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Publisher: *Routledge*

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The Routledge Companion to Iberian Studies

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Publication details

<https://test.routledgehandbooks.com/doi/10.4324/9781315709895.ch36>

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Published online on: 28 Mar 2017

How to cite :- Agustín Sánchez Vidal. 28 Mar 2017, *Buñuel, Lorca, and Dalí from: The Routledge Companion to Iberian Studies* Routledge

Accessed on: 26 Sep 2023

<https://test.routledgehandbooks.com/doi/10.4324/9781315709895.ch36>

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Literature and visual culture



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BUÑUEL, LORCA, AND DALÍ

A new tradition

Agustín Sánchez Vidal

In 1559, by order of a decree issued on November 22 in Aranjuez, Philip II prohibited Spaniards from studying in any foreign universities except Bologna, Rome, Naples, and Coimbra, under pain of heavy sanctions. The effect was to significantly undermine Hispanic humanism, as the Iberian Peninsula was cut off from Protestant Europe.

It was not until almost three centuries later that this historical cycle was finally reversed. The real turning point came in 1843, when Gómez de la Serna, Minister of the Interior, gave financial support to Julián Sanz del Río that allowed him to further his education at the University of Heidelberg. That same year, of course, also saw the birth of the outstanding author of Spanish Realism, Benito Pérez Galdós.

On his return from Germany, Sanz del Río would bring Krausist doctrine back to Spain: a line of thought rooted in the work of Karl Christian Friedrich Krause (1781–1832), and which sought to harmonize the legacy of Kant and Fichte with that of Schelling and Hegel. Above all, this was a doctrine which defended a liberalism founded on the individual, against the budding totalitarianism implicit in certain interpretations of Hegelian philosophy. It also suggested a move away from the French cultural hegemony still very much in force, while its secular, pro-European tendencies stood in opposition to conservative, clerical traditionalism.

This is not to suggest that Spanish Krausists were necessarily or primarily anti-Catholic. However, a raft of university professors who subscribed to the doctrine were removed from their posts precisely because they refused to swear an oath of allegiance to the Church and the throne. Among them was Francisco Giner de los Ríos, who led them in founding the *Institución Libre de Enseñanza* (ILE) in 1876, soon after the restoration of the Bourbon monarchy with Alfonso XII. This gave them a platform to promote a private, secular education, initially at university level, but later with a wider scope which included primary and secondary education.

If Julián Sanz del Río emphasised German philosophy and learning, Francisco Giner built on this with the inclusion of pedagogical systems modelled on those used in England. This was the beginning of one of the most ambitious attempts to see Spain integrated into Europe, from both an intellectual and a moral standpoint, by re-establishing those links which had been severed by the *cordon sanitaire* against Lutheranism enacted in the mid-sixteenth century.

Such initiatives meant that Krausism gradually made its mark at all levels of intellectual development, resulting in an educative movement of a rather puritan nature. This would give rise to organizations ranging from the *Junta de Ampliación de Estudios* (whose president,

Santiago Ramón y Cajal, attempted to maintain intellectual links abroad) to *Misiones Pedagógicas* (whose role focused on cultural dissemination in rural areas during the 1930s). Its effects were also felt in the *Residencia de Estudiantes*, an idea conceived and realized by teachers who were very aware of their objectives and their place in history. Only the ILE could have carried out an undertaking of this sort, as the only sustained and coherent educative project which existed outside the Church in Spain.

Nothing in the *Residencia* was the product of improvisation; rather, this was a place designed to facilitate interdisciplinary dialogue, following the lead of the colleges in England. Everything had been calculated in minute detail by its director, Alberto Jiménez Fraud, with the aim of producing a ruling élite composed of a refined blend of the Spanish *caballero* and the English gentleman. The model to be avoided at all costs was the Spanish *señorito*, product of the “España de charanga y pandereta.”¹

The *Residencia* had 150 places, and was attended by 900 students in total, but its influence on Spanish culture was remarkable. In its most famous period (1915–1936) it was located in Madrid’s Altos del Hipódromo, near the “Paseo de la Castellana,” where it still stands today. At that time, it was almost completely surrounded by open fields, and had its own sports facilities. It also put on a wide range of cultural events, with programmes rarely bettered, in terms of their contemporary relevance and quality, in all Spanish history.

The young students who stayed there could learn at first hand about such recent events as the discovery of the tomb of Tutankhamun or the ascent of Everest, from hearing the testimony of those involved, Harold S. Carter and General Bruce. They could attend talks given by such luminaries as Einstein, Marie Curie, H. G. Wells, Paul Valéry, Chesterton, Marinetti, Max Jacob, Duhamel, Cendrars, Claudel, R. Tagore, Mauriac, Bernard Shaw, Keyserling, Keynes, Le Corbusier, Walter Gropius – and Louis Aragon, who was to lecture on surrealism in 1925.

Encounters

It was in this setting that the friendship between the young Federico García Lorca, Luis Buñuel, and Salvador Dalí was born – a friendship which was to prove decisive for all three. Moreover, were it not for the *Residencia*, it is unlikely that they would ever have met, as Lorca came from Granada as a student of law and Buñuel from Aragon to study agronomy, while Dalí was a Catalan painter.

Buñuel arrived at the *Residencia* in autumn 1917, at 17 years of age; Lorca arrived at the age of 21, in spring 1919; Dalí was 18 on his arrival in September 1922. The future film director was to stay for seven years, until 1925, when he moved to Paris; Lorca also stayed until 1925, although he would continue to make frequent visits after he left; Dalí remained until 1926, when he was permanently expelled from Madrid’s *Escuela Superior de Bellas Artes de San Fernando*. The crucial period for their friendship therefore runs from 1922 to 1925, a significant length of time during one’s formative years.

Their affection for the old imperial capital of Toledo, city on the Tagus, may stand as an example. The significance of Toledo was outlined by Fernando de los Ríos, former Chair of the University of Granada where Lorca undertook his studies of law, and the man who set Lorca on his way to the *Residencia* and his later stay in New York. In his lecture entitled *Sentido y significación de España*, given in Mexico in 1945 and considered by its author to be a “[m]anifiesto sobre la tolerancia,” Fernando de los Ríos admitted that his work as Minister of Public Instruction during the Second Spanish Republic had been guided by a particular model: the three cultures of Toledo. Moreover, he did not think Toledo an isolated example, but part

of the current of free-thinking heterodoxy that began with Priscilian and continued with the Erasmians of the sixteenth century and the Enlightenment Encyclopedists of the eighteenth.

Similarly, the director of the *Residencia* and close friend of Fernando de los Ríos, Alberto Jiménez Fraud, began his *Historia de la Universidad Española* with a chapter titled “Peregrinación a Toledo,” where he framed the School of Translators as a crucial moment in the history of the West – a moment when journeys were made to Toledo from all over Europe in search of the Greek learning preserved there in Arabic translation, the high water mark of a cultural unity in the Mediterranean that was one of history’s greatest achievements.

Also relevant here is Manuel Bartolomé Cossío, founder of the *Misiones Pedagógicas*, who had revived the great artistic spokesman for the city on the Tagus, El Greco; a visit to Toledo thus became obligatory for any student staying at the *Residencia*. Nor was this the only proposal seeking to revive Toledo which had currency in the *Residencia*: others may be found in the symbolic weight given to the old imperial capital in novels such as Pérez Galdós’s *Angel Guerra*, Azorín’s *La voluntad*, or Pío Baroja’s *Camino de perfección*, the high point of the search for the innermost depths of the national soul and the causes of the country’s fall.

Of course, this fascination with the city did not mean that the young residents had to be reverent in their attitudes towards it; as testament to this stands Buñuel and his *Orden de Toledo*, founded in 1923. Among the places they visited was the tomb of Cardinal Tavera, located in the hospital which bears his name; the tomb was the work of the renowned sculptor Berruguete and showed the cardinal’s body already in a state of decomposition. This tomb thus became the emblem of what were known in the *Residencia*’s own idiolect as “putrefactos.”

This term was used to refer to anything old-fashioned and aesthetically outdated, contrasting it with the emotional detachment of the modern. One of the greatest expressions of this last tendency was to be the “Oda didáctica a Salvador Dalí,” published by Lorca in 1926 in the *Revista de Occidente*.² The ode sets the painter against a Cubist Mediterranean background, drawing on the intellectual classicism advocated by Cocteau’s *rappel à l’ordre* or Ortega y Gasset’s *La deshumanización del arte*. The poet’s lines mention “la amistad o la esgrima,” undoubtedly a reference to the exchange of suggestions and stimuli in the work of the two friends, a process which culminated in 1927. That year saw them spend part of the spring and summer together at Cadaqués, while Dalí painted the backdrops for Lorca’s play *Mariana Pineda*.

Nonetheless, it is impossible to ignore the ruptures that quickly followed, and the reticence visible on the part of the painter in the dense prose of his “San Sebastián,” published in July 1927 in the Sitges journal *L’Amic de les Arts*. It contains an appeal to “Holy Objectivity,” and to the impassivity of the eponymous martyr as he was shot with arrows, without showing any signs of pain. This thus stood as a translation, in homoerotic key, for an attitude of distance which acted as a barrier to the ode which Lorca had dedicated to Dalí, and the caution with which the painter responded to his affection.

This was to be the beginning of a dialectic between Putrefaction and Holy Objectivity, between sentimentalism and impassivity, manifest in the confrontation between biologism, with its excesses of blood and other bodily fluids, and the objectualism of what Dalí termed the *aparatos* – those mechanical devices that emerged from detailed reflection on those of Giorgio de Chirico. This conflict is at the heart of an enormously complex oil painting originally entitled *El nacimiento de Venus*, later altered to *Los esfuerzos estériles*, and finally *Cenicitas*. It took a long gestation period of nine months for Dalí to paint it, during the course of his military service in Figueras. He completed it in early 1928.

Following a process typical of much of his work, Dalí here began from a classic theme, the *Birth of Venus*, and turned it into the origin of the sexual impulse during adolescence. He then

applied this to his relationship with Lorca, attempting to translate into visual images the rich world of Lorca's poetic imagery. These were the common reference points which both were using to construct their own personal worlds, when they began to grow apart, leaving behind the remains, the embers or ashes (*cenicitas*) of what could have been.

For 1928 was to be another story. In late July that year, Lorca published his *Romancero gitano*, a quite brilliant meeting of the discoveries of modernity and an apparently folkloric neo-popularism which extends to every possible aspect of the work. Lorca was at the centre of this non-rupturist avant-garde, which had celebrated the centenary of the Baroque poet Luis de Góngora the year before, and which would become known as the *Generación de 1927*.

The book met with spectacular success. Everyone heaped praise upon it – except for Dalí and Buñuel, who found it too “traditional.” Both by this point had begun to incline towards surrealism: Buñuel, because he was in Paris, with first-hand knowledge of the deeds and writings of the circle of André Breton; Dalí, because he already showed signs of the influence of Joan Miró, Max Ernst, and Yves Tanguy.

After an intense effort to undermine Lorca, Buñuel succeeded in winning Dalí to his cause. The bait he offered was his collaboration in *Un chien andalou*, a short film that marked his first steps as a director in 1929. Such is the fame of this episode, there is no need to go into further detail here; it is enough to note that this film was to become a reference point for the avant-garde across the full breadth of Spanish culture. It marks several changes of direction at that crucial turn of the decade, as the fall of Primo de Rivera's dictatorship would quickly lead to the proclamation of the Second Republic on April 14, 1931.

Distancing

We cannot be sure that Federico García Lorca saw *Un chien andalou* in 1929, since he had left for New York on June 19, and would not return to Spain for more than a year. Nonetheless, during his time in New York he did write a brief screenplay, *Viaje a la luna*, intended to be brought to the screen by the Mexican director and painter Emilio Amero, who included Buñuel and Dalí's short film among his influences.

There are certain passages in Lorca's screenplay which bear a remarkable similarity to *Un chien andalou*, for example, the close-up of an eye being cut through by fish; a large head emerging dead from a mass of silkworms, in front of a sky with a severed moon; or a girl defending herself from a boy threatening to gouge out her eyes with his thumbs. His two friends' adventure in film had a profound effect on Lorca, who saw an allusion to himself and took offence at its title, its themes, and its imagery. It was this that prompted his first and only foray into writing screenplays and his adoption of surrealism, visible in *Poeta en Nueva York* and other works conceived in that city.

For Buñuel and Dalí, the success of their first collaboration was justification enough to think about shooting a longer film with sound: *L'Âge d'or*. They met during the summer of 1929 in Cadaqués, to plan the venture; however, their harmonious relationship was broken by the appearance of Gala, wife of the French surrealist poet Paul Éluard, who soon provoked as much dislike in the director as she did fascination in the painter. Accounts differ as to what happened thereafter. According to Buñuel, his former collaborator did no more than send him a few ideas for the film by letter, of which Buñuel used only one: the man going for a stroll with a stone on his head. Dalí maintained that his participation had been much greater, but that his role had been distorted by the director, who had brought a mere caricature of his ideas to the screen.

These testimonies, which are not contemporary and which bear the traces of their later quarrels, may now be usefully supplemented, and in some cases rejected, by documentary

evidence which has become available. Particularly useful are letters from Dalí to Buñuel, and the correspondence between Buñuel and the patron of *L'Âge d'or*, Viscount Charles de Noailles.

It may be seen from this correspondence that the painter suggested various ideas to him which related to some of the film's most important sequences, and these were indeed incorporated by the Aragonese director. Dalí would therefore expect proper compensation for this, given his precarious situation, as his father had thrown him out of the family home and Camille Goemans, who exhibited his work, was recently bankrupt. Gala was also seriously ill, and required an operation. This was the first time Dalí had been without economic means, and he had great hopes of *L'Âge d'or*, which had tremendous financial backing, eventually totalling more than 750,000 francs. Buñuel received 6,000 per month while the technical screenplay was prepared, and 12,000 while the film was shot.

Dalí felt marginalized by his friend, and felt he was betraying him in the moment of his and Gala's greatest need. From that moment on, their paths would diverge. When surrealism was divided in 1932 by the great schism that set André Breton and Louis Aragon against each other, Dalí remained on Breton's side, while Buñuel left the group to join the Communist Party. This brought him to his 1933 documentary project *Tierra sin pan / Las Hurdes*.

Nonetheless, while their friendship had cooled since Gala became a part of Dalí's life, it did not visibly deteriorate until May 1934. This was the moment when hostilities really commenced, as a result of a dispute over the credits for *Un chien andalou* and *L'Âge d'or*. After seeing a re-run of *Un chien andalou* in Paris and being dumbfounded to see that Buñuel had removed his name, Dalí wrote an outraged letter to him, threatening legal action.

Before he recovered from this shock, Dalí had the same thing happen to him again when *L'Âge d'or* was shown in Barcelona: his name had once again been pulled from the credit sequence. Buñuel's answer must have been unsatisfactory, leading Dalí to take the matter up again in a long, hostile letter reproaching him for his lack of honesty and friendship.

If this were not enough to widen the breach between the two men, subsequent events would ensure they had little to do with each other. Dalí would continue to find success as a painter, and travelled to New York for the first time in November 1934, while Buñuel, who married on June 23 that year and was awaiting the arrival of his first child, worked on dubbed films for Warner Brothers; in 1935 he came together with Ricardo Urgoiti at the Filmófono production company to undertake populist projects involving *zarzuelas* and *sainetes*.

The Spanish Civil War marked a significant turning point in many respects. Lorca was shot by the Francoists in August 1936. The two survivors were both in the United States in 1939, by which time the painter had become famous, and was, according to the press, a multi-millionaire, while the film director's situation was very precarious. It was at the beginning of that year that he wrote to Dalí to test the waters regarding a possible collaboration in Hollywood. Dalí, however, rejected the idea. He was deeply affected by the harm done to his family by anarchists and republicans, and firmly committed to reconciling with them: he wanted to re-establish ties with his father and his family, and to turn back towards Spain. He concludes: "En el pasado nuestra colaboración ha sido mala para mí: acuérdate que me fue necesario un *esfuerzo* para que mi nombre fuera *reproducido* en el *chien andalou*" (see Figure 36.1).

The reference to the credits of their first filmic collaboration undoubtedly has the air of revenge. Buñuel must have been very hurt by these rejections, and was forced to content himself with a much more bureaucratic job at the Film Library of the Museum of Modern Art (MOMA) in New York, which he joined in early 1941. In October 1942, Dalí's *Vida Secreta*

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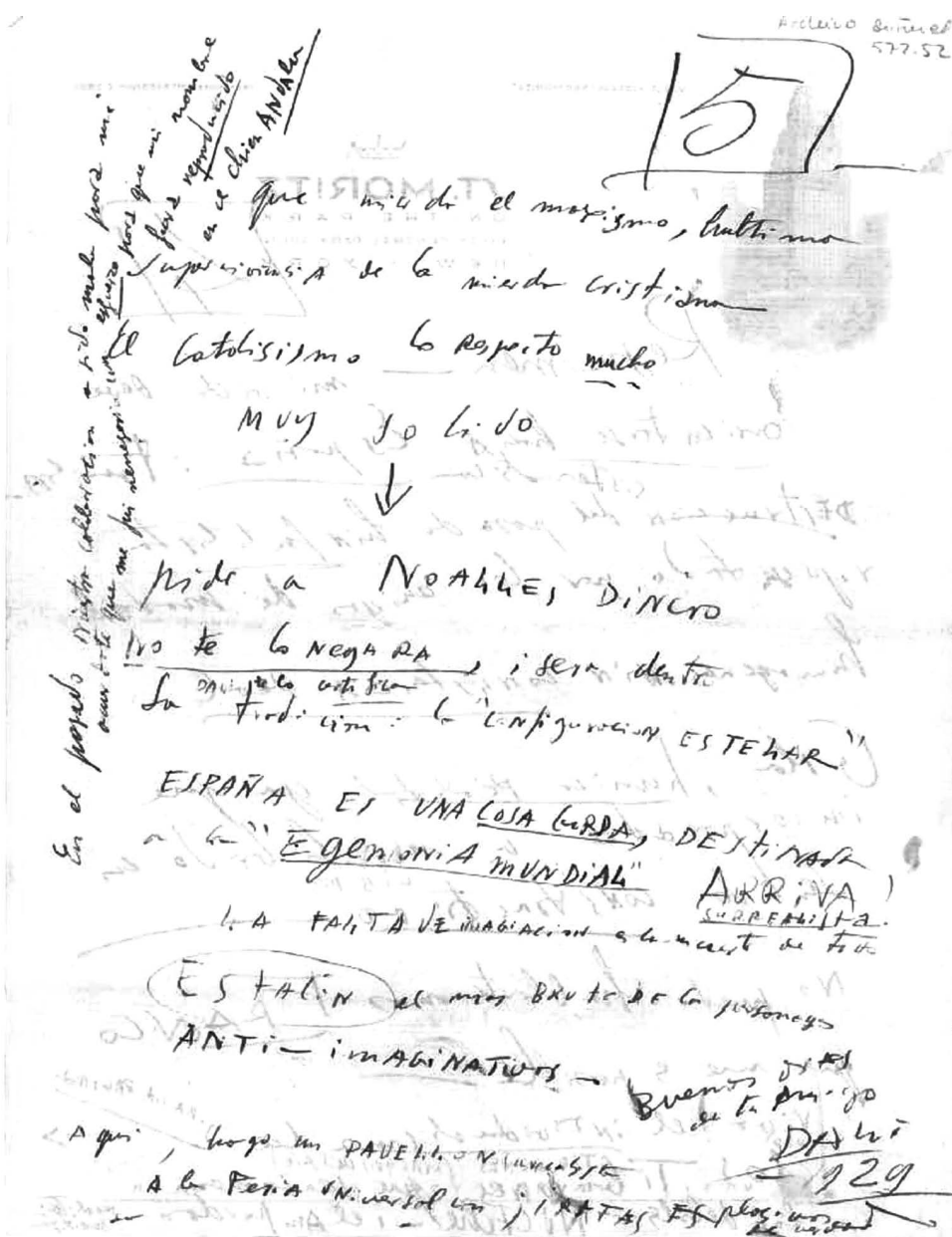


Figure 36.1 Dalí's letter to Buñuel from New York, 1939.

appeared in New York, and on June 30, 1943, Buñuel was obliged to hand in his resignation at MOMA. He has always maintained that the two events were linked, though so far nobody has found conclusive proof.

It seems rather that Buñuel was a victim of the early stages of what would become known as the “witch hunt” of Senator Joseph McCarthy. It is possible that Dalí's idiosyncratic autobiography was a cog in this larger machine, but it seems unlikely, if proper analysis is made

of the forces in play. Whatever we might think of the *Vida secreta* today, its immediate reception was hostile, considered fatuous, megalomaniac, and untrustworthy. To suggest that such a work really had the effect on Buñuel's employment at MOMA that has been attributed to it is hardly plausible without evidence to that effect, particularly given that there is no lack of evidence for the left-leaning tendencies of both the director himself and his supporters.

Many years later, Dalí would attempt to call off hostilities with Buñuel, but the director appears to have been utterly unyielding. And in his 1955 film *Cela s'appelle l'aurore*, he included Dalí's *Cristo* as the background to a conversation in which a police commissioner tries to convince the film's protagonist to denounce a workman he has hidden in his house. Buñuel is thus accusing his old friend of being a "pintor de comisaría," or even, more clearly, a grass.³

From time to time, Dalí sent Buñuel messages of reconciliation, but the latter was unrelenting and unresponsive, save perhaps to say that they were past the point of no return. Dalí had still not admitted defeat by November 6, 1982, when he sent Buñuel the following telegram: "Querido Buñuel: cada diez años te envío una carta con la cual no estás de acuerdo, pero yo insisto. Esta noche he concebido un film que podemos hacer en diez días, a propósito no del Demon filosófico, sino de nuestro querido diablencillo. Si te da la gana, pasa a verme al castillo de Púbol. Un abrazo. Dalí" (see Figure 36.2).

Buñuel wrote in reply to decline the offer of collaboration: "Recibí tus dos cables estúp. idea sobre diablencillo, pero me retiré del cine hace cinco años y ya no salgo de casa. Lástima.



Figure 36.2 Dalí's telegram to Buñuel, November 6, 1982.

Recibi tus dos cables estúp.
 idea sobre film diablucillo
 per me retiré del cine hace
 cinco años y ya no salgo de
 casa. Lastima Abrazos

Figure 36.3 Buñuel's reply to Dalí's telegram.

Abrazos" (see Figure 36.3). This retirement from cinema was final, as he was to die eight months later.

A new tradition

Of the three friends, it was undoubtedly Lorca who made the most sustained defence of cultural tradition, even during the period when he was most in the grip of the modern, and produced works such as *Poeta en Nueva York*. This may be seen, for example, in his "Danza de la muerte," in which Wall Street is the background for his evocation of an African mask which looms above the crowd of people condemned, day and night, to keep the great machine running. Or, as he writes in the poem: "Y el director del banco observaba el manómetro / que mide el cruel silencio de la moneda."

What stands out here is the seamless integration of the old medieval or tribal dances with Goya's *El entierro de la sardina*, his own time spent in New York, and the Moloch-Machine sequence from Fritz Lang's *Metropolis* (1927), a sequence which in turn combined a vision of New York and modern technology with the ancient practice of human sacrifice, drawing for the latter on *Cabiria* (Giovanni Pastrone 1914).

It is therefore no surprise that the great, primitive mask should pass judgement over Wall Street's cement cliffs, just as in *Metropolis*, where skyscrapers are judged by the Tower of Babel; aerial motorways by the underground passageways of catacombs; the Promethean power of turbines by the crucifixion of the worker looking after them; the robot by the alchemist; the pleasure district by the allegory of the dance of death and the seven deadly sins which adorn the cathedral.

Returning to these questions after his time in New York, in his lecture *Teoría y juego del duende* Lorca considers the poetic hierarchy that brings art into the realm of the ineffable. But how to give form to the *duende's* ethereal ideal? To this end, Lorca gives a survey whose breadth is illuminating. For, following Lorca's own order in his lecture, *duende* may appear unexpectedly in the spirit of Nietzschean tragedy, being nourished by "Pena" (great sorrow)

[mourning], since “el duende no llega si no ve posibilidad de muerte.” But it may also appear in the dark sounds of the *cante jondo*, or in Falla’s *Nocturno del Generalife*. It appears in the ecstasy of the mystics Santa Teresa de Ávila or San Juan de la Cruz; in Goya’s dark paintings, or in Jorge Manrique’s *coplas*; in Quevedo’s *El sueño de las calaveras*, or in Valdés Leal’s *Obispo podrido* (the name given in the *Residencia* to his *Finis gloriae mundi*, painted in 1672 at the Hospital de la Caridad in Seville); in Berruguete, who created the statue of Cardinal Tavera in the Hospital de Tavera in Toledo, and in Velázquez; in Juan de Mena and Martínez Montañés; in Rimbaud and Lautréamont; in the Cervantes of the “Cueva de Montesinos” episode; in the flamenco singer Niña de los Peines; in the bullfighters Rafael el Gallo, Lagartijo, Joselito, Belmonte, and Cagancho. Or else in the poet Pedro Soto de Rojas, or the actress Eleonora Duse; in the image of Paganini we are given by Goethe; in the tower of Sahagún, or the Mudéjar style of the master builders in Catalayud or Teruel; in El Greco’s yellow lightning, or in the apse of El Escorial, or in the song and dance of the sibyls in the cathedrals of Mallorca and Toledo . . .

What leads Lorca to make a catalogue on this scale? It is no coincidence that music features so often in these comparisons, as their trigger, guiding thread, and conclusion: Lorca always gave it a central role in any attempt to formalize his aesthetic. Of his important theoretical works, only *La imagen poética de Don Luis de Góngora* moves away from music into another field, as the Baroque poet is considered a visual creator, one who produces images rather than sounds.

The debt of Lorca’s neo-popularist outlook to the example of Falla is well known, from *La vida breve* to the Cante Jondo competition they organized together in Granada in 1922. Falla inherited from his master Felipe Pedrell – himself often cited by Lorca – an idea which is vital for understanding the poet’s attitude to these matters: that *lo popular* is visible not only in oral sources, but also in the most literary texts. This was founded on the understanding that the *Cantigas* of Alfonso X or *vihuela* players, for example, had themselves echoed the popular music of their own day, which had only managed to achieve written form following the intervention of the higher echelons of society.

This search for the popular requires, of course, an excellent ear. And here we begin to perceive a crux of Lorca’s thought: the segregation of the spurious populism that was the product of picturesqueness or the *españolada*. This led to his radical opposition of *cante jondo* and flamenco: while the former represents spiritual colour, as a manifestation of something eternal whose creation predates all recorded time, flamenco is burdened by local colour and the lingering influence of the eighteenth-century outlook under which it was codified.

This had already been seen by Ortega y Gasset when he evoked the Esquilache riots of 1766, one of the pretexts for which was the rejection of the three-cornered hats set to replace the broad-brimmed *chambergó*. The word *chambergó* had been incorporated into Spanish as an adaptation of *Schomberg*, the surname of the commander of the Flemish guard brought to Spain a century earlier, during the reign of Charles II: In its own day, therefore, it had been just as unpopular and foreign as the French-style three-cornered hats were now. When the Spanish descendants of those subjects of Charles II fought to defend “their” *chambergó*, believing that a foreigner was attempting to deprive them of one of the defining markers of their identity, they were therefore fighting the descendants of those same Walloon guards from whom they had taken that hat. Moreover, by the time of the *Romancero gitano*, the *sombrero de tres picos* – internationalized by Falla, Picasso, and Diáguilev, in the ballet named after it – had become one of the distinguishing symbols of eternal Spain, in the form of the *tricornio* of the *Guardia Civil*.

To get to the root of such heritage, it is therefore necessary to dispense with period elements, replacing them with later artistic practices which update them – such as the various avant-gardes. For *lo popular*, on Lorca's various definitions, does not necessarily discriminate between aristocratic and common, high and low, rural and urban, oral and written, clear and inscrutable, rational and irrational, minority-based and commercial, sacred and profane, living folklore and the museum of ethnography, classical and baroque, or other standard dichotomies. It does not even distinguish between the different arts, but melds them together, along with their different techniques and discoveries.

Lorca's conception of *lo popular* is not only based on what is typical, excluding everything not considered authentic; rather, it includes what is external and foreign, but assimilated and treated as if it really belongs, provided that its origins remain visible. Such is the case with Japanese haikus, or the Afro-American culture of New York and Cuba.

To put it another way: given that one of the surest guarantors of this open concept of *lo popular* lies in its links with the great myths, with fundamental metaphors and essential rituals, these elements should not necessarily be assigned to the past, but should rather be associated with the new web of mythology being spun in the present day. This opens the way for associating – without the need of continuity – Greek tragedy, *autos sacramentales*, *esperpento*, jazz, Buster Keaton, and the raft of mythogenic material derived from the silver screen.

Dalí has suffered much greater misunderstanding, in large part as a result of his own attitude, as he was an inveterate trickster. Nonetheless, we must be unequivocal on the classicist background to his work, so clear in his early periods. Above all, we cannot doubt that his evolution through almost every trend in modern painting is precisely that of a member of the avant-garde, *malgré lui*. This is the only explanation for his idiosyncrasies within surrealism, and the profound alteration in his character and his work which took place during the 1930s. This change was in process throughout the Spanish Civil War, but really took hold at the outbreak of the Second World War, emerging particularly virulently in 1941: that was the year Dalí finished his *Vida secreta*, which can only really be understood in the light of his novel *Rostros ocultos*, the most enigmatic of his written works.

For the present investigation into the establishment of a new tradition, 1941 is also relevant as the year which saw a musical comedy based on Aristophanes's *Clouds*, the butt of whose satire was the surrealists. Dalí also released his ballet *Laberinto*, while extending the run of *Bacanal*, which he had shown on the New York stage in 1939. His intention was to complete the trilogy by adding a third ballet entitled *Sacrificio*, which was to take place in Toledo and El Escorial. If *Bacanal* represented the annihilation of a Wagnerian romanticism which was on its last legs, *Laberinto* showed the way out of this chaos by means of the Ariadne's thread of Tradition. *Sacrificio* was to be the triumph of religion and spiritual values, given form by the painting of El Greco and the music of Bach.

Sacrificio, then, represented his recovery of those childhood visits to Toledo, alongside his friends from the *Residencia*. During those same years, between 1940 and 1945, he painted the *Resurrección de la carne*, which he considered a "seismograph" of his reactions to the Second World War. It features a whole series of rotting corpses attempting to reconstruct their bodies as they emerge from the crypt of the Capuchin church in Toledo.

This would be followed by his *Manifiesto místico* in April 1951, with its vindication of Santa Teresa de Jesús, San Juan de la Cruz, and El Escorial; or his collaboration in making the sets for Luis Escobar's version of *Don Juan Tenorio*, and a very interesting "neo-mystic" film project entitled *El alma*. After his *Cristo de Port Lligat*, which bore the hallmarks of San Juan, the example of Velázquez would also be crucial, crystallising all these tendencies towards a

return to Spanish tradition in the face of the frequent changes of direction in contemporary painting, which, he maintained, revealed its lack of style, intelligence, and conviction.

Unlike Dalí or Lorca, however, Buñuel was forced to confront much more specific problems when embarking on his most experimental period. Both *Un chien andalou* and *L'Âge d'or* had been independently financed, away from the commercial machine: the first was paid for by the director himself, while the second relied on the patronage of the Viscounts of Noailles. Moreover, *Tierra sin pan / Las Hurdes* was largely financed by Ramón Acín, a friend who owed his wealth to a lottery win. However, the ascent to power of a right-wing government resulted in a ban on showing the film. By 1934, Buñuel was therefore a director renowned for being radical, but whose films remained underground and made no impact on the box office.

As noted previously, the need to provide for his family led Buñuel to venture into commercial cinema in 1935 and 1936, with the production company Filmófono – a foray that would be ended by the Spanish Civil War. However, it was this commercial experience, together with the time he spent in 1940s Hollywood working on dubbing, which allowed him to advance so rapidly and successfully in the Mexican field, as he came to shoot certain films in as little as four, three, or even two weeks.

Buñuel was 46 on arrival in Mexico, by which time his personality was definitively fixed; his cultural background thus remained entirely Spanish, even though his themes, plots, and characters all took on features of his adopted country. Carlos Arniches is still behind *La hija del engaño* (1951), a new version of *Don Quintín el amargao*, already adapted for Filmófono. Similarly, Galdós is in the background of *Nazarín* (1959), and *Los olvidados* evokes the Spanish picaresque, or Pío Baroja's *La busca*.

All of which is to say nothing of the telling example of *Viridiana* (1960), which in principle was to be shot in Mexico, but was eventually made in Spain. Along with *Nazarín* and *Tristana* (1970), *Viridiana* forms a triptych of films inspired by Galdós, since it draws on two of his novels, *Halma* and *Angel Guerra*, the latter being set partially in Toledo, where the entirety of *Tristana* takes place, despite the novel's action being predominantly located in Madrid. The whole film is an homage to Toledo, and includes, of course, the tomb of Cardinal Tavera and other sites which Buñuel often visited on those *Residencia* visits, together with Lorca and Dalí.

In a letter to Ricardo Muñoz Suay of October 8, 1960, Buñuel admitted that in filming *Viridiana*, he was making his return to “ese famoso realismo español.” In other words, more than three decades later, he is here picking up more or less where he left off in 1933 with *Las Hurdes*, and his explicit appeal to the painters Ribera and Zurbarán. However, other films from his second French period are no less replete with elements of Spanish tradition: *La vía láctea* (1969) owes much to Menéndez Pelayo's *Historia de los heterodoxos españoles*, among whose number was the Priscilian invoked by Fernando de los Ríos. Moreover, the central idea of the abortive dinner in *Le charme discret de la bourgeoisie* (1972) comes from *Don Juan Tenorio*, some lines of which are quoted on a theatre stage in the dinner sequence.

Nonetheless, Buñuel's most productive phase, when it comes to evaluating a tradition and founding a new one, is perhaps his Mexican period. The films that he shot there put forward a concrete proposal which has not always received the attention it demands. This is doubtless the result of the pull of the “surrealist” label so often attached to him, despite the fact that he spent the bulk of his career in Mexico, often in a context very different from his own beginnings, or his final French period. If pushed to assign this Mexican period a contextualizing label, we might perhaps opt for “Third Cinema,” as it was coined and used by filmmakers such as Glauber Rocha, Fernando Solanas, and Octavio Getino, contrasting it with a domineering, commercial Hollywood, and with the European tradition of the *auteur*.

In this field, Buñuel's influence has been decisive. On the one hand, he helped to bring an end to the false dichotomy of slogans dividing filmic practices between American commercial aspirations and Soviet doctrinal aims ("neither Hollywood nor Mosfilm"). On the other hand, he updated the melodrama in ways that prove interesting in the light of subsequent developments in the Latin American audiovisual industry. Central to the question of his influence, above all, was his intuiting and avoidance of some of the dangers of Italian neo-realism, fortified by the presence, patronage, and prestige of Cesare Zavattini in certain Hispanic circles, including Cuba. The Aragonese director never hid his instinctive dislike of the overblown sentimentality so common to that kind of cinema, or of the obvious way it conveyed its messages, as it brushed aside the irrational moments that come with real human behaviour. Without that lesson from Buñuel, neither Brazilian *Cinema Novo* nor Cuban *Nuevo Cine* would have advanced towards originality and pluralism as quickly as they did.

It is no coincidence that these matters were raised by someone who had worked with Buñuel in Mexico: Alfredo Guevara, founder and director of the *Instituto Cubano de Arte e Industria Cinematográficos* (ICAIC). When he took charge of that institution and had to define the area with which the new, revolutionary cinema would concern itself, he insisted that the "Cine de la Libertad" took as its framework two classic Buñuel films, *Tierra sin pan* and *Los olvidados*, which demonstrated an engagement with an impoverished reality.

In some of his later polemics, Guevara would insist that Buñuel did not only constitute an ideal when producing this "realist" cinema with a social message. Rather, he was still an ideal to be aspired to when he returned to his old ways – which bore closer resemblance to surrealism – in films such as *El ángel exterminador*, which the party line in Cuba was to criticize as "bourgeois," and which Guevara himself knew well, having been part of the team which shot the film.

In this respect, a good part of Buñuel's legacy to the *Tercer Cine* was not a matter of content, but of form, suggesting non-reductionist ways of putting across his criticisms or reflecting social reality. Moreover, he did this while not falling prey to avant-garde traps, as well as avoiding stumbling into formalism, with a *mise-en-scène* that incorporated, and even concealed, his complexity of purpose beneath visual formulations that were obviously classicizing in appearance. This gave even more power to the irrational images that flashed through those neutral filmic mechanisms.

Properly considered, this approach is really not far from that of Lorca or Dalí. In their own ways, each of the three men returned to the great store of Spanish tradition that had nourished them in the *Residencia de Estudiantes*. Yet they made this return not to endorse that tradition, but to renew it, bringing to it some of the most advanced avant-garde features of their era. In doing so, they created new foundations for the cinema, literature, and painting of the twentieth century.

Notes

- 1 This famous phrase was coined by the poet Antonio Machado (himself associated with the ILE) in his poem "El mañana efímero" (1910), and refers to the vulgar, uncreative, dormant Spain that has yet to be reborn.
- 2 The poem was titled "Oda didáctica a Salvador Dalí" when Lorca, introduced by Jorge Guillén, read it in Valladolid on April 8, 1926, and was published with its definitive title as "Oda a Salvador Dalí" in the April edition of the *Revista de Occidente* (Laura Arias Serrano, *Las fuentes de la historia del arte en la época contemporánea*. Barcelona: Ediciones del Serbal, 2012, 474).
- 3 In the Spanish text of this chapter the author is making a pun on the word "comisaría," meaning both police station and commission.

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