

LINA MORGAN: THE ARCHETYPE OF THE EXPLOSIVE *INGÉNUE* IN SPANISH CINEMA OF THE LATE FRANCOIST PERIOD*

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In her book *From Reverence to Rape* (1974), Molly Haskell's description of Mary Pickford as the embodiment of the innocent virgin inevitably brings to mind the Spanish actress Lina Morgan. Like other scholars who have explored the female archetypes of Hollywood cinema from a gender perspective (Rosen, 1974a; Studlar, 2013), Haskell views Pickford's ingénue image as a legacy of the Victorian values that prevailed in America in the early decades of the twentieth century. For Haskell, Pickford's success had a lot to do with the American psyche's obsession with the return to childhood as a journey to recover an innocence that is both historical and personal, in which the childlike woman escapes from the dreariness of adulthood to inhabit a time of her own when "everything was still possible and ideal, not yet delimited by sexual or domestic submission" (Haskell, 1974: 61). It was under these circumstances that Pickford became America's sweetheart, the first female star to earn 350,000 dollars a year and

eventhe co-founder of her own studio: she was the absolute image of an infantilised womanhood from which she would never be able to escape. While male audiences saw her as a refuge from "new models of female sexual subjectivity" associated with the 19th Amendment to the US Constitution, which gave women the right to vote for the first time in 1920, Pickford's femininity was identified with her asexuality, as a woman "whose youth released her from the demands—including the sexual demands—of adult femininity" (Studlar, 2013: 32).

Just as Pickford, with her porcelain doll looks and cotton dresses, embodied the incorruptible innocence of rural America, Lina Morgan was the rural girl of Francoist Spain who confronts the dangers of the big city, the little orphan outcast, the virgin waiting for her Prince Charming, even one whose charm has faded. Mainstream Spanish comedy in the later years of the Franco dictatorship was a genre defined by archetypes closely as-

sociated with a few specific actors (Pérez Rubio, Hernández Ruiz, 2011: 109), and Lina Morgan was certainly one of them. The Madrid-born actress drew from the tradition of female archetypes described by Haskell insofar as her description of Pickford's rebellious quality, expressed in terms of working-class pride as a rebel who "championed the poor against the rich, the scruffy orphans against the prissy rich kids" (Haskell, 1973: 60), could easily be referring to Morgan in her role in *La descarriada* [Off the Rails] (Mariano Ozores, 1973). Pickford's portrayal of the ingénue archetype has been viewed by some feminist theorists as regressive and reactionary, as Marjorie Rosen argues that "her legend was an insult. With her abhorrence of age and repression of sexuality, she created a monster who denied all femininity or made it repugnant" (Rosen, 1974b: 6). This is an interpretation that could well be extended to Morgan, who has been almost entirely ignored in the academic literature.¹ In opposition to this view, Gaylyn Studlar proposes a more positive, emancipating reading: Pickford's orphanhood and poverty gave her an independence that freed her from the repression of the conventional nuclear family, because "viewers might revel in Pickford's display of childhood freedom as an alternative space, a site of resistant female pleasures that slip away under the pressure of woman's cultural destiny" (Studlar, 2013: 37).

What was "woman's cultural destiny" in Francoist Spain? For the Francoist women's movement Sección Femenina, the qualities of the conventional woman of the dictatorship necessarily included "self-sacrifice, authenticity, strength, austerity, justice, joyful discipline, self-reliance, camaraderie and exemplariness" (Gómez Morcillo, 2015: 268). These qualities, which are not really so different from the essence of the innocent virgin described by Haskell, form part of the archetype embodied by Lina Morgan, who nevertheless used the physical exaggeration inherent in comedy as a form of dissidence that was progressi-

LINA MORGAN USED THE PHYSICAL EXAGGERATION INHERENT IN COMEDY AS A FORM OF DISSIDENCE

vely consolidated over the course of her career in the late Francoist period. Morgan's body of work, which could be compared with the American tradition of comedic *ingénues* like Mabel Normand, Colleen Moore, Bebe Daniels, Louise Fazenda or Alice Howell, and with Spanish actresses like Rosita Díaz Gimeno or Josita Hernán (who starred in the original version of *The Complete Idiot* [La tonta del bote, Gonzalo Delgrás, 1939] thirty years before Morgan played the same role in the remake), finds its clearest expression in what Kathleen Rowe calls the "unruly woman".

In her feminist approach to "gender and genres of laughter", with objects of study as diverse as the television actress Roseanne Barr and the Muppets' Miss Piggy, Rowe argues that the image of these female comedians is defined by a resistance to the age-old sanction women learn against making a spectacle of themselves, usually by inappropriate exposure of their bodies in public places. Rowe associates this resistance with the concept of the carnivalesque, which the philosopher Mikhail Bakhtin describes as a parody of the social ritual, an inversion of the social hierarchies and a loss of bodily control. The carnivalesque thus offers the seed of comedy understood as a genre of transgression. This article offers an interpretation of Lina Morgan's film career in light of Rowe's theory of the "unruly woman", with a view to demonstrating, on the one hand, how the repressive apparatus of the Franco regime affected her embodiment of the ingénue archetype, and, on the other, the paradoxical complexity of a character tailored to her, in which the tension between innocence and extravagance, puritanism and mischief, expanded the battlefield for her discourse as an actress after the dictator's death, especially

in the theatre and on television, and reflected the contradictions inherent in the social transformation of the regime, particularly with respect to the depiction of women. In this way, this article aims to show that through the progressive adoption of an “unruly” body, Lina Morgan represented naivety as a performative act that undermined the dogmatic stability of the Franco regime.

THE RIGHT TO BE SEEN

The discreet, romantic beauty of the *ingénue* archetype always ran the risk of being invisible. According to Studlar, Mary Pickford represented a girl who was too young to know what desire was, a condition that weakened her sexual potential. Through their independent, resolute attitude towards life's troubles, *ingénues* asserted their right to be seen. Lina Morgan incorporated this independence into her characters with the disadvantage of lacking conventional beauty, a fact that was all the more striking considering that she started her career in the silken, sequinned world of the theatrical revue genre. In keeping with Rowe's “unruly woman”, Morgan turned her disjointed body into a wildscream for attention. Of diminutive stature and with a very short, boyish haircut that contrasted with both the voluptuous femininity of showgirls and the demure hairstyles of housewives addicted to the manuals for good behaviour published by Sección Femenina, Lina Morgan was destined to join the list of secondary female comedians of Spanish cinema, alongside stars as brilliant as Gracita Morales, Laly Soldevila, Rafaela Aparicio, and Florinda Chico. With the possible exception of Concha Velasco, Morgan was the only female comedian of her generation who managed to secure leading roles, starting with *Soltera y madre en la vida* [Unmarried and Mother in Life] (Javier Aguirre, 1969), eight years after her debut role in *El pobre García* [Poor Garcia] (Tony Leblanc, 1961), in which she wasn't even allowed to appear with her own voice.

Dos chicas de revista [Two Chorus Line Girls] (Mariano Ozores, 1972), a kind of camouflaged autobiography about her early days in theatre, consolidated the “ugly duckling” archetype that she became known for in the Franco years. “I don't know why people say I'm an ugly duckling, because I'm not,” she told Diego Galán in the show *Queridos cómicos* [Beloved Comedians], “I'm a nice, kind, affectionate duckling” (Diego Galán, 1993). Lina

Lina Morgan featured for the sketch
El papá y su niña [Dad and his girl]



Morgan complained that from her beginnings in revue theatre, when the impresario Matías Colsada decided to place her in the last line of chorus girls, she seemed fated to be eclipsed by the statuesque beauty of the women she shared the stage with: "I had a hard time getting my way. Years and years of struggle. Even when I was filling theatres, when I was working with (comedian) Juanito Navarro, there was always a chorus girl in front of me. It drove me crazy" (Gómez, 1985: 35). In a scene characteristic of the actress, during one of the most memorable numbers in *Dos chicas de revista*, she breaks a heel while coming down a flight of stairs, and then limps on until her legs buckle while she tries to follow the rhythm of the dance so as not to fall out of step with her conventionally beautiful dance partner. She trips, the zip of her dress gets stuck, she kicks up her legs exaggeratedly, her feather headdress slides down and the feathers get in her way. And the audience laughs because the naive Lina Morgan has made herself visible, claiming her place on the screen as a clumsy reflection of the standard chorus girl.

As Kathleen Rowe suggests, comedy makes a spectacle of the actress's body. In claiming the right to be seen through excess and assertiveness, the comedic *ingénue* is transformed into a powerful force. It should hardly be surprising that in Spanish films of the late Francoist period this empowering visibility of the female through the

chaos and anarchy of laughter would be repressed by the patriarchal dictatorship: any attempt at transgression had to be stifled, especially if it stemmed from the code of ethics of the film industry. An actress like Gracita Morales, who co-starred with Morgan in *La graduada* [The Graduate] (Mariano Ozores, 1971), was the exception that proved the rule. Starting her career in the Spanish musical comedy tradition of the *sainete*, which forged a school of acting inclined towards the wild and exaggerated gestures characteristic of the film genre that came to be known as *españolada*, Morales, with the dissonance of a shrill, infantile voice that effortlessly stood out over the expressive strategies of her fellow cast members, personified what Kathleen M. Vernon calls the "comic embodiments of the clash between traditional values and urban modernity" (Vernon, 2016: 81). The extraordinarily unique quality of her voice turned her instantly into one of Rowe's "unruly women" even more obviously than Lina Morgan, who had to develop the explosive eccentricity that became her trademark on the stage gradually over the course of her film career, hemmed in as she was between the rigid morality of the Franco regime and the need to find a style of her own. It was one of those contradictions that Richard Dyer (2001) tells us are so intrinsic to the concept of the star.

THE VIRGIN CLOWN

Kathleen Rowe's description of Claudette Colbert in *It Happened One Night* (Frank Capra, 1935) is striking in this respect, and the title of the chapter in her book that analyses Colbert's role in the Capra classic is itself significant: "A genre in need of a virgin." According to Rowe, the interesting aspect of the

The Complete Idiot (La tonta del bote, Juan de Orduña, 1970)



romantic comedies of the 1930s was their affirmation of a certain set of virtues, such as spunk, the ability to work hard, a sense of independence and the celebration of sexual vitality: “With these virtues, a person could achieve perfect happiness. The inequities of the class system and the oppression of women cease to matter” (Rowe, 1995: 127). Quoting the historian Leonard J. Leff, Rowe suggests that the Hays Code did not so much repress sexual discourse as regulate it, and that regulation, which did not censor, simply placed it in the foreground, at the heart of the romantic friction in the form of metaphors and subtexts. This means, of course, that the obstacle to the consummation of the sexual act is what drives the narrative of *It Happened One Night*. Rowe argues that the denial of the mutual desire between the characters played by Clark Gable and Claudette Colbert falls on the woman due to cultural prejudices, “beginning with the traditional valuation of female virginity and modesty” (Rowe, 1995: 130).

LINA MORGAN TURNS SUBMISSION INTO A SPECTACLE OF HER OWN DESIRE

It is hardly incidental that Lina Morgan should have played a chaste and pure virgin in most of her films. However, for Morgan's characters virginity was something very different from what it meant to the capricious rich woman in *It Happened One Night*: as Aurora Gómez Morcillo reminds us, in Francoist Spain “for working-class women, virginity became part of the dowry [...] Finding a husband was no longer a simple means of survival but a national responsibility” (Gómez Morcillo, 2015: 117). For example, in *The Complete Idiot* (*La tonta del bote*, Juan de Orduña, 1970), a Spanish version of the Cinderella story based on a play by Pilar Millán Astray, the way the orphan Susana looks is a metonym for her innocence and naivety, virtues that contrast with the hostility of her

adoptive mother and the bitterness of her sisters. Armed with two pigtails that make her look like a 1950s comic-strip schoolgirl, she always carries an empty tincan (the source of the film's Spanish title, which literally translated means “the tin can fool”) to collect cigarette butts in so that she can give them to a homeless man. Her pigtails will vanish when the necessary kiss has been received: finally, her virginity, and her marriage to a man with newly acquired wealth transforms her into a princess. Money won't be a problem either in *La graduada*, in which she plays Benita, a girl who, after her Aunt Ágata's death and the substantial inheritance that comes with it, travels to Madrid to “complete a crash course in living it up and finding love”; in other words, to free herself from the withering stares of the old women of the town, the corporate image of Francoist Spain, and get herself a boyfriend. In *Una pareja... distinta* [A Different Kind of Couple] (José María Forqué, 1974), when a journalist asks the bearded lady Zoraida whether she is a virgin, she answers in the affirmative, despite the fact that she has a son (“as if I wouldn't be [a virgin],” she adds). In *La descañada*, Morgan plays Nati García, who works as a prostitute (for a noble purpose: to raise her little brothers) yet keeps her virginity intact. In one scene, she takes on the task of teaching the wife of one of her customers what she should do to make him happy, because “when a man goes looking for something outside, it's because he's not getting it at home.” In her own home she stages an improvised performance of what a perfect wife should be, although in reality she is representing a dream of domestic bliss that she herself has yet to put into practice. Welcoming him when he gets home from work, putting on his slippers, giving him his newspaper, making dinner and putting on make-up and perfume to seduce him all form part of a domestic sacramental rite that also includes her future husband as a privileged spectator. Lina Morgan thus turns submission into a spectacle of her own desire.



It Happened One Night (Frank Capra, 1935) / *Esta que lo es... [This Is It]* (Ramón Fernández, 1974)

The enactment of this “good wife’s manual” as a piece of micro-theatre reveals how far the Franco regime, like the Hays Code in the Hollywood cinema of the 1930s, was prepared to go to regulate the wayward body of the “unruly woman”, often to make her sexual desire much more evident. It is common to see Lina Morgan raising her eyebrows or making an expression of repressed pleasure when the leading man in question demonstrates his gallantry. In *Esta que lo es... [This Is It]* (Ramón Fernández, 1974), Morgan plays Lina, a maid who runs from the altar in disappointment because after being engaged for ten years, her fiancé (Tomás Zori), a fireman addicted to his job, chooses to go put out a fire on the day of their wedding rather than showing up at the church on time. She decides to head south to the town of Huelva to look for her father, a clown she hasn’t seen since she was a little girl, and to get there she decides to hitch-hike. It can hardly be a mere coincidence that Lina should imitate Claudette Colbert’s famous method for getting a driver’s attention, although in this case showing her leg has a purely practical purpose, because Lina is alone and therefore has no travel companion to humiliate. Nevertheless, the gesture still reveals an awareness of the body as a weapon of seduction, even if it only serves to attract an ambulance driver who turns out to be a sexual predator, groping her in the car and then, on perceiving her reluctance, abandoning her in

the middle of the highway shouting: “you sure are weird!” In keeping with the ideological repression of Francoism, the erotic gesture is punished, but on Lina’s next stop she will get her reward: Carlos, a chivalrous gentleman (Arturo Fernández) who has just committed a robbery and is fleeing with the money. Based on Rowe’s theory, Ellie in *It Happened One Night* and Lina in *Esta que lo es...* have something important in common: both are virgins who hold the power to redeem the lives of their male companions. Although Ramón Fernández’s film includes no trumpets bringing down the walls of Jericho between separate beds (Lina and Carlos will share a single bed without endangering the required chastity of the era), Lina embarks on her adventure with the same enthusiasm as Colbert’s Ellie. Rowe’s observation that “[t]he Ellie character is built out of a tradition of virginity that encompasses independence and strength as well as vulnerability” (Rowe, 1995: 133) could equally be said of Morgan’s character. Lina’s laughter is “the laughter of maidens”, a laughter that “expresses rather than represses [...], finding no role in the world which totally satisfies her” (Wilt, 1980: 179-180). Judith Wilt discusses laughter in some of Shakespeare’s plays, and in novels by Jane Austen and George Eliot. As Rowe reminds us, this kind of laughter is also present in romantic comedies. The point is, however, that in contrast to the happy ending for Ellie and Peter (Clark Gable)

in Capra's film, Lina does not end up with Carlos. The police arrest him for the robbery and he can do no more than tell Lina, who cries as they say goodbye, that he has learned to be a better person thanks to her. Before this final scene, Lina once again rejects her fiancé, who comes looking for her at her father's circus, and she also discovers her true vocation in life: to work as a clown. In the end, she is Gelsomina in *La Strada* (Federico Fellini, 1954), a character that Morgan always envied Giuletta Masina for (Yagüe, 2005).



Esta que lo es... [This Is It] (Ramón Fernández, 1974)

THE PARODY OF THE RIDICULOUS BODY

In her most famous sketch with Juanito Navarro, who had Morgan under contract for nine years as his comedy partner, the two stars portray a father and daughter from rural Spain: Navarro holding a walking stick and wearing a beret, white shirt and corduroy vest, and Morgan with her girlish features accentuated with the pigtails and short dress she would subsequently use in *The Complete Idiot*. He was the straight man and she was the clown, contorting her facial expressions and twisting her speech with the idioms and contractions of a sometimes indecipherable Spanish to get laughs out of the audience. That laughter reflected a contradiction inherent in the way the Franco regime idealised the lifestyle and morality of the rural Spaniard in opposition to the vices of urban capitalist modernity. It was a contradiction that lay at the very heart of the success of what came to be known as "*paleta* cinema" during the regime's developmentalist period in the 1960s and early 1970s. As Luis Moreno-Caballud (2015: 523) suggests, "Francoism appropriated the idea of the *pueblo* (people), especially the rural population, to appropriate its aura of pure and eternal tradition,"

which would come into conflict with a "modernising" economic and sociocultural process that was essentially bourgeois. The consequence of this contradiction was significant: in Spanish mainstream cinema, poverty completely disappeared. "The problems of the petite bourgeoisie were politically explained in the comfort of the home [...]. The Spanish have difficulties, they suffer hardships, but they are no longer poor: they never lack the essentials, and their main problem lies in managing their perfectly adequate paycheque" (Hernández, Revuelta, 1976: 77-78). The urban middle classes couldn't laugh at poverty, but they could laugh at the ignorance, coarseness and uncouthness of the rural population, who in return are always ready to give them a lesson in ethics, good manners and national unity. The *paleta* (yokel) portrayed by Lina Morgan with a clownish quality not only uses a hyperbolic parody to represent the archetype of the innocent girl but also exposes the paradoxical relationship that the Spanish audience had with that archetype.

The careers of Lina Morgan and Paco Martínez Soria (another icon of *paleta* cinema) have a lot in common: both started out in the trenches of the theatre; both had a relatively small number of leading roles in films (15 in Morgan's case, 16 in Martínez Soria's), mostly during the late Francoist

ALTHOUGH ALWAYS ASSOCIATED WITH THE INGÉNUE ARCHETYPE, MORGAN NEVER ALLOWED HERSELF TO BE TYPECAST

period; both worked mainly with a single director (Morgan with Mariano Ozores, Martínez Soria with Pedro Lazaga); and both represented that philosophy of life of the common people that was so popular with the staunchest Francoists. “How was I going to learn the lesson if I can’t read? I only know how to work,” complains the taxi driver in *¿Qué hacemos con los hijos?* [What Should We Do with the Kids?] (Pedro Lazaga, 1967), a film featuring both Martínez Soria and Lina Morgan, in that period when the latter was still only getting supporting roles like the maid’s role she had here. However, while Martínez Soria was able to transfer the stereotype of Uncle Agustín in *La ciudad no es para mí* [The City Isn’t for Me] (Pedro Lazaga, 1966) from stage to screen, becoming known for a character that had already been familiar to theatre-goers for years, Morgan was working on a more unstable archetype, much more affected by the changes brought by modernity than the atrophy of tradition. Although always associated with the ingénue archetype, Morgan never allowed herself to be typecast, as she moved in step with the progressive thaw of Francoist morality during the final years of the dictator’s life.

Morgan’s repertoire of characters was nothing if not diverse. She played a servant in *¿Qué hacemos con los hijos?*, *Las que tienen que servir* [Those Who Must Serve] (José María Forqué, 1967), *La tonta del bote*, and *Esta que lo es...*, a hostess in *La descarriada*, a chorus girl in *Dos chicas de revista*, a petty criminal in *La llamaban «la Madrina»* [They Called Her the Godmother] (Mariano Ozores, 1973), a nun in *Una monja y un Don Juan* [A Nun and a Don Juan] (Mariano Ozores, 1973), a doctor in *Señora doctor* (Mariano Ozores, 1973), a bearded

lady in *Una pareja... distinta*, and a country girl in *Los pecados de una chica casi decente* [The Sins of a Nearly Decent Girl] (Mariano Ozores, 1975) and *Un día con Sergio* [A Day With Sergio] (Rafael Romero Marchent, 1975). In contrast with the “ridiculous body”, in Aintzane Rincón’s words, constructed by Martínez Soria, based on “his clownish way of behaving, his manner of dress, his curtness, his eating habits and a language full of archaic expressions and grammatical errors” (Rincón, 2014: 175), Morgan developed a kind of parody that reduced the character of the *paleta* to an explosion of performativity that Haro Tecglen identifies with the tradition of *commedia dell’arte*: “Much of her work recalls the harlequin: the transformations of soft and expressive caps, the hand gestures, the strolling around the stage, the rapid-fire speech, the blend of cleverness and incomprehension while trying to explain the chaos of the action, the exaggeration and, in short, the mutual understanding with the audience” (Haro Tecglen, 1985: 35). Her sketches with Navarro or the scene in *La llamaban «la Madrina»*, where she repeats the money scam from *Los tramosos* [The Cheaters] (Pedro Lazaga, 1959), offer some good examples of how Morgan relates to the “ridiculous body” of *paleta* cinema. “The poor girl is cross-eyed, uglier than hell, and her legs, just look at her legs,” remarks the victim of the scam (Ángel de Andrés), with his beret on his head and suitcases in his hands. “And back home they told me I wouldn’t earn a cent here in the city. Just wait till I tell them about this in the old watering hole,” he exclaims, after receiving an envelope that he has been tricked into believing is stuffed with cash but is in fact filled with newspaper cuttings. The unruliness of Morgan’s body, in a recital of grotesque grimaces, negates the popular idea of traditional Spain as “pure and eternal”.

This process of ironic transgression of the edifying tale in *paleta* cinema culminates with *Señora doctor*, which reverses the direction of the country-city journey to celebrate the arrival of modernity in rural Spain with a feminist touch. Before

arriving in the small town where she will hide from the ghosts that haunt her, along with her mother, a nurse (Mari Carmen Prendes), the men that Doctor Elvira Ruiz Marcos had to deal with were atrocious: Federico, her fiancé, rejected her sexually, and her psychiatrist tried to assault her. In her new home, the rural Spanish male is not much better. Ataúlfo (José Sacristán), the veterinarian who tries to woo her, declares himself to be “old-stock Spanish” but suffers from erectile dysfunction, and the three yokels who refuse to have the newly arrived doctor attend them, besieged by prejudices over the idea of having to confess their venial sins to a woman, appear to have caught a venereal disease in the local whorehouse next door. While Elvira’s arrival initially destabilises the precarious balance of life in rural Spain, in the end she is responsible for civilising it, like Ellie in *It Happened One Night*, who turns Peter into a new man, correcting all his shortcomings “in the areas of self-awareness, generosity, the pragmatic and erotic” (Rowe, 1995: 133).

THE SOLITUDE OF DIFFERENCE

“Can’t you just be a normal woman? Do you have to wreak havoc wherever you go? You’re constantly making me look ridiculous,” roars Sergio (Juan Luis Galiardo), a former big-screen heartthrob who has fallen on hard times, at Valenti-

na, the small-town girl who has won a contest to spend twenty-four hours with him in *Un día con Sergio*. He blurts this out after she confuses a jug of martini with a jug of water, and the effects of the intoxication turn her into the Lina Morgan of Spain’s collective imaginary, gleefully smashing up a restaurant and making a mess of the lobby of a five-star hotel. Here we find the pursing of her upper lip (“she has the loquacity sometimes displayed by Donald Duck, as well as his stretched neck, and his expressions of surprise” [Haro Tecglen, 1985: 35]), the tiny blinks of pleasure, the exaggerated narrowing and widening of her eyes, and the flexible use of her legs. The width of the film screen is not comparable to that of a theatre stage, which Morgan “sweeps across in gaping strides, ploughing over it uncontrollably rather than walking around it; she comes and goes, stands with arms akimbo, and gathers up a billowing skirt to underscore a retort” (Torres, 1979: 19), and she gives the impression that the film screen is simply too small for her, that even while a close-up shot or a long shot may capture the twists of her expressions and of her body, she doesn’t have enough space to develop the archetype of the “unruly woman” that she would be identified with in theatre and on television.

Nevertheless, it would seem that in this film, made in the year that Franco died, Lina Morgan

Un día con Sergio [A Day With Sergio] (Rafael Romero Marchent, 1975)



fully embraces this archetype, released at last from the repressive codes that domesticated the rebellion of the female body during the dictatorship. While this liberation had begun to emerge in the musical numbers in *Dos chicas de revista* and was consolidated with her clown in *Esta que lo es...*, it was in 1975 that the ingénue became truly unruly. This was when Morgan reclaimed the

voice that was her own, at the very moment when the nude scenes that defined the *cine del destape* (“uncovered cinema”) of the early post-Franco era would turn the body “into the symbolic site of the political and social tension of the Transition [to democracy]” (Rincón, 2014: 279). Her nudity is obviously of a different type, because her body did not conform to the standards of female beauty in the risqué comedies and the soft porn films that would characterise a certain type of Spanish commercial film in the late 1970s. Suddenly, virginity gives way to the desire to lose it at any cost. In *Los pecados de una chica casi decente*, María detains her boyfriend in a stable until her passion literally consumes him; that is, she kills him (apparently). In *Un día con Sergio*, she agrees to spend the night with her ageing Don Juan, who has been unable to defend her from three womanisers in a disco (she takes care of them herself with her expertise in martial arts), and she even fakes a suicide attempt so that he can get the publicity he needs to sign his next film contract. In the conclusion to *Un día con Sergio*, Lina Morgan’s desire to violate the romantic principles of the post-Francoist *españolada* is significant: Valentina rejects Sergio’s romantic offer, not to give in to the advances of the village mailman, but to remain locked in a loop of idealised love, now with Alain Delon as the next target. “Alone in my tractor, daydreaming,” she exclaims. In *Un día con Sergio* Valentina’s return to her hometown does not signify the restoration of the traditional values of rural Spain. On the contrary, the story does not validate Valentina’s goodness and purity with a marriage, but with a solitude that embraces difference.

It is in this solitude that we can find the most unique dimension of Lina Morgan’s unruliness in her film career. This is not the first time in a film that her character ends up alone. It is significant that in *Esta que lo es...* and *Dos chicas de revista* this solitude melts away on the stage, as if spectacle were the only lover that the actress can tolerate in her dreams. In the first of these two films, as

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noted above, she finds herself replacing the father figure in the circus, as the clown who catches flies, plays the sax and cries like a baby to the rapturous applause of her audience. Her body, finally disjointed, bids farewell to her male companions without acrimony, drenched in tears. In the second film, she rejects Evaristo (José Sacristán) when he tries to win her back after having told her at the beginning of the film that his father would never approve of his marrying a chorus girl. The proposal comes too late, especially when Catalina has just given up her job in the revue show that has made her famous, and accepted the departure of her stage partner, Alicia (Dyanik Zurakowska), with a handsome dentist that she had introduced to her friend, and who had also seemed to have a romantic interest in her. There is a certain ambiguity in Catalina’s tears, as we do not know whether she is crying because she lost her closest friend or because her love interest of the moment ultimately chose Alicia over her. The reconciliation between the two women takes place abruptly during the show, a genuine refuge of happiness where the repressive apparatus of the regime seems to absolve its most popular female comedian—who even performed for Franco at the Royal Palace of La Granja—of her matrimonial obligations. If, as Rowe argues in relation to *Gentlemen Prefer Blondes* (Howard Hawks, 1951), the film’s real love story is the one between Lorelei (Marilyn Monroe) and Dorothy (Jane Russell), it seems equally likely that the real love story in *Dos chicas de revista* is between Alicia and Valentina.

In any case, the evolution of Morgan’s archetype constitutes a rebellion against the nude film movement of the post-Franco period, when the

word “Fin” (“The End”) appears over a close-up of her clown face in *Esta que lo es...*. This was the exposure of the female body in a public place in grotesque form, which Rowe tells us is described by Mary Russo as a way of destabilising the idealisation of female beauty, undermining what was commonly accepted about the limits of femininity in a society which, in this case, was in the midst of a major transformation. It is curious that this exercise in the grotesque should coincide with the two films in Morgan’s career in which she attempts to distance herself from her reputation as a comedian: *Una pareja... distinta*, where she is presented as a bearded lady who ends up falling in love with her gay friend and landlord (José Luis López Vázquez), and which she has identified on several occasions as her favourite role; and *Imposible para una solterona* [Impossible for a Spinster] (Rafael Romero Marchent, 1975), in which she portrays an overweight woman who is seduced, tricked and betrayed by a dietician (Juan Luis Galiardo). Her sententious farewell (“For a woman, what matters most is not the first love but the last”), refusing to forgive the doctor who abused her, represents the embracing of her independence, alone again, and also her farewell to cinema, to which she would return, without much conviction, on just one more occasion, in *Hermana, ¿pero qué has hecho?* [Sister, What Have You Done?] (Pedro Masó, 1995).

CONCLUSIONS

“I think if I’d been born anywhere else in the world, I don’t know, on Broadway, where the musical genres are held in high esteem, I think I would be a really important star, I’d have my own hour on television, like Carol Burnett, but here I don’t even get a minute” (Torres, 1979: 20). It would still be a few years before some of the episodes of television series like *Compuesta y sin novio* [All Dressed Up and Nowhere to Go] (Antena 3, 1994) and *Hostal Royal Manzanares* (TVE, 1995-98), vehicles for showing Lina Morgan’s versati-

le comic talent, would draw more than 8 million viewers in the ratings. Morgan had embraced her status as an “unruly woman” on the stage, selling out theatres with shows like *Vaya par de gemelas* [What a Pair of Twins] (1980-83), *Sí al amor* [Yes to Love] (1983-1987) and *El último tranvía* [The Last Tram] (1987-1991). Television and the theatre allowed Morgan to assert herself as a “rebellious body” without having to resort to the nudity that had been established as a standard in Spanish cinema by *cine del destape*.

In a broadcast of the program *Estudio Directo* in 1972, José María Íñigo asked Lina Morgan whether she was an *ingénue*. “In life it’s important to play the *ingénue*,” she replied. This self-awareness of innocence as a masquerade, as a staging to make oneself visible, first to the repressive apparatus of the Franco regime, and then to take refuge from the expectations of the *cine del destape* in her La Latina theatre, which she began renting in 1978 and purchased in 1983, is the key to understanding her unique status as a female comedy star of the late Francoist period. It is when she plays the clown that Lina Morgan creates her own genre, completely separate from ideological negotiations. The politics of the gesture that she put into practice in order to stand out in a film world dominated by male comedians allowed her to create an apolitical body that resonated powerfully with audiences. ■

NOTES

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- 1 One exception is the unpublished thesis by Mónica Gozalbo (see Gozalbo Felip, M. (2016). *Para una tipología de la actriz cómica del cine español: el caso de Gracita Morales y Lina Morgan*. Doctoral thesis. Castellón: Universitat Jaume I).

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LINA MORGAN: THE ARCHETYPE OF THE EXPLOSIVE *INGÉNUE* IN SPANISH CINEMA OF THE LATE FRANCOIST PERIOD

Abstract

Lina Morgan was the highest grossing female film star of Spain's late Francoist period, and third overall after two male comedians who embodied Spanish masculinity, Paco Martínez Soria and Alfredo Landa. This article offers an analysis of Lina Morgan's career in light of Kathleen Rowe's theory of the "unruly woman". In a historical period when female comedians were relegated to secondary roles, the evolution of Morgan's film career was mediated by the repressive demands of the regime; but at the same time, she sought to subvert those demands through the use of a hyperbolic poetics of the gesture and the body that would find its full expression precisely around the time of Franco's death, in the fields of theatre and television.

Key words

Lina Morgan; *españolada*; unruly woman; comedy; mainstream cinema; Francoist cinema.

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LINA MORGAN. EL ARQUETIPO DE LA *INGENUA EXPLOSIVA* EN EL CINE DEL TARDOFRANQUISMO

Resumen

Lina Morgan fue la estrella cómica más taquillera del cine del tardo-franquismo, solo superada por dos encarnaciones de la masculinidad patria como las de Paco Martínez Soria y Alfredo Landa. El presente artículo pretende analizar la figura de Lina Morgan a la luz de la teoría de la «mujer indisciplinada» formulada por Kathleen Rowe. En un período en el que las actrices cómicas eran relegadas a papeles secundarios, examinamos la evolución de su trayectoria cinematográfica, por un lado mediatizada por las exigencias represoras del régimen, y por otro, aspirando a subvertirlas desde la práctica de una poética hiperbólica del gesto y el cuerpo que estallaría, precisamente, a la muerte de Franco, en los ámbitos del teatro y la televisión.

Palabras clave

Lina Morgan; *españolada*; mujer indisciplinada; comedia; cine popular; cine franquista.

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