández Ardavín, 1943), reached its peak at the end of the decade with films like *Locura de amor* (Juan de Orduña, 1948), and saw its decline in the early 1950s due to lack of audience interest in productions like *Alba de América* (Juan de Orduña, 1951). The traditional discredit with which the cycle has been judged for decades has now evolved into a more reasoned historiographical view. Apart from exploring the centrality of the female figure as analysed by Marta Selva (1999), this re-assessment has developed in two complementary directions: on the one hand, trying to better understand its impact on the audiences that it targeted, as explored by authors like Jo Labanyi (2002, 2004, 2007); on the other, exploring the textual tensions of films in the cycle beyond their mythical-historicist focus, as analysed by authors like Castro de Paz (2002, 2014). The irreconcilable contradictions of *La leona de Castilla*, that is, the impossible nature of narrative formalisation

of the confrontation between the “narrow view” of the Spanish commoners and the “ambition of the Spanish Caesar” (Charles I of Spain), without ascribing the role of antagonist to either, is highly emblematic of the complexity of some of these film; moreover, and more importantly still, many of them cannot under any circumstances be considered a mere ideological transposition of the Francoist project

2 A preliminary methodological classification is imposed here. I share José Luis Castro de Paz’s view that the Formalist-Pictorial Stylistic Model, qua theoretical model, is not directly in keeping with the films it classifies. Rather, it is a formal construction which, from the outside, orders the formal similarities that can be identified among the different films studied.

3 This type of referencing is in no way exclusive to Spanish cinema. As already pointed out by Javier Hernández (2001), the pictorial device in historical films was also a constant in the cinema of nearby nations, such as Germany and Italy, and even in countries as far removed from the fascist orbit as the United Kingdom or the US.

4 For a detailed analysis of the main themes in 19th-century Spanish historical painting, see, for example, REYERO (1989), VARIOUS AUTHORS (1992), PÉREZ VEJO (2001), ÁLVAREZ RODRÍGUEZ (2010), PELLETER (2012). On its presence in the historical cycle, see HERNÁNDEZ (1999), GONZÁLEZ (2009), SÁNCHEZ-BIOSCA (2012), MORAL (2014).

5 Unsurprisingly, the relationship between the painter of history and the historian is common terrain in theory on the pictorial genre, as noted by Francisco de Mendoza in his work *El manual del pintor de historia*: “It is thus necessary, once the subject has been chosen, to read it many times until it is well understood and known by heart,” in order to ensure that the spectator will “come to develop the illusion that it really happened that way and that it is occurring in his presence” (1870: 32-33).

6 According to the filmmaker himself, in *Domingo de carnaval* he had the intention of making “a Solana painting in motion”, as well as highlighting its profound association with the masquerade and the carnivalesque universe established by Goya: “There are scenes that transpire on the hills of Parque

de San Isidro, with a Goya-esque Madrid skyline in a background, and the whole film I hope will have that bustling joy of Goya's *Burial of the Sardine*." Statements by the filmmaker in the magazine *Cámara*, No. 50 (1 February 1945), quoted in Castro de Paz (2012: 271). Obviously, Neville was not interested in the historical Goya, whose famous compositions are closer to the pictorial conception described in this article as the total image.

- 7 *Don Quijote de la Mancha* also appears to swing between the metonymic and the metaphorical without defining itself in spite of its attempt to become "an iconographic fastener of the Cervantes classic" (CASTRO DE PAZ, 2013). Compare the filmmaker's version with Albert Serra's radical exercise *Honor de Cavallería* (Honour of the Knights, 2006).
- 8 Statements by Benito Perojo collected in BARREIRA, 1968.

## Bibliography

- ÁLVAREZ JUNCO, José (2001). *Mater dolorosa. La idea de España en el siglo XIX*. Madrid: Taurus.
- ÁLVAREZ RODRÍGUEZ, María Victoria (2010). "La revisión de los temas de la Antigüedad en la pintura de Historia Española del siglo XIX: Entre la evocación del pasado y la legitimación del poder." *El Futuro del Pasado: revista electrónica de historia*, 1, 525-539.
- AUMONT, Jaques (1997). *El ojo interminable*. Barcelona: Paidós.
- BARREIRA, Domingo (1968). *Biografía de Florián Rey*. Madrid: Agrupación Sindical de Directores Españoles de Cinematografía.
- BARTHES, Roland (1972). "Introducción al análisis estructural del relato." In Various Authors, *Análisis estructural del relato* (pp. 9-43). Buenos Aires: Tiempo Contemporáneo.
- CABEDA, José (1867-1868). *Memorias para la historia de la Real Academia de San Fernando y de las Bellas Artes en España: Desde el advenimiento al trono de Felipe V, hasta nuestros días*. Madrid: Imprenta de M. Tello. Accessed at <<http://babel.hathitrust.org/cgi/pt?id=ucm.5306806878;view=1up;seq=143>>.
- CASTRO DE PAZ, José Luis (2002). *Un cinema herido. Los turbios años cuarenta en el cine español (1939-1950)*. Barcelona: Paidós.
- (2012). *Sombras desoladas*. Santander: Shangrila.
- (2013). "De miradas y heridas. Hacia la definición de unos Modelos de estilización en el cine español de la posguerra (1939-1950)." *Quintana* 12, 47-65.
- DE MENDOZA, Francisco (1870). *Manual del pintor de historia*. Madrid: Imprenta de T. Fortanet.
- DELEUZE, Gilles (2001). *La imagen-movimiento*. Barcelona: Paidós.
- FANÉS, Félix (1982). *Cifesa. La antorcha de los éxitos*. Valencia: Institución Alfonso el Magnánimo.
- GONZÁLEZ, Luis Mariano (2009). *Fascismo, kitsch y cine histórico español (1939-1953)*. Cuenca: Universidad de Castilla-La Mancha.
- HERNÁNDEZ, Javier (1999). "Historia y escenografía en el cine español: una aproximación." In J.E. MONTERDE (coord.), *Ficciones Históricas, Cuadernos de la Academia*, 6, 179-190.
- (2001). "Películas de ambientación histórica: ¿Cartón-piedra al servicio del Imperio?" *Cuadernos de la Academia*, 9 (AEHC conference proceedings), 127-136.
- LABANYI, Jo (2002). "Historia y mujer en el cine del primer franquismo." In *Secuencias: revista de historia del cine*, 15, 42-59.
- (2004). "Costume, Identity and Spectator Pleasure in Historical Films of the Early Franco Period." In S. MARSH & P. NAIR (eds.), *Gender and Spanish Cinema* (pp. 33-51). Oxford and New York: Berg.
- (2007). "Negotiating Modernity through the Past: Costume Films of the Early Franco Period." *Journal of Iberian and Latin American Studies*, 13:2-3, 241-258.
- MORAL, Javier (2014). "De imágenes primordiales. Fundamentos literario-plásticos del Modelo de estilización formalista-pictórico." In *Actas del VI Congreso Internacional Latina de Comunicación Social*. Universidad de La Laguna.
- PELLETER, Stéphane (2012). *Cuando los artistas pintaban la historia de España*. Madrid: Ministerio de Educación, Cultura y Deporte.
- PÉREZ VEOJO, Tomás (2001). *Pintura de historia e identidad nacional en España*. Universidad Complutense de Madrid.
- REYERO, Carlos (1989). *La pintura de historia en España*. Madrid: Cátedra.
- SÁNCHEZ-BIOSCA, Vicente (1991). *Sombras de Weimar. Contribución a la historia del cine alemán 1918-1933*. Madrid: Verdoux.
- (2012). "Una nación de cartón-piedra. Las ficciones históricas de Cifesa." In I. SAZ and F. ARCHILÉS (eds.), *La nación de los españoles: discursos y prácticas del nacionalismo español en la época contemporánea*. Universitat de Valencia.
- SEGUIN, Jean Claude (1997). *Locura de amor* (1948). In J. PÉREZ PERUCHA, *Antología crítica del cine español (1906-1995)* (pp. 230-232). Madrid: Cátedra.
- SELVA, Marta (1999). "Mujeres y cine histórico." In J.E. MONTERDE (coord.), *Ficciones Históricas, Cuadernos de la Academia*, 6, 179-190.
- TÉLLEZ, José Luís (1990). "De historia y folklore (notas sobre el 2º periodo Cifesa)." In J. PÉREZ PERUCHA (coord.), *Cifesa: de la antorcha de los éxitos a las cenizas del fracaso*. Valencia: Archivos de la Filmoteca, 4.
- TORREIRO, Casimiro (1999). "Por el Imperio hacia Dios. El cine histórico de la autarquía." In J.E. MONTERDE (coord.), *Ficciones Históricas, Cuadernos de la Academia*, 6, 54-55.
- Various Authors. (1992). *La pintura de Historia del siglo XIX en España*. Madrid: Museo del Prado.

Javier Moral has a PhD in Film Studies from the Universitat Politècnica de València. Member of the Asociación Española de Historiadores del Cine (AEHC), he has taught several courses and seminars about film and art. He is the author of *Guía para ver y analizar Lola Montes* (Nau Llibres, 2015) and *La representación doble* (Bellaterra, 2013), and the editor of *Cine y géneros pictóricos* (MuVIM, 2009). Besides, he has contributed to a dozen books and has published numerous articles in scientific and cultural journals.

# WHEN THE FACE HIDES THE MASK: THE ROLE OF SUPPORTING ACTORS IN *LOS QUE NO FUIMOS A LA GUERRA*\*

It is curious to observe the way in which old fables resonate in different contexts and different eras. Consider, for example, the famous fable attributed to Aesop of the Tortoise and the Hare, in which the tortoise, paradoxically, beats his agile, fast-footed adversary in a race. If we attempted to transpose this story to a particular history of Spanish cinema, we would be in for a number of surprises. A country like Spain, which, like the tortoise, has trudged along the paths of history at a noticeably slower rate than most of its neighbours, at least on its most recent lap (I refer here of course to the long forty years of dictatorship), has managed to establish some formulas in its film tradition that have been viewed as ground-breaking some time later in the *hare countries* (i.e., the free nations). Among these are the breaking of the fourth wall and the highlighting of the materiality of the film medium with its consequent exposure of the illusion of mainstream cinema, formal techniques of Brechtian origin which in Spain have been applied in a similar way, but with very different sources. One such case is a film by Fernando Fernán Gómez, *La vida por de-*

*lante* (1958), and its legendary scene in which José Isbert gives his testimony of events in a trial, while on the screen we see the story he tells unfold in time with his halting stutter, just as in the statements of other witnesses in these absurd proceedings the image adds or removes elements in response to the testimony of the character speaking. The manipulation of the image and the materiality of the cinema could not be made clearer, but what we are seeing in this case is not a *Brechtian operation*, as it may seem; it would be more accurate to identify its origin in the humorous books of Enrique Jardiel Poncela, which also ironically expose the materiality of their medium, with curious ploys like twisted phrases that compel the reader to turn the book upside down in order to keep reading. In this way, in Fernán Gómez's film a formal mechanism is introduced which would some time later be considered innovative, but which formed part of an eccentric tradition of its own and thus, in a certain way, went by unnoticed.

As for the breaking of the fourth wall, there are also a diverse range of examples. Indeed, we need look no further than Fernán Gómez's next film,



*La vida alrededor* (1959), in which see characters speaking directly to the camera, addressing the spectator and thereby short-circuiting the story, and making visible the illusory world established by the film. We could even go back further and consider a film from the 1940s, *Dos cuentos para dos* (Luis Lucia, 1947), in which, in the final shot, “as Tony Leblanc turns around, we see the word ‘FIN’ (‘THE END’) written in chalk on the back of his sports coat” (CASTRO DE PAZ, 2002: 115), in a clearly self-referential gesture. Yet these practices were not viewed as ground-breaking by a spectator familiar with similar strategies in popular theatre.

It is precisely this coexistence with a Spanish popular tradition in which self-consciousness is often associated with humour and which naturally includes what allows Julio Diamante in his first feature film, *Los que no fuimos a la Guerra* (The Ones Who Didn't Go to the War, 1961), to posit a curious and productive ambivalence of meaning through the performances of the supporting actors who abound in the film. With this in mind, in this article I will analyse Diamante's film in order to raise some issues related to the theoretical framework within which we might locate the particular *modus operandi* of that glorious breed of the Spanish supporting actor, a breed of which few survivors remain.

### The Ones Who Didn't Go to the War (or The Ones Who Didn't Go to the Post-War)

In an article whose title gives away its content and tone (“Queridísimos actores de reparto”, or “Beloved Supporting Actors”), Julio Diamante suggests that “[s]upporting actors are the actors who represent the nation's masses: mothers and fathers, grandparents, aunts and uncles, faithful wives, good or bad hookers, pimps, noble or sinister doctors, teachers, holy or whiskey priests, outlaws, peasants... Good or bad characters in larger or smaller roles, but who all together contribute decisively to offer a vision, whether ac-

curate or erroneous, true or false, of a time, of a country, of a society” (DIAMANTE, 2005: 52).

This view of supporting actors, which in my opinion hits the nail square on the head, effectively puts into writing a strategy that Diamante had employed years earlier in *Los que no fuimos a la guerra*, an adaptation of the (fragmentary) novel of the same name by Wenceslao Fernández Flórez, a writer astutely described by Fernando Fernán-Gómez as “a man who was absolutely right wing, but whose writing was absolutely, distinctly leftist” (GALÁN, 1997:14). The novel in question is actually, as suggested by its subtitle (“Notes on the History of the Spanish people during the European War”), a succession of stories about a group of characters living during the First World War in the (allegorical) city of Iberina. Although not a leftist novel in any real sense, it offers a wry depiction of a set of attitudes and opinions that could be read as illustrative of a particular time and society. And it conveys not only the mood of the era in which the novel is set (as it tells in a tragicomic tone of the misadventures of the residents of the neutral Iberina during the Great War and the conflict between supporters of the Germans and supporters of the Allies), but also of the time when it was written, in 1930.

Diamante takes a similar approach in his adaptation of Wenceslao's novel, using its plot to construct a period film which, nevertheless, not only tells of those who didn't go to war in 1914, but also of those others who, like him and his generation, did not take part in the fateful Spanish Civil War, but experi-



*La vida alrededor* (Fernando Fernán Gómez, 1959)

enced the aftermath of the rebel victory: a grey post-war period imposed by the winners with an unabashed vindictiveness.

In his film Diamante thus posits various strategies to refer to the Spanish Civil War in the narration of a story that occurs, for the most part, during the First World War, of which two strategies stand out above the rest. The first is the adaptation of the age of the protagonist who connects the different stories told in the novel, which is changed from forty to seventy years old in the film, so that what he narrates in flashbacks becomes inevitably tinged by the experience of a man who has lived through the Civil War. This adaptation would be a key factor, for

example, in the inclusion at one point in the film of a nightmare in which the protagonist dreams he is caught in a surreal war (in which the same characters, dressed as officers on one side and soldiers on the other, engage in a battle with one side using strange typewriters turned into improvised machine guns and the other with actual machine guns), which can be read as an uncanny recollection of the national conflict<sup>1</sup>. But it is the second of the strategies used in the film with which my analysis here is most directly concerned. This is the use that Diamante makes of the rich tradition of Spanish supporting actors to achieve this double layer of meaning between the past in which the film is set and the present in which it is filmed, using the war in which Spain remained neutral (the First World War) to allude to the other more recent conflict that established a coercive apparatus still in effect when the film was made (the Spanish Civil War). And it was precisely this apparatus that had erected the ominous watchtowers of censorship which Diamante's oblique approach to the Civil War sought to circumnavigate; nevertheless, *Los que no fuimos a la guerra* had to fight a hard battle with the censors, as it was not released until three years and five months after its completion, following a long and tortuous administrative process. Only after this time was the film finally able to see the light, once the rights to it had been acquired by Universal Studios' subsidiary in Spain, which colluded with the Censorship Board to make changes that reduced



*Los que no fuimos a la guerra* (Julio Diamante, 1961)

the length of the film, with some decisive cuts (including the nightmare scene mentioned above) that effectively garbled its meaning.<sup>2</sup>

As noted above, a fundamental factor in the establishment of the relationship with the Spanish Civil War was the choice of certain actors who belonged to a tradition of supporting performers that had its origins in Spanish popular theatre. This tradition was continued (although in our times it is disappearing, if it has not already disappeared) in films associated with the Spanish farcical genre of the *sainete*, due largely to the interest of the studios in the 1940s and 1950s in having a few faces well-known to the public and with whom audiences

had forged a special relationship in the context of the theatre.<sup>3</sup> Most of the actors who appeared in Diamante's film formed part of this tradition: Félix Fernández, José (Pepe) Isbert, Tota Alba, Julia Caba Alba, Erasmo Pascual, Xan das Bolas, María Luisa Ponte, Gracita Morales, Ismael Merlo, Sergio Mendizabal, Juanjo Menéndez and Agustín González, the last of these in his first starring role. The reason for the existence of this uniquely Spanish star system made up of actors that Berlanga defined as "*cómicos de tripa*" (natural born comics) (BERLANGA, 1984: 33) can be found, according to the authors who have analysed the question, in the absence in Spain of the revolutions that occurred in the theatre in other parts of Europe in the early twentieth century; with respect to its origin, some argue that it could be traced back to the theatre comedy of

the Spanish Golden Age, and more specifically to the figure of the *gracioso* (joker) who "comments on and at the same time ridicules the main story of the protagonists" (COMPANY, 1984: 53).

In any case, I find the choice of these actors to perform in this film important, above all, for one reason: the particular style of acting that defines them and that has been identified by several important Spanish film historians. While Santos Zunzunegui refers to this style as a "dialectic between the newness of the character [they represent] and the continuity of their physical presence" (ZUNZUNEGUI, 2002a: 182), Jesús González Requena views them as a type of "actor whose body resists the signs it portrays. Not out of a lack

of professionalism, but quite the contrary, because in this body these signs do not negate the physicality that sustains them: they signify with precision, but they do not exhaust their signification. This actor's body, solid and thick, gives its signifiers a unique irreducibility. It is a body at odds with signification, resistant to the meaning it sustains and therefore equally resistant to the story in which it participates" (REQUENA, 1984: 37). This is a type of actor who Francesc Llinás suggests is suspended in a "balance between excess and submission to the story" (LLINÁS, 1984: 30). It is thus a style of acting that is sustained through an incredulity shared between actor and spectator with respect to the role portrayed, and which Zunzunegui (referring to one of these actors, Antonio Casal) has defined as a "strange form of Brechtianism" (ZUNZUNEGUI, 2002b: 189).

Indeed, Brecht's theories on acting are not far removed from this particular performing style. Although epic theatre is diametrically opposed to the comic sketch or the *sainete* in its theoretical foundation and its political intentions, this would not be the first time that such distant points strangely converge. Walter Benjamin wrote, referring to Brecht's theatre, that "epic theatre is gestural. The extent to which it can also be literary in the traditional sense is a separate issue. The gesture is its raw material and its task is the rational utilization of this material. The gesture has two advantages over the highly deceptive statements and assertions normally made by people and their many-layered and opaque actions. First, the gesture is falsifiable only up to a

point; in fact, the more inconspicuous and habitual it is, the more difficult it is to falsify. Second, unlike people's action and endeavours, it has a definable beginning and a definable end. Indeed, this strict, frame-like, enclosed nature of each moment of an attitude which, after all, is as a whole in a state of living flux, is one of the basic dialectical characteristics of the gesture" (BENJAMIN, 1998: 3).

MIN, 1998: 3).

This seems quite close to a description of those supporting actors, whose own features are difficult to falsify because of the role they play; actors whose contribution is decisive to the achievement of this distancing effect. It is Brecht himself who formulates this question more clearly: "The actor must show an event, and he must show himself. He naturally shows the event by showing himself; and he shows himself by showing the event.

## The film cannot be fully credible as a period film when these characters, who are characters only up to a certain point, undermine the possibility of believing in the historical illusion of what we are watching

Although these coincide, they must not coincide in such a way that the difference between the two tasks is lost."<sup>4</sup>

Inevitably, as I suggested above, this unique model of actor divided between character and person requires a no less unique relationship with the spectator. While in Brechtian theatre the actor enters into a dialogue with a spectator who is *awake* (or awakens a spectator in lethargy), Spanish supporting actors establish with the audience what Zunzunegui has called a *contract of trust*,<sup>5</sup> i.e., a relationship based on a *re-encounter* with bodies, gestures and voices that remain unchanged in spite of the different role they happen to play in each film, while at the

same time still performing that role.<sup>6</sup> It could be argued that, more than just playing a role, they assume different roles without losing their own physicality.

A number of facts suggest that Diamante was aware of the signifying capacity of these *cómicos de tripa*, especially if we consider two of the most charismatic actors who take part in the film: Xan das Bolas and Pepe Isbert. Xan das Bolas played the role of the "Galician" in numerous films and his

mere presence mobilises a whole series of clichés that foreshadow the position that the character will take: in this case, for example, he is Fandiño, proprietor of a tavern who wants not only to keep out of the conflicts but, if he can, to profit from them. On his performance in the film Diamante remarked: "After deciding that the role of Fandiño would be played by Xan das Bolas, I made some changes to the dialogue, adapting it to the characteristics of this ac-

*Los que no fuimos a la guerra* (Julio Diamante, 1961)



tor" (DIAMANTE, 2010: 112). The role is thus at the service of the actor, not the other way round. More meaningful still is the use that Diamante makes of a man who is perhaps the best representative of this endangered breed of actor: Pepe Isbert. At one moment in the film, in his role as Aristides Sobrido, a militant Germanophile who even has under his command a group of pubescent boy scouts to whom he tries to teach the benefits of German discipline, we hear him say "we need to inject the germs of militarisation in every vein of the nation." There is an obvious ridiculousness in these words being spoken by Isbert, whose particular physique (of course quite lacking in any hint of Germanic svelteness) combines with his inimitable guttural voice, rushed and almost unintelligible in his most brilliant moments (for example, in the trial scene in *La vida por delante*, 1958). As José Luis Téllez has pointed out with remarkable astuteness, Isbert's style of acting (or of being on the screen) "immediately revealed the pompous or empty nature of any discourse that is or makes claims to being predominant. Isbert's place of enunciation is systematically situated at the paradigmatically opposite extreme of the enunciation itself" (TÉLLEZ, 1984: 42). By giving him the role of the Germanophile with a love of discipline, Diamante seems to know how to use Isbert's capacity for invalidating whatever he asserts, whatever he says, with his own presence (physical and vocal), in a clear example of that dialectic produced by an acting style that is not entirely acting. Perhaps this is why one of the assessments of the film's censors related to deficient performances, "as if the director had not known what to do with the actors."

In view of the above, I would suggest that the choice of this kind of actor is the fundamental reason why the film, set in the flashback to 1914 that takes

## In *Los que no fuimos a la guerra*, the present is also presented by certain faces that cannot hide completely behind the masks of their 1914 characters

up most of the story, *does not work* as a historical film. By this I mean that it cannot be fully credible as a period film when these characters, who are characters only up to a certain point, undermine the possibility of believing in the historical illusion of what we are watching; it is difficult to strip these comic actors of the uniqueness that irremediably anchors them in a particular time period. As a result, the contribution of the actors is decisive in bringing the meaning of the film towards a war that is chronologically closer to the bodies acting out the story, to the actual time of these comedians.

### Here and elsewhere: the constant state of flux of the Spanish supporting actor

Having thus considered how supporting actors are used in Diamante's film, I will now attempt to raise the question to a more general perspective. To this end I will refer to an article by film historian Santos Zunzunegui ("Los cuerpos gloriosos") in which he uses Greimas's semiotic square to develop a typology of actors. The axis of opposites on this square would be formed, on the one hand, by actors in the traditional conception of the term (those who adopt various acting methods to play a fictional character as faithfully as possible), while on the opposite end would be the Bressonian *model*, who reveals his essence through a "flattening of expressiveness [and a] mechanisation of gestures and poses" (ZUNZUNEGUI, 2005: 97); this is an opposition in which "the 'knowledge' of the 'actor' will find its logical correlative in the 'ignorance' of the 'model'" (ZUNZUNEGUI,

2005: 97). Applying the laws of opposition, the contrary axis for the two types described above would comprise the *not-actor* and the *not-model*. *Not-actors* would refer to what "Sergei M. Eisenstein had theorised about using the term *tipazh*, [a technique in which] the

aim is to present to the audience a face (a figure) capable of 'expressing everything' on the basis of his social and biological experience" (ZUNZUNEGUI, 2005: 97). Finally, the fourth category, the *not-model*, would refer to "bodies with autonomy. Autonomy that sustains their ability to go from one film to another, from one topos to another, from one story to another, from one narrative situation to another, *without ever ceasing to be themselves*" (ZUNZUNEGUI, 2005: 97). In this category Zunzunegui places our supporting actors, who move constantly between the two poles "from the Bressonian model to the actor proper" (ZUNZUNEGUI, 2005: 103).

Returning to my analysis in the first part of the article, i.e. the use that Diamante makes in his film of the uniquely transitory condition between *actor* and *model* of these supporting actors, it becomes clear that it is this dual status that allows them, in their role of *actors*, to represent the characters of the story taking place in 1914, while their status as *models* is what evokes, in their faces, in each little dispute between the supporters of the Allies and the Germanophiles, a war that has not yet occurred in the time-frame of the diegesis. It could therefore be argued that while the past is represented in *Los que no fuimos a la guerra*, the present is also presented by certain faces that cannot hide completely behind the masks of their 1914 characters.

The discussion in this article points to a question that is in a sense methodological: whether the analysis of acting styles could serve as a scaffolding or basis for an exploration of film forms

in the context of their tradition. We have seen here how focusing the analysis on the question of performance in a specific film makes it possible to expand the framework to a theoretical level, while at the same time addressing the origins of the acting method studied in a related field like the theatre. This way of looking at a film or a film tradition will ultimately lead us to some productive albeit also paradoxical conclusions, such as the fact that cinematic traditions in countries subject to censorship may arrive at innovative formal solutions at the same time as (or even before) they are developed in free countries. It is a conclusion as paradoxical, at least, as the old fable attributed to Aesop. ■

## Notes

- 1 Uncanny even in the Freudian sense (*unheimlich*), since this absurd battle dream is the fratricidal episode known since ancient times, which, repressed, returns unexpectedly.
- 2 It is worth recalling here, to avoid possible confusion, the curious story of the censor's cuts to Diamante's film, one of which was the dream scene. The film received its screening licence in 1961, and premièred at the Venice Film Festival in 1962 with the inclusion of the protagonist's nightmare, a scene that was subsequently cut by Universal Films, in agreement with the General Directorate of Cinema and Theatre, prior to the film's première in Spanish theatres in 1965. Many years later, Diamante managed to find the scene and reinsert it, returning the film to its original state, as we know it today.
- 3 In the early days of Franco's regime, the debate over what kind of films were desired by the regime was, of course, interesting. On one side were certain official agencies that sought to eliminate *sainetes* and popular films that they deemed to be associated with the Second Republic, while on the other were certain studios that were far from willing to give up the audiences attracted by the actors (or comedians) with theatrical origins who appeared in these types of films. It could be said (while admitting the simplified nature of the definition)

that the solution, an intermediate one, was to soften the popular content of the films while keeping the familiar faces on the screen.

- 4 Bertolt Brecht (1930). *Versuche* 1-3. Berlin; quoted by Walter Benjamin (1998: 21).
- 5 A unique relationship which "at the end of the day allows the transmutation of a *body* into a *symbol*" (ZUNZUNEGUI, 2002: 183).
- 6 It seems timely here to note certain similarities and differences between the two models of acting described. In Brecht's theatre the aim was not so much to act as to make it obvious that one is acting and, as a result, a distance, visible and palpable, arises between the role portrayed and the audience, from the actor working and not so much from the work of the actor. In the performances of Spanish supporting actors, however, the aim is not to make it obvious that one is acting, but to act on the basis of an awareness of certain traits of one's own that are recognisable and recognised by the audience. In both cases, the illusion of reality is partial and the audience's disbelief is, necessarily, only partially suspended.
- 7 The censor's reports on the actors' performances included assessments like the following: "Rather mediocre. As if the director hadn't known what to do with the actors"; and: "Barely correct, discreet, the actors betraying the lack of coherent direction" (Administrative File 23.871, Alcalá de Henares, AGA, Caja/legajo 36/3876).

## Bibliography

- BENJAMIN, Walter (1998). *Understanding Brecht*. Trans. Anna Bostock. London: Verso.
- CASTRO DE PAZ, José Luis (2002). *Un cinema herido. Los turbios años 40 en el cine español (1939-1950)*. Barcelona: Paidós.
- COMPANY, Juan Miguel (1984). "El grano de la voz secundaria." In J. Pérez Perucha (ed.), *El cine de José Isbert* (pp. 53-54). Valencia: Excmo. Ayuntamiento de Valencia.
- DIAMANTE STIHL, Julio (2005). "Queridísimos actores de reparto." *AGR. Coleccionistas de cine*, 28, 51-69.
- (2010). *De la idea al film. El guión cinematográfico: narración y construcción*. Madrid: Cátedra.
- GALÁN, Diego (1997). *La buena memoria de Fernando Fernán-Gómez y Eduardo Haro Tecglen*. Madrid: Alfaguara.

GARCÍA BERLANGA, Luis (1984). "La lección de Isbert." In J. Pérez Perucha (ed.), *El cine de José Isbert* (33). Valencia: Excmo. Ayuntamiento de Valencia.

GONZALEZ REQUENA, Jesús (1984). "El cuerpo del actor." In J. Pérez Perucha (ed.), *El cine de José Isbert* (pp. 37-38). Valencia: Excmo. Ayuntamiento de Valencia

LLINAS, Francesc (1984). "El hombre que quería ser alguien." In J. Pérez Perucha (ed.), *El cine de José Isbert* (pp. 29-31). Valencia: Excmo. Ayuntamiento de Valencia

TÉLLEZ, José Luis (1984). "La eternidad dispersa." In J. Pérez Perucha (ed.), *El cine de José Isbert* (pp. 41-43). Valencia: Excmo. Ayuntamiento de Valencia.

ZUNZUNEGUI, Santos (2002a). "El cuerpo y la máscara. Para una tipología del actor español: el caso de Alfredo Landa." *Historias de España. De qué hablamos cuando hablamos de cine español* (pp. 181-185). Valencia: Ediciones de la Filmoteca.

— (2002b). "El hombre sin atributos." *Historias de España. De qué hablamos cuando hablamos de cine español* (pp. 186-190). Valencia: Ediciones de la Filmoteca.

— (2005). "Los cuerpos gloriosos." *Las cosas de la vida: lecciones de semiótica estructural* (pp. 95-103). Madrid: Biblioteca Nueva.

Iñigo Larrauri Garate (Bilbao, 1981) holds a degree in Art History and a PhD in Film Theory, Analysis and Documentation from the Euskal Herriko Unibertsitatea (UPV-EHU), where he has worked on his thesis project *Julio Diamante. Militancia ética y estética de un cineasta*. Currently, he is part of the research group Mutaciones del Audiovisual Contemporáneo (MAC, UPV-EHU). He recently contributed to the catalog of the 55th edition of Zinebi (International Festival of Documentary and Short Film of Bilbao) with a text on filmmaker Manuel Gutiérrez Aragón. He also spoke at the XIV Congress of the Asociación Española de Historiadores del Cine (AEHC).

# THE TRAJECTORY OF THE INVISIBLE VOICES: THE VOICEOVER IN SPANISH FICTION FILMS\*

The notable presence of voiceovers in Spanish fiction films of the period after the Civil War reflects a practice which had also been used at that time in other countries and which needs to be placed in relation with its use in documentaries and newsreels, to avoid tracing it all the way back to precedents like the figure of the explicator in silent films. In general terms, the evolution of its use would move from an initially extradiegetic location, exercising from this privileged position a full command over everything that occurs on screen, to the progressive adoption of an enunciative complexity that would have the voice alerting the spectators to what they are going to see or are already seeing, speaking directly to them as if expecting an immediate answer, or attempting to provoke their emotional involvement. This complexity would ultimately result in the insertion of narrators into the story, embodying the voice in the figure of a particular character, which may or may not be the protagonist. Whatever mode is

adopted, the intervention of the narrator positions us clearly in the terrain of a kind of fiction that is conscious of its condition as such, with a centre of reflexivity and thought removed from what the images are showing us, which, whether through nostalgia, melancholy or humour, impregnates a remarkable number of the most unique titles of the early Francoist period.

I will now explore, at least briefly, how from the theoretical point of view the insertion of a voiceover as a prominent element that configures the textual framework raises essential questions of filmic enunciation. First of all, the kind of relationship established between that voice and the subject-spectator, out of which arises other equally important issues concerning the organisation of the story, such as the extent of the knowledge of the facts that the spectator should be given or the doses of information that the spectator receives. All of this ultimately feeds into the particular way in which the narrative point of view is articulated, from which we



might in turn discern who is showing us what we see, who sees it at the same time as the spectator, and who narrates it and from what position in the story, and on the basis of these questions we may attempt to outline the figure of a “maker of the images”. Literary studies have attempted to answer some of the questions raised here, chiefly through the analytical explorations of Gerard Genette, and film studies have drawn from these and, more specifically, have used the concept of focalisation, on which the narratological propositions of Tom Gunning, André Gaudreault, and François Jost are based, as well as the approaches to film narration made by another important author, Seymour Chatman, who opened up the field of study with his affirmation that “[f]ilms [...] are always presented – mostly and often exclusively shown, but sometimes partially told – by a narrator or narrators.” (CHATMAN, 1990: 133). In considering the intervention of this narrator and his or her degree of involvement in the narrative material, it will be important to keep in mind Gerard Genette’s affirmation that “[a]bsence is absolute, but presence has degrees” (GENETTE, 1983: 245). The analytical overview offered here of a representative corpus of films that adopt the voiceover as a key element of the story will focus on establishing this degree of intervention, the particular focalisation that operates on the narrative material and, in short, the method of organising our access to the knowledge of the events narrated and, consequently, to their meaning. This overview will also be adopted from a historical perspective that takes into account the evolution that the voiceover underwent in the period.

Any reconstruction of the trajectory followed by the voiceover up to its appearance in major Spanish films of the

1940s must first consider its presence in film newsreels and the didactic, persuasive and politicised documentaries of the 1930s. And attention will also have to be given to its presence in the newsreels and documentaries of the Spanish Civil War, which made use of voiceover commentary to give the *collage* of images typical of these documentary corpora their characteristic tone between

**Any reconstruction of the trajectory followed by the voiceover up to its appearance in major Spanish films of the 1940s must first consider its presence in film newsreels and the didactic, persuasive and politicised documentaries of the 1930s**

informative and propagandistic. The subsequent onset of the Second World War would only lead to a notable relapse of analogous use of such voiceover commentary in film. And in terms of consumer habits, it is also important to mention the acousmatic voices of the radio, which prepared the ground for the future sound film spectator and, more specifically, for the spectator of films that included these incorporeal voices, as noted by various theorists who have either addressed the use of voiceover commentary in the classical documentary or studied the introduction of sound. It would also be useful, with respect to the particular relationship that can be established with the subject-spectator, to give at least a little attention here to certain intertitles used in silent films. Bernard P.E. Bentley, for example, pointed out that in *El golfo* (José de Togores, 1917) the intertitles guide the spectator’s response and that those appearing in *La Casa de la Troya*

(Manuel Noriega and Alejandro Pérez Lugín, 1925) are notable for their markedly humorous and ironic tone (BENTLEY, 2008: 32). With respect to newsreels and documentaries, Sarah Kosloff notes, citing Lewis Jacobs, that narration appeared in these filmic forms before it became a common resource in fiction films, but its use in fiction films was not widespread prior to 1939, probably because in the early years of sound film audiences would have felt cheated by anything other than synchronous speech, and the voiceover was thus only fully established in fiction films once the novelty of synchronicity had worn off (KOSLOFF, 1988: 33).

Once this habit of use and reception had been established, the transfer of the voiceover to fiction occurred as a natural progression. Already in the 1930s we can find it in a few Hollywood films, as documented by Sarah Kozloff (1988: 31), who mentions titles such as *The Bride of Frankenstein* (James Whale, 1935), which incorporates the voiceover to recycle footage taken from the original *Frankenstein* (James Whale, 1931), which also already featured a presenter-character who, appearing from behind the theatre curtain, warned the audience, with a cautionary gaze at the camera as if he were directly addressing the people seated in the theatre, that the story that they were about to see may be upsetting. An earlier film, *Forgotten Commandments* (Louis J. Gasnier, William Schorr, 1932), also uses a voiceover, in this case belonging to the character of a priest who, in a similar manner, comments on some scenes taken from *The Ten Commandments* (Cecil B. de Mille, 1923). The fact that both cases involve a particular practice of appropriation points to a key question in any analysis of the voiceover: reflexivity. At the same time, as will be

explored in detail below, the voiceover is always suggestive of the enunciative distance intrinsic to thought and memory

This same enunciative distance, which distorts the established transparency of the narrative, is characteristic of the parodic register which, in the case of Spain, is already observable in the film series that Eduardo García Maroto made in the 1930s: *Una de fieras* (1934), *Una de miedo* (1935), and *...Y ahora... una de ladrones* (1935). This series also offers an early case of the use of a narrating voiceover, except in the last title in the trilogy. This mark of reflexivity is taken to its fullest extent here through the adoption of the form of clear enunciative self-consciousness in a thought-provoking metacinematic strategy that constantly seeks the spectator's complicity.

At the opposite extreme from humour and parody, the omnipresent voiceover of newsreels and documentaries on the war, with its powerful command over the visuals, over which it maintains a clearly tutelary, orientational and persuasive position, would later be transferred, as suggested above, to fiction, as evidenced in numerous films of the post-war period. It would be in a period of transition, in the moments immediately after the end of the conflict, when it would appear in that hybrid product represented by Edgar Neville's short film *Vivan los hombres libres* (1939). Here, the visual document of a now occupied Barcelona is mixed with brief insertions offering a dramatised recreation of the terror and torture in the prisons. The highly marked propagandistic intention is thus supported not only by the probative nature of the images that characterises the canonical practice of the expository documentary, but also by a certain emotional dimension evoked by the narrating voiceover's reading of the desperate letters of the prisoners.

Bearing in mind that my period of study covers the years of the Second World War and immediately thereafter, it is worth highlighting Sarah Kosloff's

observation that in the early 1940s there was a veritable avalanche of Hollywood films that used the voiceover (1988: 34), which was present in war films, semi-documentaries, film noir and, finally, in literary adaptations, where it no doubt represented a logical transfer from novel to film. Two acclaimed films from this period, *Casa blanca* (Michael Curtiz, 1942) and *To Be or Not To Be* (Ernst Lubitsch, 1942) make use of an initial voiceover, as an extradiegetic narrator who, from a position outside the story narrated, fills the need to explain, contextualise and frame the story in specific spatio-temporal coordinates which of course relate to the Second World War, in the same way as such voiceover was being used in newsreels and documentaries reporting on the conflict. Curtiz's film, incidentally, also makes use of the well-worn device of animated maps.

### Trajectory of the voiceover through Spanish cinema

In the above-mentioned films by Curtiz and Lubitsch the war appears as a primary reference which underpins the story and which, in turn, is explained through the intervention of a voiceover that anchors the images and assigns them their meanings. In Spain, the indelible mark left by the painful experience of the Civil War could be fittingly evoked by this narrating voiceover which, having accompanied so many films during the war itself, was transferred to numerous fiction films of the 1940s and continued to be used, also with significant variations, in the decades that followed. An initial approach to this idea can be found in the research of Castro de Paz, who notes that the voiceover appears to have seen

an "early but painful" shift to fiction from the wartime newsreels. Castro de Paz discusses this in his analysis of *El hombre que se quiso matar* (Rafael Gil, 1942, shot in 1941): "narrated as a fable by a voiceover external to the diegesis. [...] This striking and aurally demiurgical position of the calm and didactic extradiegetic narrator shrouds and cushions a discourse of veritable critical ferocity." (CASTRO DE PAZ, 2013: 103). As it does not assume incontrovertible realities of the cinema of the era (military, religious, historical), the film requires a different kind of complicity from the subject-spectator, seeking his/her comprehension of its balanced doses of melancholy and black humour. And it must, in turn, manage the treatment of the issue on which the whole fate of the protagonist turns, his decision to commit suicide; a treatment which, if not banal, is certainly stripped of the serious drama that it would be expected to have, and which itself reflects a kind of mixture of embittered and good-natured criticism that is so typical of Fernández Flórez, the adapted author. The voiceover is thus the element that leads the grey and mediocre reality of the post-war era into the realm of fable, towards a certain degree of unreality and atemporality that will soften what ultimately cannot be concealed: the precarious lives of the people, their

Figure 1. *El hombre que se quiso matar* (Rafael Gil, 1942)



struggle for subsistence in a harsh and hostile environment, and also the possibility of realising dreams of salvation like climbing the social ladder through marriage.

And speaking of fable, understood here in literary terms as a “narrative-didactic genre with an illustrative purpose” (PLATAS, 2004: 305), the voiceover would also have another role to fulfil in the specific case of the historical cinema of the Francoist era: “a self-serving, manipulative didacticism that exploits the general public’s ignorance of history, to which end there is a use and abuse of the voiceover at the beginning and end of films” (MONTERDE, 2007: 93).

Its demiurgical and omniscient nature, the finality of its affirmations and the control it exercises over the characters and their fates are some of the main attributes of this voiceover, which presides over what is shown on screen, chiefly at the beginning of the story. A common styleme in numerous films of the early Francoist era, it not only appears to serve the obvious function of locating and introducing the story, but also shows signs of a certain task of containment, of control and subjection, in an effort to cushion the harsh reality of its time which, whether intentionally or not, and in spite of the reassuring discourse underpinning the words of the narrator, will ultimately evoke and expose the scars left by the war experience.

Any analysis that begins with a consideration of the voiceover as an element of continuity between the newsreels that had been fully established by the post-war era and fiction films must necessarily make mention of the long shadow cast by the NO-DO newsreel series. Its uninterrupted presence for

so many years in Spain’s film theatres seemed to contaminate certain fiction films whose use of the voiceover imitates, reproduces or recreates that of the official newsreel, thereby associating them with a “tendency towards

ditional family values that shaped the Francoist period.

On the other hand, the use of voiceovers also denotes an interest in staging a story that is self-conscious, vesting the agents involved in the filmic com-

munication with an eloquent presence, so that the reflexivity is transferred to the subject-spectator, who is invited more or less explicitly to participate in everything that will be shown and narrated. And as everything is a question of degree, following Genette’s assertion quoted above, this self-consciousness would evolve towards greater levels of engagement with the story and with the story’s audience. And this evolution, in the case of



Figure 2. *El santuario no se rinde* (Arturo Ruiz Castillo, 1949)

artificiality, to the use of an absolutely vacuous bombastic and pompous tone” (TRANCHE and SÁNCHEZ-BIOSCA, 2001: 120). This *colonisation* of certain films by the NO-DO series is observable, for example, in the voiceover at the beginning of *Los últimos de Filipinas* (Antonio Román, 1945), which repeats the oft-heard refrains of those years on military matters (fulfilment of duty, defence of the fatherland, etc.). Of course, such an approach is far from surprising in the case of this film, but it is worth highlighting the projected voice, with its tone of gravity and importance, the strict seriousness the speaker seeks to convey with this particular modulation of his voice, in contrast with the irony, double-entendres or appeals to the spectator’s complicity in other titles that will be analysed below. A similar voice can be heard, for example, in *La señora de Fátima* (Rafael Gil, 1951) or in *La familia Vila* (Ignacio F. Iquino, 1950), with reference in these cases to another semantic universe, of the religiosity and tra-

Spanish post-war cinema, could in general terms take one of two possible paths: the homodiegetic narrator, a protagonist in the events he narrates (and experiences, and which the filmic text shows), and the heterodiegetic narrator, who, without giving up his position outside the narrative universe, holds the power to intervene directly in the events in the story through the contact he establishes with the world of the story itself, by communicating directly with the characters, or with the world of the audience, by directly addressing the spectator; in short, by his capacity to submit the flow of the images to his will.

As a paradigmatic example of the homodiegetic narrator, and as a landmark work against which to measure what would be done in Spain in these years, it is important to mention *Rebecca* (Alfred Hitchcock, 1940). As is obvious, the voiceover, which we attribute to the female protagonist, speaks to us from within the story and has a notable impact on the spectator’s experience in

that she engages the usual mechanisms of identification sustained by the establishment of perceptual subjectivity. Kosloff argues that this voice is so firmly inscribed in the film that it seems generated not only by what she sees, but also by what we, the spectators, are seeing (1988: 45). It would be this establishment of subjectivity that provoked a unique critical controversy over the film's successful première in Spain. According to Fernando González's analysis, it was classified at that time as a "deceitful cinematic suggestion" (2003: 74-93), as the atmosphere created seemed to arise directly from the characters' perception and this was considered, as González himself quotes from an article by Gómez Tello in the magazine *Primer Plano*, heretical and materialist. However, this controversy extended in general to what at that time was considered an excessive use of subjectivity beyond its expression through the voiceover. In opposition to this approach, films like those of Rafael Gil, in close collaboration with cinematographer Alfredo Fraile and set designer Enrique Alarcón, would represent a possible Spanish alternative through films which, in the words of Castro de Paz, "would be meticulous in their visual expression and finely crafted in their lofty concept of atmosphere" (2007: 92). In his opinion, the staging would almost always be demonstrative and omniscient, seeking to introduce the subjectivity of the character without resorting (at least excessively) to the orthodox subjective POV so as not to fall into the realm of "morally reprehensible psychodrama" (CASTRO DE PAZ, 2007: 92). The creation of a particular atmosphere would thus be made to depend on the work on the mise en scène, on the sets, lighting and shadows. This question has also been analysed this way from different perspectives by other authors, including Rubio Munt (2001: 144-145).

The narrative model of *Rebecca* can also be found in *El santuario no se rinde* (Arturo Ruiz Castillo, 1949), as previously noted by Sánchez-Biosca



Figure 3. *Cerca de la ciudad* (Luis Lucía, 1952)

(2006: 160). In both cases, the story begins with a dolly shot giving a POV approaching an old building, a place that holds the memory of death. In both films, the voiceover, positioned inside the story, activates the memory of an event from the past and makes explicit the feelings that this memory provokes. As it is not the filmic expression of a dream, as in the approach to Mander-

that ultimately fosters "a conciliatory perspective determined by the alliance between complex characters who struggle constantly against an invisible enemy in a tragic conflict that nobody seems to comprehend" (GÓMEZ BECEIRO, 2013: 103).

This homodiegetic narrator of a significant number of Ruiz Castillo's films takes on more complex forms

**Its demiurgical and omniscient nature, the finality of its affirmations and the control it exercises over the characters and their fates are some of the main attributes of this voiceover, which presides over what is shown on screen, chiefly at the beginning of the story**

ley, the scene begins with a detail shot of some hands cutting some flowers, which then appear in the foreground when the movement towards the sanctuary begins. This is also a plaintive voice which, while appearing to constitute an apparent affirmation of Catholic-National Francoism, above all expresses the feeling of loss provoked by the memory of the war, which appears here more as a desperate allegory

in titles like *Las inquietudes de Shanti Andía* (1947), where, in the famous final scene, we are shown the person to whom the story was addressed, who is none other than Pio Baroja, author of the novel adapted for the film. The communication with this *other* outside the diegesis where the subject-spectator is located also appears in the first shot when Shanti, with greying hair, looks at the camera and begins telling



Figure 4. *Nadie lo sabrá* (Ramón Torrado, 1953)

his story. The fact that the narrative focus is made to depend on a character has already been noted by Juan Miguel Company in a brief but revealing analysis of Spanish cinema in the 1940s, which proposes “a constant fluctuation between the points of view of the narrative and of the characters participating in it, the articulation of which contains much of the textual richness of

but also by the moral baseness of the illegal trafficking of basic medications. In *Segundo López, aventurero urbano* (Ana Mariscal, 1952), another devastating portrait of post-war Madrid, we also find the listener who subsequently narrates what he has heard: “I accepted the invitation from that stranger. He told me all of this that you have just seen.”

A later film by Ruiz Castillo, *Dos*

**As a paradigmatic example of the homodiegetic narrator, and as a landmark work against which to measure what would be done in Spain in these years, it is important to mention *Rebecca***

the films” (1997: 10).

This complex enunciation that incorporates the figure of the narratee and thus includes both interlocutors in the diegetic universe, the storyteller and the listener, can be found in another, later film by Ruiz Castillo, *El guardián del paraíso* (1952), a recreation of post-war Madrid that brings together characters, situations and settings typical of the *sainete* style of Spanish cinema and which, in short, offers an authentic picture of a post-war Spain marked not only by material precariousness,

*caminos* (1954), also makes use of a voiceover that focuses the plot on the main characters of the film, giving way to respective flashbacks to then return to the theme of possible reconciliation, suggested in the values of reformation, redemption or compassion for the vanquished.

Later in the post-war period, a larger degree of intervention in the narration would be proposed through techniques associated with the enunciative strategy, thereby reinforcing what has already been stated through a clearly self-

reflexive representation. Moreover, the inspiration identified above in the documentary and the newsreel is evident in a film like *Cerca de la ciudad* (Luis Lucia, 1952). The first intervention of the voiceover is already powerful: “Our first purpose: to make a documentary about Madrid.” Although the voice is maintained off camera, the presence in the frame of the film crew reaffirms the ironic, parodic and self-conscious nature of filmic discourse. A number of cinematic clichés of the period are lampooned here: the imitation of the voices of the NO-DO newsreels, the composition of Dutch-angle shots to catch the attention of international film competitions, the attention given to the working classes and working-class neighbourhoods with the intention of “reinventing neorealism”, making a film with bulls so that it seems more Spanish, and the fashion of making films about priests. Finally, it is the last of these options that is chosen. The purpose of making a documentary about Madrid is also maintained, although it is to be a Madrid very different from the one that appeared in the NO-DO newsreels. The camera followed the priest through the centre of the capital on his journey to a neighbourhood on the city’s outskirts, to that space of the story situated “*cerca de la ciudad*” (“near the city”), as if a neorealist approach to the social context of this specific space were indeed being attempted, although obviously all the narrative material is organised according to the codes of priest films. The credits mark this boundary between the initial intention to make a documentary of the style of the urban symphonies and a fictitious construction that begins after entering the suburban belt, where widespread social decay, exemplified in juvenile delinquency or parental absence (due to imprisonment) in the harsh post-war reality can only be resolved by the welfare work initiated by the priest. This boundary also marks the abandonment of the voiceover. The character of the priest is established here as an actant-subject who crosses this border, going

from one filmic model (documentary and urban symphony) to the other (priest fiction). Crossing to this other side of the border ultimately entails the abandonment of the strict focalisation explicitly signalled by the voiceover in following what the characters are doing and is accompanied by the reverse shot that shows us the supposed film crew, to give way to a greater liberation of the gaze through an omniscient enunciation.

In *Nadie lo sabrá* (Ramón Torrado, 1953), there is an analogous break with classical transparency which, without upsetting the natural flow of the story, occurs through the eloquent presence of the enunciative strategy. The film, which is also constructed on the humour and parody provided by the voiceover, begins with recurring wide shots of Madrid, with an aerial angle that allows the camera to bring this omniscient, demiurgical narrator down from on high into the bustle of the capital to seek out the protagonist in the working-class neighbourhoods. And the voice will seek him out by calling to other characters who, by looking to one side of the camera to reply, evading the lens, incorporate this invisible narrator into the story. The narrator here is thus differentiated from the one who speaks to the character played by José Luis López Vázquez in *Se vende un tranvía* (Luis G. Berlanga, 1959), who looks directly at the camera and thus establishes a very different relationship as it employs self-referentiality, thereby developing a story that is conscious of its status as such. In Torrado's film, the narrator's intervention in the development of the plot will be so significant that this voice will even incite the character to commit the theft that will change the course of his life. Ordinary people, working-class neighbourhoods, the daily struggle to get ahead: all of these are social issues

present in another title, *El malvado Carabel* (Fernando Fernán-Gómez, 1956), with which it bears some striking resemblances in the recounting of the protagonist's fate. Also here, the voiceover that introduces and frames the narrative appears to establish an ironic distance from what is, in short, the consideration of theft and fraud as legitimate ways of combating the oppression of everyday life in a mean-spirited and unsupportive society.

The greater degree of intervention in the story occurs in other uses of the

### **In *Nadie lo sabrá*, there is an analogous break with classical transparency which, without upsetting the natural flow of the story, occurs through the eloquent presence of the enunciative strategy**

voiceover, different in each case but sharing the same quality of exposing the enunciative apparatus. This voice which, as I have suggested above, explained, persuaded or exhorted in war films, is maintained in numerous important fiction films of the post-war period, acting on realities that speak to us of impoverishment, of fraud or of speculation. Only a few years before the release of the films discussed above, in *El destino se disculpa* (José Luis Sáenz de Heredia, 1944), the voiceover was fully inserted into the diegetical space, albeit on a different dimension from that of the story itself, taking the form of an old man who is no less than the embodiment of Fate, who, as a kind of inserted *scriptwriter*, guides the lives of the other characters and even allows them to decide freely at a particular moment, as noted by Castro de Paz and Paz Otero, who argue that in this way "Fate symbolically cuts the ties that guide the movements of his fable's protagonist. [...]" (2011: 109).

On the other hand, the narrator in *La ironía del dinero* (Edgar Neville, 1957) is no longer just a voice, but also an actant-subject who, as in *El destino se disculpa*, conducts the flow of communication directly from the place of enunciation to the place of reception, as eloquently expressed through his addressing the spectator to introduce each episode of the film. The irony, already hinted at in the title, is that this figure will add to his role of narrator that of a character when he appears as the victim in the last of the stories.

As a final example of what I have intended here as a significant sample of titles from Spanish post-war cinema underpinned by the presence of a voiceover, I cannot help but conclude with *Bienvenido Mr. Marshall* (Luis García Berlanga, 1953), which, first of all, once again confirms the functional value of the voiceover for the depiction of a

fable or moral tale, again portraying the hopes and illusions of humble people trying to get ahead in the harsh reality of this period of Spanish history. Here, as has been extensively analysed, the voiceover does not merely introduce the story at the beginning, but will also have the ability to manipulate what is shown at whim, for example through freezing the image, or to enter into the dreams of the story's characters and give the spectator access to them.

The significant use of voiceover in Spanish post-war films clearly demonstrates that fiction picked out from newsreels and documentaries an expressive resource which, while in itself alluding in a certain sense to the traumatic experience of the war, at the same time represented a bold new formula for relating to the universe of the story and to the spectator to whom that story was being told. ■



## Notes

\* This study has been completed in the context of the R+D+I research project: "Hacia una reconsideración de la cultura posbélica: análisis de los Modos de Representación en el cine español (1939-1962) a partir de la impronta de Wenceslao Fernández Flórez" (CSO2012-34648). Ministry of the Economy and Competitiveness. Government of Spain. The images illustrating this article have been contributed voluntarily by the author of the text, who was responsible for locating and requesting copyright for the purposes of reproduction. In any event, the inclusion of images in the texts of *L'Atalante* is always done by way of citation, for their analysis, commentary and critical assessment. (Editor's note).

## Bibliography

- BENTLEY, Bernard E.P. (2008). *A Companion to Spanish Cinema*. Woodbridge: Tamesis.
- CASTRO DE PAZ, José Luis (2007). "Cuerpo(s) para nuestras letras. Rafael Gil y CIFESA (1940-1947)." In J. L. CASTRO DE PAZ (coord.), *Rafael Gil y CIFESA* (pp. 53-109). Madrid: Filmoteca Española / ICAA.
- (2012). *Sombras desoladas. Costumbrismo, humor, melancolía y reflexividad en el cine español de los años cuarenta*. Santander: Shangrila.
- CASTRO DE PAZ, José Luis; PAZ OTERO, Héctor (2011). "El destino se disculpa y la estilización fantástica, costumbrista y reflexiva de Sáenz de Heredia y Fernández Flórez." In J. NIETO FERRANDO AND J. L. CASTRO DE PAZ (coord.), *El destino se disculpa. El cine de José Luis Sáenz de Heredia* (pp. 105-114). Valencia: Filmoteca.
- CHATMAN, Seymour (1990). *Coming to Terms: The Rhetoric of Narrative in Fiction and Film*. Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press.
- COMPANY, Juan Miguel (1997). *Formas y perversiones del compromiso. El cine español de los años cuarenta*. Valencia: Eutopías / Episteme.
- GENETTE, Gerard (1983). *Narrative Discourse: An Essay in Method*. Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press.
- GÓMEZ BECEIRO, Fernando (2013). "Deconstrucción y ocaso del 'cine de cruzada'. Desde la ruinas de un legendario santuario castrense: *El santuario no se rinde* (Arturo Ruiz Castillo, 1949)." In J. PÉREZ PERUCHA AND A. RUBIO ALCOVER (eds.), *De cimientos y contrafuertes. El papel de los géneros en el cine español: Actas del XIV Congreso Internacional de la Asociación Española de Historiadores del Cine* (pp. 97-109). Bilbao: Universidad del País Vasco.
- GONZÁLEZ, Fernando (2003). "El clavo de Rafael Gil en la búsqueda de un modelo para el cine español." *Archivos de la Filmoteca*, 45, 74-93.
- KOSLOFF, Sara (1988). *Invisible Storytellers: Voice-Over Narration in American Fiction Film*. Los Angeles: University of California Press.
- MONTERDE, José Enrique (2007). "Un modelo de reapropiación nacional. El cine histórico." In N. BERTHIER AND J-C SÉGIN (coords.), *Cine, nación y nacionalidades en España*. Madrid: Casa de Velázquez.
- PLATAS TASENDE, Ana María (2004). *Diccionario de términos literarios*. Madrid: Espasa Calpe.
- RUBIO MUNT, José Luis (2001). "Aplicación simbólica del esbatimento por los directores de fotografía de la primera generación de posguerra: el caso de Alfredo Fraile." In Various Authors, *La herida de las sombras. El cine español de los años cuarenta*. (pp. 137-156). Madrid: AECH / Cuadernos de la Academia.
- SÁNCHEZ BIOSCA, Vicente (2006). *Cine y Guerra Civil. Del mito a la memoria*. Madrid: Alianza.
- TRANCHE, Rafael R.; SÁNCHEZ-BIOSCA, Vicente (2001). *NO-DO. El tiempo y la memoria*. Madrid: Cátedra/Filmoteca Española.
- VARIOUS AUTHORS. (1999). *Nuevos conceptos de la teoría del cine. Estructuralismo, semiótica, narratología, psicoanálisis, intertextualidad*. Barcelona: Paidós.

Fernando Redondo Neira (Camporrapado, A Coruña, 1971) has a degree in Information Sciences from the Euskal Herriko Unibertsitatea and a PhD from the Universidade de Santiago de Compostela, where he is currently a lecturer in the Faculty of Communication Sciences. He belongs to Asociación Española de Historiadores del Cine (AEHC) and the Asociación Galega da Investigadores en Comunicación (AGACOM). He is the author of *Carlos Velo. Itinerarios do documental nos anos trinta* (2004) and coordinator of the volume *Ciudadanía y Documental*.

# ***LA CIUDAD PERDIDA.* SPACES OF RECONCILIATION AND DISSIDENCE IN 1950S SPANISH LITERATURE AND CINEMA\***

reconcile.

(From Latin: *reconciliāre*)

1. v.tr. To restore friendly relations, or to bring unrelated or estranged elements into agreement.
  2. v.tr. To bring a person who has strayed from church doctrine back into the community of the Church.
  3. v.tr. To hear a brief or minor confession.
  4. v.tr. To bless a sacred place, due to its having been violated.
  5. v.tr. To confess certain offences that are minor or were forgotten in another confession recently made.
  6. v.tr. *Rel.* To make a confession, especially a brief one or one of minor offences.
- (REAL ACADEMIA DE LA LENGUA, 2001)

## **Imagine an understanding**

On 30 September 1955, a première was held at Madrid's Teatro Musical of a film that today is all but forgotten: *La ciudad perdida* (The Lost City, Margarita Alexandre and Rafael Torrecilla), an adaptation of the novel of the same name by Mercedes Fórmica (1951). The film tells the story of Rafa, a Spanish exile who secretly enters the country to take part in an attack organised by anti-Franco guerrilla forces. When the mission fails on his arrival in Madrid, the protagonist ignores his orders and gives in to an impulse to wander the streets of the city he had defended during the Civil War and was forced to abandon after Franco's troops arrived

in 1939. On his wanderings, the character waivers between fascination for the city reclaimed and the oppression of knowing he is being hunted down. In an effort to secure an escape he knows is impossible, he takes a hostage: María, a lady of high society who, by virtue of a kind of confession intoned by the fugitive, will become his redeemer. The adaptation of *La ciudad perdida* constituted a curiously symbiotic exercise between the author Mercedes Fórmica—the first national delegate of the female wing of the Spanish Students' Union and a member of the Women's Section of the Falange—and the duo formed by the pioneering Margarita Alexandre and Rafael Torrecilla, who, after their time working in the Spanish film industry in the 1950s, would go into exile in Cuba in 1959 to place themselves at the service of the newly declared Revolution.

A thematic and aesthetic analysis of the film reveals some bold narrative propositions and combinations of genres which, being in keeping with the historical, political and cultural context in which they were produced (the end of Franco's autarky and the subsequent alliance of his regime with the Western powers during the Cold War), make Alexandre and Torrecilla's film valuable material for studying the guiding principles that came into play in Spanish cinema during these years. It was a moment when the triumphalist and revanchist rhetoric of *cine de cruzada*, predominant during the first years after the Spanish Civil War, necessarily gave way to discourses which—generally with rabidly anti-communist sentiments—offered products that were more easily digestible in the liberal democracies of the Western block. This no doubt gave rise to a greater ambivalence towards the topic of the Civil War, beginning with the possibility that the “vanquished” would be given space on the screen and might awaken some kind of sympathy or affection in the audience. However, in Francoist discourse, the restitution of the vanquished back into Spanish society invari-

bly required confession and repentance (the reference to Catholic concepts was not accidental) for the errors committed in the past. But *La ciudad perdida* went beyond this. As will be discussed below, underlying the discursive strategies employed both by Fórmica and by Alexandre and Torrecilla is an attempt to articulate spaces (by which we mean symbolic spaces) of reconciliation which, given the intransigence of the censors, could also be interpreted as an early form of dissidence. Based on this approach, in the pages that follow I will offer a thematic and aesthetic analysis of the novel and the film, without losing sight of the context of the cultural discourses which, in the early 1950s, gave rise to the complex atmosphere described above.

### An unprecedented film

In thematic terms, *La ciudad perdida* forms part of a series of films resulting from “the evolution of cinema inspired by the Civil War and its aftermath, now heavily coloured by the international context of the Cold War” (GUBERN, 1981: 81). *Cerca del cielo* (Domingo

Figure 1. Dust jacket for the first edition of *La ciudad perdida* (Mercedes Fórmica, 1951). Over a background of the city at night, with Madrid's Telefónica building and La Cibeles fountain both recognisable on the skyline, a man dressed in a hat and gabardine coat, his face in shadow, casts a worried look off frame



Viladomat and Mariano Pombo, 1951) and *Dos caminos* (Arturo Ruiz Castillo, 1953) constitute examples of different styles within this group of films which, with the early exception of *Rojo y negro* (Carlos Arévalo, 1942), only began to find a place in the Spanish film industry once the international anti-Franco embargo—imposed by the allied nations against the Axis powers in the Second World War—came to an end.<sup>1</sup> As Román Gubern (1981: 81) suggests, “*En un rincón de España* (1948) by Jerónimo Mihura did it by exhorting exiled republicans to return to Spain without fear of reprisal, representing a turning point that was reassuring to Western democracies. The same reassuring propaganda underpinned the subsequent film *Rostro al mar* (1951) by Carlos Serrano de Ossa, which also showed the horrors suffered in the Soviet internment camps, in harmony with the global ideological battle of the Cold War.” However, *La ciudad perdida* did not appear so much to try to please the anti-communist block through the depiction of a hero who was repentant or wracked with guilt as to articulate a view that sought to integrate the vanquished in the Civil War back into Spanish society. It did so chiefly by encouraging visual and narrative identification with the character of Rafa, played by an attractive Italian actor (Fausto Tozzi), depicted as a middle-class university-educated Spaniard with profound humanitarian convictions, and secondly, through the love story between him and María (Cosetta Greco),<sup>2</sup> in which the attraction is activated, quite apart from the political and moral convictions of both characters, under the sole imperative of love and desire.

On the other hand, from the perspective of aesthetics and genre, Alexandre and Torrecilla's film bears some interesting resemblances to popular detective drama formulations which—boosted by the new interest in appealing to the Western powers (and their cultural forms) that the regime began to promote in the early 1950s—proliferated in those years. In spite of the impor-

tance that the protagonist's republican past plays in the plot of *La ciudad perdida*, the story is articulated around the persecution and inevitable capture of the fugitive by the police, and includes elements typical of the crime story (both literary and cinematic), such as the police commissioner (played by Félix Dafauce, a familiar face in the



Figure 2. Poster for *La ciudad perdida* (Margarita Alexandre and Rafael Torrecilla, 1955. 9 x 14 cm five-ink print. Like Mercedes Fórmica's novel, the poster for *La ciudad perdida* adopted the visual style of the detective genre with a romantic touch

genre) and his agents, the shoot-outs and the squalid nocturnal settings. Moreover, the film features numerous key scenes that serve as a pretext for offering postcard shots of the streets of the Spanish capital, filmed on location, in which the character Rafa mixes in with the passers-by of the Madrid of 1954. In this way, the representation acquires a photographic realism that is also recognisable in films like *Apartado de correos 1.001* (Julio Salvador, 1950), *Los peces rojos* (José Antonio Nieves Conde, 1955) or, to a lesser extent, *Los ojos dejan huellas* (José Luis Sáenz de Heredia, 1952).<sup>3</sup>

In this respect, Elena Medina de la Viña highlights the fact that IFI, Ignacio F. Iquino's Barcelona studio

specialising in detective films,<sup>4</sup> held distribution rights for 20th Century Fox productions at a time when Fox had begun filming on location with non-professional actors (cf. LABANYI, LÁZARO-REBOLL, RODRÍGUEZ ORTEGA, 2014: 266), an intuition which, in the case of *La ciudad perdida*, seems to be confirmed by the fact that Hispano FoxFilm assumed its distribution. Authors like Labanyi, Lázaro-Reboll and Rodríguez Ortega (2014: 266) also refer to the influence of Italian neorealism on this realist branch of Spanish detective films, especially following the success of *Surcos* (José Antonio Nieves Conde, 1951). However, it is worth recalling that the influence of neorealism, even in Italy, extended to popular detective films, and that a film like *Four Ways Out* (La città si difende, Pietro Germi, 1951), with Cosetta Greco and Fausto Tozzi, presented a detective story that identified the conditions of social inequality as the cause of the crime, in a kind of “pseudo-social” cinema, as Guido Aristarco has described it.<sup>5</sup>

In any case, shooting on location opened up new opportunities to present an image of post-war Spain that differed from the glowing picture postcard images offered by the regime through the *No-Do* newsreel series, and although, as Román Gubern notes, this genre, which took Hollywood detective films as its model, would invariably fall into the habit of “exaltation of the repressive apparatus of the State” (GUBERN, 1981: 81), it is also equally true that, as debtors to the realist tradition of the thriller and film noir genres and their fondness for gritty underworld settings, these films were able to subvert the moral tone that directors were obliged to adopt to reassure the regime (cf. LABANYI, LÁZARO-REBOLL, RODRÍGUEZ ORTEGA, 2014: 266). This is exactly what happened in the case of Margarita Alexandre and Rafael Torrecilla's film, which was mutilated by the political and moral objections alleged by the censors (AGA, 1954: 36 / 04750 C / 13.820).

This brief thematic and generic analysis of *La ciudad perdida* should

prompt us to reflect on the unprecedented nature of Alexandre and Torrecilla's film in a context marked by the emergence of new discourses on the Civil War, far removed from the pro-Franco propaganda of *cine de cruzada*, and from visual approaches that connect with international trends like Italian neorealism or American or European film noir. While the film studied here clearly reflects the elements of theme and genre described, it is equally true that it constitutes a kind of mutation in which the detective story serves as a pretext to push the depiction of the *vanquished*—to use the official terminology of the era—and the representation of the past to the very limits of permissiveness.

However, to fully understand the support that more commercial formulas could bring to visions of the recent past that offered alternatives to the official discourse, it is worth considering the literary source of *La ciudad perdida* and the place occupied by its author, Mercedes Fórmica, in the cultural context of 1950s Spain. The combination of a commercial formula that was considered inferior to the type of cinema promoted by official agencies and the use of novels clearly supportive of Falangism became a calculated strategy from the moment that the incipient dissidence began seeking political alternatives in the realm of cultural representations. It is hardly surprising that Margarita Alexandre should have asserted that “those of us in the film industry began doing things, often with books or ideas of the Falangists, because we thought that, being the story of a Falangist, [the censors] would be more benevolent. It was sort of an opportunist idea of finding a way around the censorship” (M. Alexandre, personal communication, 23 June 2014).

### The novel *La ciudad perdida*

Mercedes Fórmica's novel, published in 1951 with a generous print run of 5,000 copies, was triumphantly launched by its publisher, Luis de Caralt, who placed it unhesitatingly among

the best books he had read in the ten years prior to its publication. In a curious mixture of publisher marketing and personal reflection, Caralt asserted on the back flap of the book's dust jacket: “The atmosphere of a nocturnal Madrid full of contrasts and the stage for a dramatic tale is masterfully described, and the [narration of the] chase and capture of the fugitive is reminiscent of Graham Greene's best writing.” Caralt concluded his review by linking the novel to “the literary movements in vogue around the world” and, in a display of unquestionable optimism, or perhaps of sharp business savvy,



Figure 3. Advertisement for *La ciudad perdida* published in *La Vanguardia* for the premiere in Barcelona, 20 October 1955. The promotional material for *La ciudad perdida* highlighted the “human problem” addressed by the film and its status as a “detective adventure”

he promised that “*La ciudad perdida* will have a huge international impact” (FÓRMICA, 1951). Notwithstanding the enthusiasm of its publisher, the topics addressed in the book that were hardly dear to the regime, such as anti-Franco guerrilla forces and the Civil War (Arroyo Rodríguez, 2010), articulated in the form of a detective story, a genre that also found little sympathy with the censors (VALLES CALATRAVA, 1991; ABIO VILLARIG, 2013), placed the novel in a complex situation in terms of censorship. Indeed, this was something that Fórmica herself was quite aware of: in the third volume of her memoirs, published in 1988, with respect to *La ciudad perdida* the author remarked that “the story's ending was phoney, but the

censors would never have allowed the protagonist's suicide and we writers in those days either submitted to certain expectations or we would not be published” (FÓRMICA, 2004: 26).

Nevertheless, the novel was supported by Fórmica's unequivocal background as a *white shirt* in the Falange and by her first novel, *Monte de Sancha* (1950), nominated for the Barcelona City book prize,<sup>6</sup> with a story that evoked the *red terror* experienced by the writer in Málaga during the first months of the Civil War. The publisher also had numerous credentials placing him in the ranks of Francoist officialdom,<sup>7</sup> a fact which, although it probably influenced the attitude of the censors, did not prevent certain frictions with which Caralt was in any case already familiar: the novel, whose file contained a “copy of the typescript with numerous handwritten alternatives by the author”, was authorised “with the classification of ‘tolerated’” after the censors indicated their approval of “the natural restraint of the author” when entering into “the core of the moral landscape painted because he [sic] either does not know it or does not dare” (LARRAZ, 2013).

In a context in which moral issues were almost as important as the political orientation of the cultural product, the development of a story that openly called up the ghosts of the Civil War in the invariably unorthodox context of a police chase (“Is it dangerous, politically speaking, for a besieged resistance fighter to evoke sympathy?” asked the censor) required an extremely delicate balancing act on the part of the publisher in order to defend his author. The legitimization of the book through the various mechanisms of publishing strategy thus proved essential. Shortly after the Civil War, in 1942, Luis de Caralt had founded his publishing house in Barcelona with the publication of two titles by Spanish authors on the Civil War (*Mis amigas eran espías* by Luis Antonio de Vega, and *No éramos así* by José María García Rodríguez), but its catalogue was characterised from the



Figure 4. *La ciudad perdida* (Margarita Alexandre and Rafael Torrecilla, 1955). Fausto Tozzi, in the role of Rafa, dressed as a republican militiaman

beginning by Spanish and international titles of recognised prestige, alongside other more commercial products. Thus, “in its catalogue appeared important names in literature like William Faulkner, John Steinbeck and John Dos Passos, along with commercial authors

included numerous American noir fiction novels”, as confirmed by the slogan of the *El Club del Crimen* collection, which first appeared in 1947: “*Las novelas policíacas se visten de tela y lujo*” (“Detective novels dressed up in style”).

Perhaps taking this legitimising am-

**It was undoubtedly the effort made by Fórmica to offer a more nuanced and integrative vision of the vanquished and of the recent past which, in spite of the melodramatic touches sprinkled through the novel, inspired Alexandre and Torrecilla to attempt a film adaptation**

like Cecil Roberts” (MORET, 2002: 56). Otherwise, Caralt was, together with Bruguera (established in 1939) and Josep Janés (founded in 1941), one of the first publishers to introduce detective novel collections in Spain, other than the cheap paperbacks that had been sold at newspaper stands since the 1920s. According to Abio Villarig (2013: 212), “these collections were placed on the quality literary market [and]

bition a little further, and in view of the publisher’s clearly commercial intention to position the book as a detective novel,<sup>8</sup> *La ciudad perdida* was published in the Spanish authors’ series of the *Gigante* collection, reserved for “the most select works of world literature”, in an effort to give the tale of intrigue the stamp of “high culture” that authors like the aforementioned Graham Greene had begun to give the genre in

the English-speaking world. However, Mercedes Fórmica’s novel had nothing at all to do with the search for new narrative forms embarked on in the 1940s and early 1950s by authors like Camilo José Cela or Carmen Laforet and that would continue in the critical realism of Juan Goytisolo, Rafael Sánchez Ferlosio and the authors of the so-called Generation of ‘50 (cf. VALLES CALATRAVA, 1991: 96). On the contrary, *La ciudad perdida* could be more suitably identified as an heir to the Civil War and “red terror” serial novels produced during the first years after the war by authors like Carmen de Icaza, Luisa María Linares, María Mercedes Ortoll and Concha Linares-Becerra (RODRÍGUEZ PUÉRTOLAS, 2008: 631-635), but with, at least, one difference: rather than the revanchist character, tinged with hatred for the “reds”, that characterised the works of those authors, Fórmica’s novel introduced a desire for reconciliation and, consequently, integration of the vanquished into post-war society, openly recognising the affections and interests shared by the members of her generation who took one or the other side in the Civil War. Although it was a degraded and *kitsch* version of the novels of “the great American anti-Franco novelists” that Caralt bragged of having published after the end of the dictatorship (MORET, 2003: 58), its author recognised the importance that a novel like *La familia de Pascual Duarte* (Camilo José Cela, 1942) had played in her development as an author, because “beneath the Solana-style gruesomeness lay a great tenderness and, for the first time, a ‘red assassin’ was spoken of with compassion” (FÓRMICA, 2013: 367).

From this perspective, *La ciudad perdida* is a novel that reflects the ghosts of its author, as she explains in her memoirs: the Civil War experienced as a fratricidal tragedy in which the young men of the best generation that Spain had given us were cut down; the frustration that no dialogue occurred to prevent so many deaths (a willingness for which the author attributed to the *absent* Falange founder, José Antonio



Primo de Rivera); the common ideal, albeit understood from a different perspective, shared by Falangists and communists, defined by the idea of “social justice” (FÓRMICA, 2013: 290-292). Ultimately, this was what led many of the *old shirts* of the Falange, under Dionisio Ridruejo, to join an early dissident movement within Franco’s regime. Rather than the *red terror* experience in Málaga in the first months of the Civil War, which the author describes

**In spite of all their objections, the political baggage of the character of Rafa did not bother the censors as much as the fact that an upper-class lady would speak so familiarly to a communist**

in the pages of *Monte de Sancha*, *La ciudad perdida*, set twelve years after the end of the conflict, focuses on other aspects: as noted, the protagonist is a republican exile who enters Spain to launch an attack on Franco’s regime, but, instead of giving him the sinister character with which the republicans were usually depicted in the culture of early Francoism, Mercedes Fórmica places him in a middle-class family, as a formerly brilliant medical student who joined the republican side by virtue of his honest communist convictions. Meanwhile, María is the widow of a Francoist aircraft pilot named Carlos<sup>9</sup> who, in spite of having been taken as a hostage by Rafa, feels an irresistible attraction to her captor, who reminds her so much of her late husband.

The literary techniques employed obviously play a fundamental role in the series of identifications articulated in

the novel and which, inevitably, would be adopted in the film. Resorting to a multiple focalisation with numerous paralepses, each instance of enunciation gives access to the thoughts and emotions (and thus, to an understanding of the motivations) not only of the kidnapped and imperilled woman, but also of her kidnapper and of other characters

who together compose a mosaic of the moral bankruptcy of post-war Madrid. Otherwise, it is a story with a markedly impressionist character, where the urban spaces operate as an objective correlative of the emotions of the characters, which seem to be projected onto the landscape (“chaste light”, “hostile city”, etc.) (FÓRMICA, 1951: 11, 20), while the exploration of the gritty streets of Madrid at night becomes the stage for a dialogue, in the full sense of the term, in which, above all, the characters long to understand and be understood. In tune with the central nature of dialogue and the creation of meeting spaces for characters who embody irreconcilable positions from the perspective of the institutional discourses, the idea of reconciliation, in its sense of “to resume a friendly relations, or to bring unrelated or estranged elements into agreement” is powerfully expressed in statements like: “Who were the ones responsible for the fact there was no dialogue?” (FÓRMICA, 2013: 292); and “Who are you? Tell me. Why don’t you tell me what’s wrong?” (FÓRMICA, 1951: 60). Last of all, the tone of the detective novel allows Fórmica to describe the gritty underworld of Madrid and its inhabitants, embodied by the clientèle that frequent the sleazy taverns of the Barrio de La Latina neighbourhood where the protagonists pass through, and by the characters at the police sta-



Figure 5. *La ciudad perdida* (Margarita Alexandre and Rafael Torrecilla, 1955). Cosetta Greco and Fausto Tozzi joined in a passionate embrace

tion visited by the butler Eliseo in the early hours of the morning. As noted above, the descriptions of these spaces in the novel, together with the paralepses that give access to the thoughts of the characters, make it possible to explain (and thus understand) their reasons for choosing a life of what the public discourse classified as vice, sin or crime. Underlying their behaviour is the terrible social inequality which the regime made efforts to gloss over and which the detective genre, with its realist focus, exposed in both literature and cinema, again and again.

#### Different fates for the same story

It was undoubtedly the effort made by Fórmica to offer a more nuanced and integrative vision of the vanquished and of the recent past which, in spite of the melodramatic touches sprinkled through the novel, inspired Alexandre and Torrecilla to attempt a film adaptation. This is something which, many years later, allowed Alexandre herself to affirm: “[Mercedes Fórmica] never seemed to me a good writer, but her book had something interesting: an exile who comes back to Madrid and re-encounters his hometown. A man who had to leave at a particular moment of his youth. That was what interested us. The rest was anecdotal.” (M. ALEXANDRE, personal communication, 23 June 2014). However, the fate of Alexandre and

Torrecilla's film was very different from that of Fórmica's novel. While the novel, with some reservations on the part of the censors, was released onto the market under the conditions mentioned above, the film saw its première delayed by almost a year due to the interminable negotiations with the censors that the directors had to deal with, and only reached the screens after the removal of several shots and the introduction of new dialogues written by the censors and dubbed over the original soundtrack (AGA, 1954: 36 / 3.518 C/ 34.519, 13.453). In spite of all their objections, the political baggage of the character of Rafa did not bother the censors as much as the fact that an upper-class lady would speak so familiarly to a communist. While the censors' report suggested that "if for unquantifiable reasons it was impossible to shoot a new ending, the film could be rectified by cut out all political references therein [...] through the re-dubbing of a series of sentences and with the elimination of the scene showing the protagonist dressed as a militiaman", in the end the scene in question was not eliminated based on the argument that "the way in which the film has been shot not considered truly important or of political significance and if reservations were expressed in the first viewing it was because the instructions in the censors' original approval of the screenplay had not been strictly adhered to" (AGA, 1954: 36/ 3.518 C/ 34.519, 13.453). However, the dialogues were changed so that, in spite of the passionate embraces shared by María and Rafa, the characters continued speaking to each other in an absurdly formal manner (addressing each other with the Spanish formal form "usted" rather than the familiar "tú") until the fatal conclusion of the film, because the censors deemed it inadmissible that the "red protagonist" should have a "likeable and heroic character". Moreover, they required that "the young woman must not fall in love but on the contrary, rather than offering him refuge, should reproach him and condemn him" (AGA, 1954: 36/ 3.518 C/ 34.519, 13.453).<sup>10</sup>

Based on the reports issued by the censors, it could be argued that in their final decision questions of class and gender (that an upper-class lady should fall in love with a communist) took precedence over political factors (the very idea of a *hero* belonging to the republican side), pointing to the conclusion that, in a certain sense, the criteria of the censors shifted in this case from the public sphere (the question of visibility) to the private sphere (the choice of love object). In any case, the film was "penalised" by the *Sindicato Nacional del Espectáculo* (Spain's film industry union, which determines subsidies for film projects) with a category of "First B" and a subsidy of only 875,000 pesetas (Anon., 1956) out of an estimated cost of 3,864,737 pesetas (AGA, 1954: 36 / 04750 C/ 13.820), which brought Nervión Films to the brink of bankruptcy. All of these are reasons to assert that the case of *La ciudad perdida* ultimately demonstrated that the regime's supposedly liberal discourse still had a long way to go, and that the representation of the political opposition in films addressing the Civil War was far from being genuinely inclusive. Meanwhile, the real discourse of reconciliation could be seen as the tip of the iceberg of the dissidence movements,<sup>11</sup> as yet concealed under the still waters of a frozen sea. ■

## Notes

\* This study has been completed in the context of the R+D+I research project *Hacia una reconsideración de la cultura posbélica: análisis de los Modos de Representación en el cine español (1939-1962) a partir de la impronta de Wenceslao Fernández Flórez* (CSO2012-34648). Ministry of the Economy and Competitiveness. Government of Spain. The author would like to thank Marga Lobo, Trinidad del Río, Catherine Gauthier and Alicia Potes (Filmoteca Española), and Raquel Zapater (IVAC-La Filmoteca) for their assistance in this research.

1 On the return of films with the Civil War as a theme during the 1950s, see SÁNCHEZ-BIOSCA, 2006: 145-179.

2 *La ciudad perdida* was a 50-50 Spanish-Italian co-production between Nervión Films (the

studio founded by Alexandre and Torrecilla) and the Italian studio Pico Films. The title of the Italian version is *Terroristi a Madrid*.

3 According to the statements made by the production manager José María Ramos to Sofía Morales (1954: 28), *La ciudad perdida* had the police commissioner, writer and journalist Comín Colomer as its *police advisor*.

4 Iquino's studio, Emisora Films, produced films like the aforementioned *Apartado de correos 1.001* and *Brigada criminal* (Ignacio F. Iquino, 1950). Meanwhile, *La ciudad perdida* was shot in Chamartín Studios, the main centre for detective film production in the Spanish capital.

5 In an interview given to *Fotogramas*, Cosetta Greco recognised that her role in this film bore similarities to the character of María in *La ciudad perdida*. (ANDRESCO, 1954: 18). The importance to the press of location shooting, attention to realistic details and authenticity of acting performances is made clear in the articles published by Sofía Morales in *Primer Plano* (1954: 28-29) and Víctor Andresco in *Fotogramas* (1954b: 18-19).

6 The City of Barcelona book prizes were promoted by Caralt in 1949 and were awarded by the city council, on which he acted as Deputy Mayor for Culture.

7 In addition to holding a position on the Barcelona City Council, Luis de Caralt Borrell was an original *old shirt* who had fought during the Civil War with the Virgen de Montserrat battalion. In 1951 he was decorated by the National Ministry of Education with the Order of Alfonso X the Wise, and was also honoured with the Knight's Cross of the Order of Cisneros, awarded by the Secretary General of the Movement. See the article published in *La Vanguardia* on 29 July 1951, p. 13.

8 This is confirmed, for example, by the design on the book's dust jacket: over a background of the city at night, with Madrid's Telefónica building and La Cibeles fountain both recognisable on the skyline, a man dressed in a hat and gabardine coat, his face in shadow, casts a worried look off frame.

9 Presumably based on Carlos Haya, a personal friend of the author's, who was killed in combat at the Battle of the Ebro.

10 In the case of the novel the censors found that "its tone is always measured even if the crux of the plot is a woman's kidnapp-

ping" (LARRAZ, 2013), which led them to the authorisation of its publication without acknowledging the fact that the "kidnaping" motif hardly masked the desire of the female protagonist for her captor (an extremely common narrative mechanism in popular romantic novels).

- 11 The call of the Communist Party of Spain in exile "for national reconciliation, for a democratic and peaceful solution to the Spanish problem" was broadcast on Radio España Independiente in June 1956.

## Bibliography

- AGA (Archivo General de la Administración). (1954). *La ciudad perdida* (File No. 36 / 04750 C/ 13.820). Alcalá de Henares, Madrid, Spain: Ministry of Culture.
- (1954). *La ciudad perdida* (File No. 13.453, 1954: 36/ 3.518 C/ 34.519). Alcalá de Henares, Madrid, Spain: Ministry of Culture.
- ABIO VILLARIG, Carlos (2013). *Políticas de traducción y censura en la novela negra norteamericana publicada en España durante la II República y la dictadura franquista (1931-1975)*. Doctoral Thesis. Advisor: Javier Franco Aixelà, Universidad de Alicante.
- ANDRESCO, Víctor (1954). "Ya está en Madrid Cosetta Greco." *Fotogramas* No. 306, pp. 18-19.
- (1954b). "Fausto Tozzi huye de *La ciudad perdida* en plena calle madrileña." *Fotogramas* No. 308, pp. 18-19.
- ANON. (1956). "La protección del Estado al cine español en 1955." *Espectáculo* No. 101.
- ARISTARCO, Guido (1951). "La città si difende." *Cinema*, No. 75 (December). Accessed 14 July 2014. *Rivista del Cinematografo*. Accessed at [http://www.cinematografo.it/pls/cinematografo/V3\\_S2EW\\_CONSULTAZIONE.mostra\\_pagina?id\\_pagina=12096&url\\_target=http%3A//www.cinematografo.it/bancadati/consultazione/schedafilm\\_2009.jsp%3Fcodice%3D4415%26completa%3Dsi](http://www.cinematografo.it/pls/cinematografo/V3_S2EW_CONSULTAZIONE.mostra_pagina?id_pagina=12096&url_target=http%3A//www.cinematografo.it/bancadati/consultazione/schedafilm_2009.jsp%3Fcodice%3D4415%26completa%3Dsi)
- ARROYO RODRÍGUEZ, Daniel (2010). "Héroes en Francia y bandoleros en España: resignificación ideológica del maquis en el discurso cultural franquista." *Transitions: Journal of Franco-Iberian Studies*, No. 6, pp. 37-60.
- FÓRMICA, Mercedes (1951). *La ciudad perdida*. Barcelona: Luis de Caralt.
- (2004) [1988]. *Espejo roto. Y espejuelos*. Madrid: Huerga y Fierro.
- (2013). *Memorias (1931-1947)*. Seville: Renacimiento.

- GUBERN, Román (1981). *La censura. Función política y ordenamiento jurídico bajo el franquismo (1936-1975)*. Barcelona: Península.
- LABANYI, Jo, Antonio Lázaro-Reboll, Vicente Rodríguez Ortega (2014). *Film Noir, the Thriller and Horror*. J. Labanyi, T. Pavlović (eds.), *A Companion to Spanish Cinema* (pp. 259-290). New York: Wiley-Blackwell.
- LARRAZ, Fernando (2013). *Fichas de novelas presentadas a la censura. Primera serie: 1937-1962. Represura, Revista de Historia Contemporánea española en torno a la represión y la censura aplicadas al libro*. Accessed at <http://www.represa.es/documentos-represa8.html>
- MORALES, Sofía (1954). "Viaje por los estudios. Se rueda *La ciudad perdida*." *Primer Plano*, No. 731, pp. 28-29.
- MORET, Xavier (2002). *Tiempo de editores. Historia de la edición en España, 1939-1975*. Barcelona: Destino.
- RODRÍGUEZ PUÉRTOLAS, Julio (2008). *Historia de la literatura fascista española. Volumen 2*. Madrid: Akal.
- SÁNCHEZ-BIOSCA, Vicente (2006). *Cine y guerra civil española. Del mito a la memoria*. Madrid: Alianza Editorial.
- VALLES CALATRAVA, José R. (1991). *La novela criminal española*. Granada: Universidad de Granada.

Sonia García López (València, 1977) is a lecturer in Film and Media Studies at Universidad Carlos III de Madrid. The author of *Spain is US. La guerra civil española en el cine del Popular Front (1936-1939)* and *Ernst Lubitsch. Ser o no ser*, she co-edited the collection of essays *Piedra, papel y tijera: el collage en el cine documental* and published several articles on documentary, film and history in journals of national and international scope. Currently she is working on an interview book about Margarita Alexandre with the title *Silencio, palabra y danzón. El cuerpo y la voz de Margarita Alexandre* [due 2015].

# ESLABONES PERDIDOS DEL IMAGINARIO POPULAR. APROXIMACIONES AL CINE DE LADISLAO VAJDA\*

## Liminar

El director húngaro Ladislao Vajda (Budapest, 1906-Barcelona, 1965) llega a España en 1942, huyendo de la conflagración mundial. Aunque a lo largo de su carrera dirigirá películas en ocho países distintos (Gran Bretaña, Hungría, Francia, Italia, España, Portugal, Suiza y la República Federal de Alemania) será en España donde realice la parte fundamental de su obra, y más en concreto la llevada a cabo durante la década de los años cincuenta, donde se concentra la mayor parte de los títulos más decisivos y de mayor éxito de su producción.

Si bien Vajda llegará a adquirir la nacionalidad española en 1954, su figura no deja de ser la de alguien ajeno, por trayectoria vital y por formación, a nuestra tradición cultural. Sin embargo, su trabajo constituye un magnífico ejemplo de ese *mestizaje* en el que formas culturales propias —bien procedentes de la tradición popular, bien de vetas marginales de la cultura oficial— se ubican en nuevos contextos de significación, constituyendo el sustrato sobre el que se cruzan, o pueden cruzarse, elementos de tradiciones

foráneas (ZUNZUNEGUI, 2002: 13). Con todo, no consideramos que este sea el aspecto más relevante de su propuesta cinematográfica, sino que su trabajo, netamente encuadrado en el circuito industrial y en el cine de masas, al mismo tiempo que forja imágenes que documentan ese proyecto integral de sociedad que fue el franquismo, también permite detectar la articulación de un punto de vista que busca intervenir discursiva y políticamente produciendo, *de facto*, una ampliación de los límites de lo decible previstos en la época.

Es esta perspectiva la que vertebra las páginas que siguen. A lo largo de ellas abordaremos cómo la puesta en escena de los films *Carne de horca* (1953) y *Mi tío Jacinto* (1956), si bien desarrollan temáticas centradas en modelos genéricos tópicamente funcionales para el imaginario de la época —el clásico bandolerismo andaluz, la fiesta nacional—, paralelamente revelan la existencia en el interior del cine comercial del franquismo de un dispositivo textual compartido que, bajo esa *firma* denotada «Ladislao Vajda», desborda la adscripción genérica, articulando un régimen

de relaciones discursivas comunes que hacen pivotar los dos films sobre una visión del mundo soterrada —pero no por ello menos definidamente— crítica.

### Estrategias de sentido y puesta en escena

*Carne de horca*, coproducción hispano-italiana y segunda de las películas que Vajda rueda para Chamartín, con argumento y guión de José Santugini, aborda el tema clásico de la tradición romántica del bandolerismo andaluz unido a la historia amorosa de final feliz y de redención de Juan Pablo de Osuna (el señorito jugador y calavera responsable de la muerte de su padre a manos de los bandidos). Sin embargo, este abanico de tópicos va a ser tratado desde una aproximación claramente antirromántica, reubicando discursivamente la película en una seca visión sobre los vínculos económicos y morales que conforman el tejido social que muestra el film.

Para ello, la puesta en escena de *Carne de horca* estructura simétricamente sus secuencias de apertura y cierre a través de tres elementos inextricablemente unidos entre sí en la articulación del punto de vista que vertebra la película: las viñetas de un romance de ciego, la balada que, en voz de María Dolores Pradera, atravesará el film desde el principio hasta su clausura y los *travellings* laterales que recorren las mismas calles desiertas al inicio y al final.

El plano medio que da inicio a la película es el de un ciego que, a través de las viñetas de un cartelón, pasará acto seguido a narrar la historia del bandolero protagonista. Sin embargo, en ese primer plano inicial, el cartelón con las viñetas que ilustran las aventuras de Lucero aparece completamente enrollado, y solo muestra el título de la historia: «Verdadera historia del Lucero» (figura 1), esto es, la mitificación implícita que, desde el siglo XVI, conlleva la tradición de los romances de ciego, como tan espléndidamente mostró Valle-Inclán en *Los cuernos de Don Friolera*.

Mito y realidad emergen así, desde el primer momento, como los dos po-

los que imantan la tensión de una historia que será la que constituya el devenir narrativo del propio film, *Carne de horca*, desplegándose ante nuestros ojos *al igual que* el cartelón con las viñetas, ya acompañado por la narración que canturrea el ciego: «Lucero, el ladrón valiente / el mejor de Andalucía / que a los ricos les robaba / y a los pobres socorría. / Las mujeres le amaban / y los hombres le temían / y por eso le llamaban / el rey de la serranía».

La balada en voz de María Dolores Pradera recogerá, extradiegéticamente, el testigo de la narración mistificadora del ciego y se hará cargo de hacer colisionar verdad y leyenda a lo largo de todo el film, de tal modo que las afirmaciones de la canción en la banda de sonido sean desmentidas por los hechos que se muestran en la banda de imagen, comenzando por la misma localización geográfica, que en el inicio de la canción remite a Sierra Morena, cuando la acción se desarrolla explícitamente en la Sierra de Ronda. Sin embargo, este recurso de la puesta en escena no tiene por función, como a menudo se ha señalado (LLINÁS, 1997: 95; VIDAL, 1997: 342), fijar la fractura entre ambas narraciones, sino, por el contrario, establecer su *sutura*.

En efecto, Vajda utilizará este recurso de la puesta en escena en cuatro ocasiones, articulando la colisión entre mito y realidad en un *in crescendo* que, como veremos, presentará un decisivo punto de inflexión, cuando ambos polos se fusionen en único plano, suturando el film desde el punto de vista discursivo. La primera de esas ocasiones<sup>1</sup> tiene lugar justo a continuación del romance del ciego, mientras la cámara abandona las viñetas del cartelón para demorarse en un *travelling* de clara función documental que primero recorre los rostros de las gentes del público popular atento al romance y luego varias calles desiertas al anochecer (figuras 1, 2 y 3), subrayándose así, desde el inicio, los potenciales efectos retóricos de intervención social que conlleva la tradición mistificadora de los romances de ciego a la que antes hacíamos referencia.

En ese orden de cosas, es importante marcar la diferencia entre las figuras históricas del bandido social y el bandido criminal:

Con todo, los bandidos sociales y los bandidos criminales no pueden compararse, aunque a los ojos de la ley oficial fueran tan delinquentes los unos como los otros,

Figuras 1, 2 y 3. *Carne de horca* (Ladislao Vajda, 1953)







Figura 4. *Carne de horca* (Ladislao Vajda, 1953)

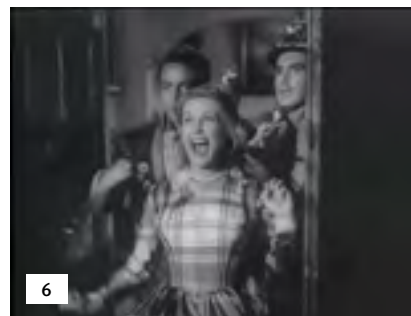
porque, según la moral del pueblo llano, unos eran delincuentes y otros no [...] Los bandidos sociales podían ser y eran personas de las cuales su sociedad podía enorgullecerse. Los delincuentes eran héroes solo entre los marginados y los excluidos, *a menos que* adquiriesen fama de ser bandidos sociales, y en tal caso el mito los convertía en no criminales. (HOBBS-BAWM, 2001: 189, 193. *Cursivas nuestras*)

La segunda vez que escuchemos la voz de María Dolores Pradera coincidirá con el auténtico arranque argumental del film: la llegada sobre un caballo del cadáver de Don Esteban de Osuna, muerto a manos de la banda de Lucero<sup>2</sup> y padre de Juan Pablo, quien logrará introducirse en la banda con el fin de vengar su muerte. La balada suena por tercera vez mientras adviene la brutal represalia contra los campesinos que la banda del Lucero realiza en el pueblo, tras ahorcar al barbero que denunció a uno de ellos. La destrucción de las cosechas y del ganado tiene lugar mediante un montaje alternado en el que los rostros impotentes de los campesinos retoman la función documental antes mencionada, y el plano sostenido de unos buitres surcando el aire desemboca por sobreimpresión en el árbol donde cuelga el cadáver del barbero ahorcado<sup>3</sup>. La última vez que suenen los versos de la canción será en la secuencia final cuando, una vez muertos Lucero y Don Joaquín —oligarca para el que trabajaban los bandoleros y al que Juan Pablo de Osuna consigue desenmascarar—, Vajda repita

los mismos *travellings* sobre las calles desiertas del inicio, con la única diferencia de que ahora es de día (figura 4)<sup>4</sup>.

Esta variación lumínica recoge, sintomatizándola, la colisión entre leyenda y realidad que se ha ido desarrollando a lo largo del film, pero solo lo hace después de que se haya producido su sutura, *sacando a la luz*, con ello, el punto de vista discursivo sobre el que pivota la totalidad de la película. El momento de inflexión al que nos referimos no es otro que el del suicidio de Don Joaquín. Cuando este se siente acorralado —sabe que ha sido descubierto porque ve cómo los soldados llevan presos a miembros de la banda y, acompañados de Consuelo, su ahijada, y de Juan Pablo de Osuna, se dirigen a detenerle— un *travelling* en picado nos lleva desde su mirada hacia la lámpara de la habitación. Sin embargo, el suicidio se dará en fuera de campo, y solo sabremos que se ha producido *realmente* a través de la última viñeta del cartelón del ciego que, por corte directo, se nos muestra después de que Consuelo descubra su cadáver (figuras 5, 6 y 7).

Mito y verdad se funden así por única vez en el film y en un solo plano, el de la *culpabilidad pública* del oligarca que, gracias a su posición, siempre pudo estar en la sombra en su connivencia con los bandoleros; aspecto este último que no solo se hace explícito en los diálogos —como cuando Juan Pablo de Osuna, infiltrado ya en la banda, intenta averiguar quién es al que llaman «el padrino» y uno de los hombres del Lucero le responde: «un amigo que tiene el Lucero en Ronda. Avisa cuando hay que asaltar una diligencia<sup>5</sup> y dice el rescate que hay que pedir. Se queda siempre con la mayor parte y sin dar la cara»—, sino también en la muerte del Lucero al que, solo y cercado por los mismos campesinos a los que condenó al hambre, miramos a través de las rejas de una ventana en la que *no puede verse* quién hay (figura 8). Acto seguido, se producirá su muerte, y por sobreimpresión pasaremos a otro cerco: el que asedia a Don Joaquín que observa la escena a través de una ventana enrejada, en un encuadre muy similar al anterior (figura 9).



Figuras 5, 6, 7, 8 y 9.  
*Carne de horca* (Ladislao Vajda, 1953)



Esta misma aproximación discursiva es la que Vajda desarrollará a lo largo de las tres películas que rueda con Pablito Calvo como protagonista: *Marcelino pan y vino* (1954), *Mi tío Jacinto* (1955) y *Un ángel pasó por Brooklyn* (1956), si bien habitualmente hayan sido abordadas desde su adscripción genérica a una suerte de *trilogía con niño* y al tema de la infancia.

Desde nuestra perspectiva, en cambio, la propuesta de Vajda desborda por completo esa mera adscripción genérica y temática en los tres films, en la medida en que vertebraba su articulación discursiva sobre la explicitación llevada a cabo por la puesta en escena de los vínculos económicos y morales que conforman el tejido social en cada uno de ellos, al igual que hemos visto que sucedía en *Carne de horca*.

Si bien, por razones de espacio, aquí nos centraremos en el caso de *Mi tío Jacinto* para analizar ese *desplazamiento*, idénticas estrategias de sentido se dan también en las otras dos películas de la trilogía<sup>6</sup>.

En este orden de cosas, disentimos de la filiación que en los escasos estudios existentes sobre la obra de Vajda se ha establecido entre *Carne de horca* y *Tarde de toros*, una filiación motivada por el hecho de que, una vez asumida como tal la *trilogía con niño* y, por tanto, dejadas fuera del circuito del posible diálogo las películas que la conforman:

[*Carne de horca*] intenta aproximarse a un tema que el cine español ha tratado siempre de forma romántica y nada realista, pero mientras en aquel caso se trataba de un relato de aventuras, novelesco en el mejor sentido de la palabra, aquí la pretensión del cineasta es la de ofrecer un semi-documental que refleje con fidelidad los acontecimientos que giran alrededor de una corrida de toros. (LLINÁS, 1997: 110)

Antes bien, pensamos que en virtud de ese desplazamiento discursivo al que anteriormente hemos hecho referencia, el diálogo que ha de establecerse implica una filiación entre *Carne de horca* y *Mi tío Jacinto*, filiación que pivota sobre el punto de vista que vertebraba ambos films. Este posicionamiento requiere dejar a un lado, claro está, el corsé preestablecido que exige la trilogía, así como tener en

cuenta la relación de haz y envés que Vajda *detalla* entre *Tarde de toros* y *Mi tío Jacinto* a través de la puesta en escena. A partir de este último aspecto conviene matizar la supuesta pretensión documental de Vajda en *Tarde de toros* puesto que, si todo documental ficcionaliza su referente y toda ficción lo documenta (CARMONA, 1991), esa pretensión no agota su emergencia ni se substancia en el hecho de filmar una corrida *real*, ni de utilizar a toreros profesionales como protagonistas del film: Domingo Ortega, Antonio Bienvenida y Enrique Vera —los primeros dos, nombres capitales en el toreo del siglo XX—, sino en esa *complementariedad* de haz y envés que Vajda articula entre *Tarde de toros* y *Mi tío Jacinto*.

*Mi tío Jacinto* es el segundo film que Vajda rueda, tras el éxito de *Marcelino Pan y vino*, con Pablito Calvo. Coproducción hispano-italiana, con guión de A. Lazslo, José Santugini, Max Korner, Gian Luigi Rondi, y Ladislao Vajda sobre un relato de A. Lazslo, la película aborda una jornada en la vida de un niño, Pepote, junto a su tío, un novillero fracasado y alcohólico, mientras intentan encontrar las trescientas pesetas que cuesta el alquiler de un traje de luces, traje que permitirá a Jacinto participar esa noche en una *charlotada*. En este caso, nuestra lectura del film implica una doble contextualización: por un lado, la tradición tópica del *self-made man* aplicada al motivo de la fiesta nacional; por otro, la tradición literaria de nuestra picaresca<sup>7</sup>. Ambos aspectos, inextricablemente unidos entre sí, articularán una visión —esta vez desesperanzada y fatalista— sobre el Madrid de los excluidos de finales de los años cincuenta.

Con respecto al primer punto, Vajda juega a saber que la visión del mundo de los toros como metáfora del triunfo social («Más cornás da el hambre», dice la expresión popular) forma parte del horizonte de expectativas del imaginario espectral, lo que por contraste le permitirá ahondar en su mirada lúcida y crítica, al mostrar la otra cara de la moneda.

Por ello, si con *Mi tío Jacinto* Vajda decide mostrar el envés de la fiesta nacional, lo hace al año siguiente de



Figura 10. *Tarde de toros* (Ladislao Vajda, 1956)  
Figura 11. *Mi tío Jacinto* (Ladislao Vajda, 1956)

mostrar su haz con *Tarde de toros*, una exitosa película en color —144 días en cartel tras su estreno el 24 de febrero de 1956 y la obtención de la categoría de Interés Nacional—, que narra las faenas de tres toreros en una tarde triunfal en la Plaza de las Ventas. Se trata de un mundo en el que el éxito es el único destino posible, tanto para el viejo Fuentes, torero de renombre en horas bajas, como para Carmona y Rondeño II, respectivamente el torero de moda y el joven que esa tarde tomará la alternativa. De hecho su final lo constituye la imagen de la Plaza de las Ventas vacía mientras en la banda de sonido se escuchan los olés de la afición (figura 10): por el contrario, en *Mi tío Jacinto* lo que cierra el relato, ya fuera de la plaza, es la imagen de una estocada fingida sobre un árbol en la que el estoque ha sido sustituido por el paraguas, única posesión de Jacinto (figura 11). La historia,



Figuras 12, 14, 17, 18 y 20. *Tarde de toros* (Ladislao Vajda, 1956)  
Figuras 13, 15, 16, 19 y 21. *Mi tío Jacinto* (Ladislao Vajda, 1956)

no escenificada pero sí narrada, de los dos amigos, el Trepa y el espontáneo, es la única grieta a través de la cual entrever en *Tarde de toros* los derrumbaderos vitales por los que discurrirá *Mi tío Jacinto*.

Desde los mismos títulos de crédito, el diálogo que la puesta en escena establece entre ambas películas nos habla de esa relación complementaria haz/en-vés. Así, mientras en *Tarde de toros* nos encontraremos pinturas que remiten a los grabados goyescos y a la imagen del toreo en el siglo XVIII, esto es, el momento en que se establecen la técnica y las normas del arte de torear y, por tanto, se definen las corridas de toros en sentido moderno (figura 12), en *Mi tío Jacinto* es una tela raída y pobre (figura 13), perfectamente equiparable a los tejidos de las chaquetas que Jacinto y Pepote llevan en el film, la que sirve por todo fondo.

A ello se añade el plano con que se nos muestra la Plaza de las Ventas antes de la corrida. En *Tarde de toros* Vajda se decanta por un plano en contrapicado del numeroso público que acude a la plaza en una tarde de sol saliendo por la boca de metro (figura 14), mientras en *Mi tío Jacinto* encontraremos un contrapicado equivalente, pero esta vez serán solo Pepote, Jacinto vestido de torero y el ayudante del ropavejero, encargado de velar por la seguridad del traje de luces, los que se dirijan a la plaza, ya de noche (figura 15); enseguida Jacinto será acogido por niños que se burlan de él (figura 16), paralelamente, muchas admiradoras esperarán para un autógrafo del torero Carmona (figura 17).

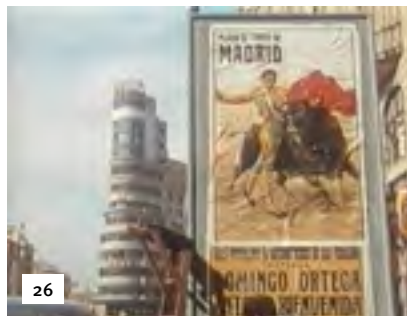
En idéntica dirección, los planos generales de ambas corridas, con la plaza llena de gente y de luz (figura 18), en el primer caso, y con una plaza semivacía e iluminada por los focos que se dirigen a los payasos de la *charlotada* en la que Jacinto hace de torero (figura 19), en el segundo, así como la misma entrada de los toreros en la plaza (figuras 20 y 21) o el momento en que Fuentes y Rondeño II realizan el tradicional ritual de vestirse para la corrida en ha-



bitaciones llenas de luz y al resguardo de cualquier carencia material (figuras 22 y 23), mientras en el caso de Jacinto encontraremos un fuerte contraste lumínico entre la oscuridad del plano en que Pepote lo ayuda a levantarse al encontrarlo tirado en el suelo, agotado tras intentar descargar un camión lleno de pesados sacos con objeto de conseguir el dinero para el traje (figura 24), y el sucesivo en la tienda del ropavejero, por corte directo, con un movimiento de cámara de abajo hacia arriba donde el espejo refleja, solo por unos instantes —tan marcados como fugaces—, la claridad brillante del traje de luces y a Jacinto puesto en pie (figura 25).

Con todo, es en las secuencias iniciales de ambas películas donde puede sintetizarse mejor su relación complementaria. *Tarde de toros* comienza con un plano general que subraya el supuesto *referente real* de lo filmado, con la pegada de un cartel en la Gran Vía de Madrid anunciando la corrida de D. Ortega, A. Bienvenida y Enrique Vera (figura 26); inmediatamente a este se superpone otro con los nombres de los toreros reales en la ficción (figura 27), y tras lograr un plano de detalle del nombre «Fuentes», por sobreimpresión pasamos al retrato, de grandes dimensiones, del diestro en cuestión, que está vistiéndose para la faena (figura 28).

Como negativo de este, otro comienzo: el largo periplo que hará la carta dirigida a Jacinto *novillero* con —después lo sabremos— el contrato para la charlotada. Desde el centro de la ciudad a los arrabales, atravesando barrios cada vez más pobres y alejados, la puesta en escena inicial de este descenso tendrá como colofón un único movimiento de cámara que, desde el cielo, baja hasta la chabola en la que viven Pepote y Jacinto, continuando en su interior con un marcado claroscuro y donde lo primero que veremos será, por sobreimpresión, un trozo de un viejo cartel de la Plaza de toros de Madrid, que reviste, junto a páginas de periódico, las paredes del interior. La cámara continuará su descenso hasta detenerse a ras de suelo, en el camastro



Figuras 22, 23, 26, 27 y 28. *Tarde de toros* (Ladislao Vajda, 1956)  
Figuras 24 y 25. *Mi tío Jacinto* (Ladislao Vajda, 1956)

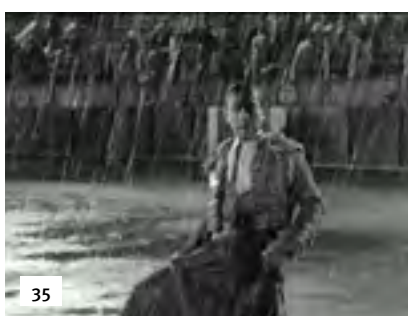
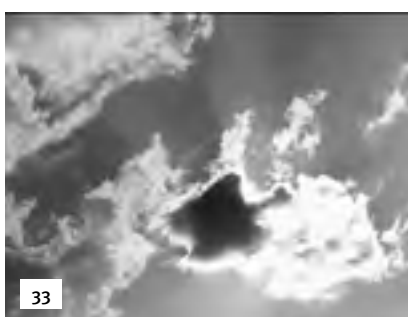
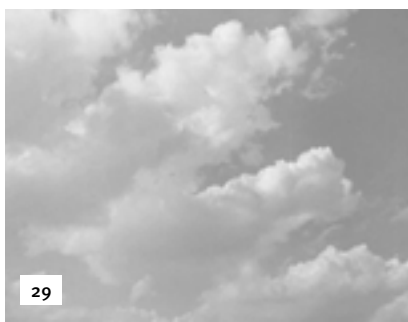
donde Pepote se despereza (figuras 29, 30, 31<sup>a</sup>, 31<sup>b</sup> y 31<sup>c</sup>).

Los dos planos del cielo sobre la chabola desde los que se inicia ese movimiento descendente no son gratuitos y marcan simbólicamente la inscripción de un elemento capital en el film: el estado de intemperie vital en que se encuentran las existencias de Jacinto y Pepote.

Tanto el comienzo como el final del día que narra la película están presididos por el estruendo de una lluvia de la que ni a Pepote ni a Jacinto les es dado guarecerse. Así, cuando el niño inicia su jornada yendo por la leche para el desayuno, Vajda se demora en un plano con grúa con un fuerte picado que nos muestra a Pepote corriendo bajo el aguacero (figura 32). La lluvia, que llegará a inundar la propia chabola, constituye para el niño la ocasión de disfrutar de su único espacio de juego, con un molinillo con el que hace presas. En el mundo al que pertenece no está previsto en ningún momento ese ámbito junto a otros niños; de hecho, cuando escampe (figura 33) y veamos a Pepote con otros críos mientras hace de toro de la corrida, no se tratará de un juego, sino de un intercambio en el que los otros le interpelan con un: «¿quieres ganar dinero?»; el niño aceptará el trabajo a cambio de unas monedas con las que conseguirá pagar la leche de ese día (figura 34). Simétricamente, la jornada se cierra con la *charlotada* en la que participa Jacinto, en la que nuevamente un fuerte aguacero hará su aparición vaciando la plaza y expulsándolo definitivamente del ruedo (figuras 35 y 36).

Esta intemperie vital que hilvana la película de principio a fin se inscribe en una tradición muy concreta: la proveniente de la novela picaresca de los siglos XVI y XVII.

Conviene, sin embargo, aclarar que este vínculo con la tradición —explícitamente señalado por la promoción del film con ocasión del estreno, al presentarlo como «Un nuevo Lazarillo de Tormes»— se hizo despojándolo de toda carga crítica dejándolo reducido a un melodrama costumbrista protago-



Figuras 29, 30, 31<sup>a</sup>, 31<sup>b</sup>, 31<sup>c</sup>, 32, 33, 34, 35 y 36. *Mi tío Jacinto* (Ladislao Vajda, 1956)

nizado por una estrella infantil<sup>8</sup>. Dicha reducción estaba en perfecta sintonía con la lectura sesgada y superficial que durante mucho tiempo se había hecho del universo de la novela picaresca.

En efecto, la lectura canónica hasta finales de los años cincuenta y los años sesenta, con la aparición de trabajos que cambiaban de manera radical las perspectivas interpretativas a partir de las nuevas propuestas de la teoría literaria<sup>9</sup>, tanto en lo que atañe al tema del punto de vista y la composición estructural del relato como en lo referido a las implicaciones socio-

políticas que se derivarían de los anteriores, se basaba en dos asunciones básicas: 1) la centralidad del personaje del pícaro, cuyas andanzas y desventuras serían el verdadero asunto de cada novela y 2) el carácter secundario de todo lo demás —movilidad, servicio a varios amos, etc.—, incluido el referente histórico-social

de la España de los Austrias, reducido casi a un mero telón de fondo. El resultado de esta simplificación era que el pícaro, que algún hispanista notable llegó incluso a definir como «delincuente»<sup>10</sup> está contemplado, no solo como alguien de escasa catadura moral, dispuesto a vivir sin trabajar, mediante el robo y el engaño, sino, lo que resulta más llamativo, como ejemplificación de una conducta individualizada, elidiendo el carácter sistémico de la corrupción del entorno, que hacía de aquél, al mismo tiempo, una víctima y una parte integrante. Como afirma Talens (1975), el pícaro solo actúa como tal en tanto en cuanto no tiene otra salida para ascender socialmente, esto es, lo es como medio de integración de clase. No otra cosa significaba aquella alusión del Lázaro de Tormes maduro cuando habla del consejo que recibió de niño para que se arrimara «a los buenos», entendiendo como tales aquellos —ladrones, estafadores, mentirosos— que interiorizan la falsedad y

la mentira que rigen las convenciones sociales.

Desde esa perspectiva el recorrido existencial de Lázaro, Guzmán y Pablos —para citar los tres personajes fundamentales del género— no es sino una suerte de viaje iniciático o de aprendizaje, lo que Bělič denominó «escuela de la vida» (1969). Cada una de las etapas con los sucesivos amos le sirve a cada protagonista para interiorizar que solo se escapa a la maldición de la miseria asumiendo la lógica perversa y sistémica del mundo y actuando en conse-

## **Cuando, en la secuencia final de *Mi tío Jacinto*, Pepote y Jacinto vuelvan a su ċhabola, nada habrá cambiado, salvo la conciencia de los personajes sobre las dificultades que encontrarán para salir del círculo vicioso de su marginalidad**

cuencia.

Si asumimos, como es nuestro caso, esta manera de entender la lectura del modelo narrativo áureo, *Mi tío Jacinto* sí remitiría al universo de la novela picaresca de los siglos XVI y XVII. Pepote, verdadero aprendiz en la escuela de la vida, acabará la jornada que resume el lapso temporal de la historia convertido en alguien que accede a la fuerza a una madurez que no le correspondería por edad, al haberle sido negado el mundo inocente de la infancia y que ahora, igual que Lazarillo o Pablillo en las novelas del Siglo de Oro, aprende a moverse con soltura, imitando lo que ve en las calles del Rastro madrileño, espacio fílmico elegido por Vajda para hacer patente la presencia de un mundo donde no solo robar, sisar o estafar es la forma de sobrevivir, sino donde no parece haber otro modo de conseguirlo. El músico callejero (Julio Sanjuán) y el timador (Miguel Gila) serán los equivalentes de los amos en la tradición literaria clásica. De hecho, es la enseñanza

del primero (cuya voz suena en *off* en la escena en que intenta que el trapero le ceda fiado el traje de luces para su tío) la que le permite conseguir su propósito. También Jacinto —cuyo sentido del honor y la dignidad, como atributos propios del pobre, el propio Vajda relaciona en el guion con la tradición calderoniana—, vivirá su particular proceso de aprendizaje, desde el desapego que muestra con su sobrino en el inicio del film hasta el derrumbe que representa la decisión del comisario de arrebatarle su custodia. Si Pepote asume, en cierto

modo, las características del pícaro en cuanto tal, Jacinto hará otro tanto con las del estudiante del *Buscón*, que arrojaba migas de pan sobre su traje para que los demás no se apercibieran de que no había comido. Como él, Jacinto, ya decidido a participar en prácticas que intuye o sabe ilegales —la estafa de las obras de arte, la venta fraudulenta de re-

lojes de imitación—, está preocupado por la imagen que ofrece a los demás y, por ello, intenta mantener su dignidad dentro de unos límites asumibles, como cuando se enfrenta al timador para que no manipule al niño, o cuando no admite que este exagere diciendo que tiene hambre o cuando se avergüenza de que la lotera haya podido percatarse de que está a punto de convertirse en uno más de los sinvergüenzas que pululan en esa especie de patio de Monipodio del *Rinconete* y *Cortadillo* cervantino que es el Rastro madrileño.

Queda así de manifiesto la centralidad de un contexto nada favorable a vivir dentro de la ley si no se poseen de antemano los medios para hacerlo en la organización significativa del film. El verdadero espacio que la película pone en escena no es tanto *une tranche de vie* de los dos personajes principales, sino el carácter sistémico y opresor de un entorno que muestra con absoluta contundencia la lógica que mueve y sostiene el edificio social,



Figuras 37 y 38. *Mi tío Jacinto* (Ladislao Vajda, 1956)

donde incluso las fuerzas del orden — señalemos el escrito a la superioridad que está dictando el comisario sobre las deplorables condiciones higiénicas de la comisaría— son, como aquellos, víctimas y participantes. Cuando, en la secuencia final de la película, Pepote y Jacinto vuelvan a su chabola, nada habrá cambiado, salvo la conciencia de los personajes sobre las dificultades que encontrarán para salir del círculo vicioso de su marginalidad.

En este orden de cosas, resulta significativa la diferencia existente en una secuencia muy concreta, pero fundamental para reafirmarnos en nuestra lectura, entre el guion oficial de la película (que era lo que debía ser aprobado por la censura), la versión efectivamente rodada y la copia que hoy circula en formato DVD (editada por Mercury Films en 2007 y donde el nombre del director aparece erróneamente citado como Ladislao Vajda). Nos referimos a la secuencia final que muestra la inconclusa *charlotada* en la Plaza de las Ventas. En el guion depositado en la Biblioteca Nacional no se especifica en ningún momento que Pepote acceda a la plaza, por lo que si no presencia el fracaso de su tío, no puede hacerle creer que ignora lo ocurrido. Sin embargo, en la copia en VHS comercializada a finales de la década de los años ochenta (supuestamente a partir de la copia que se utilizó para el estreno), la cámara muestra en un muy explícito *travelling* el ros-

tro triste de Pepote, sentado en medio de una multitud que ríe y se burla de lo que sucede en el ruedo (figuras 37 y 38).

El plano ha desaparecido de la nueva versión digital. Obviamente, la presencia o ausencia de ese plano cambia todo el sentido del film. En el primer caso, se nos muestra a un niño que, de modo prematuro, ha aprendido las ventajas de fingir —permitiendo que su tío fantasee en su presencia sobre un triunfo que él sabe inexistente. En el segundo, su inocencia queda a salvo, tal y como las reglas del melodrama y el final feliz preconizaban. Desde nuestro punto de vista, es la primera aproximación la que muestra la lógica del film, emergiendo así el régimen de relaciones discursivas comunes con *Carne de horca*. ■

## Notas

\* Las imágenes que ilustran este artículo han sido aportadas voluntariamente por los autores del texto; es su responsabilidad el haber localizado y solicitado los derechos de reproducción al propietario del *copyright*. 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 «Lucero fuego en los ojos / y oro en el corazón / jamás pudieron vencerle / solo pudo la traición. / Sierra Morena le llora / los pobres rezan por él / y las mujeres lo adoran / pensando en su querer: / Ay Lucero, quiéreme».
- 2 «Con sangre de un inocente / cegado por la ambición / Lucero bandido noble / jamás sus

manos manchó. / La luna le tiene envidia / la sierra vela por él / y en un cortijo una moza / suspira por su querer: / Ay Lucero, quiéreme».

- 3 «El favor de los humildes / tu nobleza conquistó / Lucero corazón de oro / aun lloran tu perdición / la luna canta su gloria / los pobres rezan por él / repite el aire en la sierra / el ruego de una mujer: / Ay Lucero, quiéreme».
- 4 «La luna ya no es de plata / el viento gime por él / en un cortijo enlutada / suspira así una mujer: / Ay Lucero, quiéreme».
- 5 El motivo del asalto a la diligencia, las constantes persecuciones a caballo con prolongados tiroteos, los duelos entre bandidos (o pistoleros), o los paisajes áridos de la Sierra de Ronda, marcan la evidente superposición de una tradición foránea, la del *western* hollywoodense, sobre el sustrato de la tradición popular autóctona de los romances de ciego (LLINÁS, 1997 y VIDAL ESTÉVEZ, 1997).
- 6 En *Marcelino pan y vino*, basada en un relato original de José María Sánchez Silva, Vajda subvierte el sentido de la historia mediante procedimientos y cambios, en apariencia mínimos, pero que diluyen el carácter supuestamente *naturalizado* de los acontecimientos de la anécdota argumental. Si en el cuento encontramos un narrador omnisciente que nunca cuestiona la verosimilitud de su relato, en la película todo está contado muchos años después de los supuestos hechos (ocurridos al término de la Guerra de Independencia) desde la perspectiva de un fraile que acude al lecho de una niña moribunda con la intención de paliar el miedo a



la muerte de la pequeña, ya que la vida de Marcelino puede servirle como ejemplo de un idéntico final feliz en el más allá del cielo. Su carácter de *enxiemplum* lo acerca a la parábola, antes que a la crónica. Por lo demás, la distancia temporal entre el tiempo de la narración y el tiempo del relato permite sospechar que el supuesto milagro cuyo aniversario se celebra no sea, en realidad, sino una leyenda urbana iniciada cuando el único testigo (Fray Papilla en el film), que ha visto la más que probable muerte por accidente de Marcelino a causa del derrumbe del crucifijo en el destartado desván, decide convertirla en testimonio de una oportuna muestra de la bondad divina, que no solo demostraría la fuerza de la fe sino que evita, como consecuencia, el desahucio de los frailes, algo con que los había amenazado el alcalde liberal (en otro giro de caracterización que distancia el film del relato original). El carácter económico del conflicto y el tema de la propiedad —inexistentes en el cuento— vertebran una historia donde lo que se expone es el uso de la religión para una suerte de reamortización por parte de la institución eclesiástica. Es relevante subrayar que, explícita o implícitamente, la dimensión política siempre emerge en la filmografía de Vajda y, en el caso que nos ocupa, también en su aproximación al material literario, incorporando el carácter económico del conflicto y el tema de la propiedad como eje articulador de la historia. Aunque no es objeto del presente artículo, conviene recordar que en la mayor parte de la escasa bibliografía dedicada al cineasta esta dimensión política es sustituida por una lectura de corte simbólico-metafísico que clausura toda posibilidad de interpretación materialista como la que aquí proponemos. Como ejemplo más representativo de esa deriva baste recordar los trabajos de Jolivet, que ha insistido reiteradamente en sus diferentes textos en esta vía superficial y reduccionista (1999; 2003; 2010; 2012 y 2014). En uno de sus escritos dedicados al film *Marcelino Pan y vino* la autora llega a afirmar que: «En su ópera prima con el aprendiz de actor Pablito Calvo, Vajda enriqueció con aportes de su propia subjetividad creadora (*sic*) el famoso cuento de José María Sánchez Silva, ahondando sus potencialidades ficcionales y plasmando en imágenes la dimensión antropológica de lo

sagrado y del mito [...] El gran mérito de esta creación cinematográfica hispánica es haber logrado proponer una verdadera representación simbólica del lugar donde se engendra al hijo, un *desván-útero-tabernáculo del misterio ontológico*» (JOLIVET, 2003: 31, 234, cursivas en el original).

Por su parte, *Un ángel pasó por Brooklyn* vuelve a utilizar la mediación —esta vez más explícita— del *enxiemplum*, a través de una suerte de cuento para niños, donde un malvado, usurero y poco escrupuloso abogado se aprovecha de una comunidad de vecinos en un improbable barrio de Nueva York. Golpeado por la maldición de una vieja vagabunda —cruce de hada buena y bruja malvada— se convierte en perro y aprenderá los principios de la solidaridad y el amor al prójimo desde su nueva posición de excluido del mundo. Tratado como un animal, acabará comprendiendo que hay otros valores, aparte del poder y el dinero, algo que, por contraste, rige en la realidad de la que acaba de ser expulsado. El tono en ocasiones sensiblero y un punto sentimental de la película no excluye, sin embargo, la centralidad en la mirada del cineasta del carácter sistémico y profundamente inmoral de una sociedad regida por el patrón del dinero, algo que ejemplariza, no por casualidad, en EE UU, la patria supuesta de las oportunidades individuales.

7 En mestizaje con el neorrealismo italiano (LLINÁS, 1997: 115; ZUMALDE, en PÉREZ PERUCHA 1997: 397).

8 Este material puede consultarse, junto al guion de la película, en la Biblioteca Nacional, con la signatura T/36147: «*Mi tío Jacinto*, relato novelesco de Andrés Lazslo filmado por el director Ladislao Vajda, ofrece una certera visión de la actual picaresca española, no solo en sus personajes centrales, el ex novillero Jacinto y su sobrinito Pepote, sino en cuanto se mueve alrededor de estos, desde el falsificador de cuadros hasta el timador callejero, dignos descendientes de los tipos que animan las páginas de nuestras mejores novelas del Siglo de Oro. Este simpático y avisado Pepote creado por Lazslo e interpretado por nuestra infantil estrella cinematográfica Pablito Calvo, es como aquel Lázaro nacido en la ribera del Tormes, del que tomó nombre: compañero inseparable de su tío, sabe de la vida difícil y es ducho

en las modernas artes de trapecería; sin su ayuda, ni Jacinto conseguiría el “traje de luces” que necesita, ni Paco lograría tan fácilmente vender un reloj malo como si fuera bueno. Pepote es un moderno Lazarillo de Tormes que entre sonrisas, sin amargura, nos refiere sus inquietudes y sus aventuras en los maravillosos fotogramas de *Mi tío Jacinto*».

9 Cf. BLANCO AGUINAGA (1957: 313-342); BÉLIČ (1969); RICO (1970); TIerno GALVÁN (1974) o TALENS (1975).

10 Cf. PARKER (1967).

## Bibliografía

- BÉLIČ, Oldřich (1969). *Análisis estructural de textos hispanos*. Madrid: Prensa Española.
- BLANCO AGUINAGA, Carlos (1957). Cervantes y la picaresca. Notas sobre dos formas de realismo. *Nueva Revista de Filología Hispánica*, vol. XI, 313-342.
- CARMONA, Ramón (1991). *Cómo se comenta un texto fílmico*. Madrid: Cátedra.
- HOBBSAWM, Eric (2011). *Bandidos*. Barcelona: Crítica.
- JOLIVET, Anne-Marie (1999). *Marcelino pan y vino: l'enfant au cinéma dans l'Espagne franquiste*. Tesis doctoral. París: Université Paris-Sorbonne.
- (2003). *La pantalla subliminal, Marcelino Pan y Vino según Vajda*. Valencia: Ediciones de la Filmoteca.
- (2010). Miradas fílmicas españolas, cine con niño y otro cine para representar y trascender la infancia. Comunicación presentada en Casa de Velázquez el 21 de septiembre de 2010.
- (2012). Détails et déchirures: regards filmiques sur l'enfant et l'abus de pouvoir à l'époque franquiste. En D. ARGELES et al. (dir.), *Le détail à l'oeuvre. Individu et histoire Dans la littérature, les arts et les discours* (pp. 145-162). Palaiseau: École Polytechnique.
- (2014). Le policier, la petite fille et le serial killer. En B. CASTANON-AKRAMI et al. (dir.), *Littérature et cinéma. Allers-retours*. Villeurbanne: Orbis Tertius, pp. 147-162.
- LLINÁS, FRANCISCO (1997). *Ladislao Vajda. El húngaro errante*. Valladolid: Seminci.
- PARKER, Alexander A. (1967). *Literature and the Delinquent*. Edinburgo: Edinburgh University Press.
- PÉREZ PERUCHA, Julio (1997). *Antología crítica del cine español (1906-1995)*. Madrid: Cátedra.

- RICO, Francisco (1970). *La novela picaresca y el punto de vista*. Barcelona: Seix-Barral.
- TALENS, Jenaro (1975). *Novela picaresca y práctica de la transgresión*. Madrid: Júcar.
- TIERNO GALVÁN, Enrique (1974). *Sobre la novela picaresca y otros ensayos*. Madrid: Tecnos.
- VIDAL ESTÉVEZ, Manuel (1997). Carne de horca. En Julio PÉREZ PERUCHA, *Antología crítica del cine español (1906-1995)* (pp. 340-342). Madrid: Cátedra.
- ZUMALDE, Imanol (1997). *Mi tío Jacinto*. En Julio PÉREZ PERUCHA, *Antología crítica del cine español (1906-1995)* (pp. 395-397). Madrid: Cátedra.
- ZUNZUNEGUI, Santos (2002). *Historias de España. De qué hablamos cuando hablamos de cine español*. Valencia: Ediciones de la Filmoteca.

Susana Díaz es Laureata en Lingue e Letterature Straniere por la Università degli Studi di Firenze (Italia) y Doctora Europea en Teoría de la Literatura por la UNED. Ha sido profesora en la Faculté des Lettres de la Université de Genève y en la actualidad lo es en el Departamento de Periodismo y Comunicación Audiovisual de la Universidad Carlos III de Madrid. Entre sus últimas publicaciones cabe citar *Modos de mostrar. Encuentros con Lola Salvador* (2012) y *Vigilados. Wikileaks o las nuevas fronteras de la información* (2013).

Manuel de la Fuente es profesor contratado doctor en Comunicación Audiovisual en la Universitat de València (UV). Su principal línea de investigación se centra en el análisis discursivo de las distintas manifestaciones de la cultura popular. Ha publicado los libros *Frank Zappa en el infierno. El rock como movilización para la disidencia política* (2006) y *Madrid. Visiones cinematográficas de los años 1950 a los años 2000* (2014).

# the searchers

Una colección de Shangrila Textos Aparte

Primer volumen en colaboración con

L'Atalante. Revista de estudios cinematográficos

## PÁGINAS PASADERAS

Estudios contemporáneos sobre la escritura del guion

Coordinado por Rebeca Romero Escrivá y Miguel Machalski



Prólogo

**Rebeca Romero Escrivá**

Película soñada y espejismo-literatura: controversia sobre la ubicación del guion en los géneros literarios

**Antonio Sánchez-Escalonilla**

Las múltiples caras del guion

**Miguel Machalski**

La faceta multidisciplinar del guionista en el nuevo marco audiovisual

**Michel Marx**

El nuevo guion cinematográfico: vanguardias narrativas y rebelión creativa para el cine del siglo XXI

**Jordi Revert**

El guion de estructura narrativa no lineal en el cine de ficción

**Ignacio Palau**

Homero en el ciberespacio

**Daniel Tubau**

El guion en los videojuegos. De las *background stories* a las películas interactivas

**Marta Martín Núñez / Carlos Planes Cortell / Violeta Martín Núñez**

Prometer y nada más. *Shapeshifters* y circunloquios en la creación de las series de televisión

**Iván Bort Gual / Shaila García Catalán**

Las fuentes de las historias

**Alicia Scherson Vicencio**

Sistema emocional de zonas

**Rafael Ballester Añón**

La mirada continua. Narrador y punto de vista

**Julio Rojas**

Guion y teoría: tan lejos, tan cerca

**Arturo Arango**

Epílogo. El guionista como crítico. Algunas observaciones sobre la importancia de educar la mirada

**Javier Alcoriza**

**L'ATALANTE**  
REVISTA DE ESTUDIOS CINEMATOGRÁFICOS

shangrila  
TEXTOS APARTE

# DIA LO GUE



In spite of the exceptional importance of the work of José Antonio Nieves Conde (Segovia, 1911-Madrid, 2006) in the history of Spanish cinema of the first two decades of the post-war period, it seems that he has yet to be given the recognition he deserves, apart from the extraordinary *historiographical popularity* of *Furrows* (*Surcos*). The great commercial success of the supposedly and apparently clerical *Reckless* (*Balarrasa*, 1950) to a lesser extent, and, above all, the crisis provoked by the decisive support given to *Furrows* by the then Director General of Cinematography José María García Escudero and the National Interest classification it received to the detriment of *Dawn of America* (*Alba de América*, Juan de Orduña, 1951), which later, as a result of the uproar, was also awarded this classification, and its (also supposed) relationship with Italian neorealism, as well as the screenwriter's and filmmaker's connection with Falangism (obviating the fact that such a heterogeneous *formation* would inevitably give rise to some of the most profound and critical films of the period), have focused the *institutional historiographical discourse* on Spanish cinema to such an extent that much of the cinematic value of this work (not to mention the rest of his filmography) has been buried under clichés, *a priori* assumptions or, sometimes, serious errors of evaluation. If *Furrows* belonged, albeit *ambiguously*, to a no less hazy *dis-*

*sident* cinema, which, formulated this way as a unitary *whole*, prevents any real comprehension of texts that are as suggestive as they are unique, and, therefore, different (and even opposed) to one another, his films as a whole were lost in a supposed mediocrity from which could be rescued, at most, a few brush-strokes, a few isolated details that reveal the "technical proficiency" or "professional value" of this filmmaker.

Convinced of the lack of rigour of such assertions, as self-interested as they are repeated, and in the context of the preparation of a volume for the Ourense International Independent Film Festival, we (José Luis Castro de Paz and Julio Pérez Perucha) interviewed the filmmaker (who was 92 at that time) in his house in Madrid on 25 September 2003. Our intention was to delve into the filmography of this member of what some keen observers by the end of the 1940s were already calling the "reformist generation", made up of filmmakers of around the same age, who began working in Spanish cinema immediately after World War II: Manuel Mur Oti, Antonio del Amo, Arturo Ruiz Castillo and Nieves Conde himself. In spite of their obvious differences, this group—to which we could tangentially add such names as Carlos Serrano de Osma or Enrique Gómez—shows a remarkable homogeneity which, for different reasons, makes it especially appealing to historians.

## Realism(s), tragedy and irony

### JOSÉ ANTONIO NIEVES CONDE

*“It could have been and it wasn’t. I wanted to make films, but I found myself in a world where the director was constantly being pushed around”*

Firstly, but definitively for understanding the difficulties of his work—which reached its critical period between the end of the 1940s (Nieves Conde debuted in 1946 with *Path Unknown* [Senda ignorada], which is lost today) and the appearance of the so-called New Spanish Cinema at the beginning of the *swinging sixties*—is the fact that he belongs to a *bridge generation* between the first wave of the post-war period (including the filmmakers most committed to building an official cinema that could be defined as Francoist, an endeavour with uneven results) and the generation that appeared at the beginning of the fifties, under the influence—sometimes hypertrophied by historiography—of Italian neo-realism. Nevertheless, this influence also logically touched this “reformist generation”, producing in some works an attractive hybrid between the industrial and rhetorical modes of Spanish post-war cinema and certain achievements of this movement. Secondly, and as a remarkable *unifying* feature, a singular concern for the formal work of the films; a concern that is visible in such semantically and formally daring titles as *The Anxieties of Shanti Andía* (Las inquietudes de Shanti Andía, Arturo Ruiz Castillo, 1946), *Ninety Minutes* (Noventa minutos, Antonio del Amo, 1949) or *A Man on the Road* (Un hombre va por el camino, Manuel Mur Oti, 1949). And no less could be said in this regard of Nieves Conde’s first film, *Anguish* (Angustia, 1947), which, through calculated staging shot brilliantly by José F. Aguayo, tells a Hitchcock-esque story with a psychoanalytical hue, which could be related to a line that he would develop in later films, such as the obsessive and sinister *Red Fish* (Los peces rojos, 1955), one of its greatest expressions. Finally, but no less importantly, the maintenance of a far from negligible level of personal dissidence with the official structures

within which he worked, which he sometimes expresses in his films, and which has its origins as much in the republicanism of some filmmakers (Ruiz Castillo, Mur Oti, del Amo) as in the “genuine” Hedilla-style Falangism of Nieves Conde himself. It is thus not surprising, for example, that Nieves Conde saw in the cultivated writer Torrente Ballester, also a Falangist, a solid ally in his endeavour to establish a *social cinema*—with the agricultural problem as the axis of some of his important offerings, as was the case of other members of the reformist generation—which, taking the experience of what other films had already attempted, with considerable difficulty, in the period immediately after the Spanish Civil War, would reveal *from within* what the longed-for revolutionary *new dawn* of his nation had turned into. The complexity of this project (of which the conflictive *Furrows* is the extraordinary centrepiece) gives a clear reflection of the troubled subsequent development of his filmography which this interview makes clear, especially from the equally problematic and exceptional *The Tenant* (El inquilino, 1957), a devastating anti-Francoist discourse which, after its sudden withdrawal from the theatres following its release in 1958, was only allowed to be re-released (following edits and additions that still do not manage to undermine its incendiary message) in 1963, until its withdrawal after the appearance of *Beyond Desire* (Más allá del deseo, 1976). In spite of this, his collaboration since 1971 with José Frade would still result in some timely films, sometimes of significant interest, such as *Marta* (Las señoritas de mala compañía, 1973) or *The Marriage Revolution* (La revolución matrimonial, 1974, with a screenplay by Rafael Azcona). ■

## PROFESSIONAL TRANSFORMATIONS

**The first film of yours that we still have today—and which, by the way, endures extraordinarily well—is *Angustia* (1947), a story whose staging, on top of a fairly clichéd plot of the “who dunnit?” variety, builds a claustrophobic, stifling, oppressive atmosphere, closely linked to other films of the period, like Edgar Neville’s *Nada* (1947), for example. The characters often appear in frame boxed in by bars, by windows... elements that you would develop successfully in subsequent films.**

It’s true. The set was made by the architect Antonio Labrada, the same one who then did the set for *Furrows* (*Surcos*, 1951). The whole house was built inside the set. Also, for the element of the windows, I told José F. Aguayo, the cinematographer: “Look, I want these elements to acquire visual importance, to be noticed...” In that period it could be done because we filmed inside a set; today this has disappeared. Everything is like a uniform spot of colour... I don’t know if this treatment of space and light could be a metaphor for the situation in Spain in the post-war era; I don’t think so. It was a temporary circumstance. It was the type of cinema being done. It was a genre that existed then... Spanish directors, whether we like it or not, were wrapped up in the American tradition, which dominated. But the Italian and French films were similar too... Visconti’s first film, for example... a type of cinema creates a style of lighting, and this style at the same time has an effect on another one... American cinema changed at a certain moment, thanks to Lee Garmes. This new style, with its variations, reached Gabriel Figueroa... the French imitated it, too... but it was basically a copy of the German style. A constant contrast between light and shadow... colour has been what has destroyed all that work. The other day I was watching *Shadow of a Doubt* (1943) by Alfred Hitchcock, an impressive work in black and white. People who write about my films mention the influence of Hitchcock or Robert Siodmak. It is undeniable that Hitchcock was very important then, and especially the English Hitchcock. The wonderful ending of *Jamaica Inn* (1939)... fortunately, he was able to maintain a constant, something I tried to do, but couldn’t... I needed food. I had to eat.

**You were the assistant director of *Black Jack* (Julien Duvivier, 1950)**

I had watched some of Duvivier’s films and I liked them, as much the first ones he made after the introduction of sound as the ones after *Golgotha* (1935) or *La Bandera* (1935), and, at one point, the Spanish editor Margarita Ochoa told me that they were planning a co-production... I put my name in to take part, I wanted to see how Duvivier filmed. We went to Palma de Mallorca and the conclusion I drew from the whole thing is not to make a co-production.



Shooting of *Angustia* (José Antonio Nieves Conde, 1947). Origin: Archivo Gráfico de la Filmoteca Española. Courtesy of Juan Miguel Nieves

The producer was a Spaniard who worked in dubbing. The American part was handled by a Jewish producer... I was practically a spectator, I attended the shootings... I made good friends with the actor George Sanders, who spoke good Spanish, because his father had been a tobacco sales representative in Buenos Aires. The impression I got was that Duvivier was doing it out of necessity, but he couldn’t have cared less about it... After Palma de Mallorca they filmed here, at C.E.A., and then, the only thing I did was some scenes of corpses and, as we had a kind of well here to do them, we filmed a few things according to his instructions and they sent it to him to see if he liked them. But who really made the decisions was the French editor, Marthe Porcin... I remember that, when I received the script by Charles Spaak, it seemed extraordinary to me, but then it had nothing to do with what was filmed; they transformed it “American-style”, they lengthened it and it lost its force.

**We asked that question partly because you once said that you had had the script of *Mister Arkadin/Confidential Report* (1955) by Orson Welles in your hands, and we thought that you might initially have been considered as assistant director, a role that was ultimately given to Julio Fleichner.**

No. What happened was that, taking advantage of the fact that one of Welles’ assistants was Margarita Ochoa’s son, I was watching him filming. He was introduced to me. Then, I met him in Seville, riding around on a horse and carriage, and with a huge cigar, and he greeted me warmly... But it is true that they gave me the draft script of *Mister Arkadin*, but what I really saw was the Swiss co-producers’ version, which was different from the Spanish one.





Shooting of *Llegada la noche* (José Antonio Nieves Conde, 1949). Origin: Archivo Gráfico de la Filmoteca Española. Cesión de Juan Miguel Nieves

**Historiographically, *Furrows* is, without a doubt, the most renowned film of your filmography, and *Reckless* (Balarra-sa) is the most popular and best-known with audiences. However, we have had the good fortune recently to see *Todos somos necesarios* (1956), an excellent film which, in a way, underscores the willingness to take a position at the limits of what could be said at that time, of discussing uncomfortable issues, bringing up social problems in the Spain of the fifties, and in a way that is brave and supportive of the disadvantaged.**

Yes, although really it is a film of circumstances, after *Los peces rojos*, with the same producers, with the Opus... The screenplay was written by Faustino González-Aller, a scriptwriter who then went to Cuba and to the United States as a correspondent for the agency EFE. I liked the story. I think it was a good film; of the films I have made, it was the one I felt most at ease and freest with. As you know, it was screened at the San Sebastián Festival, where it received awards for best film and best direction.

**In some of your films—especially in *Los peces rojos* and also in *Rebeldía*—there are some formal devices that seem to be taken directly from Luis Buñuel’s filmography, and specifically from *Él* (1952), a film that you have said more than once that you watched with great interest. It is obvious, at least, that the presence of Delia Garcés and Arturo de Córdova in the cast of these films might have something to do with it.**

I don’t think that Buñuel had any kind of formal influence on my films at all. I briefly met Buñuel in 1935, before the Civil War. He was introduced to me by Sáenz de Heredia. Buñuel’s assistant on his first film, *Urgoiti*, Domingo Pruna, had come from France as his assistant. And then

he was my assistant on *Furrows* and on *Los peces rojos*. And he was the one who told me how they filmed at the Filmófono studios from an extremely strict and detailed script, which was followed to the letter. Actually, I saw *Él* in Cannes; what attracted my attention the most was Arturo de Córdova. When I made *Los peces rojos* in collaboration with the Mexican Wallestein, the Arturo de Córdova’s name came up, along with the memory of his tense and obsessive character. It was Arturo who later told me how they filmed the scene in *Él* where the protagonist rides a bicycle in his underpants; that is not in the film now, but I saw it at Cannes... Buñuel said that the critics were going to love it, because it was nonsense.

**And Delia Garcés, the star of *Rebeldía*, is Córdova’s partner in *Él*.**

Well, I didn’t even remember. She was an Argentine actress who was married to Zubiría, a director of Basque ancestry. The only thing I remember now about *Él* is that sequence that ended up not being in the film. I also remember that Arturo told me that he was keen on a novel by Ricardo León, an employee at the Bank of Spain who wrote very pro-Catholic novels. Arturo de Córdova was prepared to put money into the production and he offered it to Buñuel, but Buñuel rejected it because he was a right-wing writer and that could cause him problems... And that story is practically the story of *Viridiana* (1961). It’s about a man who goes around the countryside preaching, like a kind of lay priest. At one point he goes into a house where there is a bunch of insane people... and he practically converts them all... The story of the house with the beggars in *Viridiana* is already there. Buñuel filmed it at the same studio where I was filming *Prohibido enamorarse* (1961); on the next set. I remember, as a curiosity, that his assistants asked us for a bed from our set to use on theirs. But in reality, I have never been all that interested in Buñuel. I had the patience to watch almost all his films on television in order, one after another, and the one that really interests me is *Los olvidados* (1950), the first part of Pío Baroja’s *La busca*. Don’t imagine for a second that they wasted time on trifles, either Buñuel or his scriptwriter Julio Alejandro, when they were looking for material. I like many of his films, but he often went over the top.

**As you know, there is a tendency to speak of “film auteurs”, who take charge not only of the direction, but also of the script and, sometimes, of the production, and of “filmmakers” or “directors”—who are given the material a material and have to do what they can with it. In this sense, you would be a filmmaker, but actually there are filmmakers like you (Hitchcock or Douglas Sirk in the U.S.) who aren’t usually recognised as co-scriptwriters, but who work with the scriptwriter either during the shooting**

**or before it. We would like you to tell us a little bit about your relationships with the scriptwriters.**

For example, in *Furrows*, a paradigmatic case, Natividad Zaro gave us a few sheets, about twenty foolscaps, of a *sainete*-style farce. I read it and I told her I was interested, but that it had to be changed. I was interested in the idea, but not the story. "If you wish to make this film," I told her, "I need absolute freedom to hire the scriptwriter I want and rewrite the film from top to bottom." When I told her that the scriptwriter chosen was Gonzalo Torrente Ballester there was no problem. Gonzalo was a friend of Eugenio Montes. We began with the idea of some poor peasants who come to Madrid, and starting from there we had to create a new story. Between the two of us we discussed every situation. It was a kind of co-writing. He had a bigger influence on the words than I did, but I was the director and I corrected him and marked out the direction to take. The film was shot on the third version of the script, but even there, we corrected and changed things. I think I still have the first version, but not the final one.

***Don Lucio y el hermano Pío* (1960) also had an original script that was extensively modified.**

The script was by Jaime García Herranz and the truth is nobody could stand it. It was woeful, weepy. Highly sentimental. It needed to be transformed and given life. The scriptwriter, logically, loved what he had done, and when we showed him the film he stood up, furious, and walked out. I met Pío Ballesteros and he generously promised to collaborate with me, even without being credited. We started with the central ideas in general terms. Then we shot and discussed the development of the story, and what we would film the next day. We made some copies and delivered them to Pepe Isbert and Tony Leblanc, who adapted without any problem. The script was constructed as we filmed. We constructed different episodes, little stories, without any order. We had to warn the editor about the lack of continuity. It had to be created. I gave it to the editor.

**The curious thing—since we do not know the original script by García Herranz—is that the film ends with a documentary aftertaste of the Madrid of the era, of El Rastro, and of certain situations and relationships among the characters which, in a way, make it resemble *Furrows*. In this sense, the work of re-reading that script, of bringing it home, is quite remarkable.**

Yes, yes. Talking about films about Madrid, *Don Lucio y el hermano Pío* also had to be screened together with *Furrows*. It is a real Madrid film: El Rastro, its characters and types... Also close to *The Tenant* (El inquilino, 1957), another *documentary* about Madrid. It is a film I like. When we watched it after the end of the editing, both Alfredo Fraile and Arturo González (the producer, Cesáreo's brother) were very happy with the transformation we'd pulled

off. And it did quite well. The story was based on a tradition I remember when I was a boy in Segovia: carrying religious statues home. To my house they brought "the Virgin of I don't know what"... That also happened in Madrid. It was the basis of the story. García Herranz was a very Valencian scriptwriter, very CIFESA, very sentimental... I discussed it with Fraile and we decided on all those changes. In the end he was afraid that not everything we'd filmed would stick. But I told him not to worry. There is an old saying that in cinema everything sticks.

**There is, by the way, an old Castilian proverb, as you know, about the opportunist who "wants to keep the saint and the alms as well." It describes exactly the character played by Tony Leblanc. It is a very funny depiction of the proverb, and it takes us to an aspect, which has to do with *Furrows* and also with *Don Lucio*, which is the aspect of Cervantes' influence. The structure of *Don Lucio y el hermano Pío*, for example, has an accumulation of interludes typical of Cervantes' theatre.**

Yes, yes. That's it exactly. And it also has to do, in another sense, with Pérez Galdós, with *Misericordia*. In *Furrows*, in spite of the oft-mentioned influence of Italian neorealism, our source of inspiration came from the world of Cervantes. But also from Florián Rey and his extraordinary film *The Cursed Village* (La aldea maldita, 1930). When he congratulated me after watching *Furrows*, I told him that, in a way, my film was a continuation of his.

**Your reworking of previously written scripts and giving them a personal touch, as you did in *Las señoritas de mala compañía* (1973) or in *Impossible Love* (La casa manchada, 1975), requires a more detailed comment from you.**

Actually, in the case of *Las señoritas de mala compañía*, by Juan José Alonso Millán, I worked out a version that Fraile liked, but he did not dare face the writer. I told him that I would talk with him and explain how and why I wanted to transform it, in addition to the changes that would occur to me during the shooting. It is a film that I am satisfied with. There are certain aspects that come from my own memories... for example, there is a sequence where they are all in single file in the *hall* of the brothel and are passing by one by one, that is based on something I myself saw in Burgos... we went to a brothel during the war... "Next!" Whorehouses were not forbidden; during the Franco era they were never banned. The banning came from UNESCO. I was doing research; I went to the National Library and, while looking for documentation, I found out that it had happened at the same time in other European countries... which was also amusing—and part of that is also in *Las señoritas de mala compañía*, when they leave the church, although it doesn't show it exactly as it was. It was like in Segovia, on Thursday mornings after 11 a.m., everyone in Calle Real watched the prostitutes crossing the street to

the hospital for their check-up. I don't know if they do it now... people greeted them, it was funny. It was a bunch of poor women, in reality.

That was, in broad strokes, my way of working. In *Marta* (1971), for example, the script I had worked out was sent to Marisa Mell in Rome and she liked it. It was similar to a Hitchcock story. She loved it. But then that script wasn't the one we used. We couldn't convince the producer. In my last film, *Más allá del deseo* (1976), it was a disaster. Nothing could be done. I have never met a man more stubborn and awkward than that scriptwriter, Ramón Solís. I tried to fix it up every night at home, the best that I could. But we needed to film, due to problems with the dates... and we had to eat.

**Tell us about your work in *Volvoreta* (1976), because for that film Wenceslao Fernández Flórez's story was also partially changed.**

What happened was a pity. I had to save Rafael Gil, my first teacher and friend, after the dismissal of Rafael Moreno Alba. We had to begin immediately. Amparo Muñoz had a set time for filming written into her contract and she only

Shooting of *Surcos* (1951). Origin: Archivo Gráfico de la Filmoteca Española. Courtesy of Juan Miguel Nieves



cared about looking pretty in the film. I took the novel by Fernández Flórez, several copies, and I shared them out to assistants and actors. The only thing I did not follow was the story of the two boys and that was a mistake. Consequently, it came out the way it came out. Additionally, I wasn't able to have complete control over either the editing or the soundtrack. But the distributor was economically satisfied with the result. I had to agree to things that I never should have, but I had no other choice. I had to help my friend, whatever the outcome.

**In some interviews you have said that there have been times when you were short of money, that you had bad times. Was this very common in Spanish cinema?**

Yes, it wasn't something that just happened to one person, but on the contrary, to nearly everyone. They appeared suddenly and then disappeared. I had to suffer that problem. In between I did those things with the Americans, like *Sound from a Million Years Ago* (*El sonido de la muerte*, 1965). The scriptwriter and co-producer, Sam X. Abarbanel, a man of Jewish descent, was a scriptwriter of those kinds of stories, B-movies, about monsters and things like that, in the style of Roger Corman. They wanted the monster to appear from the first moment and I told them to forget it. The monster, if it appears at all, appears at the end, in the last moment, and I wanted to convey the sensation of its presence more than really show it. It was filmed like that, but then the Spanish and American producers got together and told me that it had to appear in the end, and that was when we filmed the part with the monster. (The monsters that appeared in the shadows were done with mirrors that Alarcón had that we placed in front of the camera and the actors to create that effect.) When they offered me the project I thought it would be fun, because these are things that everyone wants to do professionally, that require ingenuity. But it was all very modest economically, and we worked at Bronston Studios, who lent them the set and various other things. I told Abarbanel that we needed a good scriptwriter in the genre... without realising that he himself was the scriptwriter! In the end, the film won an award at the 4th Trieste Science and Fiction Festival. It's a story that could be entertaining if it were done again today in colour...

**José María García Escudero was the General Director of Cinema on two different occasions during your career.**

Before *Furrows* I didn't know him...

**Did you know he came from the National Syndicalist Offensive (JONS)?**

According to what I read in his book, it just so happens that he knew some personalities in 1935 that I had met when I went to see Dionisio Ridruejo at a hostel on the

street that was then called Príncipe de Vergara (later called General Mola). I remember that we were constantly meeting. He told me about his conversations with José Antonio Primo de Rivera and, in fact, he was the one who introduced him to me. García Escudero, according to what he tells in his book, studied at the school of journalism run by the newspaper *El Debate* at the same time as Ridruejo.

When I made *Furrows*, they wanted to cut it up, and thanks to Fray Mauricio de Begoña, they only cut the ending. I remember that I didn't like the new ending at all, and I tried to make the original one secretly, but Natividad Zaro didn't dare to do it; people were logically afraid in those days... as the film was going to Cannes I came up with the solution to end it in a different way for that screening: after the arrival of the train that follows the *Chamberlain* throwing Pepe's body onto the tracks, to put the ending coinciding with the smoke from the machine... but it was decided it would be too risky to do it. It was a moment... the same thing happened to me with the ending of *Los peces rojos*: I wanted the protagonist to commit suicide for real and the girl to stay there, screaming... it happened to me like it did to Fritz Lang, who proposed endings that were not accepted. Something similar also happened with *El diablo también llora* (1963), where the expected ending is only suggested. The producer is always very important and makes his decisions, for better or for worse. Thus, for example, the one who took me to see Natividad Zaro—a meeting that would result in *Furrows*—was Felipe Gerely, a Hungarian emigrant who had worked in Vienna with Pressburger, and who was a great friend of hers.

**Talking about altered endings, another *casus belli*, and very well-known too, is the ending of *The Tenant*, a film that we've been able to see in its "original version" and that proves to be an incendiary plea against the Regime in the mid-fifties. It is a film which also combines, in an extraordinarily subtle way, certain elements typical of the *sainete* and others of farce with the most dismal tragedy.**

In reality, I was always wanting to make a film like *Furrows*. When we created the cooperative, I put forward the script for *The Tenant*. It was a disjointed script by José Luis Duró from which we only took the first episode; all the rest was thrown away. The ambition was to make a *Furrows* with humour. The subsequent problem, as you know, was with Arrese, the recently appointed Minister of Housing...

**As the film progresses with what is really an almost Kafkaesque nightmare, while the situation of the protagonist becomes increasingly dramatic, without a single ray of light for him or his family, the other characters progressively begin acting in a way that is increasingly farcical. There is a kind of playing with contrasts.**



*Surcos*' launch ceremony in Cannes. Origin: Archivo Gráfico de la Filmoteca Española. Courtesy of Juan Miguel Nieves

Yes. That was the result of the construction of the script, which I got directly involved with a lot. We basically kept in mind one central idea: to narrate the tragedy of a character surrounded by eruptions of humour, but eruptions of humour that actually brought out eruptions of extreme farce... like the episode with Don Tancredo, which I saw when I was a boy and suggested to the scriptwriters.

**In the film there is a series of camera movements, of descending pan shots (over the façade of the house that is going to be demolished, on the mansion of the Marquis, the profit curve of the company Mundis S.A.) which, in a consonant rhyme, trace an unequivocal discourse on the forces that are ultimately behind the eviction of the González family...**

Yes, yes. It is done that way on purpose. Although today I probably would not have filmed it in that way and, certainly, I would have edited it differently. I would have made it choppy, sharper, in an effort to make more impact. Because as it is, with the pan shots, it seems to soften the intended effect, to flatten it. It is a film that I would have *corrected* today, but that is a possibility that writers have and that we filmmakers do not.





Poster of *Senda ignorada* (1946). Origin: Archivo Gráfico CulturArts IVAC (Instituto Valenciano del Audiovisual y de la Cinematografía)

**In any case, it is a fierce film, with a surprising harshness... the problems it had with the censors are not surprising; in fact, it would seem logical that it should have had more...**

I don't know how it passed the censors. I know that a critic for the journal *Ecclesia*, who was a censor, intervened and defended it. Because the censors as a whole, at first, were puzzled by its harshness and bitterness. The scene of the application for public housing, for example, was making fun of the bureaucracy and its inefficiency... but the curious thing is that there was no problem. They let us film and put up all those posters! And it is a really funny scene. They didn't cut it, but they did cut the scene when Fernán-Gómez is going along the street, progressively overwhelmed and dejected, seeing posters reading "For sale", "Apartments for sale", etc.

**Even so, the version released in 1963, mutilated and with a new ending (the protagonist's wife finds, at the last mo-**

**ment, a new apartment in the La Esperanza housing development), is still devastating. It was beyond repair for them. It was impossible to change the direction of the discourse.**

Yes, yes. It couldn't be avoided. The new ending was filmed a year later... and that neighbourhood you see in the added sequence is the Puente de Praga housing development. But *The Tenant* is perhaps a point of no return. Between 1953 and 1956 or '57 there were a whole set of social worries in the air, which unfortunately Spanish cinema was unable to reflect in all their intensity. When that development was smothered, we filmmakers were doomed just to play the game for its own sake, out of misfortune and to survive.

**Actually, in the sixties, your career came to a halt a few times. Why, to your understanding, did García Escudero not support you but opted instead for the new Spanish cinema, so different from the Furrows model that he had formerly defended so fervently?**

He came back when Manuel Fraga entered the Ministry of Information and Tourism. They were full of good intentions, but they did not know anything about how to make films. They couldn't and they didn't have the power to do it. It was only about making a supposed "youth cinema". Besides, when you economically support the cinema you ruin it. As with all the arts. Dalí is a good example of that.

## CINEMA AND FALANGE: IMPOSSIBILITY AND DISILLUSIONMENT

**In *Impossible Love* (Casa Manchada, 1975), a rather conventional film, with an accumulation of zooms that denote a certain annoyance over having to make a film not as you would have wanted, there is suddenly a series of personal issues of yours that we found quite striking. What is the work that allows you to introduce reflections in present that give life to the film now and then? Because they are reflections on what the Civil War was and on the role played by the Falange...**

Indeed. It was a very weak novel by Emilio Romero. Andrés Velasco, the producer—who had been guaranteed financial support if he adapted it, which turned out to be a lie—and Pedro Gil Paradel created a very bad script, which did not interest me at all. We had a talk with Emilio Romero and I told him that it was crap and that it had to be re-done. He told he would do it, but he didn't do anything. And we had to start filming, because the actor Stephen Boyd was arriving... Hurriedly and on the run I corrected, crossed out and picked apart the script. I put in a number of things. The moment when it becomes more obvious is in the attack of the Maquis, because actually the story in the novel deals with other things. I inserted all the elements referring to the

actions of the Civil Guard and for the ending I made use of an interview that had been done with Valentín González, “El Campesino”<sup>1</sup>, published by the *Pueblo* newspaper. It was quite long and I revised it, arranged it and created a dialogue that interested me. The strange thing is that it went down well at the office of the General Director of Cinema. And I didn’t put in anything else because the producer asked me not to please... it was already the beginning of the Transition. But I turned “El Campesino” into a central character of the end of the story. That conversation between two people talking about the war, saying you were Falangist and you... I tried to expand that conversation and give it some content... also, when the girl appears as a prostitute in that party and people talk about the war, it was something I had seen in the film *Arch of Triumph* (1948).

**It seems that there is a base, Emilio Romero’s story, that it is obvious didn’t interest you at all, but on top of that there are twenty or twenty-five minutes that seem to be fixed on the landscape... they seem to have to do with a kind of assessment of the Falange and its activity from the war up to that time.**

Exactly. And the opening, the firing squad, etc., wasn’t in the script either. It was an invention of mine from beginning to end. The result is a kind of potpourri. We even thought of Rafael Azcona to help to improve the script, but it wasn’t possible.

**To move towards our conclusion, we would like you to think aloud, if you don’t mind, about the possibility or impossibility or the vicissitudes faced in developing a Falangist cinema...**

I don’t think there was... I think there was an attempt... but I have never talked about it, not even with Dionisio Ridruejo. I joined the Falange in 1933, shortly after hearing the foundation speech by José Antonio.

**But there was a good number of Falangists in the film world.** It seemed like a high number of them suddenly appeared, after the war... anyway... I only knew one or two of them before the war. The only ones I could name are Sáenz de Heredia (but really just because he was José Antonio’s

cousin), although he admitted to me personally that he wasn’t a Falange member, and Fernando Delgado, whom I tried to work with during the Republic but, in spite of his positive talk, I couldn’t do it. In any case, in general, I don’t think the idea of a Falangist cinema existed.

**But we don’t mean so much an organically Falangist film tradition as films made by progressively disillusioned Falangists whose critical points of view on certain social and political issues inevitably had to emerge in their works.**

No, I don’t think it existed, or could have existed. Although I know that *Furrows* has been considered a Falangist film and, indeed, there is something in the picture that reveals my stale and disillusioned ideology and my interest in a social cinema. You should bear in mind that the Falange, before the war, was a vague idealistic project that was being constructed as it went and that depended to a large extent on the personality and charisma of José Antonio. In reality, it lacked an ideological corpus, beyond the famous “Twenty-Seven

Points”. It was a hazy movement that died before it could be established. I remember the first volume published by Aguilar of Marx’s *Capital*, and the impact that had on me... the Falange was a romantic, juvenile outburst. What could come out of that? It was all very poor, with no money. National syndicalism? It was a feeling, but there wasn’t a real ideological structure. Now then, what it could have turned into was never the war nor what happened after it. That had nothing to do with the original movement. I can’t say now what it was. A dream. Before the war, I talked about it passionately with Dionisio Ridruejo... but after the military plot everything changed. I didn’t like the plot at all. It wasn’t a political coup. I remember that I met Dionisio in the street wearing the [Falangist] blue shirt and the [traditionalist] red cap and I told him off: the two pieces of clothing were, in my opinion, incompatible. Later, as we all know, he would go back to his old way of thinking. The Falange under Franco and Serrano Suñer had nothing to do with it anymore. I didn’t like the way they mocked Hecilla either. When I heard some comrades saying that he didn’t have any class, I felt that I didn’t belong there.



Program of *Rebeldía* (1954). Origin: Archivo Gráfico CulturArts IVAC (Instituto Valenciano del Audiovisual y de la Cinematografía)



One day while going for a walk in Segovia, a young priest who had been studying in Germany explained to us what was going on there, what National Socialism really was... what I remember, exactly, is that among the people close to Dionisio Ridruejo there were Jews... for example, there was the Valencian Samuel Ros, who was Jewish and a good friend of his.

I remember that once I told a priest that he lived in the 19<sup>th</sup> century because he considered liberalism a sin. I told him that if he wished to be a Falangist he should remember what José Antonio said, that liberalism is the ultimate aim of all good politics; that, in the end, every authentic political conception ends up being liberal.

## FINAL ASSESSMENT

### To conclude, what's your assessment of your film career?

That it could have been and it wasn't. I wanted to make films, I have never wanted to do anything else. But I found myself in a world that... one day someone asked me, I think it was Fernán-Gómez, why during a film shot I stopped, what was I doing? "I'm thinking" I replied "that all the people around us are not interested at all in what they are doing. They do it because they get to dress up and they get paid." Ninety per cent of the professionals I have known were not really interested. (I only met one real devotee of cinema: Rafael Gil, with whom I started as assistant director, irrespective of the quality of his films. And the director, the poor thing, almost always the only one who is interested, was constantly being pushed around.

I have reached a point where I really don't care about what people say about my films, good or bad... years ago, in 1978, a moment came when I said "it's over". And it was over. I'd become convinced that nothing could be done. I talked with different people. A lot of positive talk, a lot of promises, but it didn't go any further. In the end, a representative from the Hispanic Mexican Society congratulated me for an idea (a rather long development: the story of a group of peasants who band together against the exploitation of big business... they give them one peseta and then sell the products for a hundred; there was a series of jokes about the transport situation, etc.), but he told me that he wouldn't dare make it, that light comedy or "soft porn" would be better. None of it had anything to do with me anymore. ■

### Notes

- 1 The chiefs of staff for "El Campesino" included the late Manuel Mur Oti, another filmmaker of Nieves Conde's generation, to whom the Festival de Cine Independiente de Ourense dedicated a cycle and a book in 1999 (Castro de Paz, J. L. and Pérez Perucha, J. [coords.], *El cine de Manuel Mur Oti*).

Julio Pérez Perucha is a film historian, and currently the President of the Spanish Association of Film Historians. He is a member of the editorial committee for the film journal *Contracampo* (1979-1987), and the author of innumerable books, articles and chapters in anthologies dedicated to Spanish film history. His work includes titles such as *En torno a Berlanga* (Valencia, Fundació Municipal de Cine, 1980-81), *El cinema de Edgar Neville* (Semana Internacional de Cine de Valladolid, 1982), *Mestizajes (Realizadores extranjeros en el cine español 1931-1973)* (Valencia, Mostra de Valencia, 1990) and as editor of the critical anthology of Spanish cinema, *Antología Crítica del cine español 1906-1995* (Madrid, Filmoteca Española/Cátedra, 1997).

José Luis Castro de Paz (A Coruña, 1964) is a film historian and Audiovisual Communications Professor at Universidad de Santiago de Compostela. He has published numerous articles in scientific journals, participated in anthologies and coordinated volumes on different aspects and figures associated with cinema. His numerous books include *El surgimiento del telefilm* (1999), *Alfred Hitchcock* (2000), *Un cinema herido. Los turbios años cuarenta en el cine español* (2002), *Fernando Fernán-Gómez* (2010), *Del sainete al esperpento. Relecturas del cine español de los años 50* (2011) and *Sombras desoladas* (2012).

# (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 events<sup>1</sup>. 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?

.....

### 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?

.....

### 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. ■

Jenaro Talens is a Professor Emeritus of Comparative Literature at Université de Genève and a professor of Audiovisual Communications at Universidad de Valencia. He has taught in numerous European and U.S. universities. A writer, essayist and translator, he has published around fifty books and his poetry has been translated into more than twenty languages. He is the director of the *Signo e imagen* collection and quadrilingual journal *EU-topías*.

Alejandro Montiel Mues is a lecturer at Universidad Politécnica de Valencia, where he teaches Film History. Among other works, he has published *Teorías del cine* (1992; 1999) and *El desfile y la quietud. Análisis fílmico versus Historia del Cine* (2002). His works are also included in such anthologies as *La herida de las sombras. El cine español de los años cuarenta* (Proceedings of VIII Congress of SAFH, 2001), *Gonzalo Torrente Ballester y el cine español* (Castro de Paz, Pérez Perucha, eds. 2001), *Imagen, memoria y fascinación. Notas sobre el documental español* (Catalá, Cerdá, Torreiro, eds., 2001).

Santos Zunzunegui Díez is the Audiovisual Communications and Advertising Chair at Universidad del País Vasco, and a semiologist, analyst and film historian. He has worked as a lecturer in different universities in Europe, the U.S., and South America. His published works include: *Mirar la imagen* (2004); *El cine en el País Vasco* (1985); *Pensar la imagen* (1989); *Robert Bresson* (2001); *Historias de España. De qué hablamos cuando hablamos de cine español* (2002); *Metamorfosis de la mirada. Museo y semiótica* (2003 [Italian version *Metamorfosi dello sguardo*, 2011]); *Orson Welles* (2005); *Las cosas de la vida. Lecciones de semiótica estructural* (2005); and *La mirada plural* (2008), which won the Francisco Ayala International Essay Prize, and was translated in 2015 into Italian as *Lo sguardo plurale*. In 2013, he published *Lo viejo y lo nuevo* (Cátedra).

Juan Miguel Company Ramón is a philologist and Audiovisual Communications professor at Universidad de Valencia, as well as a critic and a film historian. Among other works, he is the author of *La realidad como sospecha* (Eutopías-Literatura, 1986), *El trazo de la letra en la imagen* (Cátedra, 1987), *El aprendizaje del tiempo* (Eutopías maior, 1995) and *Ingmar Bergman* (Ediciones Cátedra, 2007, 4<sup>th</sup> edition). His most recent book, *Hollywood. El espejo pintado (1910-2011)* was published in 2014 by the publishing house of Universidad de Valencia.

Jean-Claude Seguin is a lecturer at the Université Lumière-Lyon II. He is the honorary chairman of GRIMH (Groupe de réflexion sur l'image dans le monde hispanique). An early film historian (*La Production cinématographique des frères Lumière, BiFi*, 1996) and a specialist in early Spanish cinema, he is also the author of *Historia del cine español* (Acento, 1995) and of a significant number of articles and monographs on different aspects and figures in Spanish filmmaking (*Pedro Almodóvar o la deriva de los cuerpos*, Filmoteca Regional de Murcia, 2009).

## Un nuevo concepto de universidad online



### Máster Oficial en Creación de Guiones Audiovisuales

El único máster online de España en  
creación de guiones audiovisuales

Un programa especializado en la escritura de ficción y no  
ficción tanto cinematográfica como televisiva.

El máster en Creación de Guiones Audiovisuales ha sido  
diseñado para cubrir todas las necesidades formativas  
en relación a la **práctica profesional de la creación de  
contenidos para el mundo audiovisual.**

- Tutorización individual de mano de **guionistas de amplia y reconocida trayectoria** tanto en cine como en televisión.
- **Preparación para el ejercicio profesional:** desarrollo de habilidades tanto de escritura como de venta y estudio del mercado audiovisual.
- Elaboración final de un producto original listo para introducirse en el ámbito laboral y mercado profesional.

### Grado en Comunicación

El Grado que engloba Comunicación  
Audiovisual, Periodismo, y Publicidad en un  
mismo plan de estudios

Abarca las distintas áreas que un comunicador debe  
dominar y permite:

- **Elegir** una especialización: Periodismo, Publicidad y Relaciones Públicas o Comunicación Audiovisual
- O combinar asignaturas para ser un **comunicador 360º**

Contenidos actualizados e impartidos de manera práctica  
para poder aplicarlos desde el primer día.

- Formación en las **profesiones más demandadas en el sector:** community manager, content strategist, periodista online, gestor de contenidos, copy creativo.
- Posibilidad de hacer **prácticas en medios propios**
- **Profesorado en activo** involucrado en la actualidad de los medios.
- **Clases magistrales** de expertos en las últimas tendencias.

Consulta la oferta completa en  
[www.unir.net](http://www.unir.net) o llamando al 941 210 211

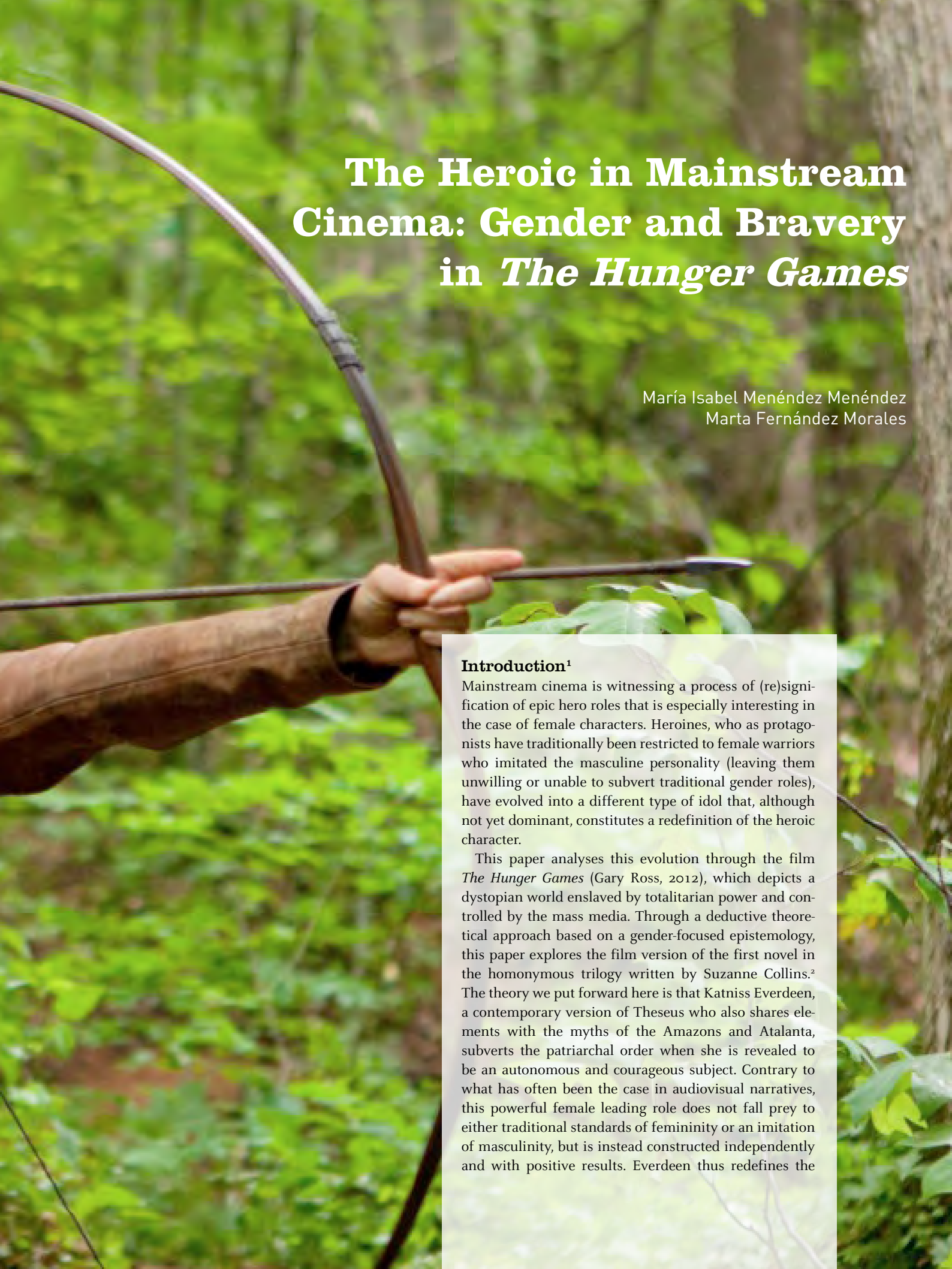


A woman with long brown hair, wearing a brown leather tunic over a dark shirt, is shown in a forest setting. She is holding a bow and arrow, aiming towards the right. The background is a dense forest with green foliage. A white rectangular box with the text "VANISHING POINTS" is overlaid on the left side of the image.

# **VANISHING POINTS**

Figura 1



A close-up photograph of a hand holding a wooden bow, with a forest background. The hand is wearing a brown sleeve. The bow is dark wood and has a string. The background is a lush green forest with many trees and leaves.

# The Heroic in Mainstream Cinema: Gender and Bravery in *The Hunger Games*

María Isabel Menéndez Menéndez  
Marta Fernández Morales

## Introduction<sup>1</sup>

Mainstream cinema is witnessing a process of (re)signification of epic hero roles that is especially interesting in the case of female characters. Heroines, who as protagonists have traditionally been restricted to female warriors who imitated the masculine personality (leaving them unwilling or unable to subvert traditional gender roles), have evolved into a different type of idol that, although not yet dominant, constitutes a redefinition of the heroic character.

This paper analyses this evolution through the film *The Hunger Games* (Gary Ross, 2012), which depicts a dystopian world enslaved by totalitarian power and controlled by the mass media. Through a deductive theoretical approach based on a gender-focused epistemology, this paper explores the film version of the first novel in the homonymous trilogy written by Suzanne Collins.<sup>2</sup> The theory we put forward here is that Katniss Everdeen, a contemporary version of Theseus who also shares elements with the myths of the Amazons and Atalanta, subverts the patriarchal order when she is revealed to be an autonomous and courageous subject. Contrary to what has often been the case in audiovisual narratives, this powerful female leading role does not fall prey to either traditional standards of femininity or an imitation of masculinity, but is instead constructed independently and with positive results. Everdeen thus redefines the

cinematic profile of the hero, especially as previously established in mainstream films featuring female warriors.

### Epistemological Matters: Myth, Hero, and Mass Society

Mircea Eliade argued some time ago that to know the myths is to learn the secret of the origin of things (1968: 20). Myth, according to Joseph Campbell, is “the secret opening through which the inexhaustible energies of the cosmos pour into human manifestation” (2011: 11). But myths cannot live and breathe on their own; they need to be embodied by individuals. This is what Eliade (2011) referred to in the mid-twentieth century as the myth of the eternal return.

In the so-called digital era, according to some authors, society has been demystified: science seeks to explain everything and technological development has reached such levels of perfection that the most basic aspect of

human life seems to have been forgotten: that human beings are organisms that live and die, and as such, they look for answers to help them make sense of their own existence and that of their universe.

### MYTHS ALLOW US TO ANSWER THE QUESTION “WHO AM I?”, THEREBY GIVING MEANING TO PERSONAL IDENTITY

Therein lies the need for redefinition in an era when people even speak of “the death of myth” (JAMET, 2011: 24). The eternal return occurring in contemporary society is embodied in four models that take human beings back to their original state: the return to others, or the sense of belonging to a whole by virtue of our inherent human sociability; the return of the figure of Dionysus through our definition of *homo ludens*; the return to the impulse, given that the mass media and, more specifically, new technologies make everything available at any moment; and finally, the return to the savage, to the animalistic (JAMET, 2011: 32).

Postmodern figures can also be explained from a mythological perspective. For Rollo May, in contemporary society myths allow us to answer the question “who am I?”, thereby giving meaning to personal identity. Moreover, they facilitate our sense of community, reinforce our moral values, and offer a way of facing the inscrutable mystery of creation (MAY, 1992: 32).

According to Roman Gubern, in an era in which profane mythology has replaced sacred mythology, myths explain and foster social cohesion, legitimating the status quo and reducing angst. Hence we find that the mass media offers audiences attractive characters and role models with whom they can identify. Myth becomes the raw material of the imaginary, of our identities, both private and collective, articulating a meaning to life: “the process of story production is inseparable from mytho-

poeia, or the process of myth generation” (GUBERN, 1993: 15). This explains why contemporary audiovisual narratives continue to draw inspiration from the world of myth and archetypes, as will be demonstrated in this article. In Campbell’s words, individuals create new myths, through novels or films, which give a sense of direction and meaning to their existence. Some modern myths are more successful than others, not only because of their capacity to guide us, but because of their ability to transcend time (RUIZ, 2012: 194).

The essential role of the hero/heroine is to serve as a vehicle for universal images that inspire the individuals of a society. “A hero, by definition, is one who finds solutions [to mythical situations], a happy ending to the wretchedness” (CAILLOIS, 1988: 28). In other words, the hero’s role is to resolve the conflict with which the individual struggles. “A hero is a myth in action” (MAY, 1992: 52), and they therefore encapsulate our aspirations, ideals and beliefs. Heroes are always transgressive, crossing over the threshold of the forbidden, questioning the limits imposed by society, often guided by a dream or even by utopia, and always undertaking an adventure which, in essence, constitutes a voyage into the unknown. They are also often defenders of social justice (BAUZÁ, 1998: 6).

The morphology of the hero can be analysed with the help of a number of key authors, from Vladimir Propp, who studied Russian folk tales in 1928, to Lord Raglan, who also identified the functions of the hero, in 1937. Others have observed that “there is a limited number of recurrent mythical themes [...] in relation to the number of characters” (BREICH, 1958: 67). These recurrent motifs, however, do not always appear in complete form, and may even be intertwined with others (BAUZÁ, 1998: 25).

One of the most influential authors on contemporary cinema is undoubtedly Joseph Campbell, whose work served as inspiration for the famous *Star Wars* (George Lucas, 1977) saga. In a text published in 1949, Campbell identified the steps taken in a hero’s adventure, from his departure to his return (CAMPBELL, 2011: 53-222); he explained, however, that this was not a rigid pattern, as many stories isolate or augment one or several of these elements, while others may unite several into a single cycle and some of the characters may even be merged, multiplied, or reappear transformed. According to Campbell, there are two types of heroes: those who accomplish merely physical feats, and those who achieve a spiritual feat. The latter are called upon to undertake a return journey, coming back transfigured, and teaching what he has learned to others (CAMPBELL, 2011: 26).

In terms of the hero’s functions, Savater argues that the hero “proves that virtue is the most effective triumphant action” (1983: 112). The hero’s greatest achievement is more than merely doing what is right, but also

involves showing why it is right to do it: “[the hero] represents a personalised reinvention of the norm” (SAVATER, 1983: 113).

Thus, heroic examples inspire individuals to action and their world is the world of adventure. Adventure, then, is a time filled with meaning in opposition to the emptiness of routine; it is a time in which the guarantees of normality are suspended and, moreover, death is always present (SAVATER, 1983: 115). In conclusion, in an adventure the hero always seeks independence. All these elements can be found, as we will see, in the work that is our object of study here.

### ***The Hunger Games: Between Myth and Media Culture***

Suzanne Collins, author of *The Hunger Games* trilogy, has stated in numerous interviews that she drew inspiration for her books from the Roman circus and its gladiators, from reality television, from the media coverage of the Iraq War, and from the myth of Theseus. This means that the story is indeed indebted to mythology and to the mass media, but, in terms of narrative content it is still a story in keeping with Jamet’s description above: a return to the savage and to the figure of Dionysus.

The action takes place in what was once the United States. Hundreds of years have passed, and the country is now called Panem (a name taken from the Latin expression *panem et circenses*). It is divided into districts, among which the Capitol holds a privileged status over the other territories, which are exploited and impoverished.<sup>3</sup> With no civil liberties, practically no resources and controlled by the media, no citizen can leave his or her home district. As punishment for a previous revolution and to commemorate the victory of the Capitol, each year a pair of adolescents from each district (called

tributes) are sent to fight in a battle to death on live television: the Hunger Games. Not everyone in the population objects to this Roman-like circus: there are youths who train their whole lives in the hope of becoming tributes, and the masses follow the television coverage of the Games with fascination. The story’s protagonist is sixteen-year-old Katniss Everdeen, a rebellious heroine who volunteers to take the place of her younger sister, Prim, to save her from the tragic destiny that chance had reserved for her.

Apart from the obvious references to George Orwell’s 1984, there are echoes of many audiovisual products in *The Hunger Games*’ narrative, such as the film *The Running Man* (Paul Michael Graser, 1987), based on a Stephen King novel of the same name. Set in a dystopian 2017 in which society has become a police state, the population is kept content with a television program where convicted felons have to flee from professional assassins. The presence of television as an Orwellian Big Brother also links Collins’ work to the popular film *The Truman Show* (Peter Weir, 1998), depicting a man raised under the watchful eye of the television cameras and the complicity of an acritical audience.

The life and death struggle depicted in *The Hunger Games* is reminiscent of *Battle Royale* (Batoru Rowaia-ru, Kinji Fukasaku, 2000), a Japanese cult movie never screened in the United States, adapted from a novel by Koushun Takami, whose title is taken from the name given to wrestling matches in which wrestlers fight each other until only one is left standing. It also evokes the film *Highlander* (Russell Mulcahy, 1986), which predates the Japanese work by more than a decade, in which a group of chosen ones must battle it out with swords to the very last survivor, on the understanding that “in the end there can be only one.”

Figure 2



The Roman Empire and its gladiators are other obvious references, expressly acknowledged in the names chosen: from Panem itself to the names of Capitol residents (Cornelius, Seneca, Cinna), and, above all, in the broadcast of a high-tech televised Roman-like circus, in which the tributes, like gladiators, are trained expressly and are allowed to choose their weapons. There is also a revision of the technological myth, with futuristic weaponry, bio-engineering, and other fantastical resources used by the media machinery and by the authorities to keep the population in check. Another element taken from Classical Antiquity is the famous cornucopia, or horn of plenty, which appears in the Games as a place stocked with supplies needed for survival (weapons, food, etc.).

When she was promoting the film, Collins also acknowledged the influence of the myth of Theseus as a source of inspiration. For her, Katniss is a “futuristic Theseus”. In the classical myth, Minos, the king of Crete, had a monstrous stepson, the Minotaur, who fed on human flesh and was kept hidden in a labyrinth built by Daedalus. Minos had another son, Androgeos, who went to Athens to participate in that city’s games and was murdered by the Athenians. To punish the Athenians, Minos demanded that every nine years, seven young men and seven maidens were to be sent to Crete to pay for his murdered son with their lives. The youths would be offered to the Minotaur, and if one of them managed to defeat the beast in the battle, Athens would be freed from the tribute. On the third occasion, Theseus, the only son of Aegeus, the king of Athens, volunteered to go. Once in Crete, the tributes awaited their fate, while they were treated with the magnanimity reserved for sacrificial victims. It was at this moment that Ariadne, Minos’s daughter, offered Theseus the ball of thread he would use to escape the labyrinth and a dagger with which to slay the Minotaur.

There are many different versions of the myth of Theseus, especially with respect to the denouement: Theseus’s abandonment of Ariadne in Crete, for which he was vilified or glorified depending on the interpretation (OMATOS, 2009: 263). This idea also appears in Collins’s story, as at the end of the first book, Peeta Mellark, like Ariadne, is abandoned by Katniss Everdeen despite having been her ally.

### **The inversion of the hegemonic hero: amazons and female warriors**

Amazons are a female symbol that has appeared repeatedly in works of art and literature, although there are no sources that can establish their existence beyond the Greek mythical narrative, in which they are described as a nation of women descended from Ares, the god of war, and the nymph Harmonia. According to Sebastián Martínez (2010: 22), their name has given rise to vari-

ous false etymologies: in classical Greece, it was said to allude to the fact that, according to the legend, Amazon women removed their right breasts, cauterizing or flattening them in order to be able to shoot arrows more easily. It also referred to the fact that they lived together in isolation from the society of men. Their neighbours, the Scythians, called them *Oiorpata*, man-killers, according to Herodotus. The Amazons inhabited a utopian past in which women lived by their own codes as warriors.<sup>4</sup> Their depiction shares some elements in common with other female warriors, such as the Valkyries of Norse mythology, the female gladiators of Rome or African warrior women (MAINON AND URSINI, 2008: 17). Popular culture has (re)appropriated the term “amazon” to describe societies dominated by women, and also to identify women who rebel against the system.

Although there are variants, it is possible to identify a series of common traits for this type of heroine: she is an aggressive fighter; she is a member of an organisation or culture governed by women, and is therefore not defined by her relationship with a man; she evinces some sort of empathy towards others of her own sex; she uses weapons and tools typically associated with fighters; she dresses and adorns herself in warrior’s garb; she is independent and does not need a man to save her; she lives in or comes from a lost civilization; and she may be homosexual, bisexual, or even asexual (MAINON AND URSINI, 2008: 24-27).

Fantasy tales about women of this sort are common to audiovisual culture, especially in science fiction (MAINON AND URSINI, 2008: 18). The first onscreen images of Amazons located them in exotic or prehistoric scenarios, nearly always with a blonde, scantily clad white-skinned woman as protagonist, and whose weapons were invariably bows and arrows. It is a curious fact that, although the weapons of the future are assumed to be highly sophisticated, contemporary images of heroines insist on ascribing to them an anachronistic weapon.

According to Asunción Bernárdez, these early female warriors were “phallic women”, that is, figures who adopted characteristics associated with men: “they exhibit values of masculinity in a social system that separates what is masculine and what is feminine as oppositional categories” (BERNÁRDEZ, 2012: 95). The particular aspects of masculinity or virility, which constitute what today we would call the *Alpha Male*, were based on the qualities most closely associated with traditional masculinity: “strength, courage, cunning, ambition, [and] power” (ZURIAN, 2011: 291). In mainstream cinema, the model of such masculinity is embodied by hyper-virile characters played by the likes of Bruce Willis or Jason Statham in their action films. According to Bernárdez, the cinema’s “phallic women” were an unexpected result of second-wave feminism, since they embodied “the most com-



mercial and popular vision of the feminist claims that were being made by social movements and in the more radical theories of those years" (BERNÁRDEZ, 2012: 97).

Examples of these characters, many of them inspired by comics or video games, include: Lara Croft, played by Angelina Jolie in *Lara Croft: Tomb Raider* (Simon West, 2001) and its sequel *Lara Croft Tomb Raider: The Cradle of Life* (Jan de Bont, 2003); Milla Jovovich's Alice in the saga that began with *Resident Evil* (Paul W. S. Anderson, 2002); Halle Berry's Catwoman in the movie of the same name (Pitof Comar, 2004); and The Bride played by Uma Thurman in *Kill Bill: Volumes 1 y 2* (Quentin Tarantino, 2003 and 2004).

As Bernárdez explains (2012: 101), these characters are split between two representations that are, in principle, incompatible: on the one hand, they reflect the most conservative image of the *femme fatale* with their hyper-femininity; while on the other, their body language is masculine and their use of weapons and violence constitutes an assimilation and imitation of classic masculinity. Moreover, these characters are often led by an absent male figure or motivated by a maternal instinct that pushes their independence as individuals into the background. Such contradictions suggest that, despite appearances to the contrary, these characters are not models of empowerment. They do not support emancipation or independence, but in fact consolidate the traditional masculine/feminine hierarchy, and are thus incapable of subverting the canonical model, even if they redress the invisibility of women in leading roles in mainstream films.

However, such hegemonic depictions are being subverted by what some authors refer to as "feminist heroic fantasy" (PITARCH, 2008: 40), or, as others prefer to call it, the "post-feminist media culture" (CHICHARRO, 2013; BERNÁRDEZ, 2012), a movement notable for female leading roles and female empowerment, which allows for the subversion of heroic stereotypes.

### Katniss Everdeen and the heroic

Katniss fits the image of the Amazons described by Mainon and Ursini, as she uses the traditional Amazon weapon (a bow and arrows) and she fights aggressively. She also displays gender empathy, especially in her relationship with Rue (young girl from District 11 who is also a tribute), but also with other female characters. As for her relationships with males, she exhibits no interest in romantic ties or in motherhood, in spite of the attraction she feels for her friend Gale Hawthorne. Despite her youth, she is independent and is even responsible for maintaining her whole family. And, to complete the Amazon profile, she also comes from a lost civilisation (the post-apocalyptic Panem).

The basic heroic quality of undergoing constant trials is a central element in the plot of *The Hunger Games*, a

story that revolves around an ongoing test that effectively perpetuates the hero's quest as described by Joseph Campbell (2011: 53-222), in which a great mission, an allegory for the universal human journey, is intertwined into the narrative of the myth. Thus, the purpose behind the quest in *The Hunger Games* responds to a greater good: to save the people from tyranny. This purpose is revealed to Katniss gradually as she progresses on her own journey, for each stage is, in reality, the acquisition of a higher level of consciousness.<sup>5</sup> For Campbell, the hero's journey has three main stages: *departure*, or separation; the trials and victories of the hero's *initiation*; and the *return*, or reintegration in society, within which he identifies various steps (2011: 40); however, as noted above, Campbell also points out that these do not always appear as separate steps or not in the same order. What follows is an overview of the most important stages of the hero's journey as undertaken by Katniss Everdeen.

The departure consists of five steps, which can be identified in Gary Ross's film: the "call to adventure" is the so-called "reaping", where the tributes are chosen, which upsets the ordinary world of Katniss's life in District 12. This is followed by the "refusal of the call", or Katniss's natural resistance to the horror that looms ahead. Next is the "supernatural aid", a meeting with a protective figure in the form of a talisman, which in Katniss's case is the golden *mockingjay* pin given to her by her friend Madge,

**THE HUNGER GAMES IS A STORY THAT REVOLVES AROUND AN ONGOING TEST THAT EFFECTIVELY PERPETUATES THE HERO'S QUEST AS DESCRIBED BY JOSEPH CAMPBELL**

Figure 3



and the appearance of an explicit mentor, Haymitch Abernathy, a seemingly irresponsible drunk whom the protagonist has no option but to trust. The “crossing of the

### EVERDEEN'S CHARACTER IS A POLITICAL HERO

“the belly of the whale”, where the hero is swallowed up by the unknown and thus leaves the ordinary world to enter the magical world, is the place where Katniss and the other tributes are taken for combat training, bringing her fully into the entrails of the monster: surrounded by people of the Capitol and forced to follow its rules.

The stage of *initiation* is, for Campbell, the place where the most psychoanalytical resources are present. Notable among the steps of this stage is “the road of trials”, when the hero plunges further into the realm beyond the first threshold. In *The Hunger Games*, this is the period that she spends in the belly of the whale, where she is required to submit to a range of harsh rules. Another step is the “ultimate boon”, when the heroine is revealed to be a superior being; in Katniss’s case, this step is reached when she is chosen to be the symbol of the rebellion. Over the course of this journey, she makes allies (such as Cinna, her stylist) and enemies (some tributes who perceive her as a rival).

Finally, the third stage, or the *return* presents us with a protagonist who had never imagined she could be successful and who, expressly before setting out, had lamented her scant chances of survival. The first stage of this return to the ordinary world is the “refusal of the return”, as Katniss does not want to accept the responsi-

first threshold” is the arrival at the Capitol following the initiatory journey on the train, beyond which is darkness, the unknown, and danger. And finally,

bility placed upon her as a revolutionary leader, as is the case in most heroic narratives; the “magic flight” and the “rescue from without” appear suddenly, when the Capitol decides to pardon the lives of Katniss and Peeta, declaring both of them winners; and the “return home” and the “freedom to live” appear at the end of the story.

In *The Hunger Games*, the hero’s journey will be repeated in the subsequent instalments, following a circular model in accordance with the pattern described by Campbell. In this way, the trilogy presents the completion of the protagonist’s personal growth as the common benefit for her sacrifice. Katniss thus exhibits that other basic heroic quality: her incessant wandering, for the journey is itself trial and action. According to Campbell, this heroism is of a spiritual kind: the hero must return to teach others what has been learned from the quest.

Continuing with the theoretical model proposed above, it is important to note that Katniss, as we have seen, is a mythical warrior whose originality lies in the fact that she does not fit the profile of the phallic heroine. This protagonist is an autonomous agent who has assumed responsibilities far beyond the norm for her age, and who does not succumb to the romantic myth (it is indeed an innovation that in this story, aimed at a young audience, romance is merely a strategic ploy) or to the traditional standards of femininity. Although Theseus is the main inspiration for Katniss, she also bears some clear similarities to Atalanta of Arcadia, the rebellious heroine and skilful archer who, according to Apollodorus, took part in the Argonauts’ expedition to fetch the Golden Fleece. Atalanta represents the independent woman who rebelled against the patriarchal norms of ancient Greece. In this sense, Katniss may be viewed as support for Savater’s argument that “virility is essential in a hero, regardless of whether the hero is male or female” (1983: 122); in other words, the hero seeks a fulfilment that is not the exclusive property of males, and in Katniss Everdeen’s case, she does this without imitating men, without becoming either an archetypal model of femininity or a transvestite or masculinised woman. Ultimately, she is faithful to her memory: she never forgets where her strength comes from (SAVATER, 1983: 123), i.e., from her people and her land.

Everdeen’s character is a political hero: she embodies the moral ideals of society, possessing exceptional values recognised by the community, and she is strong and noble-hearted (CARDONA, 2006: 59). Along with her morality, her strength is one of her most prominent qualities. As Simmons argues, “she is an adolescent heroine who embodies passion and moral values in a world in which there is still black and white, before maturity has projected onto her psyche that range of greys that characterises adult morality” (quoted in BERNÁRDEZ, 2012: 107). She is also brave, although not to the point of exempting her-

Figure 4





self from the human condition: she is often afraid, and frequently doubtful. As director Gary Ross pointed out in an interview, “[w]hile some fight to survive, Katniss does it to keep her humanity. She is a tragic heroine who goes from killing in order to survive to accepting that her death could save the life of her loved ones.”<sup>6</sup> In *The Hunger Games*, the strongest survives, but also by the most cunning, and, above all, the most human, the one with the finest moral qualities, as required of an epic hero. Katniss protects those who are weaker, and, although she provides the people with bread and circuses (something that she cannot rebel against), she does it in her own way, without losing her dignity.

This is why when she survives the Games, Katniss becomes a model for all those around her and will subsequently be the symbol of the rebellion against tyranny. She thus demonstrates, in the sense outlined by Savater regarding the profile of the hero, why defying totalitarianism is the right thing to do, however high the price to pay for such defiance may be. She courageously and valiantly embarks on a life-threatening adventure far removed from the ordinary world: in the arena, where the Games take place, nothing is as it is in reality; everyday codes do not apply in a magical space and time, defined in the film by the trappings of science fiction. But Katniss will achieve independence for herself and for her people, as inevitably happens in all heroic tales.

## Conclusions

If a hero's main function is to respond to suffering, Katniss Everdeen is the exemplification of the hero. She not only offers hope to the wretched population of Panem, but also manages to become a mythical symbol, threatening the powers that be thanks to her integrity and courage. Her ethical position is clear not because she has to kill, as this is something over which she can make no decision, but because she is conscious of the unjust treatment of the people by those in power: the class struggle and the renunciation of individual well-being for a greater good constitute the only path to salvation.

*The Hunger Games* offers a revision and a subversion of gender roles that is unusual in young adult films. Katniss Everdeen is independent and courageous, intelligent and autonomous, even in the most hostile situations. Although she matches the media stereotype of the Amazon warrior, her character is neither masculinised nor hypersexualised. In this sense she breaks with the hegemonic canon of female leading roles in popular culture. Katniss subverts the patriarchal order because she does not conform to gender standards and she redefines the leading female role that mainstream cinema had reserved for the women warriors of previous films. The narrative arc developed over the course of the trilogy depicts Katniss as a political rebel who opposes a totalitarianism that had

appeared inevitable, and who is called upon to save the world – a task which, in pop culture, is seldom entrusted to women. ■

## Notes

- 1 This article has been developed as part of the project titled “Violencia de género y cultura popular: representación y recepción”, funded by the Spanish Ministry of Health, Social Services and Equality and the European Social Fund’s “Fight against Discrimination” Operative Program (official reference 115/12).
- 2 *The Hunger Games*, published in the United States in 2008, was the first volume in a trilogy that was completed by *Catching Fire* (2009) and *Mockingjay* (2010). In 2012, a film based on the first novel and with the same name, directed by Gary Ross, became an instant box office success. In 2013 and 2014, screen versions of the second and third parts, both directed by Francis Lawrence, were also worldwide hits. The third novel was divided into two films, and the second –and last cinematic instalment– is expected in 2015. This article focuses on the film adaptation of the first novel, although for contextualisation references are made to the subsequent instalments of the trilogy.
- 3 In “*The Hunger Games*’ Feral Feminism”, published in *The Nation* (23/04/2012), Katha Pollitt characterises Panem as a society based on brute force, hunger, technological magic, and constant vigilance, in which the Capitol has the “dated-futuristic look of a fascist Oz”, with an aesthetic “somewhere between the late Roman Empire, the court of Louis XVI and the Cirque du Soleil.”
- 4 Some authors suggest that the legend may have a partly factual origin. For example, Davis-Kimball and Behan (2003) documented the existence of certain cemeteries devoted exclusively to female warriors in southern Russia. Originally of the Scythian and Sarmatian peoples, they would have migrated eastward as far as China, and as far west as the British Isles. According to some authors, these were the inspiration behind the Greek historian Herodotus’s record of the Amazons (500 B.C.E.).
- 5 The second film, released in November 2013 with the title *The Hunger Games: Catching Fire*, exhibits a deeper social commitment in terms of plot, which is also the case with the book. The demands made on Katniss are also greater, as she must assume an active role against the rebellion, and a commitment and initiative that are further accentuated in the third instalment.
- 6 *Fotogramas*, 2023 (2012), 13-24.

## Bibliography

- BAUZA, Hugo Francisco (1998). *El mito del héroe. Morfología y semántica de la figura heroica*. Buenos Aires: Fondo de Cultura Económica.
- BERNÁRDEZ, Asunción (2012). “Modelos de mujeres fálicas del postfeminismo mediático: Una aproximación a *Millenium*, *Avatar* y *The Hunger Games*.” *Anàlisi*, 47, 91-112.
- BRELICH, Angelo (1958). *Gli eroi greci: Un problema storico-religioso*. Rome: Ed. Dell’Ateneo.
- CAILLOIS, Roger (1988). *El mito y el hombre*. Mexico City: Fondo de Cultura Económica.

- CAMPBELL, Joseph (2011). *El héroe de las mil caras. Psicoanálisis del mito*. Mexico City: Fondo de Cultura Económica.
- CARDONA, Patricia (2006). "Del héroe mítico, al mediático. Las categorías heroicas: héroe, tiempo y acción." *Revista Universidad EAFIT*, 42 (144), 51-68.
- COLLINS, Suzanne (2008). *The Hunger Games*. New York: Scholastic Press.
- COLLINS, Suzanne (2009). *Catching Fire (The Second Book of The Hunger Games)*. New York: Scholastic Press.
- COLLINS, Suzanne (2010). *Mockingjay (The Final Book of The Hunger Games)*. New York: Scholastic Press.
- CHICHARRO, Mar (2013). "Representaciones de la mujer en la ficción postfeminista: *Ally McBeal*, *Sex and the City* y *Desperate Housewives*." *Papers*, 98 (1), 11-31.
- DAVIS-KIMBALL, Jeannine y BEHAN, Mona (2003). *Warrior Women: An Archaeologist's Search for History's Hidden Heroines*. New York: Warner Books.
- ELIADE, Mircea (1968). *Mito y realidad*. Madrid: Guadarrama.
- ELIADE, Mircea (2011). *El mito del eterno retorno*. Madrid: Alianza.
- GUBERN, Roman (1993). *Espejo de fantasmas. De John Travolta a Indiana Jones*. Madrid: Espasa Calpe.
- JAMET, Thomas (2011). *Ren@issance mythologique. L'imaginaire et les mythes à l'ère digitale*. Paris: François Bourin Editeur.
- MAINON, Dominique and URSINI, James (2008). *Amazonas. Guerreras en la pantalla*. Madrid: Alberto Santos.
- MARTÍNEZ, Sebastián (2010). "Amazonas. Mito y leyenda." *E-Revista de Humanidades Sarasuati*, 8, (22-28). Published online at <<http://www.sarasuati.com>> [28/01/2013].
- MAY, Rollo (1992). *La necesidad del mito. La influencia de los modelos culturales en el mundo contemporáneo*. Barcelona: Paidós.
- OMATOS, Olga (2009). "ΚΟΥΡΟΣ, una recreación del mito de Teseo." *Faventia*, 31 (1-2), 263-278.
- ORWELL, George (1983). *1984*. Barcelona: Destinolibro.
- PITARCH, Pau (2008). "Género y fantasía heroica." In I. CLÚA (ed.). *Género y cultura popular I* (pp. 33-64). Barcelona: UAB.
- PROPP, Vladimir (1981). *Morfología del cuento*. Madrid: Fundamentos.
- RAGLAN, Lord (1937). *The Hero: A Study in Tradition, Myth and Drama*. New York: Oxford University Press.
- RUÍZ, Jaime (2012). "El camino del héroe: entre lo sagrado y lo profano." *Acta Sociológica*, 57, 185-196.
- SAVATER, Fernando (1983). *La tarea del héroe*. Madrid: Taurus.
- ZURIAN, Francisco A. (2011). "Almodóvar, la identidad de género buscada. El caso de *La piel que habito*." In F. A. ZURIAN (ed.). *Imágenes del Eros. Género, sexualidad, estética y cultura audiovisual* (pp. 277-297). Madrid: Ocho y medio.

María Isabel Menéndez-Menéndez (b. Oviedo, Spain, 1967) holds a PhD in Philosophy and an MA in Journalism, and is Assistant Professor of Audiovisual Communication at Universidad de Burgos (UBU). Her research focuses on the analysis of communication from a gender perspective, particularly the discourse of fiction and biopolitics in popular culture, a topic about which she has published various articles and monographs.

Marta Fernández-Morales (b. Gijón, Spain, 1974), PhD, is Associate Professor at Universidad de las Islas Baleares (UIB). Her research deals with gender in contemporary cultural manifestations, especially theatre, film, and television. She has written several books and articles featured in international journals, and she leads the research unit "Representación, Ideología y Recepción en la Cultural Audiovisual" at the UIB.

# Rescuing the Last Grains of Truth: On Metacinematic Elements in *The Idiots*\*

Enric Antoni Burgos Ramírez

## 1. *The Idiots* or how the cinema questions itself

If, as more than one filmmaker has asserted, every movie is a documentary of its own filming, it could be argued that every film, when it signals itself to us as a movie, offers us the possibility of analysing and assessing its metacinematic aspects. In this sense, in a mainstream cinema production we may identify a metacinematic exercise every time it employs codes previously used and established by other films. However, in commercial cinema the appearance of metacinematic elements does not tend to be associated with a discursive self-consciousness that is able to break away from the complacency of the cinematic imaginary shaped by the hegemonic model. Quite different in this respect, however, are avant-garde films, which, because of their rejection of the type of filmmaking that seeks transparency of representation and their disavowal of the diegetic absorption of the audience in a believable world whose process of construction is concealed from us, offer a much more fertile field of analysis of the metacinematic phenomenon. Conscious deviations from the hegemonic model employ metacinematic mechanisms with the aim of subverting established codes and proposing a new cinematic approach to reality, thereby posing a series of questions in their products that push far beyond the ideological boundaries of mainstream cinema.

In my opinion, there are four major questions that effectively condense all the issues raised by the metacinematic devices used in these alternative movements. First of all, the metacinematic mechanism points clearly to a reflection on cinema as a means of expression, often

accompanied by the exploration of its possibilities, especially those most commonly repressed by commercial cinema. Closely related to this first question, of *what is cinema*, we find the second, which can also be addressed from a Bazinian point of view, which explores the ontological condition of cinema, in an effort to determine *what is the relationship established between cinema and reality*. The assessment of this relationship leads us inevitably to the third question, namely, *what is reality*, whose veiled answer is often suggested by the film. Finally, the metacinematic device fully develops its potential when

CONSCIOUS  
DEVIATIONS FROM  
THE HEGEMONIC  
MODEL EMPLOY  
METACINEMATIC  
MECHANISMS WITH  
THE AIM OF SUBVERTING  
ESTABLISHED CODES  
AND PROPOSING  
A NEW CINEMATIC  
APPROACH  
TO REALITY

it enables the film to pose the fourth question, *what is the role of the audience*, not only in relation with the film they are watching but also with the reality of the world they inhabit. With these questions in mind, my objective in this article is to consider the use of metacinematic elements in *The Idiots* (Dogme #2. Idioterne, Lars von Trier, 1998) and assess how it makes use of the space offered by the film itself to prompt the audience to ponder these four questions.

Von Trier released *The Idiots* in 1998. It was his first and only film made following the guidelines set by the Dogme 95 movement launched three years earlier with the presentation of its principles to the cinema world. The Dogme 95 "Manifesto" and "Vow of Chastity"<sup>1</sup> were written by Thomas Vinterberg and Lars Von Trier, who directed, respectively, *The Celebration* (Dogme #1. Festen, 1998) and *The Idiots*, the first two films to be awarded the Certificate given by the movement. According to the manifesto, Dogme 95 is defined as a filmmaking movement established in reaction against the predominance of a cinema of illusion that has been *cosmeticized* to death. The new movement was committed to the democratization of the medium, the recovery of the essence of cinema and a quest for the truth in every character and scene.

To begin this consideration of the contribution of *The Idiots* to my exploration of the "film within a film", I could identify the influence of the films and filmmakers to which von Trier's film seems something of a homage. It is easy to detect in *The Idiots* the same taste for *épater les bourgeois* that we find in films like *Blow-Out* (La grande bouffe, Marco Ferreri, 1973) or *Weekend* (Palle Kjaerulff-Schmidt, 1962), the first film in Denmark to emulate the practices of the French New Wave. Also evi-

dent is the influence of *Persona* (Ingmar Bergman, 1966) in the conversation between Karen and Susanne, two of the protagonists in *The Idiots*, about the right to be happy. And there are also noticeable traces of Fellini and Truffaut in the scene in the woods, and the influence of Dreyer, another of von Trier's idols, which is especially visible in the last minutes of the film (ROCKWELL, 2003: 39).

However, in view of my purpose here as outlined above, an analysis of the elements of homage (a practice also widespread in mainstream cinema) in *The Idiots* would not offer the same possibilities as a study of the metacinematic question from other perspectives. Thus, although the homage holds an indisputable place in explorations of metacinema, in this article I will focus on self-reflexive devices in *The Idiots* that may help answer the questions outlined above. With this in mind, for explanatory purposes, in the next section I will consider the *what* of *The Idiots* (i.e., the story it tells us), and then in the third section I will consider the *how* (or the discourse of the film) (CHATMAN, 1990:20), always with attention to my expressed objective, namely, to explore how the self-reflexive and metacinematic elements present in the story and the discourse of *The Idiots* contribute to its reflection on cinema and reality, the relationship between them and the role of the audience. Finally, in my conclusion, in addition to offering evidence of the convergence of the purposes of form and content in the film, I will attempt to answer the four questions posed above based on the argument developed over the course of the article.

## 2. A film about idiots<sup>2</sup>

*The Idiots* narrates the experience of a group of young people with the time and means to philosophise about life, who make a collective decision to discover their inner idiot. Led by Stoffer, the group, all holed up in the empty house of Stoffer's uncle, begin to behave (act, live, be) as if they were mentally disabled. The experiment leads them to interact with the outside world, to the shock and embarrassment of those who are not in on the joke. At a restaurant, they accidentally bump into Karen, at first a victim of the group's deception, who soon decides to join them. Karen, who in the beginning is unimpressed by their antics, finds herself attracted to the joy expressed in their idiocy and ends up becoming part of the group, taking part in some of their activities: visiting a factory, swimming in a public pool, being taken by surprise by a group of genuinely disabled people and witnessing an improvised orgy that takes place in the house. Stoffer then decides to take his plan to the limit: beyond merely playing the idiot in the privacy of the house or pretending to be people with disabilities outside it, the ultimate test for the members of the group is to show their inner idiot to their closest circle, either at work or

at home. But the group fails to take their idiocy to that point. Karen, on the other hand, who is secretly weighed down by the grief of having lost a child, is prepared to experiment with the game's therapeutic capacity and faces the ultimate test with her own family.

The episodes in the film devoted to the group's activities are interrupted by statements made to the camera by the members of this little commune, commenting on their past experience in the house which, as members of the audience, we are witnessing unfold. A total of nine interviews, filmed with a still camera, documentary tone and a very different aesthetic from the rest of the film, are inserted between the various episodes that outline a structure without an obvious narrative thread. The curious aspect of these interviews, as Jerslev, citing Langkjaer, points out (JERSLEV, 2002: 54), is the fact that they can be interpreted in three different ways: we can view them as the characters talking about themselves and their past experience of pretending to be idiots, as the actors talking to the camera about the characters they played, or even as the actors being interviewed about what the experience of shooting this film meant to them. The fact that we recognise the voice of von Trier himself in some of these interviews only raises more doubts in the mind of the viewer, who is thus prompted to question the role played by the interviewer with respect to the diegesis.

The interruption of these interviews, ambiguous in the sense noted above, helps to establish the existence within the film of what might be called three different ontological levels. On the first level (1) would be the actors and actresses, as well as von Trier himself and the rest of the film crew, which appears more than once in frame in the course of filming. This level is also, logically, the one in which we, as viewers, locate ourselves. On the second level (2), belonging to the diegesis, would be the characters of the film (Stoffer, Karen, Jeppe, Josephine...). But there is also a third ontological level (3), which opens the doors to some considerations explored below, in which we find the character (or, if you will, metacharacter) being played by the level 2 characters. This is the level of the idiot-character, the inner idiot that most of the members of the group are trying to find, and which appears several times throughout the film. The boundaries between these three ontological levels, of person (1), character (2) and idiot-character (3), far from being presented as clearly defined and demarcated, appear blurred, transporting us into a *mise en abyme* of constant shifts from one level to another.

I will begin with a brief exploration of what I consider to be the most significant of the shifts that take place between levels 2 and 3 (i.e., between character and idiot-character). One of these is the orgy scene that unfolds in the house upon the suggestion of idiot-Stoffer. Jeppe and Josephine, two members of the group who, like the rest, are



*The Idiots* (Dogme #2. *Idioterne*, Lars von Trier, 1998)

fully immersed in their idiot-characters, decide to leave the room where the action is taking place and go upstairs to a bedroom. We have already been given signs of the attraction that one character feels for the other (2) as something latent (although more obvious in the moments when they play their idiot-selves), but their real connection only occurs when idiot-Jeppe and idiot-Josephine (3), while jerking spasmodically, begin caressing one another in the bedroom and end up making love while the others continue with the orgy downstairs. The question here is not so much how their inner idiot led them to

do what they wanted, to reveal the truth they concealed within, but rather how difficult it is to establish the moment at which idiot-Jeppe and idiot-Josephine become simply Jeppe and Josephine. At some moment between the first caresses and her "I love you" they have stopped playing their idiot-selves, although

this fact hardly clarifies the moment or level (2 or 3) where the connection between them was most authentic. The scene that follows reinforces this idea. The next morning, Josephine's father arrives at the house with the intention of taking his daughter home, against her will as well as Jeppe's, who is visibly shaken. When Josephine's father starts his car, Jeppe runs to stand in its way to prevent its departure. His inability to articulate anything but screams and moans suggests that it is not Jeppe (2) but idiot-Jeppe (3) who throws himself onto the bonnet of the car. Or perhaps it is the most authentic part of Jeppe,

**THE IDIOTS TELLS OF THE EXPERIENCE OF A GROUP OF YOUNG PEOPLE WITH THE TIME AND MEANS TO PHILOSOPHISE ABOUT LIFE, WHO MAKE A COLLECTIVE DECISION TO DISCOVER THEIR INNER IDIOT**

which is his idiot-self. Or perhaps, as suggested above, there is no way of distinguishing with absolute certainty between one and the other.

Apart from the overlap between levels 2 and 3 revealed by Jeppe and Josephine in these two consecutive scenes, the most important shift between character and idiot-character is, undoubtedly, the one that takes place in the film's final scene, featuring Karen/idiot-Karen. After her experience with the group, Karen decides to go back home to show her family her inner idiot. It is only then that we discover that Karen joined the group shortly after the death of her son and that, since then, her family has not heard from her. But Karen does not come home with the intention of taking up the challenge posited by Stoffer, and this may be why, when she reveals her inner idiot at the family reunion, her spasms are different from those of the other members of the group: she plays her idiot-self perfectly because her performance *is* her. Beyond the rational anti-rationalism imposed by the group, with her spasms Karen transgresses the symbolic order out of pure emotion, the only channel through which her trauma can be articulated (Jerslev, 2002: 62).

We can see from these examples the particular way in which von Trier introduces a story within a story through the inclusion of a third ontological level (the idiot-character level), but above all how the leaps and overlaps between levels 2 and 3 (character and idiot-character) offer an effective way of making the audience conscious of the constructed nature of what they are watching, thus fostering their critical detachment. It is no accident that the shifts between levels 2 and 3 point indirectly to level 1, as do the parallel shifts that occur between levels 1 and 2. In other words, the overlap of levels 2 and 3 invites the audience to reflect on the distance, the difference and the heterogeneity of the space from which they watch the film (1). This distance prevents us from entering and losing ourselves in a seamless universe like the one that mainstream cinema tempts us with.

But apart from this indirect allusion to the first ontological level and to its possible overlaps with level 2, *The Idiots*, as noted above, also bluntly and directly addresses the shifts and feedback between levels 1 and 2 (actor and character), of which the case of the interviews mentioned above would constitute a plausible example. As mentioned above, not only is the mysterious location (between levels 1 and 2) of the interviewer marked by ambiguity, but also the level on which the interviewees are located: is it an interview with the actors (1) or with the charac-

ters (2)?<sup>3</sup> Many more examples of this could be found, especially if we were to focus on von Trier's direction of the actors and his intention that they should inject their character(s) with as much of their true selves as possible. But I am more interested here in examining what I consider to be the key level shift of all those that the film offers us, in which a group of people with functional diversity burst unexpectedly into the idiots' communal house. The contrast is evident at all levels: the arrival of people who are not pretending to be but actually are disabled makes the characters (2) forget their idiot-characters (3) while sharing space with their guests. Josephine's reaction, whereby she attempts to avoid the situation, Katrine's lie when asked by one of their visitors what they are doing in the house, Stoffer's violent reaction...<sup>4</sup> The scene also



*The Idiots* (Dogme #2. Idioterne, Lars von Trier, 1998)

makes an impact on and appeal to the viewer who has been entering the dynamic of this peculiar commune and who now, like the whole group, receives a slap in the face and is left wondering as to the ontological level in which the newcomers should be located. Are they acting (2)? Are they not (1)? Are they playing themselves (1 and 2)? Again, the boundaries are blurred: where is the line between the person and the character? And furthermore, in assessing the reaction of the main characters, where is the boundary between character and character-idiot? And beyond all this, playing upon the viewer's mind, there is the same question that the main characters (and the actors) are wondering: at what point does playing the idiot cease to be a game?

This may be the key scene for understanding the aim for authenticity that drives the film. Von Trier exposes himself, and exposes the characters and the audience, much more completely (although of course less literally) than in the scene of the orgy mentioned above. The cards are turned over and everyone is exposed: the idiot-char-



acters, the characters, the actors and von Trier himself. The film is also exposed with this *mise en abyme*, with cameras and microphones entering the frame with no attempt to hide them, since the aim is to make us conscious of the construction that the film necessarily entails, in which we participate as viewers. The Dogme 95 movement is also exposed through the metaphorical reading of the film, which invites us to consider the Dogme group as a collective willing to play the idiot in the film world or, if you will, to extol the virtues of idiotic (and thus authentic) cinema. And of course, we, as viewers, are also exposed, urged to be on the alert from the very beginning of the film when we discover, along with Karen in the taxi scene, that we are being teased and that things are not as they seem. Intermittently invited into the diegesis

the Dogme Manifesto and its Vow of Chastity, von Trier's diary (which was recorded during the making of the film and whose transcript was subsequently published alongside the script) and *The Humiliated* (De ydmygede, Jesper Jørgil, 1999), the documentary which, in the style of a making-of, documents the filming of *The Idiots*. This intertextuality, this amalgam of interconnected simultaneous texts that straddle the line between fiction and non-fiction leads us, according to Jørgil, to a *mise en abyme* of the *Idiot Project* understood as a whole. Despite the significance of Jørgil's suggestion, for reasons of space I will limit myself here to assessing how the *disabled* technique used in *The Idiots*, which is clearly the result of the translation to the screen of the rules of the Vow of Chastity that the film puts into practice, contributes to a

blurring of the boundaries between fiction and non-fiction in its discourse, in tune with the confusion between the different ontological levels noted above with regard to the story.

Whereas the story of *The Idiots* proposes the rejection of social control and artifice, its discourse, in a parallel way, challenges aesthetic control and artifice by dispensing with those elements used in mainstream cinema to promote plausibility. This is the spirit that underpins practically every rule of the Vow of Chastity, i.e., to strip and expose the film as much as possible in the interests of the truth. Thus, there is no sign in *The Idiots* of any effort to naturalise the space of representation with the use of realistic sets; instead, in accordance with the first rule of the Vow,

real locations are used. The aim to reduce the distance between what is taken from reality and the end result of the film is what prompts the movement to which *The Idiots* belongs to reject cosmetic devices and artifices such as the use of optical work and filters (rule 5), temporal and geographical alienation (rule 7) and conventions of genre (rule 8) and to use colour in their films as well as natural lighting (rule 4). Following these rules thus calls classical film perception into question and prevents, in keeping with my observations above, the possibility of establishing a clear boundary between filmic and pro-filmic elements. The same intention lies behind the second rule of the Vow which forbids extra-diegetic music (which is observed in *The Idiots*, although with a few exceptions) and insists on indissolubility between image and sound. The fact that images and sounds are blended and reciprocally related to each other in the film in the same way as they are in our natural perception of reality contributes to a certain *punctum*, with a similar effect to the one attributed by Barthes to the photographic image



*The Idiots* (Dogme #2. Idioterne, Lars von Trier, 1998)

only to be brusquely pushed out again and again, we have no choice but to succumb to the repeated appeals and be aware of a distance maintained by the film's discourse.

### 3. A film by idiots

In this section, my objective is to explore the discourse of *The Idiots* to identify how a discursive analysis can lead us, albeit by a different path, back to the same conclusions as does the above reflection on the metacinematic elements present at the level of the story, to help further clarify the answers to the questions posed at the beginning of the article.

This approach to the discourse of *The Idiots* inevitably requires a consideration of the Dogme 95's Manifesto and Vow of Chastity, which establishes the movement's formal principles and with which the film engages in a dialogue. As Anne Jørgil maintains (JØRGIL, 2002:43), *The Idiots* should not be considered in isolation, but as part of a larger project (what she calls the *Idiot Project*) which includes, in addition to the film itself and its script,

(JERSLEV, 2002: 50) and which *The Idiots* also achieves through the wounding detail provided by the use of videotaping.

The use of video recording, which did not prevent the distribution of the film in 35mm format as required by rule 9, allowed shooting with a hand-held camera which, following the third rule, places the camera wherever the action takes place, preventing the development of the action from being constrained by the camera position. This creates the ideal conditions to suggest that the actors are being and living rather than acting or representing, thereby allowing the film to reveal its truth. In short, this is yet another way of blurring the boundaries that separate the character and the person, cinema and reality.

But although the use of video cameras, as noted above, create an intimate effect with the film's grainy, documentary-like appearance, the spasmodic filming techniques often have the opposite effect on the audience. Close-ups with invasive cameras, conceived of as participants rather than as open windows onto the world, have



*The Idiots* (Dogme #2, Idioterne, Lars von Trier, 1998)

a disquieting effect on the viewer in their efforts to show reality while abandoning the conventional identification and emotional connection to which mainstream cinema has accustomed us. The result is a curious combination of the unadorned performance and minimalist style with camera work that distances us from the action and invites us to reflect on it; a kind of complex, intellectual

and emotional realism (VAN DER VLIET, 2009) that has the same effect as mentioned above of drawing the viewer constantly in and out of the diegesis.

But neither the *disabled* aesthetics in which *The Idiots* immerses us nor this game with the viewer is based solely on the rules established by the Vow of Chastity. Before suggesting some answers to the four questions with which my analysis began, it is important to note one last formal aspect of the film which, although not reflected in the Vow, is highly relevant to this discussion: the con-

tribution of the editing to making the artifice of the film visible and exposing its constructed nature. Indeed, *The Idiots* is the antithesis of mainstream cinema, especially in terms of the preoccupation of the latter with recreating a false continuity through the use of the match cut. As part of its subversion of mainstream ideology, the excessively visible edits in *The Idiots* disconcert us while inviting us to denaturalise the experience of film reception to which we are accustomed. The film thus succeeds in drawing our attention to what normally goes unnoticed in the cinema of illusion: the techniques it uses to communicate and the message itself.

#### 4. A film... for idiots?

The above exploration of the metacinematic aspects that pepper the story and the discourse of *The Idiots* has revealed how, by different but convergent routes, the film effectively pulls the carpet out from under the viewers, drawing them into ambiguous ontological locations halfway between fiction and non-fiction. The film's continuous appeals to the level on which the audience watches reveal the structural inconsistency that affects all discourses, highlighting the limits of their construction and encouraging a critical distance in a manner that recalls Brecht, compelling us to recognise our role as viewers, or even making it possible for the I-viewer to turn into the I-see-that-I-am-a-viewer (LEDO, 2004:153), with all the ethical implications for the cinema and the world that this conversion entails. The film's content and form jointly and repeatedly push the audience towards that unstable ground from which they can only emerge with the awareness that they, as viewers, are the ones who must decide and give meaning to what they see. This is

FOLLOWING  
THESE RULES  
CALLS CLASSICAL  
FILM PERCEPTION INTO  
QUESTION AND PREVENTS  
THE POSSIBILITY OF  
ESTABLISHING A CLEAR  
BOUNDARY BETWEEN  
FILMIC AND PROFILMIC  
ELEMENTS

precisely the role that the film reserves for the audience, the role of active and necessary participants who are invited to reflect on the aesthetic and ethical issues raised by the film that will help them formulate some answers to the other questions that the film poses. It will thus be my fourth question, about the role of the audience, that will be the first to find a possible answer. This is logically inevitable, since none of the other three questions can be answered without the recognition of the viewer's subjectivity, as no truth can be found in *The Idiots* without a subject to sustain it.

The film offers us the freedom to consider it either as a mockumentary about a group of people on a quest for their inner idiot or as a film about art and authenticity or about cinema, performance and life (ROCKWELL, 2003: 8, 45). Or even as a (false?) documentary about the filmmaking process of the Dogma collective, which, incidentally, is reflected perfectly in the consideration with which I began this article. Making use of the freedom offered by the film, and based on my reflections here, I would propose that *The Idiots* is suggestive of a kind of film that understands itself (and reveals itself) as film theory.

Having sketched out these possible answers to the questions about the viewer's role and the conception of cinema posited by the film analysed here, to conclude I will conclude by turning to my questions about reality and the relationship between reality and cinema. In this respect, *The Idiots* suggests an aesthetic of presence and immediacy (in the sense of the "here" and "now" required by the seventh rule) opposed to the classical idea of representation, so often reviled by the avant-garde. It is for this reason that the narrative progression of the film, as discussed above, is relegated to the background to give precedent to the intense moments that imbue the different episodes with authenticity. But von Trier's legitimate efforts to capture authenticity and allow the truth to be revealed in his film should not confuse us: for Dogme 95, his films are not transparent reality telling its own story. *The Idiots* shows signs of the awareness that its construction involves a necessary mediation, but also demonstrates its aim to capture the world that is shown to us (and concealed from us) in a language, because it is shown to us and it is the world that is shown to us. The type of realism that inspires *The Idiots*, diametrically opposed to that pursued by the cinema of illusion, thus facilitates a re-appraisal of the world, of the profilmic world, turning the cinematic medium into an instrument for interrogating reality while also being committed to it. According to this approach, which not only advocates a formal (aesthetic) realism but also an ethical realism, the camera can capture a reality that is ambiguous and which, whether we like it or not, has no intrinsic meaning. ■

## Notes

\*Editor's Note: *L'Atalante. International Film Studies Journal* would like to thank Zentropa for authorisation the publication of the images accompanying this article.

1 The Vow of Chastity, which includes the ten rules that establish the formal parameters of the movement, is reproduced below:

"I swear to submit to the following set of rules drawn up and confirmed by DOGME 95:

1 Shooting must be done on location. Props and sets must not be brought in (if a particular prop is necessary for the story, a location must be chosen where this prop is to be found).

2 The sound must never be produced apart from the images or vice versa. (Music must not be used unless it occurs where the scene is being shot.)

3 The camera must be handheld. Any movement or immobility attainable in the hand is permitted. (The film must not take place where the camera is standing; shooting must take place where the film takes place.)

4 The film must be in colour. Special lighting is not acceptable. (If there is too little light for exposure the scene must be cut or a single lamp be attached to the camera.)

5 Optical work and filters are forbidden.

6 The film must not contain superficial action. (Murders, weapons, etc. must not occur.)

7 Temporal and geographical alienation are forbidden. (That is to say that the film takes place here and now.)

8 Genre movies are not acceptable.

9 The film format must be Academy 35 mm.

10 The director must not be credited.

Furthermore I swear as a director to refrain from personal taste! I am no longer an artist. I swear to refrain from creating a "work", as I regard the instant as more important than the whole. My supreme goal is to force the truth out of my characters and settings. I swear to do so by all the means available and at the cost of any good taste and any aesthetic considerations.

Thus I make my VOW OF CHASTITY."

2 The titles of the three following sections play on the phrase which was used as a caption to accompany the film's title in the press kits for various film festivals, as well as on the covers of several editions on VHS and DVD: "a film by idiots, about idiots, for idiots".

3 Apparently, this doubt not only seizes the audience, but also the interviewees themselves, who later confessed that they did not know whether von Trier was asking the questions of the characters or themselves, as the actors, when he was filming them.

4 Here again, the actors, while the scene was being recorded, did not manage to stay in character (2) and began to call each other by their real names (1).

**THE IDIOTS IS SUGGESTIVE  
OF A KIND OF FILM THAT  
UNDERSTANDS ITSELF  
(AND REVEALS ITSELF) AS  
FILM THEORY**

## Bibliography

- BADLEY, Linda (2006). Danish Dogma. In L. BADLEY, R. BARTON and S. J. SCHNEIDER (eds.), *Traditions in World Cinema* (pp. 80-94). Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press.
- CHATMAN, Seymour (1990). *Historia y discurso. La estructura narrativa en la novela y en el cine*. Madrid: Taurus.
- JERSLEV, Anne (2002). Dogma 95, Lars von Trier's The Idiots and the 'Idiot Project'. In A. JERSLEV (ed.), *Realism and 'Reality' in Film and Media* (pp. 41-65). Copenhagen: Museum Tusculanum Press.
- LEDO, Margarita (2004). *Del Cine-Ojo a Dogma 95*. Barcelona: Paidós.
- ROCKWELL, John (2003). *The Idiots*. London: British Film Institute.
- VARIOUS AUTHORS. (2000). *Aspects of Dogma. A Danish Journal of Film Studies*, 10. Accessed at <<http://pov.imv.au.dk/pdf/pov10.pdf>>.
- VAN DER VLIET, Emma (2009). *Naked film: stripping with The Idiots*. Post Script, 28. Accessed at <<http://www.freepatentsonline.com/article/Post-Script/211362421.html>>.

Enric A. Burgos Ramírez (Valencia, 1976) holds bachelor's degrees in Philosophy and in Audiovisual Communication from the Universitat de València. He is a teaching assistant in the Department of Audiovisual Communication, Documentation and History of Art at the Universitat Politècnica de València and in the Department of Philosophy and Sociology at the Universitat Jaume I, and he is currently completing his doctoral thesis on the Dogme 95 movement and the philosophy of Stanley Cavell.

# Ephemeral Architectures, Colossal Sets: the *Intolerance* of the Taviani Brothers and Identity Recovered

Pedro Molina-Siles  
Óscar Brox Santiago  
Juan Carlos Piquer-Cases

Architecture and cinema maintain a close creative relationship. Indeed, set construction and staging decisions can reveal a great deal about the process of making a film. In this process, architectural language provides certain theoretical keys and tools that can help us to observe how films are shaped through their different stages. A reflection on the evolution of sets from the first experimental filmmaking pioneers through to the first decades of 20<sup>th</sup> century may therefore shed some light on the varied range of expressive and technical resources that propelled the early development of cinema.

Among its many facets, architecture has given rise to a field in which the ephemeral is the main parameter. This ephemerality is related not only to its temporal duration, but also to the idea of transformation, adaptation or multiplicity of interpretations and applications (MOLINAS-SILES, GARCÍA and TORRES, 2013). For the current analysis, we will delimit the idea of *ephemeral* as follows: certain sets have gone down in history thanks to their extraordinary visual power, and this monumental quality has prevented them from being used again in other productions. In other words, their effect was so great that it proved almost impossible to shoot another film with them without evoking the film in which they originally appeared. For this reason, their reuse, except partially, was not possible.

If there is any single emblematic example of this category, it is *Intolerance* (D.W. Griffith, 1916), whose amazing depiction of the Babylonian period culminates with the colossal set of the walled courtyard. Griffith's film will thus be useful to break down the components of the architectural set referred to above, its particular features and its evolution. Following this analysis, we will assess cinema's potential for redefining the codes of that fiction set. To this end we will refer to the set for the film *Good Morning, Babylon* (Paolo and Vittorio Taviani, 1987) to explore how the intervention of its protagonists, two artists from Tuscany who emigrate to United States, re-conceives the Babylonian construction in Griffith's film.

Based on an analysis of both films, we will observe the characteristics of two opposing architectural models. In the first, in general terms, the instrumentalist view of the set underpins its lush and monumental features. In the remake by the Tavianis, on the other hand, the parameter to be considered is the search for a unique identity and the desire to inscribe it into the set. In this way, the two films share a connection that may serve our purposes here to show how the magnitude of an ephemeral architecture can be redefined so that its main objective becomes maintaining the roots of its creators stable over time. This is, in short, the basis of our analysis here of the transformation of a set and its creative possibilities.

### ***Intolerance, Babylon: The construction of a film set***

His good fortune with critics, whose views are always partial and questionable, has turned the filmmaker D. W. Griffith into the "father of modern cinema".<sup>1</sup> Blind acceptance of this label would give rise to more than one objection from the different traditions in film studies engaged in unravelling the origins of the language and narrative forms of cinema. Nevertheless, a consideration of this arguable achievement—i.e. that Griffith laid the foundations of the golden age of classic cinema—will help us to sketch a portrait of the film that is our object of study here, *Intolerance*. In 1916, Griffith had a solid reputation as a filmmaker thanks to the success of *The Birth of a Nation* (1915), which ensured him a bigger budget for his next project. With a plot constructed around four separate time periods, from the Passion of Christ to the contemporary United States, *Intolerance* is a triumph of staging at the service of narration, with four stories that explore, up to the film's climax, the evolution of the human condition over the course of history. Faced with such creative ambition, it is hardly surprising that the spectator's gaze should be captivated by the colossal nature of the scenes set during the fall of Babylon. The set for this part of the

film thus offers an emblematic example of the technical evolution of cinema and, at the same time, a unique specimen of ephemeral film architecture.

In his study of the film set, Jean-Pierre Berthome explains how, during the early years of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, people began to understand that this element had the capacity to seduce the audience and to establish its supremacy over the theatre. The first creative developments were aimed at "a series of historical reconstructions that used antiquity as a pretext for satisfying the audience's taste for violence and eroticism" (2003:35). Notable among these first films is the Italian film *Cabiria* (1914) by Giovanni Pastrone, which, as Berthome suggests, boasted a set that "would invent an exotic realism whose main purpose would be to provoke astonishment" (2003:36). It was probably this astonishment, along with his competitive nature, that seduced D.W. Griffith when he saw *Cabiria*, as it was this film that gave him the definitive push to make *Intolerance*. Pastrone's film, with its monumental, three-dimensional sets with their extraordinary dramatic presence, may have been the inspiration that the US filmmaker needed to give his already ambitious work a truly revolutionary dimension. Griffith thus bought a copy of the Italian film to study it and attempt to move several steps beyond its visual impact.

The creation of the Babylonian set for *Intolerance*, the pinnacle of Griffith's creative work, is without doubt one of the most fascinating stories of this period of film history. According to the explanation offered by Santiago Vila, Griffith created a scrapbook of a series of aesthetic models that served as a guide for the development of the set (1997: 211). At this point, it is worth recalling an idea related to the evolution of cinema expounded by Berthome: every set has a purpose. Indeed, it is significant that such an exhaustive search for models and details should result in a film which, nevertheless, "values spectacular effect over historical accuracy" (2003: 38). Consequences of this creative criterion are, for example, the constant ornamental overload, the useless gigantism of columns designed exclusively to support the voluminous figures of elephants, which bear witness to Griffith's ultimate objective. It is for this reason that, as Javier Marzal points out, the essence of Griffith's films can be found in 19<sup>th</sup> century melodrama, in which the aesthetic presence of the set already played an important role (1998: 51).

As suggested above, the Babylonian courtyard in *Intolerance* has diverse origins. Berthome notes the Indian ancestry of the columns and the elephants, and the attention to detail typical of Mesopotamian art; Juan Antonio Ramírez, meanwhile, points out the John Martin painting *Belshazzar's Feast* (1821).<sup>2</sup> How can Mesopotamian art and an English Romantic painter coexist





John Martin's painting *Belshazzar's Feast* (1821) as one of the possible basis for the sets of *Intolerance: Love's Struggle throughout the Ages*, David Wark Griffith, 1916)

in the same scene? This is precisely one of the most interesting aspects of Griffith's film. Instead of constructing a historical guide, the filmmaker seeks a resource to amplify the monumental and dramatic dimensions of the story he is telling. In this respect, an extremely relevant reflection is offered by Vila, who points out that Martin's painting and indeed most of Griffith's references date back to before the first archaeological excavations, in 1848, in the ancient Mesopotamia (1997: 213). Griffith's ambition is thus not to be found in fidelity but in recreation. This fact points to another quality of the set of *Intolerance*: its transitory nature.

The hallmark of this period of cinema was its constant evolution, whereby numerous filmmakers embarked on a great race to see who could win the prize. As noted above, *Intolerance* was largely a reaction to the huge success of *Cabiria*. And this reaction was so strong that Griffith spared no expense in his construction of a set close to fifty metres long, forty metres tall, and thirty metres deep (2003: 38). As a consequence of this feat, filmmakers were keen to find a new set that could outdo Griffith's. Thus, in 1922 Allan Dwan directed a version of *Robin Hood* that sought to rival the magnificence of Griffith's film. To do this, he hired the son of the architect Frank Lloyd Wright to design a 12<sup>th</sup> century castle and fortress where the action would take place. The result, although far from brilliant and, of course, less remembered than the Babylonian courtyard, clearly reveals the huge impact on the budding film industry of this way of understanding the function of the set.

Having thus briefly reviewed the origin of *Intolerance*, we can affirm the connection between its dramatic functionality and its ephemeral nature, as its colossal nature and visual power were so personal that it was almost impossible to reuse it in other films. These sets

were so unique, representing themselves with such a specific purpose and meaning, that it was quite unimaginable that they should appear in any other film. And this is also the reason behind the great race embarked upon in the film industry to maximise the impact of each subsequent production, a quest still considered to be the stylistic aim of much commercial cinema today. Nevertheless, the definition of the set of *Intolerance*, so colossal and at the same time ephemeral, poses a challenge of similar dimensions: is it possible to inscribe on this kind of architecture a meaning and an identity that can remain stable over time? The vision offered by the Italian film-makers Paolo and Vittorio Taviani in *Good Morning, Babylon* will help us to shed light on this question.

### ***Good Morning, Babylon: The set and identity recovered***

Along with filmmakers like Francesco Rosi, Elio Petri or Ermanno Olmi, Paolo and Vittorio Taviani exemplify a generation in which Italian cinema became fully aware of its political dimension. After an adolescence marked by the outbreak of World War II and their membership in the Communist Party, the Tavianis found in neorealism a style through which they could develop their own aesthetic.<sup>3</sup> The Tuscan filmmakers thus based their work on themes as familiar as work, ideology and cultural roots: the home, identity, the home landscape. This brief preamble will aid in the interpretation of the interests of the two filmmakers that lay behind a film like *Good Morning, Babylon*. Set in their home province of Tuscany, the film begins with the ups and downs of two brothers forced to find a new living after the construction workshop run by their father closes down. Their dream of prospering in the building profession will lead them to United States where, finally, they will join the team of artists who designed the sets for D.W. Griffith's *Intolerance*.

It is not often that a fiction film draws on the historical details of a previous production. *Good Morning, Babylon* is notable precisely for its scenes focusing on the creation of the Babylonian set for *Intolerance*. An analysis of this creative process of the Tavianis offers a chance to observe how the lavish set in Griffith's film is reused, redefined and transformed from an ephemeral architectural backdrop for which time plays a leading role, into a work of art for which the fundamental parameter is the identity of its creators. As noted above, the constituent elements of the Tavianis' films are work and the importance of cultural roots. In the first case, work defines a way of living, a set of customs and traditions that illuminate the

## THE CONSTITUENT ELEMENTS OF THE TAVIANIS' FILMS ARE WORK AND THE IMPORTANCE OF CULTURAL ROOTS

landscape in which their works take place. However, it is the second point that takes on particular significance. As Hilario J. Rodríguez suggests, "their films, rather than reproducing specific scenes, denote a particular way of observing things [...] which they have inherited from

the great Tuscan masters. Their pictorial references are thus always indirect" (2007: 36).

As native Tuscans, the Tavianis bring in the atmosphere of their roots into each of their films.

Thus, the church, whose restoration concludes the first scenes of *Good Morning, Babylon* reflects the Romanesque style of the cathedral of San Miniato in Pisa, birthplace of the filmmakers. The influence of the landscapes of their childhood is so strong that this same building will appear in films as diverse as *Padre Padrone* (1977) and *The Elective Affinities*

(Le affinità elettive, 1996), as a sign of the attachment felt by both filmmakers for their homeland. Although its dramatic importance is minimal, the church indicates a region, acting as an almost sentimental marker of the territory in which they move. This special way of observing things will thus give a different function and value to the elements of the set of *Intolerance*, which will ultimately lose their monumental quality to hint at other aspects.

In the previous section we pointed out Griffith's aesthetic debt in his creation of the Babylonian set, a gigantic multi-referential Meccano constructed to maximise its visual power. In fact, one of its borrowings is its appropriation of the elephants from *Cabiria*, also in this case ornamental components designed to enhance the monumental nature of the Babylonian courtyard. However, for *Good Morning, Babylon*, the Tavianis decided to modify the function of this decorative element to vest it with a value of its own. Thus, the elephant becomes a piece that communicates each step of the two brothers on their life's journey. In the beginning, the Tavianis introduce their characters while they are giving the final touches to an elephant-shaped relief that dominates the centre of the restored church. Later on, another elephant, this one made of papier-mâché, will introduce the brothers into the production of *Intolerance*. Finally, the protagonists will persuade Griffith to create the majestic elephants that will form part of the columns of the set. The key to this figure, as noted by Rodríguez (2007: 129) in his study, is the role conferred by the Tavianis upon the elephant, as a bearer of a memory of a heritage and a place. Even while the familiar image of Tuscany ends up devoured by the stages of Hollywood, the two filmmakers reinforce the feeling of origin and identity in each stage of their characters' adventure.

More than a mere recreation, *Good Morning, Babylon* seeks to reinterpret the key elements of Griffith's Babylonian set. For the Tavianis, this film is a story about work, and it thus no accident that it should reflect the point of view of its creators, to the point of negating in its scenes any spectacular view of the Babylonian courtyard. If we define the significance of *Intolerance* according to instrumentalist parameters, i.e., as the sum of multiple sources whose ultimate objective is to underline the magnificence of the set, in the Tavianis' film we find the set itself linked to the cultural and emotional tradition of its builders. Hence the interest of the two filmmakers in showing how the intervention of their protagonists subsequently determines the significance of the set. While in the original film Griffith put together an extraordinary backdrop based on a clash of visual sources, the Tavianis choose to lower the scale and dimensions of the set, to reduce its ornamental components and focus the power of the ensemble on the decisive participation of the Bonnano brothers. While Griffith invoked the sign of the

The elephant as a cornerstone in the life journey of the Taviani brothers



ephemeral, of the grouping of details aimed at achieving an effect and, as in other many productions, doomed to disappear reconverted in reusable blocks, the Tavianis evoke a solid, coherent identity that resists the passage of time and invites us to think of it as the restoration of a building, like the church in the opening scene, rather than the creation of a film set.

For the Tavianis, history has a seminal influence on our personal evolution and accompanies us wherever we go, because it is part of us. It is thus not surprising that their view of Hollywood should turn, against all predictions, to identifying the trace of family in the creation of artefacts associated more with the capitalist culture, destined to disappear after their mass consumption. This is the reason why *Good Morning, Babylon* should be understood as a vindication of artistic and emotional identity, the basis of which will affect the vision it offers of *Intolerance*. If, as we noted above, the origins of the Babylonian set are found in the cuttings pasted together by Griffith during the development of the film (it is important to remember that at this time Hollywood did not yet recognize the importance of the director's film crew), in the Italian film it will be the two craftsmen who inscribe their own image on the monumental set, to blur its ephemeral lines in search of a memory in the transitory, an identity recovered.

### Redefinition of the film set

The purpose of the analysis conducted in the two previous sections has been to show the two opposed creative personalities that underpin the films *Intolerance* and *Good Morning, Babylon*. While in Griffith's film the significance of the set lies in its monumental dimensions, in the Tavianis' film its meaning is expressed in a tireless search for its artistic roots. In this section we will examine the images of the Italian film to explore the nature of

this transformation, which redefines the significance of the film set of the Babylonian courtyard.

Our starting point will be to examine how the set is seen—and filmed—in each film. As Santiago Vila points out, in *Intolerance* priority is given to “the movement of the point of view—or vanishing point—in and between perspective compositions, in order to give ubiquity to the *prince's view* [...] from which the arrangement of the different scenes acquires a narrative meaning” (1997: 213). This panoptic view, i.e., where the whole inside can be seen from a single point, is similar to the view used by John Martin in his painting *Belshazzar's Feast*. On the other hand, the Tavianis establish their own way of seeing as soon as the film begins. The story starts with the restoration of the façade of a Tuscan church. As they are about to finish the job, the Bonnano patriarch asks for a chair to sit and look at the result of the work. Facing the front of the cathedral, the father says: “I am sure that after building it they looked at it from here.” In opposition to the omniscient point of view employed by Griffith, where the image asserts the colossal nature of his creation, is the modest place reserved by the Tavianis for the craftsman, the master who observes at ground level, satisfied with the end of his work.

From this perspective, the Tavianis alter the scale of the set completely. To begin with, the scenes show small portions of it, from the stairway up to the door leading into the courtyard. The Italian filmmakers contextualise these views in quiet moments, lacking any monumental dimensions. Thus, we only observe fragments of the set during some of break from shooting or in the scene of the protagonists' wedding banquet. In this way, the camera and the layout adapt the elements of the set to a modest, almost tiny scale, so much so that the effect produced on the spectator in watching the original images in the premiere of *Intolerance* is highly significant of the pur-

Small portions of Griffith's colossal set in *Good Morning, Babylon* (Paolo and Vittorio Taviani, 1987)



pose given by the filmmakers to the set. What matters to the Tavianis is the work done to build it and not the final result. Thus, the focus is on inscribing the identity of their characters on the Babylonian courtyard rather than exalting its colossal dimensions. In this way, the set punctuates the qualities of its creators.

Charles and Mirella Affron (1995) propose a series of characteristics depending on the kind of set being analysed. In the case of *Intolerance*, the characteristic would be of set as decoration, given that it is a colossal construction whose effect relies on the imitation of other art forms and whose features take on a greater importance through its decorative qualities. In contrast, in the case of the set of *Good Morning, Babylon*, the only architectural element given heightened significance is the elephant,

which plays the role of thematic link to the family memory of the film's protagonists. This individual feature, along with the Tavianis' organisation of space, holds the meaning of the set. While in the first case that meaning is decorative, in the second we cannot even assign it a particular category. Strictly speaking,

THE EPHEMERAL  
NATURE OF THIS KIND OF  
CONSTRUCTION HAS A  
STABLE MEANING  
AND IDENTITY,  
UNRELATED TO ANY  
INSTRUMENTALIST AIM

the film never shows us the final result, except in the archive footage of the original movie, all of which suggests that the primary intention of the filmmakers is to highlight the people who created it, not their creation.

The early period of cinema was not notable for its recognition of the work of the technical crew involved in the productions. In fact, Vila explains (1997: 211) that it was not until 1973 that the artistic director Walter Hall, along with the carpenter Huck Wortman, was revealed as the man behind the design of the wall. This information contrasts with the tone given by the Tavianis to their recreation of the film, in which, even during the premiere, the Bonnano brothers are unequivocally identified as the creators of the magnificent set for Griffith's film. Once again, we must keep in mind the underlying theme of the film: the story is told from the perspective of its creators, out of whose hands the true grandeur is born.

From this point of view, it seems clear that the set of *Intolerance* undergoes a redefinition in the hands of Paolo and Vittorio Taviani. In the first section of this article we highlighted the value of the ephemeral that the set brought into play; namely, that it is so unique that it represents itself with a particular purpose and meaning, making it impossible to imagine it as part of another film. Even in the archive images that appear in *Good Morning, Babylon*, the Babylonian courtyard displays an enormity that is all but impossible to associate with a

new production, built exclusively in exaltation of Griffith's artistic greatness. Against this ambition the Tavianis oppose the know-how of the designers, revealed in the patient work and the pieces which, from one scene to the next, we see scattered around the film location. In other words, theirs is a dream to be inscribed in a tradition and an identity obscured by the practical purpose of the set. *Good Morning, Babylon* redefines the meaning of *Intolerance* because the whole film, from its script to its staging, is explained from the perspective of its workers. Thus, although the shooting takes up only a small part of the film, the Tavianis link this set built for the greater glory of US cinema to a life's journey which its characters set out upon at the beginning of the story. The result, unlike that of Griffith's film, is to give us the sense that the ephemeral nature of this kind of construction has a stable meaning and identity, unrelated to any instrumentalist aim, inscribed in a chain that links this work to the birthplace of its builders.

Cinema, we have suggested, is no stranger to historical revision. We have the example of Martin Scorsese and *Hugo* (2011), in which the US filmmaker depicts the production of one of Georges Méliès films. Or Richard Attenborough's *Chaplin* (1992), which, beneath its biographical skeleton, focused its interest on the early days of silent film, which it succeeded in recreating on various occasions. Averse to pretexts for nostalgia, the Tavianis conceive of *Good Morning, Babylon* as a film in which the artistic impulse denotes a special way of observing things. Behind the construction of the courtyard and wall for *Intolerance* there thus lies a single objective: to continue the tradition of the great masters, to prevent their disappearance over time. This is where the ephemeral kneels to embrace the identity that has been inscribed within the work. ■

## Notes

1. On this point it is worth reading the chapter that Àngel Quintana, in his book *Fábulas de lo visible*, dedicates to the relationship between the realist novel and film narration. On the other hand, the best summary of the patchwork assembly that formed so-called classic cinema can be found in BORDWELL, David; STAIGER, Janet and THOMPSON, Kristin (1985). *The Classical Hollywood Cinema: Film Style and Mode of Production to 1960*. New York: Taylor and Francis.
2. And not only Martin; Vila, quoting Ramírez, points out influences as varied as the fantastic illustrations of Gustave Doré, the works of the naturalist Paul-Émile Botta, the images of the British painter and explorer William Ellis and the set of the Neo-Egyptian palace by the painter and architect Karl Friedrich Schinkel for the 1815 production of *The Magic Flute* (1997: 212). Berthome, meanwhile, points out the English painter and portraitist Edwin Long and his painting *Marriage Market in Babylon* (1875) as a decisive influence (2003: 41). Last of all, various sources found



online point out the Dutch painter Lawrence Alma-Tadema as another reference for understanding the creative process of *Intolerance*, particularly with respect to its organisation of space.

3. One of the best overviews of this generation of Italian film-makers, their aesthetic inheritances, stylistic discoveries and artistic importance can be found in MONTERDE, José Enrique (ed.) (2005). *En torno al nuevo cine italiano. Los años sesenta: realismo y poesía*. Valencia: Generalitat Valenciana.

## Bibliography

- AFFRON, Charles y Mirella (1995). *Sets in Motion: Art Direction and Film Narrative*. New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press.
- BERTHOME, Jean-Pierre (2003). *Le décor au cinéma*. Paris: Editions de l'Étoile. Cahiers du cinéma.
- BORDWELL, David; STAIGER, Janet and THOMPSON, Kristin (1985). *The Classical Hollywood Cinema: Film Style and Mode of Production to 1960*. New York: Taylor and Francis.
- MARZAL, Javier (1998). *David Wark Griffith*. Madrid: Cátedra.
- MOLINA-SILES, Pedro; GARCÍA CODOÑER, Ángeles and TORRES BARCHINO, Ana (2013). "La frontera diluida. Arquitecturas efímeras en el medio cinematográfico." *L'Atalante. Revista de estudios cinematográficos*, 17.
- MONTERDE, José Enrique (ed.) (2005). *En torno al nuevo cine italiano. Los años sesenta: realismo y poesía*. Valencia: Generalitat Valenciana.
- QUINTANA, Àngel (2003). *Fábulas de lo visible. El cine como creador de realidades*. Barcelona: El Acantilado.
- RAMÍREZ, Juan Antonio (2010). *La arquitectura en el cine*. Madrid: Alianza.
- RODRÍGUEZ, Hilario J. (2007). *Después de la revolución. El cine de los hermanos Taviani*. Madrid: Calamar.
- VILA, Santiago (1997). *La escenografía. Arquitectura y cine*. Madrid: Cátedra.

Pedro Molina-Siles is a quantity surveyor and Doctor of Architecture with an M.A. in Artistic Production from Escuela Técnica Superior de Arquitectura de Valencia and a professor in the Department of Graphic Expression in Architecture at Universitat Politècnica de València. His doctoral thesis *La frontera diluida. Arquitecturas efímeras en el cine. De Europa a Hollywood* deals with the importance of the ephemeral nature of architectural film sets in the early 1940s in Europe and Hollywood. He currently combines his professional work as an architect with teaching and research into the relationship between cinema and architecture.

Óscar Brox Santiago (Valencia, 1983) is a film critic and writer. Editor of the journal *Détour* and chief editor of the publication *Miradas de cine*, he has taught classes and seminars in the Barcelona school *La casa del cine*, written liner notes for the DVD editions of *Avalon* y *la Filmoteca Fnac*, and contributed to the paper for the Gijón Film Festival and to anthologies such as *El cine de animación japonés* (IVAC/Donostia Kultura). Between 2007 and 2010, he was one of the members of the management team of the Universitat de València cinema club.

Juan Carlos Piquer-Cases has a Doctorate of Architecture from Escuela Técnica Superior de Arquitectura de Valencia and is a professor in the Department of Graphic Expression in Architecture at Universitat Politècnica de València. His doctoral thesis *Los modelos digitales en la arquitectura: desarrollo del proyecto e investigación patrimonial. Palacio Real de Valencia: análisis y reconstrucción virtual sobre la planta de Vicente Gascó de 1761* received a prize for Architecture in 2007 from the Social Council of UPV. He is also a researcher with IRP (Instituto Universitario de Restauración del Patrimonio) at the same university, working on the project *Reconstrucción Virtual del Patrimonio Desaparecido*. He has authored numerous articles and books on architecture, disappeared heritage and new technologies, including *Forum Unesco. Proyectos y actividades* (Forum UNESCO/ Universidad y Patrimonio) and *Miguel Colomina. Arquitecto* (Ícaro/CTAV).

# Collaborative Practices in the Contemporary Documentary: A Proposed Analysis and Revision of the Participatory Mode in Documentary Theory

Sergio Villanueva Baselga

*Burgundy Voices* (2011) presents everyday life in the community of Burgundy in the Canadian city of Montreal and the struggle of its members against oblivion. Of African-American origin, the English-speaking population of this isolated neighbourhood has lived for decades with the rejection of the rest of the city, which is largely French-speaking and notably wealthier. But this isolation, far from intimidating the residents of Burgundy, has given them a strong sense of collective identity and some solid grassroots movements based on fighting for their rights as a community.

This video could constitute an example of the many films which, making use of the cinematic medium, reveal and declaim injustice with the more or less explicit objective of raising public awareness about social issues. However, what makes *Burgundy Voices* unique is its production method: abandoning the classical structures of film production, this video was made without a director, scriptwriter or producer. Every stage of production, from writing the screenplay and planning the shooting to editing, post-production and distribution, was designed and carried out as a participatory project; that is, every phase was open to any member of the community to participate with his or her ideas or assistance in the conception of a collaborative video with a shared authorship.



In recent years, many film producers have undertaken projects in which user-generated content, shared authorship, public commitment and collective participation constitute the pivotal elements of the production process. The idea behind these projects is to open up all stages of film production to the public, from pre-production to final distribution, and to involve the community in the production decisions (SHAW and ROBERTSON, 1997: 2-23). As Nico Carpentier (2011: 68) suggests, “participation in the media deals with participation in the production of media output (content-related participation) and in media organizational decision-making (structural participation). These forms of media participation allow citizens to be active in one of the many (micro-)spheres relevant to daily life, and to put into practice their right to communicate.”<sup>1</sup>

The question of participation in the media, and of how to define and articulate that participation, has acquired considerable importance in the academic world in recent years. In this study I wish to explore the cinematic dimension of these participatory videos and to determine whether, as filmic objects, they can be conceptualised within contemporary documentary theory. In this way, my aim is to introduce to film studies a group of filmic objects that until now have been relegated to fields such as participatory research (MITCHELL and DELANGE, 2011), urban anthropology (CUMMING and NORWOOD, 2012) or health promotion (CHIU, 2009).

### The “Fogo Process”

The world’s first participatory audiovisual project took place between 1966 and 1969 on Fogo Island in Canada. The so-called “Fogo Process” arose out of the “Challenge for Change” program launched by the National Film Board of Canada (NFBC) in 1965, the purpose of which was to produce documentaries that reflected the situation in impoverished regions of the country. Fogo Island at that time suffered from a state of extreme isolation.

The population, made up mostly of fishers, was clustered in small communities along the coast, with limited contact with each other and with the administrative and political centres of the Canadian province of Newfoundland. Religious differences and the lack of infrastructure created extreme communication problems for the island’s inhabitants.

The NFBC entrusted director Colin Low with the production of a documentary about Fogo Island. The idea he came up with was to produce a documentary about poverty in which the protagonists could feel represented, based on the fact that at all times the circulation of the images would be authorised by those involved. To do this, he had the support of Fred Earle from Memorial University of Newfoundland, who was working in the Fogo community as a social mediator and who thus acted as liaison between the film crew and the island’s inhabitants.

The first interviews, once recorded, were screened in public in order to obtain the approval of the participants. However, the debate that arose as a result of these screenings led the director to offer the islanders the opportunity to film their own pieces about the issues that Fred Earle had been working on for some time. The idea thus arose of using the video as a participatory project, generating a cycle of feedback whereby the recordings were followed by debates that guided and defined subsequent recordings. Low also recommended the use of a vertical editing approach in order to keep intervention in the editing stage to a minimum, maintaining the sequences and blocks exactly as they had been filmed.

Out of this process 28 parallel documentaries were produced, which initially were only to be shown in each of the participating communities. However, the exchange of films between communities on the island expanded so quickly that, thanks to Fred Earle’s mediation, they ultimately made it all the way to the Canadian capital of Ottawa. The videos were screened at the university, and

Still shots from a video of the *Fogo Process*



in administrative and government offices, and afforded the island's inhabitants the opportunity to express their concerns to the Canadian fisheries minister, the most senior figure responsible for the policies that affected the island. The minister decided to respond to the residents of Fogo with another video, opening up a debate which, finally, led to significant improvements in living conditions on the island (NEWHOOK, 2009; WHITE, 2003: 122-143).

### The MacBride Report

The experience of the "Fogo Process" represented a starting point for a wide range of participatory practices that used video as their medium of expression. Men and women all over the planet broke out of their traditional role as passive audiences and reconstructed their self-perception and their social context by becoming filmmakers and producers.

The decade of the 1970s was marked by intense turmoil in the world of international communications. While on the one hand the first major multinational conglomerates appeared and cultural industries began converging into huge corporate groups, on the other the first local and independent media projects began to develop. Similarly, this decade also saw the birth of a form

of ethnographic cinema which, in an effort to move away from the mere description characteristics of the ethnological documentary, "sought to represent a culture in a holistic way, through the exploration of relevant aspects of life in a community or social group, with the explicit intention of having an impact on the field of knowledge of human societies" (ARDEVOL, 1996).

This situation, along with the severe inequalities between Western nations and

the Third World in terms of communications policies,<sup>2</sup> prompted UNESCO (1980) to initiate what became a long debate over possible solutions to this problem, leading a decade later to the publication of the report *Many Voices, One World*, better known as the MacBride report.

The MacBride report recognised the need to democratise cultural industries and redistribute the power held by those industries. It therefore dedicated part of its analysis to the importance of the participatory processes initiated by the "Fogo Process" in media production. As noted in one of the preliminary documents produced in the

preparation of the final report, "[p]articipation implies a higher level of public involvement in the production process, and also in the management and planning of communication systems" (BERRIGAN, 1979: 19). This will be the definition of participation adopted in this study.

The MacBride report encouraged thousands of filmmakers around the world to become involved in participatory video production processes. Although there are participatory video projects that have attracted large audiences, such as the recent *One Day on Earth* or *#18DaysInEgypt*, most are associated with alternative and community media groups in the so-called "Third Audiovisual Sector" also known as "citizen media" (RODRIGUEZ, 2001: 25-63). The possibilities afforded by technology have considerably expanded community participation in these kinds of projects. Thanks to the simplicity of the equipment, it is now possible to learn quickly how to operate a camera, to view the material recorded immediately and, above all, to conduct the editing process on a collaborative basis. Along with these advances, many filmmakers have begun developing videos in which user participation is brought to the centre of the video production process. The main objective of these projects is to give the public greater access to all stages of film production, from pre-production to final distribution. In this way, the communities that participate in the creation of these videos are the ones who make all the decisions about their production and development.

### The Documentary: Definition

In spite of the fact that the original aim of cinema was to represent reality (this was the objective of the films of the Lumière brothers), the documentary has never been a major focus of analysis in film studies. Since the term "documentary" was coined by the leader of the British Documentary School, John Grierson, in 1926, essays on theoretical aspects of this type of film production have been few and far between. However, this situation has changed drastically since the 1990s, as a wave of new film theorists have begun working almost exclusively on the documentary form. Two of the most important of these theorists have been Bill Nichols and Carl Plantinga.

One of the biggest questions tackled by these and other academics studying documentaries is the question of the definition of "documentary" itself. Due to the versatile nature of the object of study and the fact that the discipline of Documentary Theory is still relatively new, there is no unanimously accepted definition of what can be considered to be a *documentary*. Consequently, any research in the field of documentary theory first requires some in-depth reflection on the definition of the term.

Nichols (1991: 31-54), who bases his work on contemporary film theory drawing from the Derridean revolution, defines the documentary from three perspectives.

WHILE ON THE ONE  
HAND THE FIRST  
MAJOR MULTINATIONAL  
CONGLOMERATES  
APPEARED AND CULTURAL  
INDUSTRIES BEGAN  
CONVERGING INTO HUGE  
CORPORATE GROUPS, ON  
THE OTHER THE FIRST  
LOCAL AND INDEPENDENT  
MEDIA PROJECTS BEGAN  
TO DEVELOP

The first perspective relates to the filmmaker: a documentary is defined as a film in which the director possesses very limited control over the story; he or she can control the filming and the camera, but not the performance. The second perspective relates to the text: documentaries are audiovisual texts that depict places and people connected by a thematic and historical logic and, therefore, are structured by external textual elements. Finally, the third perspective relates to the spectator: the documentary generates the expectation that the status of the text bears a direct relationship with the real world and that, consequently, there is a congruence between the image shown and the historical fact to which it refers; thus, the documentary generates a desire for knowledge and the spectator views it with little expectation of identifying with characters or plot twists.

On the other hand, Plantinga (1997: 83-115), who adopts a critical approach to postmodern philosophy, defines non-fiction genres on the basis of Nicholas Wolterstorff's theory of projected worlds. This theory posits that humans act in the world through language, not only generating meaning, but also developing linguistic actions. Thus, words are projected together with different stances on reality. Thus, when the stance of a film is fictitious it belongs to the genres of fiction. On the other hand, when the stance is assertive (i.e. the work elucidates and questions the truth, seeks the truth and desires the truth), the final product falls into the category of non-fiction, of which the documentary is a major component.

### **The Documentary: Classification**

Nichols has proposed one of the most illuminating taxonomies for classifying documentaries in the field of film theory. Based on technical and narrative criteria, he defined four categories in his taxonomy (1991: 65-106), which he subsequently expanded to six (2001: 142-212). These are: expository, observational, interactive, reflexive, poetic and performative.

Expository documentaries follow the line of the British School initiated by John Grierson in response to a disenchantment with the light entertainment of fiction films. In these documentaries there is an omniscient voice that guides the narration of the core argument, the visuals are used to illustrate it, non-synchronous sound predominates, and editing is used to establish and maintain rhetorical more than spatial or temporal continuity. The voice of authority in this category of documentaries is the text itself, not the voices that have been recruited to take part in it.

Observational documentaries, which emerged in reaction against the moralising quality of the expository documentary, are characterised by the absence of filmmaker intervention and, therefore, by a total surrender of control. They rely on continuity editing to give the

impression of authentic temporality, there is no explicit narrator, external music soundtrack, intertitles or reconstructions. Interviews are rare, as it is a mode that is committed to the immediate, the intimate and the personal.

Interactive documentaries<sup>3</sup> attempt to expose the perspective of the filmmaker. Thus, it is this type of film that most commonly includes interviews and in which the addition of the narrator's voice is not left for post-production, as the filmmaker intervenes and can be heard on the scene of the events. In contrast to the expository documentary, the voice of authority is not constructed by the text but by the social actors, whose comments shape the logic of the argument.

Reflexive documentaries are the product of a desire to make the conventions of representation more obvious and to question the impression of realism. Thus, the filmmaker speaks less of the historical world and of ethical questions and focuses instead on the device of reality representation and of documentary production itself. Professional actors are often used to represent what the documentary could have been able to communicate.

The poetic documentary, on the other hand, focuses more on stylistic and technical aspects than on the representation of reality itself. It thus sacrifices the conventions of continuity editing and does not attempt to clarify the space and time in which the events occur. Its interest lies in the exploration of associations and patterns related to temporal rhythms and in spatial juxtapositions.

Finally, the performative documentary is characterised by the development of a concrete, corporeal awareness embodied in a subjectivity that is distanced from the logic of objectivity. In this way, the performative documentary actively questions the presence of an omniscient subject capable of dominating all reality and operates with the aim of conveying a subjective experience.

### **Participatory videos as a documentary form**

*Burgundy Voices* is a clear example of a collaborative video production in which the figure of the director is absent and the decisions are made by all active members of the community depicted in the film. This leap away from the traditional conception of video production, however, does not entail a distancing from the codes and practices operating in the construction of documentary discourse as it has been defined above.

**DOCUMENTARIES ARE AUDIOVISUAL TEXTS THAT DEPICT PLACES AND PEOPLE CONNECTED BY A THEMATIC AND HISTORICAL LOGIC AND, THEREFORE, ARE STRUCTURED BY EXTERNAL TEXTUAL ELEMENTS**



Still shot from the participatory video *Burgundy Voices*

As I noted earlier, the aim of this study is to elucidate whether these participatory videos adhere to the epistemological precepts necessary to be considered filmic objects within contemporary Documentary Theory. To this end, I have conducted a film analysis in four steps<sup>4</sup> defined by Marzal Felici and Gómez Tarín (2007: 31-56) to deconstruct six participatory videos from different parts of the world for the purposes of identifying the characteristics typical of documentaries as defined by Bill Nichols (1991, 2001).

On the narrative level, *Burgundy Voices* is characterized by the absence of explicit sub-narrators and the constant intervention of the filmmakers. In other words, the logic of the argument is articulated through multiple conversations with different characters in the community who are interviewed by other residents. The hierarchy of social actors also denotes a certain ideology: while the social workers from more well-to-do neighbourhoods of the city express understanding for the problems faced by the community, the contributions of the more charismatic residents (the musician, the priest or the school teacher) reveal how, in reality, Burgundy does not receive institutional support. This narrative logic is always subordinated to the rhetoric of the video's argument and serves as political support for the social critique made in this film.

A textual analysis of *Burgundy Voices* allows an examination of the role played by editing in the video. Once again, the different syntactic elements are connected by following an argumentative rather than temporal logic. In other words, omissions and juxtapositions abound. This type of editing, which rejects the representation of temporal continuity by subordinating the narrative thread to the development of the argument, is common to most of the videos analysed here.

*Los pasillos de la memoria* (2010), a Spanish production, is the second of the collectively produced videos

examined. With similar characteristics to *Burgundy Voices*, this film relates, through interviews and without the intervention of the filmmakers, an association's fight to preserve the memory of victims of Franco's regime against the municipal government of Valencia, when the latter seeks to fill in a mass grave in a municipal cemetery with concrete. *Child Labour in Nablus* (2010), shot in Palestine, follows the daily lives of a group of friends in the Palestinian city of Nablus who combine their studies and leisure time with long hours of manual labour. Once again, the absence of the filmmakers in the interviews is a constant. However, the use of intertitles to divide the different parts of the story constitutes a textual sign of the presence of an explicit sub-narrator. The last of the videos analysed here that uses an argumentative mode of editing is *Un futuro de cuidado* (2010), filmed in Spain. While this video reproduces the same narrative strategies as those mentioned above, its rhetorical approach moves away from the exposition of arguments to offer an apparently objective presentation of a fictitious situation through the use of professional actors.

Conversely, the participatory videos *Para Nayita* (2010), from Guatemala, and *Rompiendo muros* (2010), from Bolivia, employ continuity editing rather than an argument-based approach, avoiding temporal gaps. The first of these, which uses a clear and explicit voice-over narrator who avoids interaction with the characters appearing on the screen, presents the homesickness of a Guatemalan emigrant for her hometown. The second, meanwhile, is narrated from the perspective of the protagonist, who is thus a diegetic narrator. Avoiding the use of interviews and direct questioning of the video's participants, *Rompiendo muros* describes everyday life in the Bolivian capital of La Paz.

## Discussion and Conclusions

First of all, in this study I have proposed to categorise the videos analysed according to the definitions of documentary posited in the prevailing theories of the non-fiction genre. On the one hand, in correlation with the position of Plantinga (1997: 83-115), the videos examined here all adopt an assertive attitude towards the world insofar as they seek to question, elucidate and reveal the truth. Even in the case of *Un futuro de cuidado*, which recounts a fictitious situation with professional actors, the diegetic concomitance does not stray from objective reality and the argumentative exploration ultimately seeks to present a real situation.

Moreover, all the videos analysed meet the tripartite requirement established by Nichols (1991: 31-54) for an audiovisual text to be considered a documentary. First of all, although the production of the film is collective, the ultimate aim of the communities engaging in participatory video projects is to present the reality of their situa-

tion to the general population. In this respect, they meet the first criterion, related to the filmmaker. Secondly, the people and places appearing in these videos relate to each other through external textual elements; i.e., their correlation is subordinated to the logic of the argument. In this sense, all the videos analysed fulfil the textual criterion. Finally, the videos generate the expectation in the spectator that the world reflected in them corresponds to the real, historical world. As they also fulfil this last, spectator-related criterion, the participatory videos studied here can be included under the definition of documentary posited by Nichols.

Stella Bruzzi is one of the best known critics of the definition of documentary put forward by Bill Nichols. For Bruzzi, Nichols's error lies in the epistemological contradiction entailed in his theory by virtue of its invocation of "the idealised notion, on the one hand, of the pure documentary in which the relationship between the image and the real is straightforward and, on the other, the very impossibility of this aspiration" (BRUZZI, 2006: 12). Bruzzi instead appropriates the concept of *performativity* used by Judith Butler for her theory of gender, to argue that documentaries cannot represent historical reality. At the end of the day, a filmic device is identified as a documentary by a repetition of an unstable term with no known origin. It would therefore be necessary to define the conceptual analysis conducted in this study to take into account this new definition as well.

Having confirmed that participatory videos can be considered documentaries insofar as they match the established definitions, the next step is to classify them according to the taxonomic criteria proposed by Nichols (1991, 2001). In this respect, my analysis has identified two predominant categories. On one side are the documentaries *Para Nayita* and *Rompiendo muros*, which are categorised in the mode of observational representation, both for their use of continuity editing and the absence of interaction on the part of the filmmaker. The other four documentaries are included in the expository mode. However, in two of these, rhetorical components of other documentary modes can be identified. In the case of *Burgundy Voices*, the constant interaction of the filmmakers suggests that it should be placed at the intersection between expository and interactive modes. *Un futuro de cuidado*, on the other hand, could be classified in the reflexive mode because of its use of fictional elements. However, its assertive attitude and its explicatory aim suggest that this documentary is a combination of both expository and reflexive modes of representation.<sup>5</sup>

On this point it should be noted that Nichols abandoned the use of the name *interactive* (1991) in favour of *participatory* (2001) in light of the emergence of digital documentaries or "web documentaries". These films, which are also referred to as interactive documentaries

and are characterised by "disseminated authorship and a surrender of control over the narrative discourse" (GUILFREU CASTELLS, 2013: 124-125; CHOI, 2009), contradicted the epistemological assumptions of Nichols's theory. However, the name *participatory* poses the difficulty of first defining the concept of *participation*.

For Nichols, the *participatory* classification refers to the presence of the filmmaker on the screen and his or her involvement with the social actors. However, taking into account the definition provided by the MacBride report and the citizen media model posited by Rodriguez (2001: 25-63) on which this study is based, *participatory* acquires a political connotation that transcends the subjectivity of the filmmaker. Moreover, it is important to note that there are other forms of participation, such as "remixing", "crowdsourcing" or "crowdfunding" (ROIG TELO, 2012) which, although far from the activist conception of the previous definition, should also be considered in the theoretical debate over participation in the media.

Thus, in view of the confusion provoked by the *participatory* classification, in this study I propose a new label to designate this mode of representation. As Nichols himself acknowledged (1991: 79), in this category of documentaries "[t]he possibilities of serving as mentor, participant, prosecutor or provocateur in relation to the social actors recruited to the film are far greater." In other words, the film's director has the power to question and even compel the participants in the film to provide explanations for an event related to the development of the argument. In this respect, I propose *interrogatory* as a more suitable descriptor for the category in question as it avoids the semantic incompatibilities arising from both *interactive* and *participatory*. The third category of classification in Bill Nichols's taxonomy would thus, according to this proposal, be designated the "interrogatory documentary".

In the same theoretical direction that this study has taken with *participation*, Jenny Weight (2012: 3-4) defines three different types in relation to the presence of community filmmakers in the final film product. Indigo-participatory documentaries are those which are entirely produced by a community without the need of a professional filmmaker. On the other extreme would be externo-participatory documentaries, for which a professional filmmaker facilitates production and intervenes in decision making. Finally, somewhere between these two models, we find reflex-participatory documentaries, in which a professional filmmaker is a part of the community and participates as a community member who may

THE VIDEOS EXAMINED  
HERE ALL ADOPT AN  
ASSERTIVE ATTITUDE  
TOWARDS THE WORLD  
INsofar AS THEY SEEK  
TO QUESTION, ELUCIDATE  
AND REVEAL THE TRUTH

or may not contribute with his or her own ideas. These considerations would benefit greatly from research into the participation moderation methods used by filmmakers to manage the debates that arise in the production of these types of videos.

This study seeks to be a modest point of departure for a new theory of the participatory documentary that would incorporate collectively produced videos into the theoretical tradition of film studies. However, such an ambitious task requires a much larger and better-defined empirical corpus. With this in mind, the analytical strategy used here needs further systematisation, including control groups with documentaries that are emblematic of each of the modes of representation proposed, and expanding the sample of participatory videos analysed. Overcoming these limitations in future research will consolidate the conclusions drawn and expand the theoretical field outlined in this study.<sup>6</sup> ■

## Notes

- 1 It is interesting to note the distinction made by Nico Carpentier (2011: 68-71) between minimalist and maximalist dimensions of citizen participation in the media by relating them to minimalist and maximalist theories of democracy, as well as the articulation of this participation in Jürgen Habermas's theory of the public sphere.
- 2 According to the MacBride report, Europe produced on average 12,000 books per year in the 1970s, while the African nations collectively published less than 350. Furthermore, the flow of news from the First World to the Third World is one hundred times greater than the flow in the opposite direction, and while Europe sends more than 850 hours of television programming to Africa each year, only 70 hours of African television reach European countries (UNESCO, 1980).
- 3 While Bill Nichols uses the term *interactive* to refer to this type of documentary in his book *Representing Reality: Issues and Concepts in Documentary* (1991: 78-93), he changes this name to *participatory* in his subsequent work *Introduction to Documentary* (2001: 179-194). Because this new name may not be compatible with the propositions of this study, in the last section I propose a new classification for this epistemological category.
- 4 The four-step film analysis is a methodology that entails the deconstruction of the films by means of three super-categories (contextual, textual and narrative analysis), followed by a fourth step involving the interpretation of each of these elements individually and the inference of a final classification of the film according to a previously defined taxonomy. It may initially seem surprising that this study should include a narrative analysis for documentary films. However, as has been demonstrated by Vallejo Vallejo (2008, 2013) using Gaudreault and Jost's (1990) theory of film narrative construction, classical narratological codes such as the presence of a narrator and sub-narrators, the use of the active voice and the construction of archetypal characters are also present in *cinéma vérité*. Therefore, a narratological analysis of

documentary films is legitimate and can contribute a wealth of information relevant to its classification.

- 5 Nichols himself acknowledges in *Representing Reality: Issues and Concepts in Documentary* that his classification is not set in stone and that there may be multiple examples of documentaries that contain features of several modes of representation and thus constitute mixed modes.
- 6 This article forms part of the R&D&I project *Análisis del desarrollo y evaluación de las competencias básicas en Educación Secundaria desde la enseñanza de las Ciencias Sociales* (EDU 2012 37909 Co302) financed by the Spanish Ministry of Economy and Competitiveness. This work also would not have been possible without the assistance of the associations ACSUR-Las Segovias and ZaLab.

## Bibliography

- ARDEVOL, Elisenda (1996). Representación y cine etnográfico. *Quaderns de l'ICA*, 10.
- BERRIGAN, Frances (1979). *Community Communications. The Role of Community Media in Development*. Paris: UNESCO.
- BRUZZI, Stella (2006). *New Documentary*. London: Routledge (revised edition).
- CARPENTIER, Nico (2011). *Media and participation. A site of ideological-democratic struggle*. Bristol: Intellect.
- CHIO, Insook (2009). Interactive Documentary: A Production Model for Nonfiction Multimedia Narratives. *Intelligent Technologies for Interactive Entertainment*, 9, 44-55.
- CHIU, Lai (2009). Culturally Competent Health Promotion: The Potential of Participatory Video for Empowering Migrant and Minority Ethnic Communities. *International Journal of Migration, Health and Social Care*, 5 (1), 5-14.
- CUMMING, Gabriel and Norwood, Carla (2012). The Community Voice Method: Using Participatory Research and Filmmaking to Foster Dialog about Changing Landscapes. *Landscape and Urban Planning*, 105 (4), 434-444.
- GAUDREULT, André and Jost, François (1995). *El relato cinematográfico*. Barcelona: Paidós.
- GUIFREU CASTELLS, Arnau (2013). *El documental interactivo. Evolución, caracterización y perspectivas de desarrollo*. Barcelona: UOC Press.
- MARZAL FELICI, Javier and Gómez Tarín, Francisco Javier (eds., 2007). *Metodologías de análisis del film*. Madrid: Edipo.
- MITCHELL, Claudia and DeLange, Naydene (2011). Community-Based Participatory Video and Social Action in Rural South Africa. In E. Margolis and L. Pauwels (eds.). *The Sage Handbook of Visual Research Methods*. New York: SAGE Publications.
- NEWHOOK, Susan (2009). The Godfathers of Fogo: Donald Snowden, Fred Earle and the Roots of the Fogo Island Films, 1964-1967. *Newfoundland and Labrador Studies*, 24 (2), 1719-1726.
- NICHOLS, Bill (1997). *La representación de la realidad: cuestiones y conceptos sobre documental*. Barcelona: Paidós.
- (2001). *Introduction to Documentary*. Bloomington: Indiana University Press.
- PLANTINGA, Carl (1997). *Rhetoric and Representation in Nonfiction Film*. New York: Cambridge University Press.



- RODRIGUEZ, Clemencia (2001). *Fissures in the Mediascape: An International Study of Citizens' Media*. Cresskill: Hampton.
- ROIG TELO, Antoni (2012). Cine en abierto: formas y estrategias de producción basadas en la participación. *L'Atalante. Revista de estudios cinematográfico*, 13, 20-27.
- SHAW, Jackie and Robertson, Clive (1997). *Participatory Video: A Practical Approach to Using Video Creatively in Group Development Work*. London: Routledge.
- VALLEJO VALLEJO, Aída (2008). Protagonistas de lo real. La construcción de personajes en el cine documental. *Secuencias: Revista de historia del cine*, 27, 72-89.
- (2013). Narrativas documentales contemporáneas. De la mostración a la enunciación. *Cine Documental*, 7, 3-29.
- Various Authors. (1980). *Many Voices, One World (Report by the International Commission for the Study of Communication Problems)*. Paris: UNESCO.
- WHITE, Shirley (2003). *Participatory Video: Images that Transform and Empower*. New Delhi: Thousand Oaks.
- WEIGHT, Jenny (2012). *The Participatory Documentary Cookbook: community documentary using social media*. Melbourne: RMIT University Press.

Sergio Villanueva Baselga (Teruel, 1986) holds a B.A. in Audiovisual Communication from the Universitat de Barcelona. He is currently working on his Ph.D Thesis, which focusses on citizen participation in the media. His research is funded by an APIF (Ajuts de Personal Investigador en Formació), a scholarship awarded by Universitat de Barcelona. In addition to his research, he is also teaching in the undergraduate degree program in Audiovisual Communication. He has recently been designated a young representative for Spain for the European Communication Research and Education Association [ECREA].

# Ozu by Hou Hsiao-hsien: The Poetics of Bodies and Emptiness

Elpidio del Campo  
Juan Gorostidi

The aim of this paper is to analyse Yasujiro Ozu's influence on the work of Taiwanese filmmaker Hou Hsiao-hsien. Although film criticism has found obvious links between Ozu and Hou, the latter has always been reluctant to admit direct stylistic influences from the Japanese director; in an interview with Lee Ellickson in 2002 for *Cineaste*, he expressed clear disagreement with the habitual comparison. However, the relationship between Hou and Ozu is documented in an exceptional work: Hou's *film-homage* to the Japanese director, *Café Lumière* (Kôhî jikô, 2003). Taking this film as a starting point, we will explore the extent to which traces of Ozu's films are present in Hou's filmography and the similarities that can be established between the two filmmakers.

## ***Café Lumière*, Ozu-Hou**

Both the formal styling, unmistakeable in the long-distance shots with door frames in the foreground and the action in the background, and the treatment of similar themes or the de-dramatisation of the plot have led Hou to be considered a natural heir of Ozu. In 2003, the Japanese studio Shochiku (where Ozu made most of his films), to commemorate the 100th anniversary of Ozu's birth, chose Hou as one of the possible contemporary directors to shoot a film paying homage to Ozu. Hou accepted the challenge entailed in representing a culture different from his own and directing Japanese actors—

whose performances he would be unable to assess fully due to his ignorance of the Japanese language—and began working on *Café Lumière*. His aim would be to continue working on his main thematic affinity with the Japanese director: the transformations to contemporary society expressed through generation gaps. Hou believes that Ozu succeeded in an area where, in his opinion, he himself had failed: “he envied Ozu’s success in portraying contemporary Japan, which was something that Hou felt he had been unable to do with contemporary Taiwan” (UDDEN, 2009: 172–173), perhaps due to the limited impact that *Goodbye South, Goodbye* (Nan guo zai jian, nan guo, Hou Hsiao-hsien, 1996) and *Millennium Mambo* (Hou Hsiao-hsien, 2001) had in his own country. Conversely, *Café Lumière* was very well-received in Japan and Hou felt extremely satisfied with what he had achieved in it: “I feel that this film and its atmosphere will last forever.”<sup>1</sup>

The plot of *Café Lumière* to a large extent recreates Ozu’s filmography: the dramatic axis of the film revolves around the announcement of its protagonist, Yoko, to her parents that she is going to have a baby with her Taiwanese boyfriend but that she is not going to marry him: “I can raise the child alone,” she tells them. This, of course, greatly worries her father and stepmother. Yoko reaffirms her independence in circumstances very similar to several of Ozu’s films, in which women are reluctant to get married, as in *Late Spring* (Banshun, Yasujirō Ozu, 1949), *Late Autumn* (Akibiyori, Yasujirō Ozu, 1960) or *The End of Summer* (Kohayagawa-ke no aki, Yasujirō Ozu, 1961), in which the widow Aiko stubbornly rejects her family’s attempts to get her to remarry. Other iconographic elements are also strongly reminiscent of Ozu’s films: shots of clothes hanging out to dry, elevated trains, or entrances to houses in which the characters slowly come into frame. Even the everyday incidents are similar: Yoko, like Noriko in *Tokyo Story* (Tokyo monogatari, Yasujirō Ozu, 1953), borrows sake and a glass from a neighbour. Eating rituals exhibit recognisable patterns adapted to present times: Yoko’s father, seated, asks his wife for some food “to go with the beer”, while she is busy in the kitchen; however, when Yoko welcomes her parents into her apartment, we can see she is not so submissive.

In visual terms, to explain the origins of his long-distance shots (which are also an Ozu trademark), the source Hou cites is not cinematic: the autobiography of Chinese writer Shen Tzunwen, whose narrative structure takes a distanced, objective panoramic view of the events, which was something that Hou had been seeking to emulate since his early films. Based on this idea, when filming *A Time to Live and a Time to Die* (Tong nien wang shi, Hou Hsiao-hsien, 1985), Hou urged his cinematographer to take a position further away from the action. On

other occasions, Hou has also expressed the need to film scenes from a distance using long focal length lenses so as not to interfere with the performance of his non-professional actors, and thus avoid capturing small errors in their work. Beyond this occasional functional need, Hou’s concern for finding the right perspective on the action is a crucial element in his films and could be considered the essential feature he found in Ozu’s work: the distancing, the apparent de-dramatisation, the search for an objective point of view: “in Ozu’s films, the context and the atmosphere feel very realistic; he was able to adopt a very objective point of view to observe things and capture them precisely.”<sup>2</sup> Scriptwriter Chu Tien-wen, who has collaborated closely with Hou since *All the Youthful Days* (Fengkuei-lai-te Jen, Hou Hsiao-hsien, 1983), also identifies this as the Japanese director’s greatest influence on Hou: “This is how I see Ozu’s influence on Hou: a way of observing that keeps its distance in relation to the here and now” (CIMENT and NIOGRET, 2004: 8).

Moreover, the visual style of *Café Lumière* not only recreates the distinctive static camera of Ozu’s final period (although not positioned as low as was typical of the Japanese filmmaker), but also uses slow pans, especially in outdoor scenes, that could be an approximation of Ozu’s style in the 1920s and 1930s, when his films were notable for frequent camera movements. In this sense, it could be argued that Hou follows an evolution similar to that taken by Ozu in his day, described by Burch in terms of simplification and stylisation: “the narrative dissolution is associated with an increasing stylisation of editing procedures. Camera movements are subjected to a swift radicalisation through numerical reduction, specialisation and geometrisation” (BURCH, 1979: 156). However, Hou’s use of distancing in *Café Lumière* is especially striking for the way it holds the audience back from the characters—there are hardly any close-ups, and the first time we see Yoko’s face clearly is on her train journey to her parents’ house, 17 minutes into the film—while for Ozu the faces of his characters constituted an essential element of his films. Furthermore, in contrast with Ozu’s abundant, rapid-fire dialogue, the film is characterised by long silences and slow-paced exchanges: “Yoko’s awkward conversations with her parents never achieve the smooth flow of dialogue that is so essential for Ozu” (FUJIWARA, 2004: 15). And finally, the rigorous formalism of the elements present in Ozu’s shots—in terms of the arrangement of objects and characters and, in his colour films, the meticulous use of the

### THIS IS HOW I SEE OZU’S INFLUENCE ON HOU: A WAY OF OBSERVING THAT KEEPS ITS DISTANCE IN RELATION TO THE HERE AND NOW



*Late Spring* and *Café Lumière*. Ozu's meticulous compositions become brusquer in Hou's films; nevertheless, the backlighting or the objects on the table and in the background are factors that accentuate the body language of the characters

colour palette, always in an effort to connect the meticulous composition of the shot with the dramatic requirements of each scene—is absent in *Café Lumière*, which has a *mise-en-scène* apparently less concerned with such formalism; it seems clear that, in spite of some analogous elements, the two directors have a very different sense of staging and composition. This is something that reinforces the personal quality of Hou's film, as if he had decided not to imitate Ozu's style but rather to explore Ozu's world in his own language: thus, there is one sequence that brings to mind the silent films of the Japanese director, when Yoko leaves her friend Hajime's bookshop while the piano music of the Taiwanese composer (which we began hearing inside the shop) continues to play, and the camera pans slowly: a tribute much more effective than literal imitation.

### Hou's language

Thus, as Hou himself has always claimed, although his cinematic language bears certain similarities to Ozu's, it is by no means directly indebted to the Japanese master's style. Nevertheless, it is possible to detect in Hou's films some other perceptive echoes that are much subtler. In Hou's films, the studied ambiguity of his language provokes an *instability* in the spectator, who is encouraged to construct his or her own meanings. Adrian Martin remarks on this sensation that his films provoke: "In the films of Hou [...], we are constantly confronted, during our first viewing, with the question: 'What's happening?' – in the storyline as a whole, and in any given scene" (MARTIN, 2008, 258). There are some narrative aspects whose ambiguity will be cleared up in subsequent viewings, but the initial feeling of being confronted with an inscrutable meaning is an essential characteristic of his films. It is undeniable that Hou's films convey a terrific energy, and that this energy arises as much from the doubt provoked in the spectator as from the tension produced by the physicality of the bodies shown in the shot. This is noticeable even in his first truly personal

film: *All the Youthful Days*. An essentially autobiographical work, shot on location with mostly non-professional actors, this film evokes connections with the premises of the documentary form. This observation could in fact be applied to his whole autobiographical cycle up to *Dust in the Wind* (Hou Hsiao-hsien, 1987), a film that reflects the creative interest, shared by other Taiwanese writers and filmmakers of Hou's generation, in exploring the history of their country in an effort to define Taiwanese identity. As noted above, by that time Hou had already identified the perspective he was looking for, which was directly linked to Ozu's filmography, and completely removed from the documentary mode. The idea of distancing and the objective point of view would be adopted from the cinematic codes of the French New Wave: "For me, realism is not about reconstructing an event, but reconstructing an experience from one's own perception. In this sense, European cinema has helped me a lot. Thanks to films like Godard's *Breathless* and Pialat's *Loulou*, I have learned to free myself of the limitations imposed by the logic and obligations of editing. I have learned to throw out any useless shots" (ASSAYAS, 2006: 278-279).<sup>3</sup>

In *All the Youthful Days* this visual strength can be perceived in the way the *bodies in the shot* impose themselves on the development of the plot. While his visual codes have become increasingly stylised over the years, Hou's films essentially communicate with the spectator through the power of the physical presence of his characters in the two-dimensional space of the shot. Although it is easy to observe a progressive decrease in importance of plot, especially in his later films set in contemporary times, in a pattern similar to the increasing simplicity of the plots in Ozu's films (compare, for example, *I Was Born, But...* [Otona no miru ehon - Umarete wa mita keredo, Yasujirō Ozu, 1932] with Ozu's remake almost thirty years later, *Good Morning* [Ohayō, Yasujirō Ozu, 1959]), the physicality of Hou's characters is evident in all his films. Even in *A City of Sadness* (Beiqing chengshi, Hou Hsiao-hsien, 1989), a film in which the

narrative tension is of vital importance, the bodies *are* the story: “Hou neither shoots a story nor illustrates an idea; he films bodies that have trouble living (the eldest son), returning (the second son), reasoning (the third) and communicating (the youngest one)” (DE BAECQUE, 2006: 286). After making *A Time to Live and a Time to Die*, Hou saw Ozu’s silent film *I Was Born, But...* in Paris, and found reflected in it his own interest in the expressiveness of bodies on the screen: “I think the absence of sound is quite interesting, because there is no dialogue to rely upon. The images, the sense of movement and the behaviour of the characters had to communicate the whole meaning.”<sup>3</sup> His tributes to silent cinema, such as *A City of Sadness* and *All the Youthful Days*, along with his use of metalinguistic narrative devices, reflect his interest in studying the communicative mechanisms of language used over the course of the history of cinema.

As Martin (2008: 261-263) points out, the spectator’s doubts about *what is happening* arise, first of all, on the narrative level, due to the lack of expository dialogue. Such clues are largely absent from Hou’s films, especially in his later films, which have none of the structures typical of melodrama. Thus, in Hou’s stories it is more important to leave the spectator in the dark, in almost every scene change, about the spatial-temporal situation of the characters. This strategy—used, for example, in *Café Lumière* when, after paying a visit to her parents’ house, without any transition, Yoko is suddenly in the Café Erika in Tokyo—prompts the spectator to look for clues that will identify the new location of the spatial-temporal discourse. Similarly, an oft-noted trademark of Ozu’s that serves the same purpose is “the inclusion of the so-called ‘pillow-shots’ (also known as ‘cutaway still lifes’), whose purpose is generally associated with the filmmaker’s desire to disrupt the narrative flow, suspending its meaning and providing spaces for the construction of alternative meanings” (ZUNZUNEGUI, 1993: 18). However, this does not imply that Hou’s main focus

is to deconstruct narrative codes, because, ultimately, the spectator is always intensely aware that the discourse of the story is unfolding: “He discloses a surprisingly wide range of feelings in what might seem a detached perspective on the action. His films are melodramas but refined ones; as in Mizoguchi, emotion is not erased but purified” (BORDWELL, 2005: 191). Any approach to Hou’s poetics must therefore take into account that the stylisation of his language is only a means of establishing a contemporary mode of telling a story. De Baecque calls Hou’s language “*the Hou*”, paraphrasing Rivette’s definition of *the Mizoguchi*: “*the Hou*, his language, is a universal idiom, because it suspends meaning from the first to the last sequence [...], it is made up of simple, mysterious shots, in a constantly preserved state of sensitivity” (DE BAECQUE, 2006: 285).

This suspension of meaning, as Martin (2008) suggests, is also the result of close attention to the film’s audio, which often functions as a metalinguistic exercise, spotlighting the mechanics of filmic fiction. The most outstanding example is, without doubt, *Millennium Mambo*. In its captivating opening scene, a tracking shot filmed with a Steadicam invites the spectator to follow Vicky while she tells a *story*. The levels of different audio tracks rise and fall freely—the male protagonist, Hao-Hao, operating his mixing board, will visualise the idea—thereby generating an artificial sonic flow that disconnects the image from any real reference. The same effect will be maintained throughout the film: the mix of audio tracks and the interplay between narrative and extra-narrative sound establishes a personal rhetoric on cinematic sound. Finally, the film closes in a self-referential game with a scene that complements the first: a tracking shot over a snowy road introduces, first, Vicky’s voice-over, and then the film’s main theme. But this time, in a stylistic exercise, the nature of the narrative mode is made explicit: the camera pans from the sky down to the street and the theatres of Yubari in Japan, where Vicky and her Japanese friends talk, in Chinese and Japanese, about the movie posters. Meanwhile, on another audio track, Vicky’s voice-over goes on with the story. In addition, in another rhetorical loop, she draws on another tale—the story of the country of snowman—to end her narration with shots of the posters. Tales within tales: in a game of mirrors, the narrator leaves the narrative to tell her story in third person. The whole film is simply a captivating hallucination, a repetitive tale with no end: contemporary cinematic expression as a support for timeless dreams and stories.

FOR ME, REALISM IS NOT ABOUT RECONSTRUCTING AN EVENT, BUT RECONSTRUCTING AN EXPERIENCE FROM ONE’S OWN PERCEPTION

*Millennium Mambo*. The film within a film in Hou, in addition to evoking a sense of nostalgia, is always a kind of metaphor for the art of storytelling





*Millennium Mambo*. The tracking-shot at the beginning of the film is an invitation to follow Vicky's story

### Emptiness in Eastern poetics

As noted above, the suspension of meaning in film narrative has been also observed in Ozu's films with his inclusion of shots unrelated to the film narrative. Hou also employs this device, even in his first films (films with a tight and developed plot, like *A Time to Live and a Time to Die* or *A City of Sadness*), and the emotional complexity of the images arises from both the narrative conflict portrayed and from the iconic meaning of the *empty* moments (ZHÈN, 1994). These *empty* shots, with no narrative meaning, need to be understood according to the complex dialectic between form and content in Eastern culture. The difficulty faced by the Western spectator in interpreting this dialectic has often been cited as a reason for the inability of Western audiences to grasp all of the meanings in Hou's films (HEREDERO, 2001). Zhèn offers some clues to help unravel these meanings: "These 'blank spaces' in the structure point toward ambiguous readings and interpretations, as well as toward experience and understanding. In the Western literary tradition, tragedy is often expressed as a climax of conflict and destruction, but in the East, in Chinese literature, 'fate is often a blank space, a blank image, a great, incessant rhythm, resounding beyond human control, irresistible, transcending the individual'" (ZHÈN, 1994: 77). It is easy to find these still, empty moments, stripped of narrative tension in the Eastern film tradition, Yasujiro Ozu of course being an archetypal example. In his film *Late Spring*, such shots, juxtaposed with narrative sequences, have been the subject of numerous studies aimed at decoding their meaning. Zunzunegui (1993), noting their emotional complexity, moves away from the purely formalist approaches of Thompson and Bordwell in an effort to get closer to the Eastern view, and points to the need to establish a multiplicity of meanings. "It is precisely this 'perception of arbitrariness' that gives these images their main value: their meaning is simply that no meaning can be attributed to them other than the fact that they have no single meaning. They are true 'signs in rotation', which can produce what Rubert de Ventós

defined, when describing the 'logic' of Japanese thought, with the words: 'there is no pure signifier or signified in the strict sense [...]' (ZUNZUNEGUI, 1993: 22).

Abundant examples of Ozu's *empty shots* can be found in Hou's films. At the end of one of his first films, *A Summer at Grandpa's* (Hou Hsiao-hsien, 1984), there is a meaningful shot, also essential to the narrative, in which the camera frames some trees, then traces an arc moving up into the sky, and finally pans down and frames the grandfather and his grandson, just as the old man explains to the boy the only thing parents can do for their children: to teach them universal values. This shot could be regarded as a fusion of the poetics of emptiness inserted in the same narrative sequence that moves from the universal to the particular; but this is merely a crude simplification, because, as noted above with respect to Ozu's films, to separate these two functions would obscure the complexity of the images. Nevertheless, focusing our attention on these shots, in contrast to or isolated from the rest of the visual narrative, would obscure the poetics present throughout the discourse. For example, we could also recognise them in Hou's work in those final moments when we are shown a sustained shot of empty rooms after the characters have left. At the same time, it is easy to appreciate the emotional mood, not only in the usual still shots detached from the narrative, but also in those which Hou often uses in his films set in contemporary times, filming long tracking shots of the characters in cars or on motorbikes through the city or from the city out to the countryside.

In short, meaning and its absence in Hou's films are inextricably linked in each scene. The *suspension of meaning* identified by De Baecque (2006) is accomplished through Hou's radical filming method. Action—or more precisely, activity—is constantly negated by the camera. The point of view is not merely distant, but actually veils the action taking place. In *Café Lumière*, Yoko and her parents visit their ancestors' graves; they arrange the flowers and clean the gravestones, and they are filmed with their backs to the camera, so that the characters and



what they are doing is largely concealed. Immediately thereafter, following another *empty shot* (a car coming to a train crossing), the family is eating at the bar of a restaurant. Once again, the characters have their backs to us and there is no dialogue. In these cases, the spectator tends to look for information in the image, watching the characters' faces or what they are doing. The image has been almost completely drained not just of narrative information but of any meaningful information. We can see the characters eating, playing pool, fighting, travelling, being born or dying... but Hou has stripped the images of any literal meaning and the image itself may simultaneously contain comedy and tragedy: all the complexity of *reality*.

The crucial connection between Hou and the Japanese master that we believe important to highlight is thus the poetics of emptiness unique to Eastern cultures, present in the work of both artists in different ways, giving rise to a *suspension of meaning*. Both filmmakers developed a personal language that confronts the spectator with the complexity of reality by multiplying the meanings in each scene. Their creative searches in pursuit of objectivity sought to open up possible readings rather than narrowing down meanings, and both gave birth to stylised cinematic codes, sometimes tangential but absolutely personal. ■



*Café Lumière*. The subtle beauty of the opening scene, while Yoko enters and exits the frame, is not only a reference to Ozu's iconography but a reflection of the complex Eastern poetics of emptiness

### By way of conclusion: personal languages in search of objectivity

Beyond the obvious stylistic and plot connections between Ozu and Hou, it is important to note that Hou's narrative codes diverge in a personal way in search of a narrative modernism. In *Café Lumière* this intention is especially noticeable in the use of all kinds of devices typical of the film narrator—voice-over, intertitles, letters, dreams, memories, stories—to achieve a perception of reality through the narrative discourse itself. Hajime records sounds and draws trains on his computer. Yoko tells Hajime about a dream and he answers by presenting her a copy of Maurice Sendak's *Outside Over There*. Yoko reads the story to us, the audience, while showing us the illustrations. Hou shows us that meaning is not in the image captured by the camera, but in the filmic narrative that he has created by mixing all the codes, all the languages. The film ends with Yoko and Hajime recording sounds at a train station, and finally a shot of trains crossing in all directions flows into a pop song by Yo Hitoto (a well-known pop singer in Japan, who plays the role of Yoko in the film). Sound disconnected from images. The protagonist leaving the screen. Stories within stories to tell the audience to assume a new and fresh look at the world.

### Notes

1. In *Métro Lumière: Hou Hsiao-hsien à la rencontre de Yasujiro Ozu*. (Harold Manning, 2004). A documentary film about Hou's approach to Ozu's cinema focusing on *Café Lumière*.
2. Statements made by Hou Hsiao-hsien in the documentary film *Talking with Ozu* (Yasuyoshi Tanaka, 1993), a tribute on the occasion of the 90th anniversary of Ozu's birth that compiles the impressions of filmmakers Lindsay Anderson, Claire Denis, Hou Hsiao-hsien, Aki Kaurismäki, Stanley Kwan, Paul Schrader and Wim Wenders.
3. As reflected in this statement made at the beginning of his career, Hou has often proclaimed the notable influence of Godard and other French New Wave directors on his work. He has also stated that his knowledge and appreciation of Ozu's work came later. For this reason, it would be interesting to pursue further research into the extent to which Godard is *interpreted* by Hou in his quest for realism.

### Bibliography

- ASSAYAS, Olivier (2006). "Nuestro enviado a la República China (Algo nuevo en el cine de Taiwán)." In A. De Baecque (ed.), *Nuevos cines, nueva crítica. El cine en la era de la globalización* (pp. 272-283). Barcelona: Paidós.
- BORDWELL, David (2005). *Figures Traced in Light: On Cinematic Staging*. Berkeley: University of California Press.

- BURCH, Noël. (1979). *To the Distant Observer: Form and Meaning in the Japanese Cinema*. Berkeley: University of California Press.
- DE BAEQUE, Antoine (2006). "El tiempo suspendido (*Beiqing chengshi*, de Hou Hsiao-hsien)." In A. De Baecque (ed.), *Nuevos cines, nueva crítica. El cine en la era de la globalización* (pp. 284-292). Barcelona: Paidós.
- CIMENT, Michel and Niogret, Hubert (2004). "Interview with Chu Tien-Wen." *Positif*, 526, 8. Translation by E. Barriandos. Accessed at <<http://www.zinema.com/textos/sobrelas.htm>> [07/08/2013].
- ELLICKSON, Lee (2002). "Preparing to Live in the Present: An Interview with Hou Hsiao-hsien." *Cineaste*, 27 (4), 13-19.
- FUJIWARA, Chris (2004). "A Tribute to the Past Set in the Here and Now." *Fim Comment*, March-April, 40 (2), 15.
- HEREDERO, Carlos (2001). "El cine de Hou Hsiao-hsien. Historia, documento y estilización." *Nosferatu*, 36-37, 72-91.
- MARTIN, Adrian (2008). "What's Happening? Story, Scene and Sound in Hou Hsiao-hsien." *Inter-Asia Cultural Studies*, 9 (2), 258-270.
- UDDEN, James (2009). *No Man an Island: The Cinema of Hou Hsiao-hsien*. Hong Kong: Hong Kong University Press.
- ZHEN, Ní (1994). "Classical Chinese Painting and Cinematographic Signification." In L. C. Ehrlich y D. Desser (eds.), *Cinematic Landscapes: Observations on the Visual Arts and Cinema of China and Japan* (pp. 63-80). Austin: University of Texas Press.
- ZUNZUNEGUI, Santos (1993). "El perfume del zen. Forma y sentido en el cine de Yasujiro Ozu." *Nosferatu*, 11, 18-25.

Elpidio del Campo Cañizares (b. Madrid, 1967) holds a Bachelor in Fine Arts (Universitat Politècnica de València, 1990) and a PHD in Audiovisual Communication (Universidad Miguel Hernández de Elche, 2010). His PHD dissertation was an analysis of Alexander Mackendrick's films and film theory titled *Alexander Mackendrick, from Film Praxis to Film Theory*. He is currently an associate professor at the UMH in the Department of Audiovisual Communications and Advertising. One of his main research interests is the analysis of audiovisual narrative language.

Juan Gorostidi (b. Santander, 1964) holds a Bachelor of Arts in Spanish and English Languages (Universidad de Oviedo, 1988) and a PHD in Spanish (Universidad de Navarra, 2004). He has taught History of Cinema at the Universidad de Navarra and the Universidad SEK-Segovia. He also teaches Film and Literature at the Centro de Estudios Ciudad de la Luz/UMH. He has edited a Spanish edition of Andrei Tarkovsky's book *Sculpting in Time* (1991) and a monograph on Charles Laughton's *The Night of the Hunter* (2006). He is a regular contributor to the international film journal *La Furia Humana* and he is currently working on a book on Australian filmmaker Peter Weir.

# Mujer e idilio laboral en el cine de Manuel Romero y su recepción bajo el primer franquismo

Emeterio Díez Puertas

A comienzos del siglo xx, y a medida que avanza la industrialización y la emigración a las ciudades, especialmente a Buenos Aires, la proletarización de la mujer se intensifica en Argentina. Este cambio es contradictorio. Libera a la mujer de la familia patriarcal, pero también entra en el mundo de la explotación obrera (ROCCHI, 2000; LOBATO, 2005; GIRBAL-BLACHA, 2006). Ahora bien, en aquel momento, se cree que el fenómeno de las mujeres asalariadas es una fase temporal. En unos casos debe contemplarse como una tara social a extinguir. Basta con que la mujer encuentre un marido que la retire de la fábrica o bien basta con mejorar los salarios de los hombres, de modo que ellas no tengan que dejar el hogar. En otros casos, el trabajo femenino se considera una especie de excentricidad de un grupo de mujeres masculinizadas y, como tal extravagancia, se entiende que sea un tema divertido para animar novelas, obras de teatro y películas. Este estado de cosas explica que en la cinematografía argentina de finales de los años treinta y de los años cuarenta las películas sobre la situación laboral de las mujeres argentinas sean reducidas, aunque relevantes, estén rodadas por hombres, predomine el tono de humor y sigan o necesiten el apoyo de modelos narrativos hollywoodienses, donde la *working girl* sí es un personaje frecuente: *Candidata a millonaria* (Hands Across the Table, Mitchell Leisen, 1935), *El secreto de vivir* (Mr. Deeds Goes to Town,

Frank Capra, 1936), *Ella y su secretario* (Take a Letter, Darling, Mitchell Leisen, 1942), etc.

Entre los títulos argentinos que hacen visible las tradiciones de este proceso de proletarización de la mujer se encuentran *La vuelta al nido* (Leopoldo Torres Ríos, 1938), *La maestra de los obreros* (Alberto de Zabalía, 1942) y un número tan importante de películas de

Manuel Romero que casi le convierten en un especialista. Además, Romero es uno de los directores argentinos que mejor acogida tiene en España. Entre 1940 y 1950 se estrenan en Madrid doce de sus películas, lo que supone una media de, al menos, un título por año. El objetivo de estas páginas es

## EL CRONOTOPO IDÍLICO PRESENTA UN MUNDO ORDENADO QUE HA CAÍDO EN DESGRACIA O ES AMENAZADO POR UNA FUERZA EXTERIOR O UNA RUPTURA INTERIOR

analizar desde la historia cultural y desde la historia social cómo Romero plantea ese proceso de proletarización de la mujer y cómo se recibe en España, esto es, cómo el primer franquismo piensa que el mundo ficcional de Manuel Romero puede incidir en la comunicación política, en este caso, de la identidad de género (RODRÍGUEZ-VIRGILI, SÁDABA y LÓPEZ-HERMIDA, 2010). Para ello partiremos del concepto de cronotopo de Bajtin y, más en concreto, de lo que él llama el cronotopo del idilio. Este concepto teórico nos permitirá avanzar en las conclusiones planteadas por algunos trabajos anteriores, en especial, los estudios de Manzano (2001) y de Benardi (2006); también el de Gené (2004), aunque se refiera al cartel. En otras palabras, para sistematizar el análisis, hemos procedido de la siguiente forma: 1) se ha elegido una muestra de cuatro títulos de Manuel Romero producidos a lo largo de diez años y representativos de su concepción del idilio laboral: *Mujeres que trabajan* (1938), *Muchachas que estudian* (1939), *Elvira Fernández, vendedora de tienda* (1942) y *Navidad de los pobres* (1947); 2) hemos determinado sus variables de espacio (ambientes sociales), tiempo (periodos sociales) y rol (papeles sociales) y se han interpretado desde la narrativa fílmica; y 3) hemos comparado su recepción en Buenos Aires y Madrid para determinar cómo reciben este cine dos países hispanos separados por el Atlántico.

En este sentido, la primera hipótesis es que Manuel Romero presenta el trabajo femenino en un cronotopo urbano relacionado, como ya ha indicado Insaurralde (1994: 26), con la tienda y la pensión. En ese cronotopo se proyecta una imagen de la mujer caracterizada por las tensiones que en ella genera el dilema entre el amor y la autorrealización laboral. Manuel Romero resuelve esa tensión considerando que para la mujer el idilio laboral es imposible o solo puede alcanzarse mediante el matrimonio, el cual, en realidad, supone relegar a la mujer al hogar o anteponer su función reproductiva a la productiva.

Por otro lado, aquí nos importa especialmente la recepción que este cine tiene en España durante el periodo que va de 1939 a 1950 (años que comprenden las fases fascista y nacional-católica del primer franquismo) y la valoración que el régimen realiza respecto a sus consecuencias en la opinión pública. Para ello nos hemos documentado en la prensa y en los expedientes de censura. Ambas fuentes nos ilustran sobre las razones políticas que el Estado franquista aduce para permitir o no su proyección y muestran los encuentros y desencuentros entre ambas cinematografías. En concreto, dos de las películas de la muestra se estrenaron sin cortes, una fue prohibida en cuatro ocasiones y la otra nunca se importó. Hay que recordar que desde 1939 la Asociación de Productores de Películas Argentinas viene presionando al franquismo para que deje entrar libremente en España sus películas, de modo que su retórica sobre la hispanidad tenga plasmaciones concretas (DÍEZ PUERTAS, 2012, 2014). En teoría, el cine argentino es menos foráneo, surge del tronco hispánico, tiene ventajas económicas a la hora de ser importado y, por lo tanto, no debería plantear problemas de comunicación política, pero lo cierto es que el número de títulos argentinos prohibidos y cortados es relevante: *Prisioneros de la tierra* (Mario Soffici, 1939), *La casta Susana* (Benito Perojo, 1944), *La dama duende* (Luis Saslavsky, 1945), etc. Las preguntas de investigación son: ¿Qué cronotopo laboral idílico propone Manuel Romero para la mujer? ¿Amenaza la doctrina franquista? ¿Coincide con ella? ¿Hay ciertas discrepancias? ¿Cuáles?

### 1. Cronotopo, tango e identidad de género

La utilización del concepto cronotopo para el análisis de género ya ha sido utilizada por Del Valle (1999). Se fundamenta en la idea de que las conexiones temporales y espaciales establecidas por el contenido y la forma del relato crean la imagen del hombre y de la mujer en el texto artístico y dicha imagen nos revela cómo, por ejemplo, el cine piensa los roles de género, cómo los copia y traslada a la sociedad en un complejo intercambio entre el mundo real y el mundo representado (BAJTÍN, 1989: 404).

Dentro de la tipología de cronotopos centrales que establece Bajtín, aquí nos interesa el que él llama el cronotopo del idilio. Bajtín dice que el cronotopo idílico se caracteriza por presentar un mundo ordenado y perfecto que ha caído en desgracia o es amenazado por una fuerza exterior o una ruptura interior: egoísmos, envidias, celos, separaciones... Hay varias formas de idilio: el amoroso, el familiar, el campestre y el artesanal (1989: 375). Lo que aquí llamamos idilio laboral sería una evolución o un intento de reproducción en la sociedad urbana del idilio artesanal. El modelo lo podemos encontrar en las novelas de Émile Zola sobre la familia agrupadas bajo el título genérico de *Los Rougon-Macquart. Historia natural y social de una familia bajo el segundo imperio*. Me refiero

a títulos como *Germinal* (1885), *El dinero* (1891) y, para nuestro caso concreto, *El paraíso de las damas* (1883).

Lo importante es que, llevado el concepto de cronotopo al análisis narrativo del cine argentino de este periodo, observamos, en efecto, que en cada forma de idilio hay un modelo de mujer. Es más, dentro del idilio laboral femenino, el cine argentino de la llamada edad de oro presenta tres tipos de mujeres trabajadoras: la mujer artista, la milonguita y la dependienta, tipos que, en ocasiones, se suceden, se solapan o se confunden. Incluso cada una de ellas tiene su música. Aisemberg (2005) y Sánchez (2005) ya han señalado la relación directa entre el tango y el cine de Manuel Romero. No nos referimos solo al hecho de que sus películas gustaban porque tenían numerosas canciones sino a que hay una relación transtextual muy compleja entre ambos medios. Manuel Romero compone tangos para varias de sus películas, los cuales, además de buscar el interés del público, condensan el pensamiento del film y hasta dan título a la película, como *La muchacha del circo* (1937), *Isabelita* (1940) y *Elvira Fernández, vendedora de tienda*. En realidad, el tango que en su letra refleja el cronotopo del mundo laboral femenino podemos rastrearlo mucho antes en numerosos temas del repertorio porteño, como *Camino del taller* (1925), *Obrerita* (1926) y *Cotorrita de la suerte* (1927).

En concreto, el cronotopo de la mujer artista representa a una joven con talento que, tras un duro aprendizaje, se convierte en estrella de la canción, el circo, la radio o el cine, siendo estos medios el espacio-tiempo principal. Me refiero a películas como *Ídolos de la radio* (Eduardo Mórera, 1934), *El alma del bandoneón* (Mario Soffici, 1935) y la mencionada *La muchacha del circo*, donde se canta esta letra de Romero: «Ahí va la muchacha del circo, / no encuentra consuelo ni amor, / regala a los otros la dicha / y sufre miseria y dolor. / Por fin una noche la mano, / cansada, el trapezio aflojó / y... ¡pobre muchacha del circo! / Buscando un aplauso, / la muerte encontró».

La milonguita, por su parte, representa la pobreza, la caída y la degradación. Su espacio-tiempo pertenece al barrio y el cabaret donde intenta ganarse la vida con el baile y con su sexo. El cine de José Agustín Ferreyra casi da forma cinematográfica a esta figura en una larga lista de películas, entre las que pueden incluirse *Muñequitas porteñas* (José A. Ferreyra, 1931) y *Calles de Buenos Aires* (José A. Ferreyra, 1933). De forma marginal, Romero introduce este tipo de trabajadora en *Muchachas que estudian* a través del personaje de Magda (Carmen del Moral), la cual canta el tango *Como las aves*, que dice: «Libre, quiero ser como el pampiero. / Sola, y seguir mi derrotero. / Sin pensar, ni saber dónde llegar. / Sola libre quiero ser / para cantar».

Finalmente, está el cronotopo de las vendedoras, de las empleadas de comercio, el espacio-tiempo de la tienda y de la pensión, el mundo de las mujeres que trabajan de

*dependientas* y que viven de *acogida* en una pensión de señoritas. En el caso de Manuel Romero, el tango que corresponde a este cronotopo aparece en *Elvira Fernández, vendedora de tienda*. Lo interpreta Juan Carlos Thorry y dice: «Elvira Fernández, vendedora de tienda / humilde y valiente muchachita porteña. / Como ella hay millares sufriendo la crueldad / y la indiferencia de la gran ciudad. / Gentil y elegante, valerosa y modesta, / heroica en la lucha por la dura existencia. / Elvira Fernández, muchacha porteña / que vive y trabaja y que sufre y que sueña». ¿Pero cuáles son las características de este cronotopo, qué imagen de la mujer proyecta y cómo se recibe esa imagen en Buenos Aires y en Madrid?

## 2. Paraíso de las damas, infierno de las obreras: *Mujeres que trabajan* (1938)

De las cuatro películas que vamos a estudiar, *Mujeres que trabajan* es la más importante porque es la que fija el cronotopo. Este cronotopo es, en realidad, un cruce de, al menos, dos modelos narrativos. El primer modelo es la novela de Zola *El paraíso de las damas* (1883), historia de una joven huérfana que llega a París y, tras vencer todo tipo de dificultades y acosos en el trabajo, hace carrera en unos grandes almacenes, un tipo de tienda que nace por entonces. El segundo modelo es el relato cinematográfico que gira alrededor de un personaje colectivo formado por varias mujeres, el cual es interpretado por un gran elenco de estrellas femeninas o un grupo de jóvenes promesas. *Muchachas de uniforme* (Mädchen in Uniform, Leontine Sagan y Carl Froelich, 1931), uno de los films de temática lésbica más conocidos, y *Damas del teatro* (Stage Door, Gregory La Cava, 1937) son dos claros ejemplos anteriores a la película de Manuel Romero, aunque no se sitúan en el espacio-tiempo que estudiamos aquí. Asimismo *Mamá a la fuerza* (Bachelor Mother, Garson Kanin, 1939), *El bazar de las sorpresas* (The Shop Around the Corner, Ernst Lubitsch, 1940) y *Tienda de locos* (The Big Store, Charles Reisner, 1941), esta última de los hermanos Marx, tienen el lugar y el momento, la jornada en los grandes almacenes, pero le falta la segunda condición: el personaje femenino colectivo. En el modelo de Romero conviven juntas la muchacha huérfana, la fémina radical, la madre soltera, la niña rica y hasta la milonguita y, protegiéndolas a todas, un hombre de más edad, íntegro, bonachón y enamorado siempre de la mujer de carácter más difícil: la Catita de turno.

Decimos que *Mujeres que trabajan* es el film modelo porque contiene los tres elementos que consideramos que hacen de las películas de Manuel Romero que vamos a estudiar aquí un corpus singular. En primer lugar, existe un espacio configurado por el tránsito de la pensión al trabajo. Incluso parece que el motivo de la pensión Romero lo toma de *Damas del teatro*, fuente directa del film, según Di Núbila (1959: 194) y Manuel F. Fernández (CALVAGNO, 2010: 58). En segundo lugar, el tiempo está marca-

do por la jornada laboral y sus obligaciones: horarios de apertura y cierre, el día de cobro, la campaña de Navidad, los descansos para comer, etc. Finalmente, el rol principal de la mujer es el de trabajadora o, más bien, el de un miembro de la masa de trabajadoras. Todo ello comunica una imagen de la mujer como un ser carente de hogar, una dependiente amenazada en el trabajo por su jefe, sus compañeras o sus clientes, agotada por la jornada y sin más salida que el matrimonio. Esto es, no hay posibilidad para la mujer de alcanzar el idilio laboral.

Respecto al primer punto, el espacio, los títulos de crédito de *Mujeres que trabajan* aparecen sobre distintos planos que recogen la gran actividad que tiene lugar en el

cronotopo principal y más característico del film: los grandes almacenes. A continuación se nos presenta a la mujer trabajadora. Solo que todavía no lo es. El papel principal pertenece al personaje de Ana María (Mecha Ortiz), que, al comienzo del film, es una rica y aristocrática joven, la cual, medio borracha, mata el tiempo en salas de fiestas. Pero, de pronto, su mundo se viene abajo. Su padre, un rico ban-

quero, lo pierde todo y se suicida. Esto obliga a Ana María a ponerse a trabajar y a entrar en el tiempo laboral. Es más, gracias a su chófer, Lorenzo (Tito Lusiardo), encuentra refugio en una pensión, el segundo espacio característico de este cronotopo. En la pensión viven varias mujeres trabajadoras, entre otras, Clara (Alicia Barrie), Elvira (Sabina Olmos), Catita (Niní Marshall) y Luisa (Pepita Serrador). Esta última, extremista y masculinizada (en su ropa y peinado, por su desprecio de las emociones), es una chica que lee a Marx y que odia el mundo del que procede Ana María. En un determinado momento le dice a esta: «No trabajamos por placer o por falta de capacidad para vivir la vida de ustedes. Trabajamos por necesidad».

Pues bien, Ana María comienza a trabajar con las compañeras en unos grandes almacenes y su jefe, que ha dejado embarazada a Clara, se enamora de ella, mientras su antiguo novio, Carlos (Fernando Borel), no puede corresponderla por culpa del rechazo que su rica familia siente hacia Ana María. Afortunadamente, todo se resuelve y la película termina con la doble boda de Ana María con Carlos y de Catita con Lorenzo, mientras el resto de las chicas se van a su casa después de la ceremonia porque esa tarde tienen que volver a trabajar. De este modo, el final feliz en boda, típico del idilio amoroso (el cual esconde, en realidad, el confinamiento de la mujer en el espacio privado), queda neutralizado por el final triste de las compañeras.

*Mujeres que trabajan* se estrena en Buenos Aires en julio de 1938 y tiene un gran éxito de público, en gran parte, por el papel cómico de Niní Marshall. Este es su primer film, pero interpreta a Catita, una mujer como la vecina de al lado, atrevida y ocurrente, que ya era un gran éxito en la radio (MANRUPE y PORTELA, 1995: 395). Incluso la crítica de izquierdas, muy combativa con el cine de Manuel Romero, alaba el film sin entender su verdadero sentido, su tratamiento conservador; simplemente lo valora positivamente porque supone hacer visible el mundo del trabajo de la mujer.

El éxito de *Mujeres que trabajan* en Argentina hace que la película se intente importar muy pronto a España. Se presenta a censura en octubre de 1938 y, según el expediente depositado hoy en el Archivo General de la Administración Sección Cultura (AGAG), el dictamen es negativo: prohibida (exp. 3.086). Cifesa vuelve a intentarlo en abril de 1942. Pero la Comisión Nacional de Censura Cinematográfica ratifica el dictamen dado en su día en Sevilla. La compañía apela entonces a la Junta Superior de Censura Cinematográfica y ésta mantiene la prohibición. Cifesa realiza un nuevo intento en mayo de 1946 pensando que las circunstancias políticas (Fuero de los Españoles, Reglamentos de Trabajo y otras medidas liberalizadoras) favorecen su aprobación. Pero el dictamen es el mismo: prohibida en todo el territorio nacional. En definitiva, ni en plena guerra civil ni en la etapa fascista ni en la etapa nacional-católica ni distribuida por la compañía cinematográfica más franquista pudo verse en España *Mujeres que trabajan*.

### 3. La escuela de las mujeres: *Muchachas que estudian* (1939)

Un año después Manuel Romero rueda, también para Luniton, *Muchachas que estudian*. La película presenta a un grupo de mujeres que comparten una vivienda y luchan mediante el estudio y el trabajo contra la miseria, aunque tanto estudio, parece decir el film, les mete ideas raras en la cabeza. Es como si Manuel Romero diese la razón a Arnolfo, el personaje de Molière, que piensa que cuanto más ignorante es una mujer menos complicada resulta.

La trama comienza con una conferencia de Ana del Valle (de nuevo Pepita Serrador) en el Club Estudiantil femenino. La conferencia se titula «El matrimonio y la mujer que estudia». Dice al auditorio: «Una vida dedicada al estudio no necesita amor. El matrimonio hace de la mujer una esclava y la convierte en un ser inferior al hombre». A continuación Ana pide que la relación con los hombres sea de simples *camaradas* y añade: «El amor anula el genio creador de la mujer. El matrimonio destruye su potencia intelectual [...]. No escuchen la voz de la especie sino del intelecto. Busquen la compañía del hombre amigo, pero huid del hombre esposo que será vuestra anulación como seres inteligentes».

NI EN PLENA GUERRA  
CIVIL NI EN LA ETAPA  
FASCISTA NI EN LA  
ETAPA NACIONAL-  
CATÓLICA NI DISTRIBUIDA  
POR LA COMPAÑÍA  
CINEMATOGRAFICA MÁS  
FRANQUISTA PUDO VERSE  
EN ESPAÑA *MUJERES  
QUE TRABAJAN*



La conferencia genera un gran debate y abre todo tipo de contradicciones. Isabel, una muchacha rica (Alicia Barrié), decide dejar el mundo especial de lujo en el que vive y que hace de ella una inútil y se va a la casa de las muchachas para trabajar y estudiar. En cambio, Mercedes (Alicia Vignoli), que estudia medicina, piensa que solo Isabel, gracias a su riqueza, puede dedicarse al estudio. Pero lo peor es que la conferencia conduce a que las muchachas rompan las relaciones con sus parejas o estas entran en crisis, en parte porque aparecen otras mujeres y el deseo sexual se interpone en su camaradería.

Sin embargo, tras múltiples peripecias se impone la cordura y el amor. Ana termina retirando las ideas defendidas en la conferencia y dice: «El derecho del amor es lo más sagrado para mí. Todos hemos vivido en un mundo falso, creyendo pertenecer a otra humanidad superior y no somos otra cosa que mujeres, nada más que mujeres». La película concluye otra vez con una doble boda, de Ana con el profesor y de Mercedes con su novio, más una tercera que vendrá después, pues Luisa acepta casarse con el doctor Castro para dar un nombre al hijo que otra de las chicas, Lucy, va a tener con quince años, con lo que también, como en *Muchachas que trabajan*, se repite el motivo de la madre soltera víctima de un canalla. Solo Magda, la milonguita que las muchachas recogen en la calle, queda sola y sin nadie que la ame. Por lo tanto, todo vuelve a su orden en cuanto las mujeres reconocen que no son más que *mujeres*, lo que para Manuel Romero significa que los personajes femeninos reconocen que en ellas lo natural es el amor, su función reproductiva, y no el trabajo y el estudio, su función productiva.

En Argentina *Mujeres que estudian* consigue el favor del público, aunque la crítica la presta menos atención que a *Mujeres que trabajan*. Prueba de su éxito comercial es que se importa muy pronto a España. La película pasa censura el 21 de octubre de 1940, durante el periodo en que García Viñolas ejerce esta labor con mayor apertura que la que impondrá más tarde Gabriel Arias Salgado, por lo que el régimen la aprueba totalmente. De hecho, la película coincide con los postulados expresados poco después en el VII Consejo Nacional de la Sección Femenina de Falange.

El estreno en Madrid se produce el 6 de febrero de 1941 y es uno de los grandes éxitos del cine argentino de aquellos años. Está meses en cartel y luego se integra como parte del programa doble, de modo que prácticamente puede verse en la capital hasta 1943. En Barcelona también figura en las carteleras más de un año en distintos momentos. Sin embargo, tampoco la crítica española le presta mucha atención. Más Guindal, el periodista que en ese momento lleva la página de crítica de la revista oficial *Primer Plano*, considera que su estreno no merece ser reseñado. El *ABC* de Sevilla, en la crítica publicada el 22 de febrero de 1941, dice que la película es animada y humana, pero peca de exceso de embrollo y la interpretación le parece discreta (6).

#### 4. Evita antes de Evita: *Elvira Fernández, vendedora de tienda* (1942)

*Elvira Fernández* forma parte del grupo de films que Manuel Romero escribe especialmente para la actriz Paulina Singerman, como *La rubia del camino* (1938) e *Isabelita* (1940). La película se abre con un plano exterior de los Grandes Establecimientos Durán. A continuación pasamos al despacho del director, el señor Durán, y se nos informa de que las ventas de la tienda van muy mal. Los jefes encargados del establecimiento proponen a su patrón echar a la gente mayor y más antigua porque han perdido su eficacia comercial. Hay que cambiarlos por empleados «respetuosos, obedientes y humildes» y bajar el sueldo a los que se queden.

Cuando los empleados se enteran de que van a despedir a cincuenta compañeros y rebajar los sueldos, intentan organizarse y crear una comisión para hablar con el patrón. El señor Durán no se conmueve, pero sí su hija, la aristocrática señorita Elvira Durán (Paulina Singerman), que acaba de llegar de Estados Unidos. Elvira, en efecto, decide camuflarse y convertirse en Elvira Fernández, una empleada de su padre, para comprobar si lo que plantea la comisión es verdad. Elvira Fernández se vuelve una perfecta camarada, una defensora de los oprimidos y descamisados, una Evita de los almacenes. Decimos esto último en el sentido de que, como luego veremos, el cine de Manuel Romero coincide con la doctrina social de lo que luego será peronismo y heroínas como esta parecen inspirar la labor de Eva Duarte de Perón. En efecto, a los pocos días, Elvira Fernández es despedida por abofetear al Jefe del Personal y toda la tienda declara una huelga en solidaridad. Hasta el gobierno trata de mediar en el conflicto. Durán, finalmente, se da por vencido y accede a todo. La película termina con el anuncio de una doble boda, como en las películas que ya hemos comentado, pero es una boda entre distintas clases sociales, final típico, a su vez, de las películas de Romero para Paulina Singerman. Elvira se casará con un empleado, Raúl (Juan Carlos Thorry), y Pepita (Elena Lucena), la empleada del departamento de pieles, con el novio rico de Elvira.

La película se estrena en Buenos Aires el 1 de julio de 1942 y es otro éxito de Manuel Romero. La crítica elogia la comicidad, la agilidad de la acción, la mezcla de realismo y de brochazos sentimentales y su combinación de tema social y entretenimiento (Manrupe y Portela, 1995: 197). Di Núbila, en cambio, apenas presta atención al film en su *Historia del cine argentino*. Habla de una «animada pero repetida comedia de Romero» (1959: 210). Tampoco

MANUEL ROMERO  
PARECE DAR LA RAZÓN A  
ARNOLFO, EL PERSONAJE  
DE MOLIÈRE, QUE  
PIENSA QUE CUANTO  
MÁS IGNORANTE ES  
UNA MUJER MENOS  
COMPLICADA RESULTA

a la izquierda argentina le gusta la película. Le parece una simplicidad porque considera que el movimiento obrero nunca es fruto de unos espontáneos, de una iluminada o de una Juana de Arco sino de las organizaciones obreras que los patrones odian (CALVAGNO, 2010: 73).

No nos consta que ninguna empresa española intentase importar la película. Una explicación está en las directrices que marcan los códigos de censura internos que se manejan en las juntas de censura. No tanto en sus epígrafes sobre la dignidad de la mujer y los atentados contra su honor como en aquellos sobre cuestiones sociales. Pero esta explicación choca con la suerte censora que en España tiene la película norteamericana *El diablo burlado* (The Devil and Miss Jones, 1941). Dirigida por Sam Wood para la RKO, se había estrenado en Estados Unidos en abril de 1941. La licencia de su importación a España es del 28 de julio de 1943. Pero

la distribuidora que se interesa por ella, Filmófono, duda que pueda pasar la censura por su contenido, muy en la línea del espíritu del New Deal. La película cuenta la historia de Merrick, un viejo millonario (Charles Coburn), que se infiltra como trabajador en una de sus empresas, unos grandes almacenes. Como se ve, *Elvira Fernández, vendedora de tienda*

no es más que un remake (no confesado y adaptado al contexto argentino) de esta película.

Pues bien, casi un año después de su licencia de importación, el 11 de mayo de 1944, Filmófono decide presentar *El diablo burlado* a censura. Pero para evitar el descalabro que supondría doblarla, tirar copias y confeccionar la publicidad para luego encontrarse con que se prohíbe, la somete a censura previa en su versión original, es decir, con el diálogo traducido en papel. Para sorpresa de Filmófono, los censores la aprueban con solo un corte, aunque amplio: «la casi totalidad de las escenas de playa, no tanto por lo que puedan tener de inmorales, como por lo que tienen de sucio y deplorable» (AGAC exp. 3.221). En agosto vuelve a verse doblada con ese corte y la junta la aprueba definitivamente. En este sentido, una segunda hipótesis sería que *Elvira Fernández* no se importa porque en España ya se estaba comercializando el original, *El diablo burlado*, y no había hueco para lo que podía considerarse una copia.

Una tercera explicación, más prosaica y más verosímil, es que Lumiton, la productora del film, se retira en 1942 del mercado español por las dificultades que tiene para repatriar los beneficios que sus películas consiguen

en España y, al mismo tiempo, Hispania-Tobis, la distribuidora española con la que en 1939 había pactado la comercialización de sus productos, termina siendo liquidada por aparecer en la lista negra aliada que recoge las empresas cinematográficas españolas vinculadas con los fascismos europeos.

## 5. Noche de paz: *Navidad de los pobres* (1947) / *La novia del detective* (1947)

*Navidad de los pobres* se abre, de nuevo, situando la acción en el cronotopo principal del film: unos grandes almacenes, aunque ahora estamos en Navidad y los escaparates están llenos de juguetes y regalos. Dentro, una dependienta, Catita (Niní Marshall), intenta atender a una madre y a su niño grandote, más bien un adolescente vestido de primera comunión. Catita tiene muy buena relación con el hijo del jefe, Don Alfredo (Osvaldo Miranda). Esa noche Alfredo irá a la pensión que comparten varias empleadas a tomar una copa con ellas. También irá el novio de Catita, el detective de los almacenes, Gorostiaga (Tito Lusiardo). Este pillará robando a una mujer, Marta (Irma Córdoba), pero Alfredo la perdona. Ante su generosidad Catita afirma: «Si todos fueran como usted, no habría tantas huelgas en el país». Como Marta no ha comido ni tiene casa, Catita y las dependientas la invitan a pasar la Nochebuena con ellas y a vivir en la pensión. Pronto se inicia una relación entre Marta y Alfredo, pero sin el consentimiento del padre de este último, el señor Suárez, propietario de los almacenes. Tras varias peripecias, con el secuestro del hijo de Marta de por medio, la película termina con la boda de Marta y Alfredo. Se celebra el 24 de diciembre, durante la Noche de Paz, en la tienda, con todos los empleados como invitados. En ese momento, el señor Suárez manifiesta públicamente su aprecio por Marta y Gorostiaga anuncia que también se casará con Catita.

*Navidad de los pobres* se estrena en Buenos Aires el 12 de agosto de 1947. La crítica coincide en que es una película de ritmo ágil, alegre, graciosa, con numerosos chistes de actualidad y otra excelente interpretación de Niní Marshall (MANRUPE y PORTELA, 1995: 408). Di Núbila sostiene que es una película «dislocada, elemental y eficaz» al servicio de Catita (1959, II: 89). Kriger considera que es un film modélico del peronismo en el sentido de que el viejo patrón representa al empresario liberal de antes del peronismo y su hijo, al empresario corporativo que trae el peronismo (2009: 212). Como hemos visto, es algo parecido a lo que sucede con el señor Durán y su hija Elvira en *Elvira Fernández, vendedora de tienda*.

*Navidad de los pobres* se importa a España el 20 de marzo de 1950. Llega en un lote de películas de Argentina Sono Films formado por: *Una noche en el Ta Ba Rin* (1949), con el humorista Pepe Iglesias, y *Madame Sans Gene* (1945), una parodia también interpretada por Niní Marshall. Quiero decir que la casa importadora, Rey Soria Films, adquiere un tipo de cine argentino muy concreto: el interpretado

EL DICTAMEN DE UNO  
DE LOS CENSORES  
DICE QUE NAVIDAD DE  
LOS POBRES ES UNA  
«PELÍCULA INSPIRADA  
EN LOS PRINCIPIOS  
DEL PERONISMO.  
INSUFRIBLE, CHABACANA  
Y DEPLORABLE»

por sus estrellas del humor; un cine popular, no un cine social. Igualmente razones comerciales explican que, el 5 de mayo, una vez pasada la censura, Rey Soria Films solicite el cambio de título por *La novia del detective*, ya que resulta más «adecuado para la explotación de la película». En cuanto al dictamen censor, emitido el 3 de mayo de 1950, la junta la aprueba sin cortes, pero para mayores y con juicios muy negativos. Guillermo de Reyna dice: «Película inspirada en los principios del peronismo. Insufrible, chabacana y deplorable». Pío García Escudero escribe: «Melodrama argentino de lo peor que hemos visto hasta el día». Galainea dice que es de «una ordinariez aplastante» y Xavier de Echarri, que es «un engendro» (AGAC exp. 3.380).

Pero su desprecio no es compartido por el público español. Rey Soria Film arranca la explotación comercial de *Navidad de los pobres* con seis copias y la estrena en Madrid el 20 de julio de 1950. Es pleno verano, pero una fecha muy cercana a la importación, lo que no suele ser habitual con el cine argentino. En julio, la distribuidora tira dos copias más. Como tenía previsto, Niní Marshall y su vis cómica se ganan al público español. Es una película de Catita más que de Manuel Romero. En efecto, en su crítica para *Primer Plano* de 30 de julio de 1950, Gómez Tello había dicho que *Navidad de los pobres* es una producción de escasas pretensiones, pero cuyo embrollo cómico-policíaco-sentimental se defiende gracias a la comicidad de Niní Marshall.

## 6. Conclusión: el pre-peronismo desconcierta al franquismo

Hemos visto cómo Manuel Romero aboga porque la mujer anteponga el matrimonio al puesto de trabajo y, si trabaja, que los patrones y los trabajadores se hermanen para la búsqueda del bien común y la eliminación de los abusos que explotan a esas mujeres. Su solución es un punto intermedio entre los radicalismos feministas y comunistas y el egoísmo, la arrogancia y la ociosidad de la clase alta. Puede discutirse si su apuesta por el corporativismo es nacionalista, fascista o de otro tipo, aunque consideramos que es acertado contemplar su cine como un anticipo del peronismo, como señala Donatello (1997). Evita decía que las mujeres pertenecen a la esfera del amor, pero que, «mientras no son económicamente libres, nadie les asigna ningún derecho» (GIRBAL-BLACHA, 2010: 107). Las chicas de Romero también se encuentran ante el dilema de elegir entre el hogar y la empresa, entre el matrimonio y sus propias metas personales, entre alcanzar el idilio amoroso o el idilio de la libertad económica, pero él siempre termina sus películas presentando un futuro basado en ejercer de esposa y madre. Antepone su rol reproductivo al productivo y muestra a la mujer trabajadora como una anormalidad, una injusticia social que hay que resolver, ya que si trabaja es porque es huérfana, madre soltera o pobre. El peronismo vendría a decir prácticamente lo mismo

con su lema, referido a la mujer, «Nacimos para construir hogares. No para la calle» (GIRBAL-BLACHA, 2010: 93).

Dada esta construcción de sentido, creemos que si el franquismo prohíbe *Mujeres que trabajan*, la prensa oficial apenas se ocupa de *Muchachas que estudian*, ningún importador trae *Elvira Fernández, vendedora de tienda* y si la distribuidora cambia el título de *Navidad de los pobres* es porque el trabajo femenino es un tema caliente que abre numerosas contradicciones en el seno del régimen de Franco. Hay que recordar que el franquismo se debate entre defender como principio ideológico que las mujeres se queden en el hogar y, al mismo tiempo, satisfacer la necesidad que tienen las empresas de mano de obra femenina y, por supuesto, atender las precarias circunstancias materiales de muchas mujeres: viudas, huérfanas, con maridos en la cárcel, con ancianos a su cargo, etc. Por eso la limitación del acceso de la mujer al mundo del trabajo se refiere básicamente a la mujer casada, a la esposa mantenida por el marido, a la madre dedicada a la procreación de los hijos (FOLGUERA CRESPO, 1997; ROCA I GIRONA, 2003). La *Revista 'Y'* de noviembre de 1940 decía lo siguiente: «Ninguna mujer realmente sensible va por gusto a la oficina o al taller. Cumple su misión humana y realiza lo que la vida o el Estado le encomiendan, pero siempre en ansia de hogar» (RICHMOND, 2004: 57). Es esta actitud vacilante del Estado franquista la que conduce a que estas películas sean víctimas de la arbitrariedad censora, la crítica cinematográfica pusilánime y un pánico comercial injustificado. Una lectura más perspicaz del cine de Manuel Romero y una postura menos displicente hacia el cine argentino en su conjunto hubiesen conseguido que estos films fuesen la base ficcional perfecta para la comunicación política de la doctrina franquista sobre el trabajo femenino. Incluso hubiesen dado argumentos para la existencia de una doctrina compartida sobre esta cuestión, doctrina que franquistas y peronistas hubiesen llamado de la «hispanidad» en su tendencia a convertir sus principios partidistas, en este caso sobre la mujer, en acervo común y hasta en legado de raza. ■

## Notas

- 1 Esta investigación forma parte del proyecto *Industrias Culturales e Igualdad: Textos, Imágenes, Públicos y Valoración Económica. InGenArTe* (MINECO, Plan Nacional I+D+i, FFI2012-35390).

## Bibliografía

- AISEMBERG, Alicia (2005). Prácticas de cruce en las obras de Manuel Romero: tango, teatro, cine y deporte. *Cuadernos de Cine Argentino*, 6, 10-33.
- BAJTIN, Mijaíl (1989). *Teoría y estética de la novela*. Madrid: Taurus.
- BENARDI, Mario (2006). *La vida imaginada. Vida cotidiana y cine argentino 1933-1970*. Buenos Aires: El Jilguero.
- CALVAGNO, Joaquín (2010). El primer cine industrial y las masas en Argentina: la sección *Cinematografía* del semanario *CGT* (1934-1943). *A contracorriente*, 7 (3), 38-81.

- DEL VALLE, Teresa (1999). Procesos de la memoria: cronotopos genéricos. *Antropología hoy: teorías, técnicas y tácticas*, 19, 211-225.
- DI NÚBILA, Domingo (1959). *Historia del cine argentino*. Buenos Aires: Cruz de Malta.
- DIEZ PUERTAS, Emeterio (2012). Las negociaciones para el acuerdo cinematográfico entre Argentina y España de 1948. *Secuencias*, 35, 59-83.
- (2014). Identidad de género y cronotopo: el idilio familiar en el cine de Francisco Mugica y su recepción en la España de los años cuarenta. *Anales de la literatura española contemporánea*, ALEC, 39 (2), 397-416.
- DONATELLO, Luis Miguel (1997). Manuel Romero y el peronismo. Una lectura a través de *Gente Bien*. En F. MALLIMACCI e I. MARRONE (eds.). *Cine e imaginario social* (pp. 93-108). Buenos Aires: Ediciones del CBC.
- FOLGUERA CREPOS, Pilar (1997). El franquismo. El retorno a la esfera privada (1939-1975). En E. GARRIDO (ed.). *Historia de las mujeres en España*. Madrid: Síntesis.
- GENÉ, Marcela (2004). *Un mundo feliz. La representación de los trabajadores durante el primer peronismo (1946-1955)*. Buenos Aires: Fondo de Cultura Económica.
- GIRBAL-BLACHA, Noemi M. (2006). Nacimos para construir hogares. No para la calle. La mujer en la Argentina peronista (1946-1955). Continuidades y cambios. *Secuencia*, 65, 91-112.
- INSAURRALDE, Andrés (1994). *Manuel Romero*. Buenos Aires: INC.
- KRIGER, Clara (2009). *Cine y peronismo*. Buenos Aires: Siglo XXI.
- LOBATO, Mirta Zaida (2005). *Historia de las trabajadoras en la Argentina (1869-1960)*. Buenos Aires: Edhasa.
- MANRUPE, Raúl y PORTELA, María Alejandra (1995). *Un diccionario de films argentinos*. Buenos Aires: Corregidor.
- MANZANO, Valeria (2001). Trabajadoras en la pantalla. Representaciones de las trabajadoras en el cine argentino, 1938-1942. *La ventana*, 14, 267-287.
- RICHMOND, Kathleen (2004). *Las mujeres en el fascismo español. La Sección Femenina de la Falange, 1934-1959*. Madrid: Alianza.
- ROCA I GIRONA, Jordi (2003). Esposa y madre a la vez. Construcción y negociación del modelo ideal de mujer bajo el (primer) franquismo. En G. NIELFA CRISTÓBAL (ed.). *Mujeres y hombres en la España franquista: Sociedad, economía, política, cultura*. Madrid: Editorial Complutense.
- ROCCHI, Fernando (2000). Concentración de capital, concentración de mujeres. Industria y trabajo femenino en Buenos Aires, 1890-1930. *Historia de las mujeres en la Argentina. Siglo XX*. Buenos Aires: Taurus.
- RODRÍGUEZ-VIRGILI, Jordi; SÁDABA, Teresa y LÓPEZ-HERMIDA, Alberto (2010). La ficción audiovisual como nuevo escenario para la Comunicación Política. *Cuadernos de Información y Comunicación*, 5, 35-55.
- SÁNCHEZ, Silvia (2005). El cine de Manuel Romero: la textualización del fantasma. En A. L. LUSNICH (ed.). *Civilización y barbarie en el cine argentino y latinoamericano* (pp. 43-60). Buenos Aires: Biblos.

Emeterio Diez Puertas (Saldaña, 1962) es doctor en Historia Contemporánea por la Universidad Complutense y Licenciado en Dramaturgia para la Real Escuela Superior de Arte Dramático. Ha publicado más de treinta artículos sobre el cine, la radio, la televisión, la literatura y el teatro en monografías y revistas como *Historia 16*, *Cuadernos Hispanoamericanos*, *Siga*, *ZER* o *Anales de Literatura*. En este momento, es el gerente del Departamento de Comunicación y Publicaciones de la RESAD y también imparte las asignaturas de Narrativa en Radio, Televisión y Cine en la Universidad Camilo José Cela.

# 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.

**Organiza:** Grupo de Animación: Arte e Industria.  
Departamento de Dibujo, Universitat Politècnica de València

**Distribuye:** Sendema  
<http://www.sendemaeditorial.com>  
[info@sendemaeditorial.com](mailto:info@sendemaeditorial.com)



<http://conadeanimacion.webs.upv.es>



# ABSTRACTS [english]

## NOTEBOOK

### **Wounds, survivals, transformations. Styling models in postwar Spanish cinema (1939-1962)**

**Love, loss, melancholy, delirium: an obsessive-delusional styling model in the Spanish cinema of the forties. José Luis Castro de Paz, Fernando Gómez Beceiro**

**Keywords:** Spanish cinema; styling model; the forties; war; melodrama; obsession; delirium; avant-garde.

**Abstract:** One of the four Models that we have detected in the Spanish cinema of the period 1939-1950 is the Obsessive-Delusional Styling Model consisting of those films formally related to the historical vanguards and the work of the most experimental filmmakers in Hollywood at the time (Orson Welles, Alfred Hitchcock). The films would be organized on a male point of view haunted and hurt by the loss of the love object, unable to cope with grief, and insanely melancholic. They would also include, at some point in their development, the radical formalization of the delirium. The extreme uniqueness of the model is due to the combination of certain melodramatic issues with concrete solutions whereby certain filmmakers faced, after the war, the formal problems resulting from those and becoming the most relevant, striking and sublime film styling of the Spanish war wound.

**Author:** José Luis Castro de Paz (A Coruña, 1964) is a film historian and Professor of Communication Studies at the Universidade de Santiago de Compostela. He has published numerous articles in scientific journals, participated in collective works and coordinated books on various aspects and leading figures related to cinema. Some of his most remarkable books are *El surgimiento del telefilm* (1999), *Alfred Hitchcock* (2000), *Un cinema*

*herido. Los turbios años cuarenta en el cine español* (2002), *Fernando Fernán-Gómez* (2010), *Del sainete al esperpento. Relecturas del cine español de los años 50* (2011) and *Sombras desoladas* (2012). / Fernando Gómez Beceiro (Ferrol, A Coruña, 1983) has a degree in Advertising and Public Relations from the University of Vigo, with Diploma of Advanced Studies in the research History and Aesthetics of Spanish Cinema. Now he is finishing, at the University of Santiago de Compostela, his doctoral thesis on the filmmaker Arturo Ruiz-Castillo, an aspect on which he has already presented some approaches in various conferences and publications.

**Contact:** joseluis.castro@usc.es; fgbeceiro@gmail.com.

### **Humor and metadiscourse: definition of a styling reflective-parodic model in the Spanish cinema. Héctor Paz Otero**

**Keywords:** Spanish cinema; Styling model; the forties; war; parody; avant-garde; humor; reflexivity.

**Abstract:** This article's intention is to establish the genesis as well to enumerate some of the most representative features of the "parodic-reflexive stylization" film model, one of the four theoretical paradigms established by Professor José Luis Castro de Paz for Spanish filmmaking between 1939 and 1950. The movement known as "The Other 27 generation" (La Otra generación del 27), composed primarily of Edgar Neville, José López Rubio, Enrique Jardiel Poncela, Antonio de Lara "Tono" and Migel Mihura will play an essential role in the model's development thanks to the growth of the "New humor", starting from a reactualization process of elements from other artistic manifestations such as the sainete, the astracán, the comical zarzuela, the parodies, the native Madrid theatre per hour, the varieties magazine and, specially, the silly and cutting edge humor typical of the 20s.

**Author:** Héctor Paz Otero (Cangas do Morrazo, 1976) has a degree in Audiovisual Communication (Universidad Complutense de Madrid, 1999) and a PhD from the Universidade de Vigo with a thesis entitled *Adaptaciones cinematográficas de la década de los cuarenta de las novelas de Wenceslao Fernández Flórez ambientadas en Galicia* (2008). He has published contributions in collective books: *Rafael Gil y CIFESA: el cine que marcó una época* (2006) *El destino se disculpa y la estilización fantástica, costumbrista y reflexiva de Sáenz de Heredia y Fernández Flórez* (2011), articles in specialized journals (*Lecturas: imágenes, Área Abierta*) and the following books. *El malvado Carabel: literatura y cine popular antes y después de la Guerra Civil* (2013) and *Muerte de un ciclista: una firme mirada opositora* (2015). He worked as a remunerated researcher in the project «Galicia en NO-DO: Comunicación, Cultura e Sociedade (1942-1981)». Currently he works in the project «Hacia una reconsideración de la cultura posbélica: análisis de los Modos de Representación en el cine español (1939-1962) a partir de la impronta de Wenceslao Fernández Flórez» (CSO2012-34648), Ministerio de Economía y Competitividad-Gobierno de España.

**Contact:** hectorpazotero@gmail.com

### **From pictorial to film, basis for a definition of a styling model for the Spanish cinema of the forties. Javier Moral Martín**

**Keywords:** Cifesa; Orduña; historia; pintura; escenografía; cine posbélico.

**Abstract:** The majority of Spanish historical films of the forties, especially those directed by Juan de Orduña for Cifesa, used abundant pictorial references in order to build a historical verisimilitude. The nineteenth-century history painting became his main source of inspiration and helped to define the discursive architecture of those films. This feature, provides insight about one of most unique discursive Models of the period, the "Formal-



ist-Pictorial Stylization Model”, characterized by the construction of a image independent, that resists being put in relation to the rest of images that constitute the narrative chain.

**Author:** Javier Moral has a PhD in Film Studies from the Universitat Politècnica de València. Member of the Asociación Española de Historiadores del Cine (AEHC), he has taught several courses and seminars about film and art. He is the author of *Guía para ver y analizar Lola Montes* (Nau Llibres, 2015) and *La representación doble* (Bellaterra, 2013), and the editor of *Cine y géneros pictóricos* (MUVIM, 2009). Besides, he has contributed to a dozen books and has published numerous articles in scientific and cultural journals.

**Contact:** javier.moral.martin@gmail.com

**When the face hides the mask: the role of supporting actors in *Los que no fuimos a la guerra*. Iñigo Larrauri Garate**

**Keywords:** Spanish Cinema; actor; popular theater; self-awareness; metanarrative.

**Abstract:** The evolution of art forms in Spain was altered by the stagnation that Franco's dictatorship led to. It was impossible to set a free dialogue with the most advanced proposals in the democratic countries, and a strict censorship quickly searched and destroyed any activity outside the rules. However, formally innovative results were sometimes achieved, often unfolding from cultural tradition. This paper analyses a specific film, *Los que no fuimos a la guerra* (Julio Diamante, 1961), in order to observe how the film benefits from the peculiar acting manner of the supporting actors, which directly connects with the Spanish popular theater.

**Author:** Iñigo Larrauri Garate (Bilbao, 1981) holds a degree in Art History and a PhD in Film Theory, Analysis and Documentation from the Euskal Herriko Unibertsitatea (UPV-EHU), where he has worked on his thesis project *Julio Diamante. Militancia ética y estética de un cineasta*. Currently, he is part of the research group Mutaciones del Audiovisual Contemporáneo (MAC, UPV-EHU). He recently contributed to the catalog of the 55th edition of Zinebi (International Festival of Documentary and Short Film of Bilbao) with a text on filmmaker Manuel Gutiérrez Aragón. He also spoke at the XIV Congress of the Asociación Española de Historiadores del Cine (AEHC).

**Contact:** larrauri\_@hotmail.com

**The route of invisible voices. Narrative voice in Spanish fiction cinema of early Francoism. Fernando Redondo Neira**

**Keywords:** Spanish Cinema; actor; popular theater; self-awareness; metanarrative.

**Abstract:** The use of a voice-over narrator in the outstanding early Franco fiction comes directly from those other voices from comments, tutelary and persuasive, used already on the news and documentaries from the Civil War (from which there are traces in these films). At the same time, the recognized self-conscious nature of some of these films is due to the use of this voice, to a great extent, of the sometimes melancholy and sometimes parodic but always thoughtful burden that characterizes them. From the tone of fable of *El hombre que se quiso matar* (Rafael Gil, 1942) to the manipulative will of *Bienvenido Mr. Marshall* (Luis García Berlanga, 1953), narrator intervention involves, in different degrees depending on the case, the will to establish a good communication with the interior of the diegesis, in the direction of the characters, or to the outside, seeking the involvement of the subject-spectator.

**Author:** Fernando Redondo Neira (Camporapado, A Coruña, 1971) has a degree in Information Sciences from the Euskal Herriko Unibertsitatea and a PhD from the Universidade de Santiago de Compostela, where he is currently a lecturer in the Faculty of Communication Sciences. He belongs to Asociación Española de Historiadores del Cine (AEHC) and the Asociación Galega da Investigadores en Comunicación (AGACOM). He is the author of *Carlos Velo. Itinerarios do documental nos anos trinta* (2004) and coordinator of the volume *Ciudadanía y Documental*.

**Contact:** fernando.redondo@usc.es

**La ciudad perdida [The Lost City]. Reconciliation spaces and dissidence in the Spanish Literature and Cinema of the 1950's. Sonia García López**

**Keywords:** Francoism; Censorship; Spanish Civil War; Spanish Cinema; Spanish Literature; Popular Culture; Public Discourses; Mercedes Fórmica; Margarita Alexandre; Rafael Torrecilla.

**Abstract:** This paper focuses on the comparative analysis of the film *La ciudad perdida* (The Lost City, Margarita Alexandre and

Rafael Torrecilla, 1955) and the novel of the same title (Mercedes Fórmica, 1951), in which the film is inspired. The study starts with a historical approach aiming at contextualising the proposed case study in the context of the Spanish film production which —from the late 1940's onwards (with the early exception of *Rojo y negro* –Red and Black, Carlos Arévalo, 1942)—, starts to elaborate narratives of the Spanish Civil War that seem to elude the myth of the crusade and consider instead the confrontation in terms of fratricidal conflict. Then, formal and thematic analysis of both the film and the novel are carried out, specially considering the representation of the city of Madrid as an hypothetical space for the inscription of the vanquished of the Spanish Civil War, according with new cultural discourses pointing out to a redefinition of the enemy which blurs its alien nature, over which insisted the early post-war public discourses and cultural production. Last, and considering the uneven fate, and conflicts with censorship suffered by the novel and the film, this paper reflects on the achievements and limitations linked to the early discursive spaces of reconciliation emerging in the Spanish literature and cinema of the 1950's.

**Author:** Sonia García López (València, 1977) is a lecturer in Film and Media Studies at Universidad Carlos III de Madrid. The author of *Spain is US. La guerra civil española en el cine del Popular Front (1936-1939)* and *Ernst Lubitsch. Ser o no ser*, she co-edited the collection of essays *Piedra, papel y tijera: el collage en el cine documental* and published several articles on documentary, film and history in journals of national and international scope. Currently she is working on an interview book about Margarita Alexandre with the title *Silencio, palabra y danzón. El cuerpo y la voz de Margarita Alexandre* (due 2015).

**Contact:** sogarcia@hum.uc3m.es

**Missing links of popular imaginary. Approaches to Ladislao Vajda's films. Susana Díaz, Manuel de la Fuente**

**Keywords:** Spanish cinema; *Mi tío Jacinto*; *Carne de horca*; Spanish realism; picaresque; movies with a child; National Fiesta; Adventure movies.

**Abstract:** In 1950s Spanish cinema the work of Ladislao Vajda shows a real stylization

proposal by confronting its filmic specificity with its political context. The radical nature of Vajda's movies –from which we have selected examples as paradigmatic as *Carne de horca* and *Mi tío Jacinto*– exceeds their mere adscription to labels such as *adventure films* or *movies with a child*. The analysis of Vajda's rigorous *mise en scène* exposes segments usually opaque in mainstream cinema. Topics such as Andalusian banditry or national bullfighting as well as references to popular culture, i.e. the ballads sung by wandering blind men or the *Spanish realism* of picaresque novel, permit Vajda to sketch the portrait of Spanish society under Francoism, where lawlessness, deceit and corruption are systemic rather than individual deviations.

**Authors:** Susana Díaz holds a MA in Lingue e Letterature Straniere from the Università degli Studi di Firenze (Italy) and a European PhD in Literary Theory from the UNED. She has taught at the Université de Genève and currently teaches in the Department of Media Studies at the Universidad Carlos III, Madrid. Her more recent publications are *Modos de mostrar. Encuentros con Lola Salvador* (2012) and *Vigilados. Wikileaks o las nuevas fronteras de la información* (2013). / Manuel de la Fuente is lecturer in Media Studies at the Universitat de València. His main research line focuses on the discourse analysis of popular culture, especially, cinema and popular music. He has authored the books *Frank Zappa en el infierno. El rock como movilización para la disidencia política* (2006) and *Madrid. Visiones cinematográficas de los años 1950 a los años 2000* (2014). **Contact:** susana.diaz@uc3m.es; manuel.de-la-fuente@uv.es.

## DIALOGUE

**Realism(s), tragedy and irony. José Antonio Nieves Conde: "I wanted to make films, but I found myself in a world where the director was constantly being pushed around". José Luis Castro de Paz, Julio Pérez Perucha.**

**Keywords:** Spanish cinema; post-war; *Furrows*; Falangism; censorship.

**Abstract:** The last in-depth interview with Segoivano filmmaker José Antonio Nieves

Conde (1911-2006), in September 2003. Nieves Conde was the director of *Furrows* (Surcos, 1951) and *The Tenant* (El inquilino, 1957), two of the most important titles of Spanish film history. In this interview, he reflects on his extremely troubled professional career, his (only partly) thwarted aspirations to create a "social cinema", his early connection with the Falange before the Civil War and his disenchanted view of the Spain that followed. This is an important testimony that explains some of the inspirations, influences and personal and professional relationships of a truly key figure of Spanish cinema.

**Authors:** José Luis Castro de Paz (A Coruña, 1964) is a film historian and Audiovisual Communications Professor at Universidade de Santiago de Compostela. He has published numerous articles in scientific journals, participated in anthologies and coordinated volumes on different aspects and figures associated with cinema. His numerous books include *El surgimiento del telefilm* (1999), *Alfred Hitchcock* (2000), *Un cinema herido. Los turbios años cuarenta en el cine español* (2002), *Fernando Fernán-Gómez* (2010), *Del sainete al esperpento. Relecturas del cine español de los años 50* (2011) and *Sombras desoladas* (2012). / Julio Pérez Perucha is a film historian, and currently the President of the Asociación Española de Historiadores del Cine (AEHC). He is a member of the editorial committee for the film journal *Contracampo* (1979-1987), and the author of innumerable books, articles and chapters in anthologies dedicated to Spanish film history. His work includes titles such as *En torno a Berlanga* (Valencia, Fundació Municipal de Cine, 1980-81), *El cinema de Edgar Neville* (Semana Internacional de Cine de Valladolid, 1982), *Mestizajes (Realizadores extranjeros en el cine español 1931-1973)* (Valencia, Mostra de Valencia, 1990) and as editor of the critical anthology of Spanish cinema, *Antología Crítica del cine español 1906-1995* (Madrid, Filmoteca Española/Cátedra, 1997).

**Contact:** joseluis.castro@usc.es.

## (DIS)AGREEMENTS

**Undoing topics. A five-voice discussion about post-war Spanish cinema. Introduction. The retrospective**

**reappraisal of the Spanish cinema. Santos Zunzunegui.**

**Discussion. Juan Miguel Company, Alejandro Montiel, Jean Claude Seguin, Jenaro Talens, Santos Zunzunegui. Conclusion. Re-viewing, re-thinking. Santos Zunzunegui.**

**Keywords:** Spanish cinema; Spanish Civil War, post-war period; notion of *auteur*; cultural tradition; film genres.

**Abstract:** Five of the most important experts in Spanish Cinema History talk about the distinctive features that make the films produced in the period 1939-1962 neither good nor bad cinema, but unique, specific and historically dated. Issues such as the breakdown or continuity of the popular traditions that were successfully developed during the republican period, the role of censorship, the debatable aesthetic isolation of Spanish cinema in relation with the most important international movements, or the possible application to the Spanish case of the notion of *auteur* developed by the French magazine *Cahiers du cinema* are just some of the topics discussed here. Other equally weighty issues such as the presence or absence of the Civil War as a latent "trauma" in the films of the post-war or the possible existence of stylistic models characteristic of and unique to Spanish cinema, such as the grotesque esperpento style developed since the 1950s, are also explored in the reflections that follow.

**Authors:** Jenaro Talens is a Professor Emeritus of Comparative Literature at Université de Genève and a professor of Audiovisual Communications at Universitat de València. He has taught in numerous European and U.S. universities. A writer, essayist and translator, he has published around fifty books and his poetry has been translated into more than twenty languages. He is the director of the *Signo e imagen* collection and quadrilingual journal *EU-topías*. / Alejandro Montiel Mues is a lecturer at Universitat Politècnica de València, where he teaches Film History. Among other works, he has published *Teorías del cine* (1992; 1999) and *El desfile y la quietud. Análisis fílmico versus Historia del Cine* (2002). His works are also included in such anthologies as *La herida de las sombras. El cine español de los años cuarenta* (Proceedings of VIII Congress of SAFH, 2001), *Gonzalo Torrente Ballester y el cine español*

(Castro de Paz, Pérez Perucha, eds. 2001), *Imagen, memoria y fascinación. Notas sobre el documental español* (Catalá, Cerdá, Torreiro, eds., 2001). / Santos Zunzunegui Díez is the Audiovisual Communications and Advertising Chair at Euskal Herriko Unibertsitatea, and a semiologist, analyst and film historian. He has worked as a lecturer in different universities in Europe, the U.S., and South America. His published works include: *Mirar la imagen* (2004); *El cine en el País Vasco* (1985); *Pensar la imagen* (1989); *Robert Bresson* (2001); *Historias de España. De qué hablamos cuando hablamos de cine español* (2002); *Metamorfosis de la mirada. Museo y semiótica* (2003 (Italian version *Metamorfosi dello sguardo*, 2011); *Orson Welles* (2005); *Las cosas de la vida. Lecciones de semiótica estructural* (2005); and *La mirada plural* (2008), which won the Francisco Ayala International Essay Prize, and was translated in 2015 into Italian as *Lo sguardo plurale*. In 2013, he published *Lo viejo y lo nuevo* (Cátedra). / Juan Miguel Company Ramón is a philologist and Audiovisual Communications professor at Universitat de València, as well as a critic and a film historian. Among other works, he is the author of *La realidad como sospecha* (Eutopías-Literatura, 1986), *El trazo de la letra en la imagen* (Cátedra, 1987), *El aprendizaje del tiempo* (Eutopías maior, 1995) and *Ingmar Bergman* (Ediciones Cátedra, 2007, 4th edition). His most recent book, *Hollywood. El espejo pintado* (1910-2011) was published in 2014 by the publishing house of Universitat de València. / Jean-Claude Seguin is a lecturer at the Université Lumière-Lyon II. He is the honorary chairman of GRIMH (Groupe de réflexion sur l'image dans le monde hispanique). An early film historian (La Production cinématographique des frères Lumière, BiFi, 1996) and a specialist in early Spanish cinema, he is also the author of *Historia del cine español* (Acento, 1995) and of a significant number of articles and monographs on different aspects and figures in Spanish filmmaking (*Pedro Almodóvar o la deriva de los cuerpos*, Filmoteca Regional de Murcia, 2009).

**Contact:** Jenaro.Talens@uv.es; jmontiel@har.upv.es; santos.zunzunegui@ehu.es; Juan.M.Company@uv.es; jean-claude.seguin@univ-lyon2.fr.

## VANISHING POINTS

### The Heroic in Mainstream Cinema: Gender and Bravery in *The Hunger Games*. María Isabel Menéndez Menéndez, Marta Fernández Morales

**Keywords:** hero(ine); popular culture; *The Hunger Games*; gender; Amazons.

**Abstract:** Popular culture in the twenty-first century is witnessing a process of re-signification of the role of the hero, which we analyse here in the film *The Hunger Games* (Gary Ross, 2012), which depicts a dystopian world enslaved by totalitarian power and controlled by the mass media. Through a deductive approach based on a gender-focused epistemology, this paper explores the film version of the first novel of Suzanne Collins's trilogy of the same name. Our thesis is that Katniss Everdeen, a contemporary version of Theseus who also shares elements with the myths of the Amazons and Atalanta, subverts the patriarchal order when she is revealed to be an autonomous and courageous subject. Contrary to what has often been the case in audiovisual narratives, this powerful female role does not fall prey to either traditional standards of femininity or an imitation of masculinity, but is constructed independently and with positive results.

**Authors:** María Isabel Menéndez-Menéndez (b. Oviedo, Spain, 1967) holds a PhD in Philosophy and an MA in Journalism, and is lecturer of Audiovisual Communication at Universidad de Burgos (UBU). Her research focuses on the analysis of communication from a gender perspective, particularly the discourse of fiction and biopolitics in popular culture, a topic about which she has published various articles and monographs. / Marta Fernández-Morales (b. Gijón, Spain, 1974), PhD, is lecturer at Universitat de les Illes Balears (UIB). Her research deals with gender in contemporary cultural manifestations, especially theatre, film, and television. She has written several books and articles featured in international journals, and she leads the research unit "Representación, Ideología y Recepción en la Cultural Audiovisual" at the UIB.

**Contact:** mimenendez@ubu.es; marta.fernandez@uib.es.

### Rescuing the Last Grains of Truth: On Metacinematic Elements in *The Idiots*. Enric Antoni Burgos Ramírez

**Keywords:** *The Idiots*; metacinematic; Dogme 95; Lars von Trier; reality; discourse; realism.

**Abstract:** Metacinematic techniques employed in films that abandon the hegemonic model prompt viewers to reflect on their role in the film and raise questions about the cinematic medium, reality and the relationship established between the two. This article offers an analysis of the self-reflexive and metacinematic devices used in *The Idiots* (Dogme #2. Idioterne, Lars von Trier, 1998) that help shed light on the position of the film with respect to these questions. To this end, I will focus first on an analysis of the story, examining the shifts that take place between three permeable ontological levels presented in the film. I will then explore the discourse of the film based on the dialogue it establishes with the principles of the Vow of Chastity of the Dogme 95 movement, to which *The Idiots* belongs. I will consider how the film's metacinematic reflection on story and discourse, albeit in different ways, ultimately point in the same direction. Finally, to conclude the article, in addition to identifying evidence of the convergence of the purposes of form and content in the film, I will attempt, on the basis of the argument developed, to answer the questions posed by the film about the role of the audience and the relationship established between cinema and reality.

**Author:** Enric A. Burgos Ramírez (Valencia, 1976) holds bachelor's degrees in Philosophy and in Audiovisual Communication from the Universitat de València. He is a teaching assistant in the Department of Audiovisual Communication, Documentation and History of Art at the Universitat Politècnica de València and in the Department of Philosophy and Sociology at the Universitat Jaume I, and he is currently completing his doctoral thesis on the Dogme 95 movement and the philosophy of Stanley Cavell.

**Contact:** enburra@har.upv.es.

### Ephemeral Architectures, Colossal Sets. *The Intolerance of the Taviani Brothers and Identity Recovered*. Pedro Molina-Siles, Óscar Brox Santiago, Juan Carlos Piquer-Cases

**Keywords:** architecture; ephemeral; identity recovered; monumental set; cultural roots; Griffith; reinterpretation; memory.

**Abstract:** This article explores the relationship between cinema and architecture based on the notion of the ephemeral. To do this, the object of analysis is the Babylonian set that appears in the silent film *Intolerance* (David Wark Griffith, 1916) and its subsequent depiction in the 1987 film *Good Morning, Babylon* (Paolo Taviani, Vittorio Taviani). While Griffith's work exalts a colossal view of the set, whose ephemeral nature appears to be determined by its monumental nature, the Taviani brothers' film redefines and reinterprets this view to offer an alternative reading. Through an architectural and cinematic comparative study of the two films, we put forward the possibility that the colossal and ephemeral significance of the first set is transformed into an expression of cultural roots and a creative identity in the second.

**Authors:** Pedro Pedro Molina-Siles is a quantity surveyor and Doctor of Architecture with an M.A. in Artistic Production from Escuela Técnica Superior de Arquitectura de Valencia and a lecturer in the Department of Graphic Expression in Architecture at Universitat Politècnica de València. His doctoral thesis *La frontera diluida. Arquitecturas efímeras en el cine. De Europa a Hollywood* deals with the importance of the ephemeral nature of architectural film sets in the early 1940s in Europe and Hollywood. He currently combines his professional work as an architect with teaching and research into the relationship between cinema and architecture. / Óscar Brox Santiago (Valencia, 1983) is a film critic and writer. Editor of the journal *Détour* and chief editor of the publication *Miradas de cine*, he has taught classes and seminars in the Barcelona school La casa del cine, written liner notes for the DVD editions of *Avalon* y la Filmoteca Fnac, and contributed to the paper for the Gijón Film Festival and to anthologies such as *El cine de animación japonés* (IVAC/Donostia Kultura). Between 2007 and 2010, he was one of the members of the management team of the Universitat de València cinema club. / Juan Carlos Piquer-Cases has a Doctorate of Architecture from Escuela Técnica Superior de Arquitectura de Valencia and is a lecturer in the Department of Graphic Expression in Architecture at Univeritat Politècnica de València. His doctoral thesis *Los modelos digitales en la*

*arquitectura: desarrollo del proyecto e investigación patrimonial. Palacio Real de Valencia: análisis y reconstrucción virtual sobre la planta de Vicente Gascó de 1761* received a prize for Architecture in 2007 from the Social Council of UPV. He is also a researcher with IRP (Instituto Universitario de Restauración del Patrimonio) at the same university, working on the project *Reconstrucción Virtual del Patrimonio Desaparecido*. He has authored numerous articles and books on architecture, disappeared heritage and new technologies, including *Forum Unesco. Proyectos y actividades* (Forum UNESCO/ Universidad y Patrimonio) and *Miguel Colomina. Arquitecto* (Ícaro/CTAV).

**Contact:** pmolina@ega.upv.es; osbrox@gmail.com; jpiquerc @ega.upv.es.

#### **Collaborative Practices in the Contemporary Documentary: A Proposed Analysis and Revision of the Participatory Mode in Documentary Theory. Sergio Villanueva Baselga**

**Keywords:** participation; documentary; citizen media; Film Studies; film analysis.

**Abstract:** Community production of audiovisual materials has expanded notably since the *Fogo Process* in Canada opened the production process in a participatory way. The rise of local and citizen media since the 70s facilitated the proliferation of participatory videos as tools of dissemination and struggle against social problems. This study explores the conceptualization of these videos as filmic objects, aiming to introduce them into contemporary Documentary Theory, and to classify them according to the taxonomy defined by theorist Bill Nichols.

**Author:** Sergio Villanueva Baselga (Teruel, 1986) holds a B.A. in Audiovisual Communication from the Universitat de Barcelona. He is currently working on his Ph.D Thesis, which focusses on citizen participation in the media. His research is funded by an APIF (Ajuts de Personal Investigador en Formació), a scholarship awarded by Universitat de Barcelona. In addition to his research, he is also teaching in the undergraduate degree program in Audiovisual Communication. He has recently been designated a young representative for Spain for the European Communication Research and Education Association (ECREA).

**Contact:** sergio.villanueva@ub.edu

#### **Ozu by Hou Hsiao-hsien: The Poetics of Bodies and Emptiness. Elpidio del Campo, Juan Gorostidi**

**Keywords:** Hou Hsiao-hsien; Yasujiro Ozu; film codes; narration; Taiwanese cinema; Japanese cinema.

**Abstract:** Hou Hsiao-hsien's cinematic language is one of the most consistent and rigorous of modern cinema. Hou's meticulous stylistic approach is the result of his basic concern with finding the exact perspective to observe reality and convey it precisely to the audience. Nevertheless, his highly stylised films move away completely from the documentary form to accentuate the rhetoric of his own filmic code. Films like *Millennium Mambo* (2001) or *Café Lumière* (2003) are passionate tales that seduce the spectator, stories told by a contemporary narrator who seeks to show us the present through his or her distinctive point of view. All these elements are examined through the influence of the Japanese filmmaker Yasujiro Ozu, the creation of *Café Lumière* and other elements that link the work of the two directors.

**Authors:** Elpidio del Campo Cañizares (b. Madrid, 1967) holds a Bachelor in Fine Arts (Universitat Politècnica de València, 1990) and a PHD in Audiovisual Communication (Universidad Miguel Hernández de Elche, 2010). His PHD dissertation was an analysis of Alexander Mackendrick's films and film theory titled *Alexander Mackendrick, from Film Praxis to Film Theory*. He is currently an lecturer at the UMH in the Department of Audiovisual Communications and Advertising. One of his main research interests is the analysis of audiovisual narrative language. / Juan Gorostidi (b. Santander, 1964) holds a Bachelor of Arts in Spanish and English Languages (Universidad de Oviedo, 1988) and a PHD in Spanish (Universidad de Navarra, 2004). He has taught History of Cinema at the Universidad de Navarra and the Universidad SEK-Segovia. He also teaches Film and Literature at the Centro de Estudios Ciudad de la Luz/UMH. He has edited a Spanish edition of Andrei Tarkovsky's book *Sculpting in Time* (1991) and a monograph on Charles Laughton's *The Night of the Hunter* (2006). He is a regular contributor to the international film journal *La Furia Humana* and he is

currently working on a book on Australian filmmaker Peter Weir.

**Contact:** edelcampo@umh.es; jgorosti@gmail.com.

**Women and labor idyll in Manuel Romero's films and their reception under early Francoism. Emeterio Diez Puertas**

**Keywords:** Idyllic Chronotopes; Genre Identity; Argentine Cinema; Franco's regime.

**Abstract:** The article studies, from the theory of chronotope, the reception in Spain of a series of films by the director Manuel Romero, who filmed between 1938 and 1947. The article seeks to demonstrate that the Argentine director considers it impossible for women the conquest to the labour idyll, or Romero believe that their achievement is secondary to the love idyll. Despite this pre-Peronist content, the Franco regime is not always identified with those movies. Some films are considered too radical.

**Author:** Emeterio Diez Puertas (Saldaña, 1962) holds a PhD in Contemporary History for the Universidad Complutense and Graduate in Dramaturgia for the Real Escuela Superior de Arte Dramático. He has published more than thirty articles about cinema, radio, television, literature and theater in monographs and magazines like *Historia 16*, *Cuadernos Hispanoamericanos*, *Siga*, *ZER* o *Anales de Literatura*. At the moment, he is the manager of the Communication and Publications of the RESAD and he also imparts the subjects of Narrative in Radio, Television and Film of the Universidad Camilo José Cela.

**Contact:** ediez@ucjc.edu

# ABSTRACTS [español]

## CUADERNO

### **Heridas, pervivencias, transformaciones. Modelos de estilización en el cine posbélico español (1939-1962)**

**Amor, pérdida, melancolía, delirio: un modelo de estilización obsesivo-delirante en el cine español de los años cuarenta. José Luis Castro de Paz, Fernando Gómez Beceiro**

**Palabras clave:** cine español; modelo de estilización; años cuarenta; posguerra; melodrama; obsesión; delirio; vanguardia.

**Abstract:** Uno de los cuatro Modelos que hemos podido detectar en el cine español del periodo 1939-1950, el Modelo de estilización obsesivo-delirante, estaría conformado por aquellas películas formalmente entroncadas con las vanguardias históricas y con el trabajo de los cineastas más experimentales en el Hollywood de la época (Orson Welles, Alfred Hitchcock) organizadas en torno a una mirada masculina obsesionada y herida por la pérdida del objeto amoroso, incapaz de enfrentarse al duelo, melancólica hasta el delirio; y que incluyen, en algún momento de su desarrollo, la formalización radical de dicho delirio. La extrema singularidad del modelo se debe a la conjugación de ciertos temas melodramáticos con las soluciones concretas mediante las cuales determinados cineastas encararon, tras la contienda bélica, los problemas formales resultantes de aquellos, constituyendo la más coyuntural, llamativa y excelsa estilización fílmica de la herida bélica española.

**Autor:** José Luis Castro de Paz (A Coruña, 1964) es historiador del cine y Catedrático de Comunicación Audiovisual de la Universidad de Santiago de Compostela. Ha publicado numerosos artículos en revistas científicas, participado en obras colectivas y coordinado volúmenes sobre diversos aspectos y figuras

vinculadas al arte cinematográfico. Entre sus numerosos libros destacan, *El surgimiento del telefilm* (1999), *Alfred Hitchcock* (2000), *Un cinema herido. Los turbios años cuarenta en el cine español* (2002), *Fernando Fernández Gómez* (2010), *Del sainete al esperpento. Lecturas del cine español de los años 50* (2011) o *Sombras desoladas* (2012). / Fernando Gómez Beceiro (Ferrol, A Coruña, 1983) es licenciado en Publicidad y Relaciones Públicas por la Universidad de Vigo, con Diploma de Estudios Avanzados en la línea de investigación Historia y Estética del Cine Español. Actualmente ultima en la Universidad de Santiago de Compostela su tesis doctoral sobre el cineasta Arturo Ruiz-Castillo, aspecto sobre el que ya ha presentado algunas aproximaciones en diversos congresos y publicaciones. **Contacto:** joseluis.castro@usc.es; fgbeceiro@gmail.com.

### **Humor y metadiscursos: definición de un modelo de estilización paródico-reflexivo en el cine español. Héctor Paz Otero**

**Palabras clave:** cine español; Modelo de estilización; años cuarenta; posguerra; parodia; vanguardia; humor; reflexividad.

**Abstract:** Como el resto de los Modelos de estilización del cine español que encontraron pleno desarrollo en la década de los años cuarenta, el Modelo de estilización paródico-reflexivo surge de la mescolanza de elementos estéticos que, en este caso, provienen del sainete, del astracán, de las parodias y del humor vanguardista —«Humor nuevo»— plasmado sobre las tablas, la literatura y la prensa gráfica por los autores de la conocida como «La Otra generación del 27». La irreverencia del modelo se basa en sus planteamientos irónicos, burlescos y anarquizantes, en la insistencia por mostrar el anverso y el reverso de las cosas con el fin de construir un discurso en el que la reflexividad sitúa al propio medio cine-

matográfico en el centro de la diana sobre la que se lanzan los dardos de la parodia.

**Autor:** Héctor Paz Otero (Cangas do Morrazo, 1976) es licenciado en Comunicación Audiovisual (Universidad Complutense de Madrid, 1999) y doctor por la Universidad de Vigo con una tesis titulada *Adaptaciones cinematográficas de la década de los cuarenta de las novelas de Wenceslao Fernández Flórez ambientadas en Galicia* (2008). Ha publicado capítulos en libros colectivos: *Rafael Gil y CIFESA: el cine que marcó una época* (2006) *El destino se disculpa y la estilización fantástica, costumbrista y reflexiva de Sáenz de Heredia y Fernández Flórez* (2011), artículos en revistas especializadas (*Lecturas: imágenes, Área Abierta*) y los libros *El malvado Carabel: literatura y cine popular antes y después de la Guerra Civil* (2013) y *Muerte de un ciclista: una firme mirada opositora* (2015). Trabajó como investigador contratado en el proyecto de Investigación «Galicia en NO-DO: Comunicación, Cultura e Sociedade (1942-1981)». En la actualidad colabora en el proyecto de I+D+I «Hacia una reconsideración de la cultura posbélica: análisis de los Modos de Representación en el cine español (1939-1962) a partir de la impronta de Wenceslao Fernández Flórez» (CSO2012-34648), Ministerio de Economía y Competitividad-Gobierno de España.

**Contacto:** hectorpazotero@gmail.com

### **De lo pictórico a lo fílmico, bases para la definición de un posible modelo de estilización en el cine español de los años cuarenta. Javier Moral Martín**

**Palabras clave:** Cifesa; Orduña; historia; pintura; escenografía; cine posbélico.

**Abstract:** La mayoría de películas españolas de corte histórico de los años cuarenta, de manera privilegiada aquellas dirigidas por Juan de Orduña para Cifesa, se sirvieron



con prolijidad de la apoyatura pictórica en la construcción de un verosímil histórico. Una profusión de citas plásticas que encontró en la pintura de historia decimonónica su principal fuente de inspiración y que terminó por definir la arquitectura discursiva de las películas de acogida. Esta llamativa particularidad permite abordar uno de los modelos de estilización más singulares del periodo, aquel Modelo de estilización formalista-pictórico que se caracteriza por la construcción de una imagen autónoma y ensimismada, auténtica pieza de orfebrería escénica, que se resiste a su puesta en relación con el resto de imágenes que constituyen la cadena narrativa.

**Autor:** Javier Moral es doctor en Comunicación Audiovisual por la Universidad Politécnica de Valencia. Miembro de la Asociación Española de Historiadores del Cine (AEHC), ha impartido diversos cursos y seminarios sobre cine y arte. Autor de la *Guía para ver y analizar Lola Montes* (Nau Llibres, 2015) y *La representación doble* (Bellaterra, 2013), es editor de *Cine y géneros pictóricos* (MUVIM, 2009), ha participado en una docena de libros colectivos y publicado numerosos artículos en revistas científicas y de difusión cultural.

**Contacto:** javier.moral.martin@gmail.com.

### **Cuando el rostro oculta la máscara: función de los actores de reparto en *Los que no fuimos a la guerra*. Iñigo Larrauri Garate**

**Palabras clave:** cine español; actor; teatro popular; autoconsciencia; metanarratividad. **Abstract:** La evolución de las formas artísticas en España ha sido alterada por el estancamiento que supuso la dictadura franquista. El libre diálogo con las propuestas más avanzadas de los países democráticos resultaba imposible, y la férrea censura se encargaba de perseguir y eliminar cualquier movimiento fuera de las normas establecidas. Sin embargo, en ocasiones se alcanzaron resultados formalmente novedosos, avanzando en no pocas ocasiones desde la propia tradición. En este artículo abordaremos el análisis de una película concreta, *Los que no fuimos a la guerra* (Julio Diamante, 1961), para observar cómo en ella se utiliza a favor del film un peculiar modo de interpretación de los actores secundarios que conecta directamente con el teatro popular español.

**Autor:** Iñigo Larrauri Garate (Bilbao, 1981) es licenciado en Historia del Arte y Doctor en Teoría, Análisis y Documentación Cinematográfica por la Euskal Herriko Unibertsitatea (UPV-EHU), donde ha realizado su tesis doctoral *Julio Diamante. Militancia ética y estética de un cineasta*. Actualmente forma parte del Grupo de investigación Mutaciones del Audiovisual Contemporáneo (MAC, UPV-EHU). Recientemente ha colaborado en el catálogo de la 55 edición del festival Zinebi (Festival Internacional de Cine Documental y Cortometraje de Bilbao), con un texto sobre Manuel Gutiérrez Aragón. Asimismo, ha participado como ponente en el XIV Congreso de la Asociación Española de Historiadores del Cine (AEHC).

**Contacto:** larrauri\_@hotmail.com

### **La ruta de las voces invisibles. Voz narradora en el cine de ficción español del primer franquismo.**

**Fernando Redondo Neira**

**Palabras clave:** voz, narrador; espectador; ficción; memoria; reflexión.

**Abstract:** El uso de una voz over narradora en destacadas ficciones del primer franquismo procede en línea directa de aquellas otras voces de comentario, tutelares y persuasivas, que ya figuraban en los noticiarios y documentales de la Guerra Civil, de la cual no deja de ser una huella más de su presencia en estas películas. A su vez, la reconocida naturaleza autoconsciente de algunos de estos filmes se debe al uso de esta voz, responsable, en buena medida, de la carga, a veces melancólica y a veces paródica, pero siempre reflexiva, que los caracteriza. Desde el tono de fábula de *El hombre que se quiso matar* (Rafael Gil, 1942) hasta la voluntad manipuladora de *Bienvenido Mr. Marshall* (Luis García Berlanga, 1953), la intervención del narrador implica, en diferentes grados según los casos, la voluntad de establecer una comunicación bien con el interior de la diégesis, en dirección a los personajes, o bien con el exterior, buscando la implicación del sujeto-espectador.

**Autor:** Fernando Redondo Neira (Camporredondo, A Coruña, 1971) es licenciado en Ciencias de la Información por la Euskal Herriko Unibertsitatea y doctor por la Universidad de Santiago de Compostela, donde actualmente es profesor en la Facultad de Ciencias de la Comunicación. Pertenece a la Asociación Es-

pañola de Historiadores del Cine y a la Asociación Galega de Investigadores da Comunicación. Es autor del libro *Carlos Velo. Itinerarios de documental nos anos trinta* (2004) y coordinador del volumen *Ciudadanía y Documental*. **Contacto:** fernando.redondo@usc.es

### **La ciudad perdida. Espacios de reconciliación y disidencia en la literatura y el cine españoles de la década de 1950. Sonia García López**

**Palabras clave:** franquismo; censura; Guerra Civil Española; cine español; literatura española; cultura popular; discursos públicos; Mercedes Fómica; Margarita Alexandre; Rafael Torrecilla.

**Abstract:** Este artículo aborda el análisis comparado de la película *La ciudad perdida* (Margarita Alexandre y Rafael Torrecilla, 1955) y la novela del mismo título (Mercedes Fómica, 1951) en la que se inspira el filme. El estudio parte de una aproximación histórica cuyo objetivo es contextualizar el estudio de caso propuesto en el marco de la producción cinematográfica española que, desde finales de la década de 1940 (con la temprana excepción de *Rojo y negro* [Carlos Arévalo] en 1942), comienza a elaborar narrativas de la Guerra Civil que parecen eludir el mito de la cruzada para plantear la confrontación en términos de conflicto fratricida. A continuación, se procede al análisis temático y estético de la novela y la película, atendiendo especialmente a la representación de la ciudad de Madrid como hipotético lugar de inscripción de la figura del vencido de la Guerra Civil Española, en el marco de los nuevos discursos culturales que apuntan a una redefinición del *enemigo* que difumina o borra el carácter extranjerizante del mismo, sobre el que incidían los discursos públicos y la producción cultural de la primera posguerra. Por último, y atendiendo a los desiguales destinos y conflictos con la censura sufridos por la novela y la película, se ponen de manifiesto los logros y las limitaciones vinculados a los incipientes espacios discursivos de reconciliación surgidos en la literatura y en el cine españoles durante la década de 1950.

**Autora:** Sonia García López (València, 1977) es profesora de Comunicación Audiovisual en la Universidad Carlos III de Madrid. Autora de *Spain is US. La guerra civil española*

en el cine del Popular Front (1936-1939) y de Ernst Lubitsch. *Ser o no ser*, ha coeditado el libro *Piedra, papel y tijera: el collage en el cine documental* y ha publicado diversos artículos sobre documental, cine e historia en diversas revistas de ámbito nacional e internacional. Actualmente prepara un libro de entrevista sobre Margarita Alexandre titulado *Silencio, palabra y danzón. El cuerpo y la voz de Margarita Alexandre* (publicación prevista en 2015).

Contacto: sogarcia@hum.uc3m.es

### Eslabones perdidos del imaginario popular. Aproximaciones al cine de Ladislao Vajda. Susana Díaz, Manuel de la Fuente

**Palabras clave:** Ladislao Vajda; cine español; Mi tío Jacinto; Carne de horca; realismo español; picaresca; películas con niño; fiesta nacional; cine de aventuras.

**Abstract:** El cine de Ladislao Vajda materializa una propuesta de estilización en el cine español que dialoga, diseccionándolo desde su propia especificidad fílmica, con el contexto político que lo vio nacer. La radicalidad de su obra, de la que hemos seleccionado como ejemplos paradigmáticos *Carne de horca* y *Mi tío Jacinto*, excede su mera adscripción a etiquetas como *cine de aventuras* o *películas con niño*. El análisis de su riguroso trabajo de puesta en escena hace emerger segmentos opacos dentro de un cine de masas, donde motivos tópicos como el bandolerismo andaluz o la fiesta nacional en conjunción con referencias a la cultura popular como el romance de ciego o el *realismo español* de la novela picaresca, permiten bosquejar el retrato de la España franquista, donde la transgresión de la ley, el engaño y la corrupción dejan de entenderse como desviaciones individualizadas para mostrar las bases sistémicas que les sirven de fundamento.

**Autores:** Susana Díaz es Laureata en Lingue e Letterature Straniere por la Università degli Studi di Firenze (Italia) y Doctora Europea en Teoría de la Literatura por la UNED. Ha sido profesora en la Faculté des Lettres de la Université de Genève y en la actualidad lo es en el Departamento de Periodismo y Comunicación Audiovisual de la Universidad Carlos III de Madrid. Entre sus últimas publicaciones cabe citar *Modos de mostrar*.

*Encuentros con Lola Salvador* (2012) y *Vigilados. Wikileaks o las nuevas fronteras de la información* (2013). / Manuel de la Fuente es profesor contratado doctor en Comunicación Audiovisual en la Universitat de València (UV). Su principal línea de investigación se centra en el análisis discursivo de las distintas manifestaciones de la cultura popular. Ha publicado los libros *Frank Zappa en el infierno. El rock como movilización para la disidencia política* (2006) y *Madrid. Visiones cinematográficas de los años 1950 a los años 2000* (2014).

Contacto: susana.diaz@uc3m.es; manuel.delafuente@uv.es.

### DIÁLOGO

**Realismo(s), tragedia e ironía. José Antonio Nieves Conde: «Quería hacer cine, pero me encontraba en un mundo en el que el director era constantemente zarandeado».**

José Luis Castro de Paz, Julio Pérez Perucha.

**Palabras clave:** cine español; posguerra; Surcos; falangismo; censura.

**Abstract:** Postrera entrevista en profundidad concedida en septiembre de 2003 por el cineasta segoviano José Antonio Nieves Conde (1911-2006), director de *Surcos* (1951) o *El inquilino* (1957), dos de los títulos más relevantes de la Historia del cine español. En ella reflexiona sobre su en extremo dificultosa trayectoria profesional, sus (solo en parte) frustradas aspiraciones de realizar un cine social, su temprana y prebélica vinculación con Falange y su desencantada visión de la España posterior. Un testimonio relevante que aclara algunas de las deudas, influencias y relaciones personales y profesionales de una figura auténticamente clave de nuestro cine.

**Autores:** José Luis Castro de Paz (A Coruña, 1964) es historiador del Cine y Catedrático de Comunicación Audiovisual de la Universidad de Santiago de Compostela. Ha publicado numerosos artículos en revistas científicas, participado en obras colectivas, y coordinado volúmenes sobre diversos aspectos y figuras vinculadas al arte cinematográfico. Entre sus numerosos libros destacan: *El surgimiento del telefilm* (1999), *Alfred Hitchcock* (2000), *Un cinema herido. Los turbios años*

*cuarenta en el cine español* (2002), *Fernando Fernán-Gómez* (2010), *Del sainete al esmerpento. Relecturas del cine español de los años 50* (2011) o *Sombras desoladas* (2012). / Julio Pérez Perucha (Pamplona, 1945), historiador del cine, es actualmente Presidente de la Asociación Española de Historiadores del Cine. Miembro del comité de redacción de la revista de cine *Contracampo* (1979-1987). Autor de innumerables libros, artículos y capítulos en libros colectivos dedicados a la Historia del cine español, en su obra destacan, por ejemplo, títulos como *En torno a Berlanga* (Valencia, Fundació Municipal de Cine, 1980-81), *El cinema de Edgar Neville* (Semana Internacional de Cine de Valladolid, 1982), *Mestizajes (Realizadores extranjeros en el cine español 1931-1973)* (Valencia, Mostra de Valencia, 1990) o la dirección de la *Antología Crítica del cine español 1906-1995* (Madrid, Filmoteca Española/Cátedra, 1997). Contacto: joseluis.castro@usc.es.

### (DES)ENCUENTROS

**Deshaciendo tópicos. Una discusión a cinco voces sobre el cine español de la posguerra. Introducción. El reajuste retroactivo del cine español. Santos Zunzunegui. Discusión. Juan Miguel Company, Alejandro Montiel, Jean Claude Seguin, Jenaro Talens, Santos Zunzunegui. Conclusión. Volver a ver, volver a pensar. Santos Zunzunegui.**

**Palabras clave:** cine español; Guerra Civil, posguerra; autoría; tradición cultural; géneros cinematográficos.

**Abstract:** Cinco de los más relevantes expertos en Historia del Cine Español dialogan sobre las particularidades que hacen del realizado en el periodo 1939-1962 no un cine bueno o malo, sino particular, específico e históricamente fecho. Cuestiones como la ruptura o continuidad con las tradiciones populares que se desarrollaban con éxito durante el periodo republicano, el papel de la censura, el discutible aislamiento estético de nuestro cine en relación con las más relevantes corrientes internacionales o la posible aplicación al caso español de la noción de autor desarrollada por la revista francesa

*Cahiers du cinéma* son solo algunos de los asuntos sobre los que opinan. Otros temas no menos enjundiosos como la presencia/ausencia de la Guerra Civil como “trauma” latente en los films de la posguerra o la posible existencia de algunos modelos de estilización característicos y específicos de nuestro cine, como lo que podría llamarse “esperpento cinematográfico”, desarrollado desde los años cincuenta, se tratan también en las reflexiones que siguen.

**Autores:** Jenaro Talens (Tarifa, 1946) es profesor emérito de Literatura Comparada de la Université de Genève y catedrático de Comunicación Audiovisual de la Universitat de València. Ha enseñado en numerosas universidades europeas y americanas. Escritor, ensayista y traductor, ha publicado medio centenar de libros y su poesía ha sido traducida a más de veinte idiomas. Dirige la colección *Signo e imagen* y la revista cuatrilingüe *Eutopías*. / Alejandro Montiel Mues (Logroño, La Rioja, 1959) es profesor titular de la Universitat Politècnica de València, donde imparte Historia del cine. Ha publicado, entre otros, los libros *Teorías del cine* (1992; 1999) y *El desfile y la quietud. Análisis fílmico versus Historia del Cine* (2002). También se incluyen trabajos suyos en libros de edición y autoría colectiva, como *La herida de las sombras. El cine español de los años cuarenta* (Actas del VIII Congreso de la AEHC, 2001), *Gonzalo Torrente Ballester y el cine español* (Castro de Paz, Pérez Perucha, eds., 2001), *Imagen, memoria y fascinación. Notas sobre el documental español* (Catalá, Cerdá, Torreiro, eds., 2001). / Santos Zunzunegui Díez (Bilbao, 1947), es catedrático de Comunicación Audiovisual y Publicidad (Euskal Herriko Unibertsitatea), semiólogo y analista e historiador cinematográfico. Ha sido profesor invitado en diversas universidades de Europa, Estados Unidos y América del Sur. Entre sus principales libros se cuentan: *Mirar la imagen* (2004); *El cine en el País Vasco* (1985); *Pensar la imagen* (1989); *Robert Bresson* (2001); *Historias de España. De qué hablamos cuando hablamos de cine español* (2002); *Metamorfosis de la mirada. Museo y semiótica* (2003 (versión italiana *Metamorfosi dello sguardo*, 2011); *Orson Welles* (2005); *Las cosas de la vida. Lecciones de semiótica estructural* (2005); y *La mirada plural* (2008), ganadora del Premio Internacional de Ensa-

yo “Francisco Ayala” y cuya traducción al italiano aparecerá en 2015 con el título *Lo sguardo plurale*. En 2013 publicó *Lo viejo y lo nuevo* (Cátedra). / Juan Miguel Company Ramón es filólogo y profesor de Comunicación Audiovisual en la Universitat de València. Crítico e historiador cinematográfico. Es autor, entre otros libros, de *La realidad como sospecha* (Eutopías-Literatura, 1986), *El trazo de la letra en la imagen* (Cátedra, 1987), *El aprendizaje del tiempo* (Eutopías maior, 1995) o *Ingmar Bergman* (Ediciones Cátedra, 2007, 4ª edición). Su último libro, *Hollywood. El espejo pintado (1910-2011)*, fue publicado en 2014 por el servicio de publicaciones de la Universitat de València. / Jean-Claude Seguin es catedrático de la Université Lumière-Lyon II. Presidente honorífico del Grimh (Groupe de réflexion sur l'image dans le monde hispanique). Historiador del cine de los orígenes (*La Production cinématographique des frères Lumière*, BiFi, 1996) y especialista en la etapa primitiva del cine en España, es asimismo autor de una *Historia del cine español* (Acento, 1995) y de un importante número de artículos y monografías sobre diversos aspectos y autores de la imagen cinematográfica en España (*Pedro Almodóvar o la deriva de los cuerpos*, Filmoteca Regional de Murcia, 2009).

**Contacto:** Jenaro.Talens@uv.es; jmontiel@har.upv.es; santos.zunzunegui@ehu.eus; Juan.M.Company@uv.es; jean-claude.seguin@univ-lyon2.fr.

## PUNTOS DE FUGA

**Lo heroico en el cine de masas: género y valor en *Los juegos del hambre*. María Isabel Menéndez**

**Menéndez, Marta Fernández Morales**

**Palabras clave:** héroe/ína; cultura popular; *Los juegos del hambre*; género; Amazonas.

**Abstract:** La cultura popular del nuevo siglo asiste a una (re)significación del rol del héroe que aquí analizamos en la obra *Los juegos del hambre* (Gary Ross, 2012), distopía ubicada en un mundo esclavizado por el poder totalitario y controlado por los medios de masas. Mediante un enfoque teórico deductivo apoyado en la perspectiva de género como aporte epistemológico, el texto estudiará la versión cinematográfica de la

primera de las novelas de la trilogía homónima de Suzanne Collins. Nuestra tesis es que Katniss Everdeen, una versión contemporánea de Teseo que también recuerda al mito de las Amazonas y el de Atalanta, subvierte el orden patriarcal, al revelarse como un sujeto autónomo y valeroso. Este rol de poder no se acopla, como solía ser frecuente en las narrativas audiovisuales, ni a la feminidad normativa ni a la emulación masculina, sino que se construye de forma independiente y con un resultado positivo.

**Autoras:** María Isabel Menéndez Menéndez (Oviedo, España, 1967) es doctora en Filosofía, licenciada en Periodismo y profesora de Comunicación Audiovisual en la Universidad de Burgos (UBU). Su investigación se interesa por el análisis de la comunicación desde la perspectiva de género, especialmente los discursos de ficción y la biopolítica en la cultura popular, temáticas sobre las que ha publicado artículos y monografías. / Marta Fernández Morales (Gijón, España, 1974) es doctora en Filología y profesora titular de la Universitat de les Illes Balears (UIB). Su investigación aborda cuestiones de género en manifestaciones culturales contemporáneas, especialmente teatro, cine y televisión. Es autora de varios libros y artículos en revistas internacionales. Lidera el grupo Representación, Ideología y Recepción en la Cultural Audiovisual en la UIB.

**Contacto:** mimenendez@ubu.es; marta.fernandez@uib.es.

## Al rescate de los últimos granos de verdad. A propósito de lo metacinematográfico en *Los idiotas*.

**Enric Antoni Burgos Ramírez**

**Palabras clave:** *Los idiotas*; metacinematográfico; Dogma 95; Lars von Trier; realidad; discurso; realismo.

**Abstract:** El recurso a lo metacinematográfico en los cines que se alejan del modelo hegemónico propicia en el espectador la reflexión en torno a su papel con respecto al film y le plantea cuestiones en torno al propio medio cinematográfico, la realidad y la relación que se establece entre ambos. Nuestro escrito se centrará en el análisis de los gestos autorreflexivos y metaafilísticos presentes en *Los idiotas* (Dogme #2. Idioterne, Lars von Trier, 1998) que contribuyan a arrojar cierta luz sobre la posición del film frente a estas cuestio-

nes. Para ello, nos dedicaremos en un primer momento al análisis del relato acercándonos a los trasvases que tienen lugar entre los tres niveles ontológicos permeables que el film nos presenta. Posteriormente, la reflexión en torno al discurso del film partirá del diálogo que se establece entre la película y los mandamientos que recoge el voto de castidad del movimiento Dogma 95 en el que *Los idiotas* se incluye. Observaremos cómo la reflexión metacinematográfica en relato y discurso, aun por caminos diferentes, apuntan en un mismo sentido. Por último, nuestra conclusión, amén de evidenciar la convergencia de propósitos entre contenido y forma del film, esbozará, a partir de lo mantenido en nuestro recorrido, un intento de respuesta a las cuestiones que el film propone sobre el papel del espectador y el vínculo que se establece entre cine y realidad.

**Autor:** Enric A. Burgos Ramírez (Valencia, 1976) es licenciado en Filosofía y en Comunicación Audiovisual por la Universitat de València. Profesor asociado en el departamento de Comunicación Audiovisual, Documentación e Historia del Arte de la Universitat Politècnica de València así como del departamento de Filosofía y Sociología de la Universitat Jaume I, actualmente desarrolla su tesis doctoral en torno al movimiento Dogma 95 y la filosofía de Stanley Cavell.

**Contacto:** enburra@har.upv.es.

**Arquitecturas efímeras, decorados colosales. La Intolerancia de los hermanos Taviani y la identidad recuperada. Pedro Molina-Siles, Óscar Brox Santiago, Juan Carlos Piquer-Cases**  
**Palabras clave:** arquitectura; efímero; identidad; decorado; Griffith; reinterpretación; memoria.

**Abstract:** El presente artículo explora la relación entre cine y arquitectura a partir de la noción de lo efímero. Para ello, se abordará como objeto de análisis el decorado babilónico que aparece en el film del periodo mudo *Intolerancia* (David Wark Griffith, 1916) y su posterior representación en la película de 1987 *Good Morning Babilonia* (Paolo Taviani, Vittorio Taviani). Si la obra de Griffith exalta una visión colosal del decorado, cuyo carácter efímero aparece determinado por su monumentalidad, la película de los hermanos Taviani redefinirá y reinterpretará esa

visión para ofrecer una lectura alternativa. A través de una comparativa arquitectónica y cinematográfica entre ambos filmes plantearemos la posibilidad de que el sentido colosal y efímero del primer decorado mute, en el segundo, hacia una expresión de las raíces culturales y la identidad creativa propia.

**Autores:** Pedro Molina-Siles es arquitecto técnico y doctor arquitecto con máster en Producción Artística por la Escuela Técnica Superior de Arquitectura de Valencia y profesor del departamento de Expresión Gráfica Arquitectónica de la Universitat Politècnica de València donde desarrolla su docencia. Su tesis doctoral *La frontera diluida. Arquitecturas efímeras en el cine. De Europa a Hollywood* versa sobre la importancia del carácter efímero en los decorados arquitectónicos del cine en los cuarenta primeros años del siglo xx, en Europa y Hollywood. Actualmente combina su labor profesional de arquitecto con la docencia y la investigación sobre las relaciones entre cine y arquitectura. / Óscar Brox Santiago (Valencia, 1983) es crítico y escritor cinematográfico. Editor de la revista *Détour* y redactor jefe de la publicación *Miradas de cine*, ha impartido clases y seminarios en la escuela barcelonesa *La casa del cine*, redactado libretos críticos para las ediciones en DVD de Avalon y la Filmoteca Fnac, colaborado con el diario del Festival de cine de Gijón o participado en libros colectivos como *El cine de animación japonés* (IVAC/Donostia Kultura). Entre 2007 y 2010 formó parte del equipo de gestión del Aula de cine de la Universitat de València. / Juan Carlos Piquer-Cases es doctor arquitecto por la Escuela Técnica Superior de Arquitectura de Valencia y profesor titular del departamento de Expresión Gráfica Arquitectónica de la Universitat Politècnica de València donde desarrolla su docencia. Su tesis doctoral *Los modelos digitales en la arquitectura: desarrollo del proyecto e investigación patrimonial. Palacio Real de Valencia: análisis y reconstrucción virtual sobre la planta de Vicente Gascó de 1761* fue premiada en el año 2007 en el área de Arquitectura, premio otorgado por el Consejo Social de la UPV en su VIII edición de 2008. Es también investigador perteneciente al Instituto Universitario de Restauración del Patrimonio (IRP) de la misma universidad, en la línea de *Reconstrucción Virtual del Patrimonio Desaparecido*.

Autor de varios artículos y libros referentes a arquitectura, patrimonio desaparecido y nuevas tecnologías, entre los que destacan *Forum Unesco. Proyectos y actividades* (Forum Unesco/Universidad y patrimonio) y *Miguel Colomina. Arquitecto* (Ícaro/CTAV).  
**Contacto:** pmolina@ega.upv.es; osbrox@gmail.com; jpiquer@ega.upv.es.

**Prácticas colaborativas en el documental contemporáneo: propuesta de análisis y revisión del modo participativo en la Teoría del Documental. Sergio Villanueva Baselga**

**Palabras clave:** participación; documental; medios ciudadanos; teoría del cine; análisis fílmico.

**Abstract:** La producción comunitaria de material audiovisual ha tenido una gran expansión desde que *Fogo process* en Canadá abriera el proceso de realización de un modo participativo. La expansión de medios locales y ciudadanos a partir de la década de los setenta promocionó el uso de vídeos participativos como herramienta de difusión y lucha de problemáticas sociales. Este trabajo pretende conceptualizar estos vídeos como objetos fílmicos, insertarlos en la Teoría del Documental contemporánea y clasificarlos en la taxonomía acuñada por el teórico Bill Nichols.

**Autor:** Sergio Villanueva Baselga (Teruel, 1986) es licenciado en Comunicación Audiovisual por la Universitat de Barcelona y en la actualidad prepara su tesis doctoral en participación ciudadana y medios de comunicación en la misma institución gracias a una beca APIF (Ajuts de Personal Investigador en Formació). Durante el curso 2009-2010 disfrutó de una beca La Caixa para la realización de máster en España. Es además docente en el grado de Comunicación Audiovisual y recientemente ha sido nombrado representante por España en la sección joven de la European Communication Research and Education Association (ECREA).

**Contacto:** sergio.villanueva@ub.edu

**Ozu según Hou Hsiao-hsien. La poética de los cuerpos y el vacío. Elpidio del Campo, Juan Gorostidi**

**Palabras clave:** Hou Hsiao-hsien; Yasujiro Ozu; códigos fílmicos; narración; cine taiwanés; cine japonés.

**Abstract:** El lenguaje cinematográfico de Hou Hsiao-hsien se ha revelado como uno de los más rigurosos y coherentes del cine contemporáneo. El meticuloso trabajo estilístico de Hou es el resultado de su inquietud esencial por encontrar la perspectiva exacta para observar la realidad y transmitirla con precisión al espectador. Sin embargo, finalmente, sus estilizadas piezas cinematográficas se alejan por completo del registro documental para acentuar la retórica del propio código fílmico. *Millenium Mambo* (2001) o *Café Lumière* (2003) no son sino apasionados relatos que seducen al espectador, historias de un narrador contemporáneo que desea mostrar el presente mediante su distintivo modo de mirar. Todos estos elementos se examinan a través de la influencia del japonés Yasujiro Ozu, la creación de *Café Lumière* y otros elementos que emparentan la obra de ambos realizadores.

**Autores:** Elpidio del Campo Cañizares (Madrid, 1967) es licenciado en Bellas Artes por la Universitat Politècnica de València (1990) y doctor en Comunicación Audiovisual por la Universidad Miguel Hernández de Elche (2010) con la tesis: *Alexander Mackendrick, de la praxis a la teoría cinematográfica*. Actualmente trabaja como profesor asociado de esta última universidad en el área de Comunicación Audiovisual y Publicidad. Una de sus líneas de investigación es el análisis del lenguaje narrativo audiovisual. / Juan Gorostidi (Santander, 1964) es licenciado en Filología hispánica e inglesa (Universidad de Oviedo, 1988) y doctor en Filología hispánica (Universidad de Navarra 2004). Ha enseñado Historia del cine en la Universidad de Navarra y en la Universidad SEK-Segovia, y Cine y Literatura en el Centro de Estudios Ciudad de la Luz. Ha editado el libro de Andrei Tarkovski *Esculpir en el tiempo* (1991) y una monografía sobre *La noche del cazador* (2006). Actualmente prepara una monografía sobre Peter Weir.

**Contacto:** edelcampo@umh.es; jgorosti@gmail.com.

**Abstract:** El artículo estudia, desde la teoría del cronotopo, la recepción en España de una serie de películas de Manuel Romero filmadas entre 1938 y 1947. Pretende demostrar que el director argentino considera imposible que la mujer alcance el idilio laboral o bien expone que su consecución es secundaria respecto al idilio amoroso. Pese a este contenido propio de un pensamiento pre-peronista, el franquismo no siempre se reconoce en esas películas por pensar que son demasiado radicales.

**Autor:** Emeterio Diez Puertas (Saldaña, 1962) es doctor en Historia Contemporánea por la Universidad Complutense y Licenciado en Dramaturgia para la Real Escuela Superior de Arte Dramático. Ha publicado más de treinta artículos sobre el cine, la radio, la televisión, la literatura y el teatro en monografías y revistas como *Historia 16*, *Cuadernos Hispanoamericanos*, *Siga*, *ZER* o *Anales de Literatura*. En este momento, es el gerente del Departamento de Comunicación y Publicaciones de la RESAD y también imparte las asignaturas de Narrativa en Radio, Televisión y Cine en la Universidad Camilo José Cela.

**Contacto:** ediez@ucjc.edu

**Mujer e idilio laboral en el cine de Manuel Romero y su recepción bajo el primer franquismo. Emeterio Diez Puertas**

**Palabras clave:** Cronotopos idílicos; identidad de género; cine argentino; franquismo.

cine, emoción, intuición

détour



detour.es | @tdetour



# SECUENCIAS

## Revista de Historia del Cine

### Compra y suscripciones

Calle del Gobernador, 18

28014 Madrid

secuencias@maiaediciones.es



DESEO SUSCRIBIRME A **SECUENCIAS**. Revista de Historia del Cine A PARTIR DEL NÚMERO . . .

Nombre . . . . .

Apellidos . . . . .

Dirección postal . . . . .

### SUSCRIPCIÓN ANUAL (DOS NÚMEROS)

1 año	España	Europa	Otros países
Individual	17 euros	27 euros	32 euros
Institucional	23 euros	40 euros	45 euros

### SUSCRIPCIÓN BIANUAL (CUATRO NÚMEROS)

2 años	España	Europa	Otros países
Individual	30 euros	54 euros	63 euros
Institucional	45 euros	80 euros	90 euros

### FORMA DE PAGO

☐ Talón nominativo a favor de *ABADA Editores SL. Revista Secuencias*

☐ Transferencia bancaria a la cuenta nº 0128 0220 36 0100007225

☐ Domiciliación bancaria. Titular de la cuenta .....

Señores: les agradeceré que con cargo a mi cuenta atiendan, hasta nueva orden, los recibos que *ABADA Editores. Revista Secuencias* les presente para el pago de mi suscripción a **SECUENCIAS**.

Fecha

Firma

# L'A

## CINE L'ATALANTE

Podcast semanal del  
**CINEFÓRUM L'ATALANTE**  
sobre actualidad e historia cinematográfica

Programas disponibles en  
**[mediauni.uv.es/cinelatalante](http://mediauni.uv.es/cinelatalante)**

Dirección y locución  
**Nacho Palau**

Producción y locución  
**Guillermo Rodríguez**

Colaboradores  
**Óscar Brox, Jordi Revert, Miquel Tello**

**<http://mediauni.uv.es/cinelatalante>**  
**facebook • twitter**

# GUIDE FOR THE SUBMISSION OF ORIGINAL PAPERS

## 1. Receipt and approval of original papers

*L'Atalante. Revista de estudios cinematográficos* approves of publishing unpublished papers on interdisciplinary or monothematic topics related to the theory and/or practice of cinema which are also remarkable for their innovative style. Articles must be submitted via the website of the journal ([www.revistaatalante.com](http://www.revistaatalante.com)), always as an RTF file using the template provided for this purpose. The files of the author's statement (.pdf) and images (.psd, .png or .jpg), if any, must be uploaded to the web as complementary files. There are two periods for the call for papers along the year: January (for the papers to be published in the edition of January-June of the following year), and June (for papers to be published in the edition of July-December). These dates are illustrative, as the final deadlines will be posted on the website. Authors will be informed of the approval of their texts in a term of six months maximum. The topic of the monograph for every edition will be published in advance on the website [www.revistaatalante.com](http://www.revistaatalante.com). As long as the text is original, and it respects the guidelines of the journal and fulfills the standards and rigor of a humanities journal, the Editorial Board will carry out a process of external assessment of peer review, respecting the anonymity of the authors and the reviewers in order to avoid possible bias. In the event that the number of articles received in a given call is very high, the Editorial Board will make a selection before the peer review, discarding those less suitable. If the essay does not satisfy the initial clauses, it will be rejected without external query intervening. *L'Atalante* does not offer remuneration for publishing collaborations.

## 2. Publishing guidelines

What follows is an excerpt of the publishing guidelines. Those interested in them may visit the complete version in Spanish and English, and download the template for the submission of original papers on the website [www.revistaatalante.com](http://www.revistaatalante.com).

1. The length of original papers may vary between 4,000 and 4,500 words (25,000 – 35,000 characters and spaces).
2. Regarding the format, texts must be in Times New Roman font, have font size of 11 points and a justified alignment. The text must be single-spaced, without any kind of indentation and without additional separation between paragraphs. Title and section titles must be in bold type. Notes, if they exist, must be as brief as possible and will be included at the end of the text without using the automatic tool of word processors. These notes must be signalled with a superscript in its corresponding place (<sup>1</sup>); at the end of the text, under the heading Notes, the corresponding explanation for each note must be written after the number linked to it, in Times New Roman font with a font size of 9 points.
3. Texts must come with
  - An abstract around 120-150 words long (680-860 characters with spaces);
  - 5 to 8 key words;
  - A curricular note of each author of around 60-80 words (350-470 characters with spaces), where place and year of birth of the author must be specified, as well as his or her profession, his or her current research lines and published materials or recent works (if they exist).
4. Original papers may be sent in Spanish and/or English.
5. Italics must be applied only on foreign words, for emphasis on words and quotations of works and films.
6. For textual quotations, American and British quotation marks must be used in the following order: "... '...' "
7. The first time a reference to a film is made, it must be written as follows: *Title in the language of the article* (Original Title, Director, Year).
8. Harvard citation system [(SURNAME, Year of publication: pages)] must be used in the corpus of the article. The complete reference must be at the end of the text, under the heading Bibliography, where the authors must be mentioned in alphabetical order considering the surname, according to the international bibliographic citation system APA [SURNAME(s), Name of the author (year of publication). *Title*. Place of publication: Publisher]. For the bibliographic citation of articles, book chapters, minutes or other textual and audiovisual materials, please check the complete version of the publishing guidelines, available on the aforementioned website, several examples are also mentioned there.
9. Authors must provide images with a 300 ppi format (.jpeg, .tiff or .psd file) to the editorial staff to illustrate their articles. It is advisable to use 4 to 6 images to illustrate each article. *L'Atalante. Revista de estudios cinematográficos* will only accept images with the express authorization of the author or the publisher. The publication of images will be carried out on promotional, didactic or research purposes only. The source and the name of the author of the work mentioned must be specified in the corpus of the article and/or the caption. The author of the article who wants to reproduce a copyrighted work is held responsible of previously requesting permission to reproduce it in the printed and digital editions of the journal and must sign a document provided by *L'Atalante* in which this fact is stated. This includes the reproduction of film stills (screen shots), for which the authors must seek permission from the current distribution company in Spain.



## Actividades

### ■ Ciclos de cine con presentación y coloquio (de octubre a junio)

Proyecciones gratuitas, en versión original subtitulada y en digital

- Los martes a las 18:00 en el Colegio Mayor Rector Peset
  - Los jueves a las 18:00 en el Palacio de Cerveró
- Ciclos de temática científica

### ■ *Nits de cinema al claustre de La Nau*, en julio a las 22:00

Cine de verano al aire libre en el edificio histórico de la Universitat de València  
Proyecciones gratuitas, en versión original subtitulada y en digital

### ■ La Cabina. Festival Internacional de Mediometrajés

En noviembre en La Filmoteca, La Nau y otros espacios · [www.lacabina.es](http://www.lacabina.es)

### Más información:

[auladecinema@uv.es](mailto:auladecinema@uv.es) · [www.uv.es/auladecinema](http://www.uv.es/auladecinema) · redes sociales

# GUÍA DE PRESENTACIÓN DE ORIGINALES

## 1. Recepción y aceptación de originales

*L'Atalante. Revista de estudios cinematográficos* acepta la publicación de ensayos inéditos sobre temas interdisciplinares o monotemáticos relacionados con la teoría y/o praxis cinematográfica que destaquen por su carácter innovador. Los textos deberán enviarse a través de la página web de la revista ([www.revistaatalante.com](http://www.revistaatalante.com)), siempre guardados como archivo .rtf utilizando la plantilla proporcionada para dicho fin. Los archivos de la declaración del autor (.pdf) y de las imágenes (.psd, .png o .jpg), si las hubiere, deberán subirse a la web como ficheros complementarios. Se establecen dos períodos anuales de recepción de originales (*call for papers*): enero (para el número publicado en enero-junio del año próximo), y junio (para el número de julio-diciembre). Estas fechas son orientativas, ya que los plazos definitivos se publicarán en la página web. La aceptación de los manuscritos se comunicará a sus autores en el plazo máximo de seis meses. El tema del monográfico de cada número será publicado con la debida antelación en la página web [www.revistaatalante.com](http://www.revistaatalante.com). Siempre que el texto sea original, se adecúe a las normas de estilo de la revista y cumpla con los estándares y el rigor propios de una revista de humanidades, el Consejo de Redacción lo someterá a un proceso de evaluación externa por pares, que respetará el anonimato de autores y evaluadores (sistema de doble ciego o *peer review*) con el fin de evitar posibles sesgos. En el caso de que el número de artículos recibidos en una determinada convocatoria sea muy elevado, el Consejo de Redacción realizará una selección previa a la evaluación por pares, descartando aquellos menos adecuados. De no cumplirse las cláusulas iniciales, el ensayo será desestimado sin haber mediado consulta externa. *L'Atalante* no ofrece remuneración alguna por las colaboraciones publicadas.

## 2. Normas de publicación


A continuación se refiere un extracto de las normas de publicación. Los interesados pueden consultar la versión íntegra en español e inglés, y descargarse una plantilla de presentación de originales en la página web [www.revistaatalante.com](http://www.revistaatalante.com).

1. La extensión de los originales oscilará entre 4.000 y 4.500 palabras (25.000-35.000 caracteres con espacios).
2. En cuanto al formato, los textos se presentarán en tipografía Times New Roman, tamaño 11 y alineación justificada. El interlineado será sencillo, sin sangría en ningún caso y sin separación adicional entre párrafos. El título y los ladillos se destacarán en negrita. Las notas, si las hubiere, serán lo más breves posibles y se incluirán al final del texto sin utilizar la herramienta automática de los procesadores de textos. Se indicarán con un superíndice en su lugar correspondiente (<sup>1</sup>); al final del texto, bajo el encabezado Notas, se redactará la explicación correspondiente a cada nota, precedida por el número que se le asocia, en formato Times New Roman y tamaño 9.
3. Los textos se acompañarán de
  - Un abstract o resumen de 120-150 palabras (680-860 caracteres con espacios);
  - De 5 a 8 palabras clave;
  - Una nota curricular de cada autor/a de 60-80 palabras (350-470 caracteres con espacios), en la que se hará constar el lugar y año de nacimiento, la afiliación laboral, líneas de investigación en curso y publicaciones u obras de creación recientes (si las hubiere).
4. Los originales serán aceptados en lengua española y/o inglesa.
5. Las cursivas se aplicarán solo para extranjerismos, destacado de palabras y citación de obras y películas.
6. Para las citas textuales se emplearán comillas angulares, inglesas y simples según la siguiente gradación: «... " ' ' ' " ...»
7. La primera vez que se haga referencia a una película se indicará del siguiente modo: *Título en español* (Título original, Director, Año).
8. Dentro del cuerpo de texto del artículo se empleará el sistema de citado Harvard [(APELLIDO, Año de publicación: páginas)]. La referencia completa deberá aparecer al final del texto, en un bloque identificado como Bibliografía, en el que los autores se mencionarán ordenados alfabéticamente según apellido siguiendo el sistema de citación bibliográfica internacional APA [APELLIDO(S), Nombre del autor/a (año de edición). *Título*. Lugar de edición: Editorial]. Para la citación bibliográfica de artículos, capítulos de libros, actas y otras modalidades textuales y audiovisuales, consúltese la versión íntegra de las normas de estilo de la publicación, disponible en la web arriba indicada; en ella se mencionan ejemplos varios.
9. El autor deberá proveer a la redacción de imágenes que ilustren su artículo a 300 ppp (formato jpeg, tiff o psd). Se recomienda ilustrar cada artículo con 4-6 imágenes. Solo se aceptan imágenes con la autorización expresa del autor o de la casa editorial. La publicación de imágenes se llevará a cabo atendiendo a fines promocionales, docentes y de investigación. Se indicará la fuente y el nombre del autor de la obra utilizada en el cuerpo del artículo y/o pie de foto. Es responsabilidad del autor o autora que quiera reproducir una obra protegida solicitar el permiso correspondiente para su publicación en la versión impresa y digital de la revista, y firmar un documento del que le proveerá *L'Atalante* donde se haga constar dicha circunstancia. Esto incluye la reproducción de fotogramas (capturas de pantalla) de películas, para cuya reproducción los autores deberán solicitar el permiso expreso de la actual distribuidora en España.



# shangrila textos aparte

un espacio fuera de cuadro



*Sólo los ladrones, los espías,  
los amantes, los diplomáticos  
y todos los esclavos conocen  
los recursos y los deleites de  
la mirada.*

Balzac

Sin título, Chris Marker, 1957

UNA REVISTA

Shangrila Derivas y Ficciones Aparte

SEIS COLECCIONES DE LIBROS

Contracampo - [Encuadre]

Hispanoscope - Intertextos

The Searchers - Swann

[www.shangrilaediciones.com](http://www.shangrilaediciones.com)

# PUBLISHED ISSUES



Issue 1 (Spanish edition)  
Japanese cinema: Post-war and  
the Fifties period  
Women in Film Noir  
Wong Kar Wai  
*La Aldea Maldita*  
Winter 2003, 68 pages



Issue 2 (Spanish edition)  
Zavattini and De Sica  
Documentary and Post-modernity  
Abbas Kiarostami  
*Dogma' 95*  
*Napoléon* by Abel Gance  
December 2004, 68 pages



Issue 3 (Spanish edition)  
Awaiting Death  
Man and Monster  
Pedro Almodóvar  
Paul Thomas Anderson  
Wim Wenders' *Cities*  
April 2006, 72 pages



Issue 4 (Spanish edition)  
Arthur Penn  
Synthesis Languages  
Steven Spielberg, 21<sup>st</sup> Century  
Todd Solondz  
Jim Jarmusch's *West*  
April 2007, 56 pages



Issue 5 (Spanish edition)  
Interview with Ricardo Macián  
Women of Japanese Cinema  
From Manuel Puig to Wong Kar Wai  
*The Duellists*  
Monstrosity and Otherness  
November 2007, 72 pages



Issue 6 (Spanish edition)  
Interview with Paul Naschy  
Sexuality, Adolescence and Fantasy Films  
*En la Ciudad de Sylvia*  
*L'Avventura*  
*Die Nibelungen* / Indie Films  
May 2008, 72 pages



Issue 7 (Spanish edition)  
*Lost Films*  
*Katsudô benshi*,  
Storytellers in Japan  
Pier Paolo Pasolini  
Wim Wenders  
December 2008, 72 pages



Issue 8 (Spanish edition)  
*Thriller* and Contemporary Society.  
Mirror in Noir  
Female, Gazes, Filmic Construction of the  
Image of Women  
Interview with Agustín Díaz Yanes  
TV Fiction under Discussion  
July 2009, 144 pages



Issue 9 (Spanish edition)  
Non-fiction  
Interview with Isaki Lacuesta  
Travelling to the Southern Cinema  
January 2010, 112 pages



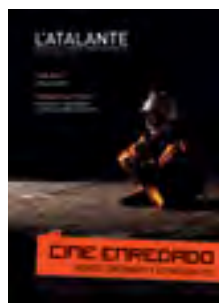
Issue 10 (Spanish edition)  
Spanish Animation. Enthusiasm,  
Exile and Resistance  
Interview with Cruz Delgado  
History (et) Cinema  
July-December 2010, 100 pages



Issue 11 (Spanish edition)  
The New Rules of the Game, Contempo-  
rary American Drama Television Series  
Interview: Javier Abad and Marcos Martínez  
From Spectator to Player. Transfers  
Between Cinema and Videogames  
January-June 2011, 124 pages



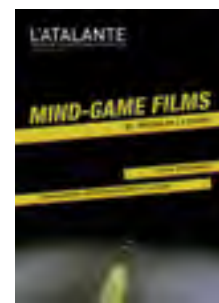
Issue 12 (Spanish and English editions)  
From Camera to Camera.  
Still Photography and the Moving Image  
Agnès Varda: From Photography  
to Film and Vice Versa  
The State of Criticism in Spain  
July-December 2011, 152 pages



Issue 13 (Spanish edition)  
Netted Cinema. New Contents  
and Strategies 2.0  
Interview with José Luis Guerin  
Cinema in the Museum  
January-June 2012, 128 pages



Issue 14 (Spanish edition)  
Rock and Cinema. Popular Music as  
Cinematic Discourse  
Interview with Tony Palmer  
The Harder They Fell:  
The Economic Crisis in Film  
July-December 2012, 136 pages



Issue 15 (Spanish edition)  
*Mind-game Films. The Trauma in the Plot*  
Interview with Enrique Urbizu  
Delirant Rhetorics and Things  
January-June 2013, 130 pages



Issue 16 (Spanish edition)  
Twenty-four Cartoons per Second.  
Transfers Between Cinema and Comics  
Interview with Óscar Aibar  
*The Third Man*. Ambiguous  
Power Relationships  
July-December 2013, 106 pages



Issue 17 (Spanish edition)  
Constructing for the Camera.  
Architecture and Cinematographic Space  
Interview: Antxón Gómez, Art Director  
Cinema Teaching Techniques: Experiences in  
the Classroom and Beyond  
January-June 2014, 134 pages



Issue 18 (Spanish and English editions)  
Cinephile directors in Modern Times.  
When the Cinema Interrogates Itself  
Martin Scorsese interviewed  
by M. H. Wilson  
Why do we need to return to film classics?  
July-December 2014, 146 pages



Issue 19 (Spanish and English editions)  
Faces, Voices, Bodies, Gestures. The Concep-  
tion of Acting as the Core of Film Analysis  
Interview with Iciar Bollain  
A shared task: filmmakers and actors  
faced with acting  
January-June 2015, 154 pages



Issue 20 (Spanish and English editions)  
Wounds, survivals, transformations. Styling  
models in postwar Spanish cinema (1939-1962)  
Interview with José Antonio Nieves Conde  
Undoing topics. A five-voice discussion on  
post-war Spanish cinema  
July-December 2015, 160 pages



Publisher



Sponsors



Delegació d'Estudiants · Servei d'Informació  
i Dinamització dels Estudiants · SeDI

Departament de Teoria dels Llenguatges i Ciències de la  
Comunicació · Facultat de Filologia, Traducció i Comunicació

Aula de Cinema · Vicerektorat de Cultura,  
Igualtat i Planificació

Collaborating Institutions



Departament de Ciències de la Comunicació  
Facultat de Ciències Humanes i Socials

