

ANDRÉ BAZIN ON MARS: THE EXASPERATION OF ONTOLOGICAL REALISM AS A CRITICAL PARADIGM IN THE MAGAZINE *FILM IDEAL* AND THE FILMS OF PEDRO LAZAGA

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In issue 77-78 of the magazine *Nuestro Cine*, published in late 1968, Vicente Molina Foix (40) described the work of Spanish filmmaker Pedro Lazaga as “a mirage occurring during a brief space of time among a small group of specialist critics (in which I participated, perhaps as one of the most active exponents) who thought they saw in Lazaga the potential revival of a genre [comedy] so habitually abused in Spanish cinema.” The critic was referring here to the attention Lazaga’s films had received in the magazine *Film Ideal* during the 1960s, especially those produced at such a prolific rate since the 1950s, specifically since *Roberto el diablo* (1956).

In the recognition of Lazaga’s work in the pages of *Film Ideal*, two significant elements can be identified. The first is an effort to develop and apply, in an original and unique way, the theories of André Bazin to the practice of film criticism, after the realism associated with neorealism as a critical paradigm (evident in *Objetivo*, in the ear-

ly issues of *Film Ideal* and in *Cinema Universitario*) had given way critical realism (in the final issues of *Cinema Universitario*, in the cultural publication *Acento Cultural* and in *Nuestro Cine*). Founded in 1956, in its early days *Film Ideal* combined a particular conception of neorealism with the Catholic perspectives of the time on cinema, giving rise to what came to be known as “*neoidealismo*”. The magazine would move away from these ideas in the early 1960s to adopt the “*auteur/mise en scène*” paradigm developed by *Cahiers du cinéma*. Bazin was one of the founders of this French publication and, furthermore, a Catholic, making it possible to establish a conceptual connection with the early days of *Film Ideal*.

Secondly, Lazaga constituted a somewhat provocative answer to the quest for a point of reference in Spanish cinema that was not part of the “new cinema” acclaimed by the editors of *Nuestro Cine* and promoted by Spain’s Office of Cinematography and Theatre in the mid-1960s. *Nues-*

tro Cine was established in 1961, continuing the trajectory of the aforementioned magazine *Objetivo*, *Cinema Universitario* and *Acento Cultural*. In its critical perspective it positioned itself close to publications like *Cinema Nuovo* or *Positif*. Along with the rise of the New Spanish Cinema, another of the key themes of the early 1960s was the definition of realism (MONTERDE, 2003). The realism of *Nuestro Cine* was founded on the idea that the cinema offered a way of examining reality, its social structures, and what lies behind external appearances. The underlying theoretical basis was Marxist literary theory and criticism, specifically the ideas of Georg Lukács as interpreted by the Italian film critic Guido Aristarco.

The group of film critics writing for *Film Ideal* known as the *marcianos* (“Martians”)—Ricardo Buceta, José María Palá and Marcelino Villegas, along with contributions by certain “travel companions” like Pere Gimferrer, José Luis Guarner, Vicente Molina Foix or Javier Sagastizábal—also advocated realism at this time, but their conception of it was very different. This conception was based on the notions about the nature of cinema offered by André Bazin, taken to an extreme to turn them into what Miguel Rubio (TUBAU, 1983: 177-178) describes as “probably the most nihilistic art theory of all: that to be a good film director one had to be a bad film director [...], because a good director has certain intentions while a bad one does not. This group developed a kind of *super-Bazinism*, for want of a better name, with the elaboration of the theory of impure art, of the involuntary documentary: this takes Bazin’s theory of ontological realism to its logical extreme.”

This critical approach needs to be understood in the context of *Film Ideal*’s confrontation with *Nuestro Cine*. Indeed, it could be considered the climax of a rivalry that gave rise to one of the most unique and fruitful periods in Spanish film criticism. But in addition, as José Luis Guarner suggests, the proposition of the Martians, “who were purists [...], unwittingly imposed a structur-

alist restriction: we don’t believe in content, we don’t believe in anything; we only believe in the reality of the still frame. Without realising it, they brought one of the hobbyhorses of modern criticism into the arena, but on a level that allowed for considerable confusion” (TUBAU, 1983: 161).

THE MARTIAN BAZIN

As is well known, many of Bazin’s notions are based on his view of realism as intrinsic to photography due to its “technical objectivity”: “Originality in photography as distinct from originality in painting lies in the essential objective character of photography. [...] For the first time, an image of the world is formed automatically, without the creative intervention of man. The personality of the photographer enters into the proceedings only in his selection of the object to be photographed” (1967: 13).

The cinema, by adding motion to the photograph, is “objectivity in time” (1967: 14). For Bazin the cinema also constitutes a key piece of the history of representation in the arts, characterised in his opinion by an increasing tendency towards convergence with reality. This trajectory brings together technique and expression: synchronised sound, the development of new cinematographic processes, the introduction of colour and of wide-screen formats have been accompanied by a series of expressive techniques that respect the profilmic space, tending to reinforce the ontological connection between image and reality.

The French critic is decisively supportive of such techniques, as becomes evident in his reflections on montage. Bazin prefers filmmakers who entrust the film’s meaning to the image connected to reality over those who seek to manipulate that image in the *mise en scène*, like the Expressionists do, or in its juxtaposition through montage. While the latter abandon the objectivity of the image or situate the meaning outside it, in the connection between the shots the former main-

tain the spatio-temporal continuity of the action presented. Bazin argues that montage contradicts the ontological principle of the image, falsifying reality, and thus he even rules it out altogether in certain circumstances: “‘When the essence of a scene demands the simultaneous presence of two or more factors in the action, montage is ruled out.’ It can reclaim its right to be used, however, whenever the import of the action no longer depends on physical contiguity, even though this may be implied.” (1967: 50). While *formativist* filmmakers begin with preconceptions that definitively mark the significance of the image, pushing it in a single direction (hence the manipulation or use of montage), realists are defined by their use of techniques like the sequence shot or depth of field (1990c) which allow the entry into the image of ambiguity, a quality they associate with reality.¹

In the value that Bazin places on the absence of preconceptions we can glean a critical approach that influenced *Film Ideal*. Non-intervention in the process of creation of the film image means the absence of subjective mediation, other than the choice of frame; the absence of a filter of *prejudices* between reality, its representation and, ultimately, the viewer. Considering this from the perspective of reception, techniques that influence the connection between image and reality, and that do not contradict the nature of cinema—like the sequence shot, depth of field or controlled use of montage—allow the spectator a greater degree of freedom in constructing meaning insofar as that meaning, in principle, is only partly determined beforehand. In the context of film criticism, the situation desired by the editors of *Film Ideal* is the unarmed confrontation of the critic with the film, also without prejudices, *with freedom*, without dissecting it analytically or subjecting it to a sociological gaze.

One of the accusations made of the *Nuestro Cine* critics was that they watched a film with preconceived ideas, and that these entailed the application of *deductive criticism* rather than the pref-

erable use of *inductive criticism*. The development of Bazin’s thought in the pages of *Film Ideal* would result in the positive appraisal of films that met the standards of cinema as defined and defended by the French critic. Thus, while it true that watching a film—from the perspective of creation or reception—without prejudices is a concept that could be attributed to Bazin, it is also true that the development and exasperation of his ideas would turn into a critical paradigm for judging films, and would thus in a sense entail a return to deductive criticism, to the preconceived notions that were so reviled.

In any case, such contradictions were of little importance when Bazin’s theories began to be developed in *Film Ideal*. In *Un arte vivo*, Javier Sagastizabal (1963a) directly links modernity in cinema to the aforementioned long takes that capture the spatio-temporal continuity of the action. According to Sagastizabal such shots result in a more fluid narration and an increase in the activity required of the spectator, since the meaning is no longer completely spelt out. This critic also points out two other aspects of modern cinema: the predominance of the character in the story, expressed through the *mise en scène*—notable among the examples he includes is *Hatari* (Howard Hawks, 1962), a key film in the magazine’s critical canon in those years—to the point that its dramatic progression loses importance, or the new appreciation for what he calls “*tiempos muertos*” (“dead times”): “it is only the dead times which, more than the external twists and turns of the story, reflect the true measure of the value of numerous modern films” (SAGASTIZABAL, 1963a: 134). By “dead times” Sagastizabal means scenes or shots that interrupt the story to linger on the characters, providing the spectator with information on their feelings, motivations or desires, although it is also true that shots that respect the continuity of the action, that do not break up the scenes with elliptical pauses, can fulfil a similar function. The predominance of the

character does not mean that the film explores the character's psychology. Indeed, Sagastizabal later differentiates between what he calls character films and actor films: while the former are moulded to the needs of psychological analysis of the character, directors who pursue the latter become dependent on the actors "to the point that they completely take over (Renoir, Cukor, Logan, Becker, etc.) [...]. Thus, while in 'character films' the actors are required to engage in 'psychology', in 'actor films' it is enough for them simply to be men" (SAGASTIZABAL, 1963b: 467). Actor films are less prone to prejudices, to a predetermined establishment of meaning, than character films.

IN THE VALUE THAT BAZIN PLACES ON THE ABSENCE OF PRECONCEPTIONS WE CAN GLEAN A CRITICAL APPROACH THAT INFLUENCED FILM IDEAL

Sagastizabal claims that modern cinema gives preference to "the subtle discovery of a creative mind [...] over the most emphatic rhetorical discourse, the most pretentious psychological treatise and the most pompous philosophical thesis" (1963a: 135).² His claims could still be situated within the boundaries of *Bazinian* orthodoxy. Overstepping those boundaries, however, was the development of the Martian revolution, which in its more exalted moments would assert that the artistic development of cinema contradicts its ontology. This is what Buceta claims in *Reflexiones para mejor entender* (1964b); for the auteur, "the cinema only attains the category of art when it ceases to be what it is by nature: a mechanical reproduction of reality" (1964b: 197). Moreover, the cinema "only succeeded in being admitted as such [art] when it turned into a language" (1964b: 197), and this art form, as it pursues an objective of communication, is founded

on conventions that limit its meaning and come into conflict with the alleged ambiguity of the realist image. However, the history of cinema—the history of cinema as technique—has evolved in an inverse direction to the history of cinema as art, because the ever greater perfection of the image has "enhanced its inherent realism and hindered the manipulations to deontologize it" (1964b: 197). This explains the opposition of numerous auteurs to technical changes. Buceta asks the question: "Is a certain weight of conventionalism inherent to cinema? My opinion would be no, provided that we don't expect cinema to be what it cannot be" (1964b: 197). Indeed, according to Buceta there are films that escape convention: *Something to Live For* (George Stevens, 1952), *La venganza de los Villalobos* (Fernando Méndez, 1955), *L'ultima violenza* (Raffaello Matarazzo and Silvio Amadio, 1957), *Man in the Shadow* (Jack Arnold, 1957), *The Giants of Thessaly* (I giganti della Tessaglia. Gli argonauti, Riccardo Freda, 1960), *Goliath against the Giants* (Goliath contro i giganti, Guido Malatesta, 1961) or, obviously, *Trampa para Catalina* (Pedro Lazaga, 1961) and *Siete espartanos* (Pedro Lazaga, 1962). Buceta claims that all these films "are prophecies of what cinema will be once it frees itself from the conventionalisms [...] that choke the medium today" (1964b: 196).

Reflexiones para mejor entender is the culmination of an iconoclastic approach that began with the first reviews of the Martians. Obviously, the references that support their assertions stand out, especially when *Film Ideal* was still immersed in the wake of the auteur paradigm. In his review of *The Sins of Rachel Cade* (Gordon Douglas, 1961), Palá (1963a: 616) was already describing the auteur as a relic "of a way of understanding art that to me reeks terribly of the academic and of art collector's snobbery." Beyond the provocation, and the repetitions of the extremist version of the ideas of Bazin (2003), who had denounced their more outrageous expressions, describing them as an "aesthetic cult of personality", the Martian

reappraisal of the auteur paradigm is founded on a change in the conception of the *mise en scène*. The auteur apologists understood this to refer to a series of choices made by directors associated with the way in which the film takes shape—the choice of points of view, shots and their duration, the performances of the actors, etc.—in close relation with their particular personal worlds and preferred themes. The notion of the *mise en scène* underscores the indissoluble coherence between content and form, in its condition as an essential route of access to the auteur’s “vision of the world”, that which gives his work its unity—referring both to the individual film and to his films as a whole—and which makes it possible to differentiate true auteurs from mere artisans. For the Martians, however, the *mise en scène* is above all the point of access to the ambiguity of reality. This obviously also entails a change to the criteria for evaluation, and many of the films they considered important were not included in the magazine’s film canon. It is true that the Martians also dealt with recognised directors—Richard Fleischer, for example—but, as made clear in Buceta’s article cited above, much of the future of the cinema would depend on filmmakers and films outside not only of the canon of that time but also of the canon that the history of criticism has been building up to our times.

In the films reviewed by the Martians, special value is given to those scenes, and even shots, that are free of symbolism, where there is no manipulation of the image, the action is shown in continuity with no tricks or fragmentation, and where cinematic language, according to their claims, gives way to reality, regardless of the intention or skill of the film’s director. It was common for some scenes to be rejected and others accepted in the same film: this is the case of *The Pigeon That Took Rome* (Melville Shavelson, 1962) (BUCETA, 1964a: 96); and even for the ones accepted to be the result of restrictions or the industry or of the director’s lack of expertise: the scenes starring Richard Bur-

ton and Elizabeth Taylor in *The V.I.P.s* (Anthony Asquith, 1963), due to an “incidental obligation of the star system, possess longer shots” (PALÁ, 1963b: 628), and the film, “thanks to its blatant adoption of star system principles, [is] an example of spontaneous and natural cinema similar to *The Son of the Sheik* in Italy or *La venganza de los Villalobos* (Fernando Méndez) in Mexico” (1963b: 629); in *The Little Shepherd of Kingdom Come* (Andrew V. McLaglen, 1961), on the other hand, “what could be considered the product of a clumsy directing method is an orchestrated rebellion of life and of the person-actor against schemes and characters” (PALÁ, 1964: 95), and this gives the film’s direction a quality that is “primitive” and free of prejudices. Moreover, reality must also be visible in the shots and in their articulation in the scenes and sequences that comprise the narrative. This is what Villegas stresses in his review of *He Can’t Stop Doing It* (Er kann’s nicht lassen, Axel von Ambesser, 1962). For the reviewer (1964a: 100), the film is planned out in such a way that it has to be accepted “as a reality. [...] At no moment is there proper narration, nobody recounts anything [...]. Any notion of exposition, climax, denouement, emotion, suspense, ending, etc., is abandoned, and the film joins the ranks of all great movies by becoming a series of moving pictures of a few people and a few places.”

The reaction in the magazine itself to the direction that Bazin’s ideas were being pushed in by the Martians did not take long to appear. This reaction was based on a return to the auteur, to *Bazinian* orthodoxy and to a freer critical approach, but not so much in the sense of simple appreciation without preconceptions—the Martians themselves had demonstrated that this would be impossible—but with the capacity to apply different critical hypotheses in accordance with the specific needs of each film. Sagastizabal warned of the consequences of adopting exclusionary aesthetic postulates: “In other words, if films with montage, literary or pictorial elements are inappropriate,

none of those jewels of cinema like *La huelga*, *En el umbral de la vida* or *Le carrosse d'or* could be evaluated on fair terms" (1966: 119). The critic thus advocated an end to banner waving, and a rejection of critical approaches that lead to phobias and phobias.

Ramón G. Redondo repeated the call to return to the auteur. He agrees that reality is present in the films cited by Buceta in *Reflexiones para mejor entender*, "but reality in the sense that would be understood by the pre-Socratic materialists; in other words, reality as matter and as matter in its most immediate sense" (1964: 257), and he compares them with the work of Richard Fleischer, another filmmaker popular with the Martians. In Fleischer's films,

the aim of the director was to insert [reality] inside a coherent story and through a personal and specific *mise en scène* that would enable him to offer his vision of the world: Fleischer is an auteur. Dealing with an auteur, we must speak of a particular style in his *mise en scène*. And where there is a style, there is a language. Of course, none of this happens, or it happens to a lesser degree, in the other films cited. And—an inevitable paradox—the presence of reality, without subjective intervention in it, contributes an air of farce to all those narrated stories due to the absence of a creator [...] who could build a climate and an amenable gateway of understanding between his world and ours. (1964: 257-258)

The return of the auteur was accompanied by the inescapable view that cinema "is a narrative medium that makes use of an expressive language based on images and sounds" (MARTÍNEZ LEÓN, 1965: 293). The film production process entails preconceptions, choices based on prior notions, and "the fact that we may prefer [...] a film by Raoul Walsh or another by Louis Malle, cannot be based on the fact that the first presents us directly with reality and the other with language, but rather, ultimately, that Walsh makes use of language in such a way that he conveys to us a truthful appearance of reality, while Malle does so in a more obscure

way and his vision of reality thus seems more distorted" (MARTÍNEZ LEÓN, 1965: 293).

THE BAZINIAN LAZAGA

In Lazaga's films, what attracts the most interest is his *mise en scène*. But it could be argued that many of the particular features that define it, and which so delight the radical *Bazinians*, were developed before *Roberto el diablo*. In *Cuerda de presos* (1956), for example, the scene of Camino and Silvestre's farewell is presented in a single shot presenting the whole scene. Depth of field is used in many shots in *La vida es maravillosa* (1955), and the film even makes unequivocal use of certain "dead times" as defined by Sagastizabal in *Un arte vivo* (1963a). These resources are present, but they are applied to a film with a clear and *important* theme, which could be summed up as the triumph of an Arcadian innocence over the complexity (and with it the wickedness) of the ways of the modern world.

What is valued most in Lazaga's work, however, is that such techniques are not placed at the service of transcendent themes or, as in *La vida es maravillosa*, artistic compositions. The review of *Trampa para Catalina* by José Luis Guarner marks the turning point in the appreciation of the filmmaker's work. Guarner highlights that the director manages to "see and show characters and situations as directly and spontaneously as possible" (1964: 206), and offers as an example the scene in which Catalina (Concha Velasco) performs a cha-cha-cha with a geography lesson over "Paramaná": "It is not merely a lucky application of an idea of comedy, or an idea of a musical. It is the perfect observation of a character at a revealing moment for her character, respecting her ontological, spatial and temporal reality. In short, an idea of documentary in its broadest sense" (1964: 206).

Also evaluated positively is the fact that the characters in his films really *are*, rather than merely *pretending to be*—another means of ac-

cess to reality. This is suggested by Sagastizabal in his review of *Fin de semana* (1963), in which the characters are outlined in broad strokes in a story bereft of artifice. This last aspect, which might be rejected by critics of content, nevertheless means that the attention is focused on a *mise en scène* in which the actors act freely and to which it is not possible to apply any subsequent “tricks”. Lazaga’s filmmaking is created and composed in the shot: “If Lazaga’s films should be considered modern it is only because of the ‘revealing’ dimension arising from a *mise en scène* that aims to go beyond the merely external appearances of the script” (SAGASTIZABAL, 1965: 66). Moreover, Lazaga’s importance lies

in taking some actors and allowing them to act completely free and unrestrained in front of the camera, yet not uncontrolled in the style of the “amateurists” who make up the new generation of Spanish cinema (Summers, Regueiro, etc.). Contrary to filmmakers like these, Lazaga does not film “wildly”, knowing that later on he can add in sound effects (songs, etc.) or editing tricks to patch up imperfections in the shoot. [...] He values a gesture in all its authentic truth over the artifice of any technical laboratory trick. And this is the CinemaScope format works so well for his films. (SAGASTIZABAL, 1965: 66).

The limited application of montage and the use of widescreen formats effectively place Lazaga on the path of convergence between cinema and reality. Sagastizabal finds the unity of action, time and space in some of the scenes portrayed by Ángela (Elvira Quintillá), specifically in the scene related to the character’s solitude: “one of the few glorious moments of Spanish cinema” (1965: 66). A similar reaction is offered by Marcelino Villagas in his review of *Siete espartanos*. The reviewer cites the long take of the flight of the Spartans at the beginning of the film—“there are no insertions or camera tricks to provide emotion, suspense, etc. The changes of shot occur only when there is a change to the situation” (1964b: 281)—to char-

acterise it as the work of a primitive filmmaker who displays a desire to escape the conventional language of the cinema, even if he doesn’t always succeed in doing so.

But the film that best embodies the Martians’ way of understanding cinema is *Dos chicas locas, locas* (1964). Indeed, as Vicente Molina Foix suggests, Buceta and his companions had up to that time found films that only partly illustrated the principles contained in *Reflexiones para mejor entender*: “Now, with *Dos chicas* we have one of the

THE REFLECTIONS AND CRITICISM OF THE MARTIANS IN THE PAGES OF FILM IDEAL CONSTITUTED A NEW, ALBEIT EPHEMERAL, CRITICAL PARADIGM THAT WOULD COEXIST WITH (WITHOUT MANAGING TO REPLACE) THE PARADIGM BASED ON THE AUTEUR AND THE MISE EN SCÈNE

best examples of a certain way of making films, generally absent from movie screens, and which of course contains in its perfection the seeds of years and years of filmmaking and of the miraculous results of a director’s connection with some established forms of production.” (1965: 374).

The film displays “a wild freedom on every level” (1965: 374); it is a *chronicle*, not a *story*, of events: “a simple succession of events on a primitive physical, dynamic level, pure phenomenology of the event and of the act, a slice of life in motion” (1965: 374). To this we should add the absence of prior planning in the performance of the actors, of any preconception about the acting, or of any technique that would give us access to the character’s psychology. In this film, the reviewer continues, these characteristics of modern cinema become even more recognisable than they are in certain examples of new cinema: in *The Fire Within* (*Le feu follet*, 1963), for example, Louis Malle distorts the character por-

trayed by Maurice Ronet because “everything in it is conceived on the basis of attitudes imposed beforehand; a theory of the character is applied to the actor”; in *Breathless* (*À bout de souffle*, 1960) Jean-Luc Godard makes use of certain shots intended to reveal the psychology of the character portrayed by Jean Seberg (1965: 374).

The recognition of Lazaga’s films also represents a provocative commitment to popular cinema: “The real *raison d’être* of these films [...] can be found watching *Martes y trece*, *Los tramposos*, *Dos chicas locas, locas*, *Luna de verano*, *Sabían demasiado*, etc., on a Sunday afternoon, in a local movie theatre” (PALÁ, 1965: 363). The director, furthermore, was able to make the most of the conditions in which he made his films. The commercial turn that his career had taken permitted him a greater freedom of experimentation in terms of the *mise en scène*, with some mistakes but also with some very notable successes (SAGASTIZABAL, 1965). In short, as Guarner pointed out, “Lazaga has become a director who knows how to make films, who makes a lot of films [...] of which some are good and others are not, as is true of everyone. Lazaga’s advantage, in my opinion, is that he shoots seven films every two years, of which two prove good; his balance sheet is thus always better than that of others who in the same time make only one film, and a bad one.” (1964: 206).

CONCLUSIONS: THE MARTIAN CRITICAL PARADIGM

In light of the foregoing analysis, the reflections and criticism of the Martians in the pages of *Film Ideal* constituted a new, albeit ephemeral, critical paradigm that would coexist with (without managing to replace) the paradigm based on the auteur and the *mise en scène*. The Martian paradigm is founded on the following five points:

1. Moving beyond the *mise en scène* understood as the manifestation of an “auteur’s vision of the world” that fuses content and expression.

The *mise en scène* is now assessed for its capacity to maintain the ontological connection between image and ambiguous reality. This results in a positive appraisal of films that go beyond the limits of the idealist-film canon, which is still restricted to the so-called “auteurs”.

2. Reality can be present in the shot, the scene and the film as a whole. Along with techniques that allow the representation of the action in its spatio-temporal continuity, as Bazin proposes, the Martians positively appraise freedom in the performance of the actors and the predominance of the character in the story to the point of diluting the latter. They also prefer a simple succession of events to a story, understood as the result of the placement of those events in a series through causal, spatial and temporal relations in a dramatic progression towards their resolution.

3. The film is valued as a *product*, not for the process that led to that product. Indeed (and this is sometimes recognised by the critics), the reality present in many of the titles they review could be attributed to a lack of direction of actors, restrictions of the industry or the lack of expertise of the filmmaker in the use of narrative and expressive techniques. None of this is relevant; only the film as a product matters.

4. A realistic product is the consequence of a type of cinema made without prejudices, which is invented with each film; hence the primitive quality associated with these directors. Bazin stressed that certain cinematographic techniques reflected the existence of preconceptions that sought to impose meaning on the image. The Martians radicalised this idea by suggesting that modernity and the future of cinema could be found in films where conventions are reduced to their minimum expression; in fact, they even claimed that the filmic language based on these conventions contradicts the nature of cinema itself.

5. Last of all, prior judgements should also be abandoned in the practice of criticism. While this proposition would naturally lead to reviewing films

outside the magazine's canon, it is undeniable that the conversion of the Martians' extremist versions of *Bazinian* theories into a paradigm represented a return to the imposition of prior judgements.

Buceta, Palá, Villegas and their travel companions found in Pedro Lazaga's films the expression of many of their critical theories, particularly in the film *Dos chicas locas, locas*. The recognition of the Catalan director also represented the proposal taken from popular cinema of an alternative to the New Spanish Cinema acclaimed by *Nuestro Cine*. Lazaga's films are realistic, not because they attempt to describe everyday life or to transcend it by revealing what lay behind external appearances (as argued by Spanish critics since the mid-1950s), but because he understood cinema "as a mechanism for recording and successive reproduction (in other words, as a pioneer would see it)" (PALÁ, 1965: 263); they are thus realistic in the most *Bazinian* sense of the word, and this came to be considered a modern quality that was quite unheard of in the cinema of the time. ■

NOTES

- 1 For more details of Bazin's ideas, only very roughly outlined here, see also ANDREW (1978: 169-216 o 2010), as well as his own writings (1967, 1990, 1999 and 2002).
- 2 The reference here to the films acclaimed by *Nuestro Cine* is explicit. This magazine did not hesitate to respond to frequent provocations in an attempt to undermine the ideas on which they were founded with the publication of the series by Gérard Gozlan. *Las delicias de la ambigüedad. Análisis del sistema crítico de André Bazin* (1964), which originally appeared in issues 45 and 46 (1962) of the magazine *Positif*.

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ANDRÉ BAZIN ON MARS: THE EXASPERATION OF ONTOLOGICAL REALISM AS A CRITICAL PARADIGM IN THE MAGAZINE *FILM IDEAL* AND THE FILMS OF PEDRO LAZAGA

Abstract

The 1960s could be considered one of the more fruitful periods of Spanish film criticism, due mainly to the rivalry between the magazines *Film Ideal* and *Nuestro Cine*, each of which posited very different views on the nature and role of cinema. The aim of this article is to explore one of the key points of this rivalry: French critic André Bazin's conception of realism as developed in the mid-1960s by the Spanish critics referred to as the "marcianos" ("Martians")—particularly Marcelino Villegas, José María Palá and Ricardo Buceta—in the magazine *Film Ideal*, turning it into a critical paradigm that would lead to a reappraisal of films left out of the canon of the day, and even out of the annals of film history in subsequent years. Notable among these is the work of director Pedro Lazaga.

Key words

Theory and Film Criticism; Realism; André Bazin; *Film Ideal*; Pedro Lazaga.

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ANDRÉ BAZIN EN MARTE. LA EXASPERACIÓN DEL REALISMO ONTOLÓGICO COMO PARADIGMA CRÍTICO EN LA REVISTA *FILM IDEAL* Y EL CINE DE PEDRO LAZAGA

Resumen

Los años sesenta pueden considerarse uno de los momentos más fructíferos de la crítica cinematográfica española, debido sobre todo a la rivalidad entre las revistas *Film Ideal* y *Nuestro Cine*, cada una con planteamientos muy distintos sobre la naturaleza y la función del cine. Este artículo pretende aproximarse a uno de los puntos más destacados de esta rivalidad: la deriva que a mediados de la década toma el realismo tal como lo define el crítico francés André Bazin en manos de los críticos denominados "marcianos" —sobre todo Marcelino Villegas, José María Palá y Ricardo Buceta— desde la revista *Film Ideal* hasta constituir un paradigma crítico que conducirá a revalorizar películas alejadas del canon del momento, incluso del historiográfico tiempo posterior. Entre estas destacan las del director Pedro Lazaga.

Palabras clave

Teoría y crítica del cine; realismo; André Bazin; *Film Ideal*; Pedro Lazaga.

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