

# FRANCO AND THE FILMMAKERS: CRITICAL MYTHS, TRANSPARENT REALITIES

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«...ya no hay protagonista, solo hay coro». (ORTEGA Y GASSET)

## INTRODUCTION

Like so many contested pasts, the history of Spain in the twentieth century has often been presented in binary terms.<sup>0</sup> Torn apart by a brutal civil war, then subject to nearly forty years of dictatorial rule, Spain offers those who seek to analyze her a facile opportunity to divide cleanly the good from the evil. As cultural historian R. A. Stradling has argued, «much writing about the Spanish Civil War is concerned to defend what might be called the ‘mutual hegemony’ of two opposed myths,» a phenomenon «evident right across the spectrum of reportage..., source material, and... professional historiography...»<sup>1</sup>

Similarly, much analysis of the representation of Francisco Franco himself is framed in binary terms: myth or reality. The prevalence of such a bifurcated perspective is not terribly surprising -indeed, it seems quite natural when one considers that the trajectory of Franco's rise to power originated in a violent fratricidal conflict that left the nation deeply divided. In order to address his country's wounds, Franco quelled dissent by imposing a harsh political order and attempted to cast an official image of unity and calm through a series of grandiose self-projections, but the rifts that were opened during the civil war were not easily healed.

When examining the Franco mythology today, it is tempting to seek to reconcile these rifts by focusing exclusively on the dictator himself and countering his blunt forms of propaganda with an equally narrow notion of myth. Such an approach sees myth as essentially a distortion of factual realities, and thus devises strategies to unmask what it considers myth's false narrative. This undertaking, especially in the case of a figure as Franco, produces striking and undeniably valuable results. But such a singular conception of myth -as a «false consciousness»- also leaves much unexamined, for the project of dismantling any mythology is far more complicated than discovering whatever truths are presumed to lie beneath the surface.<sup>2</sup> Myth is a *process*, inextricably tied up with both representation and narration. In the broadest sense, to represent or narrate our experience at all is, necessarily (and at times appropriately), to encourage myth. The danger in posing myth against reality, then, is that such a polarized formulation obscures the *procedural* dimensions of myth.

Instead of approaching the mythology surrounding Franco with tools that will yield absolutist interpretations, I would like to reverse the focus and, using a small group of film representations of Franco, examine the very tools by which we dismantle, and often reassemble, myths. The struggle of people against power, says Milan Kundera, is the struggle of memory against forgetting, a conflict between the independent witness and the official manipulators of evidence.<sup>3</sup> This claim is true enough, but the manipulation of evidence is not the monopoly of the official entities of the world -governments or corporations, for example- but of all processes of figurative reconstruction, even individual memory.

## DEATH OF THE VENTRILOQUIST

Franco's death in November 1975 provoked reactions as strongly divided as Spain itself had been during the civil war in which *el caudillo* had first come to power. In a nation where fully half the population had been born under his regime, the end of four decades of *franquismo* left much uncertainty about what both the life and death of the dictator meant for Spain. No response to Franco's death,

however, should have been more predictable than that issued from the official, state-produced newsreel, *Noticiarios y Documentales Cinematográficos*, or (as it was commonly known) NO-DO.

Franco's regime had created NO-DO in November 1942, shortly after the end of the civil war, with the purpose of overseeing all non-fiction film production.<sup>4</sup> As both source and censor of all documentary and news footage, NO-DO maintained absolute control of the celluloid images that purportedly represented the reality of life in Spain under Franco's rule. And a crucial dimension of NO-DO's undiluted power was that it managed the cinematic image of Franco himself. Given that NO-DO's role was a virtually hagiographic one, and that it had amassed a bulging archive of favorable documentary footage of the dictator, no event should have occasioned a more copious and reverential film response than the death of *el caudillo* himself. And indeed, at Franco's death, NO-DO initially responded as expected: it promptly mounted a special edition of the newsreel entitled «*La muerte de Franco*»<sup>5</sup>, which presented an obsequious retrospective of the general's life.

Yet once assembled, this newsreel was not released. In fact, it was never shown to the public, despite official notices announcing its premiere. For reasons that are not entirely clear, NO-DO prepared and announced a film-homage to Franco that it then did not show. Why this sudden, apparent crisis of authorial confidence, this seeming *ataque de nervios*? While the dictator was still alive, no one had been permitted to comment freely in public on the meaning of his life; now, once he was gone, NO-DO, the government organ entrusted to fabricate Franco's official image for nearly four decades, seemed unwilling to risk the final word (or the definitive image) on what his life had meant. It was as if the pervasive official voice that Franco had acquired through film (the law had mandated that these weekly newsreels be shown in movie houses) had now expired with his physical body.

In a way, this incident actually suggests that, during his tenure as dictator, Franco's power and authority were as great as he wanted them to appear, for it indicates that the *generalísimo* had operated like a ventriloquist, manipulating a battalion of dummies who, now suddenly left without his direction, were unable to speak. In fact, one might argue that Franco achieved his unique, nearly forty-year success as a right-wing, totalitarian dictator in Western Europe by mastering the ventriloquist's trade -by learning to exploit a number of voices, to appropriate and modify them for different occasions, and to get them to say what he wanted, all while making them seem as though they were not his own. At least on the official surface, Spain's public discourse under Franco was a conversation with just one genuine voice, a drama whose many roles were performed by just one actor; in the public sphere created and monitored by the regime, all apparently pluralistic discourse was staged, all ostensible recognition of multiple perspectives fabricated. All opposing voices were effectively silenced, often by force.

Given this broad legacy of oppression it would seem obvious that with Franco's death, as Spain's government cautiously moved a way from dictatorship and eventually towards democracy, alternative voices would fill the void of authority. And such was generally the case. The reemergence of oppositional political parties was accompanied by cultural criticism of the regime as writers and artists began to engage in open, public dialogue for the first time in decades. Yet one of the most striking effects of Franco's stifling, monolithic control was the degree to which the critical voices that emerged carried both ideological and formal traces of the all-powerful voice that had once dominated them. Especially in the film medium, during Franco's tenure one voice not only exclusively dominated all others, but that single, prominent voice shaped and mediated all others so that, even after the one primary voice ceased to dictate, the rest continued to speak in its idiom.

Thus, Franco's opponents, particularly after his death, faced the difficult challenge not merely of unveiling the mythology he had created and posing alternatives to the *content* of that political mythology, but also of confronting and revising the *form* in which that mythology had been carried. In a willfully unreflective and authoritarian fashion, film had served for more than thirty years as handmaiden to the totalizing myth Franco created of and for himself. Yet after his death, even those filmmakers who sought to criticize Franco's regime often produced work that, although undoubtedly critical in conventional ways, nonetheless maintained a certain formal servitude to the system they challenged. In short, these cineastes grappled with the timeless problem of how to effect a genuine rupture, in mode as well as message, with an outgoing political regime. How does a long-repressed voice speak in a way that successfully counters both the methods and ideas of its former master? Four curiously entangled films—two made in support of Franco during his reign (*Raza* and *Franco, ese hombre*), and two that criticized

him after his death (*Raza, el espíritu de Franco* and *Caudillo*)<sup>6</sup> -illuminate this ongoing problem of formal hegemony and provide some ideas about how we might address it.

## FRANCO'S MONOLITHIC VOICE

A skilled politician, Francisco Franco spent his public life carefully shaping his own image. Representing himself as the embodiment of the nation, Franco created a personal mythology that both promoted and echoed his vision of Spain. Never static, this myth evolved over the course of his reign in response to changing political and cultural circumstances. At the time of his death, its contours were succinctly drawn by the program devoted to him for the never-released NO-DO newsreel. This laudatory retrospective of the general's life begins by surveying a variety of immediate responses to his death, including the reaction of the popular press, several popular manifestations of mourning, the state funeral service, and the government's ceremonies commemorating his achievements. The film then recounts Franco's life as a brilliant military leader and political figure (the youngest general since Napoleon, Franco was often credited with standing up to Hitler and keeping Spain out of World War II) and asserts his importance in transforming Spain into a modern industrial nation (at Franco's death, Spain proclaimed itself the world's tenth leading industrial power). Finally, the newsreel focuses on his personal life, emphasizing his role as an exemplary father and husband (he is shown with his wife Carmen, surrounded by adoring grandchildren).

Yet despite the clarity with which these particular topics are articulated, what may be most telling about this particular film document is its literal lack of definition, its incompleteness. For example, although the version of this newsreel considered most definitive is approximately twenty-seven minutes long, there are several other versions that run well over two and a half hours.<sup>7</sup> Indeed, the film exists in several versions, apparently because those compiling footage at NO-DO had great difficulty cutting anything out; while they seemed to agree that they could not praise Franco enough, they apparently were not able to reach any accord as to just how they should erect their monument of flattery. Historian Paul Preston notes that the «key to Franco's art was an ability to avoid concrete definition.»<sup>8</sup> Ironically, Franco succeeded in establishing his image as an omnipotent, mythically-present leader largely because he never allowed himself to be strictly defined. This may help explain why the NO-DO homage was never actually released. Such a rosy retrospective on Franco's life, once released, would instantly become dangerous property: many working in the government were convinced that the country would soon be controlled by the political left, and, fearing severe reprisals for any involvement in pro-Franco activities, wanted no part in the productions of a film tribute to the now-deceased dictator.<sup>9</sup>

## FILM AS BLUEPRINT: *RAZA*

Whatever its basis in fact, the Franquist myth had been carefully perpetuated through, among other things, the skillful exploitation of film. Franco's keen interest in film as a potent mythmaking tool became decidedly personal towards the end of 1940. As the nation came to terms with the dramatic repercussions of the bloody civil war that had just ended, and while the rest of Europe engaged in its own devastating conflict, Franco found the time to write a brief novela entitled *Raza*.<sup>10</sup> Published under the pseudonym Jaime de Andrade, *Raza* was structured like a screenplay, privileging dialogue over description, and clearly was intended to be made into a film (the work's subtitle was *Anecdotario para el guión de una película*). Ultimately released in 1942, the film was directed by José Luis Sáenz de Heredia, a first cousin of José Antonio Primo de Rivera, the founder of the Falange, or Spanish fascist party, and the Nationalists' ideological hero and martyr.

*Raza* established the model narrative of Franquist mythology that would dominate Spanish cinema for years to come. Allegorically depicting Spain as a family torn apart by foreigners and then happily reunited, largely through the acts of a chosen son, the film reviews the recently finished civil war and justifies Franco's methods of winning it and of then consolidating all political power in his person. On its face, however, *Raza* traces the story of the Churruca family in the period beginning with Spain's humiliating defeat in Cuba in 1897 and ending with the conclusion of the civil war.

The heroic death of the Churruca family's patriarch in the Spanish-American war forces the family to move to Madrid, where one son seeks financial gain and a career in politics, while the other three children -a daughter and two sons- pursue appropriately traditional and patriotic vocations as a homemaker, priest and soldier, respectively. The family's unity is threatened and eventually destroyed when Pedro, the wayward son, becomes a Republican congressman and sides with the liberal government when the civil war breaks out. Eventually, however, Pedro is made to see the error of his ways, and the family is brought back together, thanks to the heroism of the anointed son, José, who has risen to power as a military leader on the Nationalist side.

For all the simplicity of the film, what soon becomes clear is that the family drama of *Raza* is a favorably revised version of Franco's own family history, with the hero José Churruca serving as fictional alter-ego for Franco himself. In the film, José was played by Alfredo Mayo, an immensely popular Spanish actor of the 1940s whose physical characteristics (tall, blond and handsome) as well as his personal charm and charisma were all notably lacking in Franco. Furthermore, the family patriarch in the film, José's father, is a model husband and father who dies a naval hero and national martyr, while Franco's own father, by contrast, was an alcoholic womanizer who severely abused his wife.

Despite these differences, the number of characteristics and conditions shared by the film's fictional family, the Churrucas, and Franco's own family overwhelmingly suggests that the work is a thinly veiled autobiography. For example, both families are Galician; the film's story begins in 1887, which makes its protagonist, José Churruca, the same age as Franco; José's mother's name is Isabel de Andrade, a name which comes from Franco's own mother's family; the men in both families have traditionally served in the navy; despite this history of naval service, José, like Franco, serves instead in the infantry and is educated at the Military Academy at Toledo; both José and Franco see their first military action in Morocco; both have a leftist Republican brother who is eventually redeemed; José is shot by the Republicans during the civil war, as Franco was wounded and given up for dead in 1916, during the battle of Biutz in Morocco; José puts off his marriage until he has finished his military duties, as did Franco in 1920 and 1923. In short, *Raza* constructs a narrative in which Franco, mildly disguised as José Churruca, registered himself in the public memory as the Spanish national family's divinely ordained son, a savior who must, in the natural order of things, assume the mantle as that family's benign, ruling father. And indeed, as the program to NO-DO's «*La muerte de Franco*» indicated thirty years later, paternalism would remain a central element of the Franco myth.

But *Raza* does more than merely recast the Spanish drama in a familial idiom. By framing modern Spanish history in the political terms and values of Franco's nationalist vision -race, God, and family, narrowly defined- *Raza* establishes the ideological message by which the regime would justify its repressive actions for the next four decades. Moreover, the film establishes a certain representative style, a hegemonic form that enabled Franco to manipulate facts and events according to his own designs. In part, this manipulation occurred at the personal level; as noted earlier, Franco sanitized some elements of his own past, such as his father's character, for dramatic effect. But *Raza* also freely mixes historically factual with fictional material in order to invest Franco's myth with a sense of inevitability. Using, ironically, conventions of both Hollywood melodrama and Soviet realist cinema, *Raza* mixes staged and factual material and a combination of fictional and documentary images. During the film, Franco, the historical personage, is referred to in the context of the picture's fictional plot (his portrait can be seen adorning the Nationalists' tents at the front, and he is even referred to as «*el caudillo*» by José's commanding officer). Similarly, in the film's concluding sequence, which highlights the Nationalists' victory march at the end of the civil war, close-up shots of the fictional José Churruca atop his horse in the parade's place of honor are interwoven with documentary long shots from Franco's own victory parade in 1939.

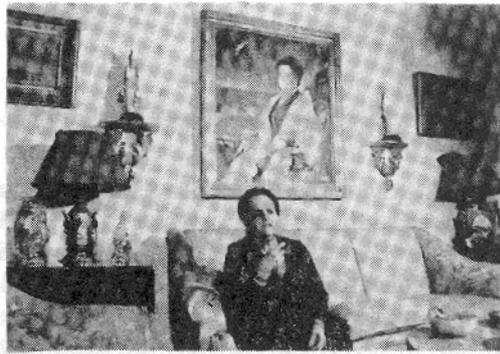
*Raza* remakes history in the totalitarian terms similar to those that George Orwell, himself a veteran of Spain's civil war, described in his novel *Nineteen Eighty-Four*:

[The Party's]...process of continuous alteration was applied...to every kind of literature or documentation which might conceivably hold any political or ideological significance. Day by day and almost minute by minute the past was brought up to date... All history was a *palimpsest*, scraped clean and re- inscribed exactly as often as was necessary <sup>11</sup>

Despite Franco's own assurance in the film's prologue that «you will find nothing contrived here,»<sup>12</sup> *Raza* intended to do nothing less than reconfigure Spain's collective memory through the manipulation of those celluloid images that made up its visual archive and were projected daily onto the nation's movie screens. The film's final sequence, which features a montage of the climactic fictional events recalled from the film itself (the heroic deaths of the family patriarch, and of José's brothers Jaime and Pedro, for example), mixed with documentary images of the actual civil war, epitomizes this process of reconfiguration. The sequence combines established public film memory with the fresh vision that the audience has seen in the past hour to create a new, mythical history -a seamless, unified, Manichean vision of Spain past and present.

Even the film's title, *Raza* [Race], testifies to Franco's vigorous efforts to remake his nation's history. It reflects Franco's Nationalist belief that Spain be peopled by members of a single, pure blood or race, bound by a singular, heroic purpose. But such thinking is especially wishful in a country like Spain, whose culture has been shaped throughout history by a variety of diverse ethnic groups. None of this mattered to Franco when he composed *Raza*; indeed, years earlier, in 1922, Franco had established his intentions as a writer with the publication of *Marruecos. Diario de una bandera* [Morocco: Diary of a Flag], a collection of military memoirs from his time as commander of the Spanish forces in Morocco which included passages -conveniently deleted in later editions- offensive to the very Moroccans who helped him win the civil war. *Raza* only brings to a climax Franco's practice of «palimpsestic» historiography, for the film's ultimate aim had little to do with truth or history, but was intended as a nationalizing narrative, a story of nation whose purpose was to cast a unified reflection before the eyes of a war-exhausted people.

That mythic history was carefully adapted over time; as the new world order of the postwar period established itself, the original version of *Raza*, made in 1941, was mysteriously re-edited, outfitted with a completely new soundtrack, and re-«premiered» to much fanfare in July 3, 1950.<sup>13</sup> Curiously, all copies of the original had disappeared, but the two versions were vastly different in political tone. Some of the changes involved simple cuts: the original, for example, contained many shots of the fascist salute, while the new edition had been relieved of virtually all such images, as well as any mention of the Spanish fascist party, the Falange.<sup>14</sup> Excised as well was any pejorative mention of the United States or of democracy; the original had portrayed both as culprits in Spain's loss of Cuba and the Philippines during the Spanish-American War. In fact, the entire nature of the 1898 defeat was transformed; refusing to identify a determinate national enemy, the new *Raza* presented Spain's loss of her remaining colonies as an unprovoked catastrophe, instead of the price paid for losing the war. And most strikingly, the players in the film's central conflict had changed. Lines were no longer drawn between «good fascists» and «evil Republicans,» but rather between patriots and communists. In other words, the new, 1949 version of *Raza*, now entitled *Espíritu de una raza*, was a film whose message was far more compatible with the new political contours of the Cold War.<sup>15</sup>



A historical shot of Franco, *ese hombre*. Above: Pilar Franco, co-starring in *Raza, el espíritu de Franco*

### **EXTENDING THE MYTH: *FRANCO, ESE HOMBRE***

In 1964 the Spanish government set aside a special subsidy of one million pesetas for Sáenz de Heredia, the director of *Raza*, to make a film about Franco that would commemorate what would be called «twenty-five years of peace.» The film, entitled *Franco, ese hombre*, essentially perpetuated both the message and form of *Raza*'s Franquist mythology.<sup>16</sup> Without the dramatic device of the fictional Churruca family, it nevertheless reviews the same heroic story: Franco's miraculous rise to power and his stunning liberation of the nation from nefarious outside forces bent on frustrating Spain's noble destiny.

Although its title promised a glimpse into the personal life of the man, *Franco, ese hombre* focuses instead on his heroic public role in Spain's wars with Morocco, and in the Spanish Civil War.

In an attempt to give its narrative an air of historical objectivity and authority, *Franco, ese hombre* relies much more heavily than *Raza* did on documentary images, and it includes a variety of remarkable documentary gestures, including Sáenz de Heredia directly addressing the camera on occasion. The director also shows himself interviewing the doctor who first examined Franco when he was taken for dead in Morocco and who reproduces what he claims to be Franco's chest x-ray. Nonetheless, *Franco, ese hombre* also deploys fictional sequences, including a brief clip from *Raza* itself. While *Franco, ese hombre* is conventionally classified as a documentary, and *Raza* as a fiction or narrative film, the license with which each appropriates historical persons and events is almost identical; neither film is concerned so much with the accuracy or reliability of its sources as it is in using them to praise Franco.

Franco's mythmaking ventriloquism is most apparent when, at the conclusion -and narrative climax- of *Franco, ese hombre*, the camera cuts back from a shot of the Twenty-Five Years of Peace parade in downtown Madrid to reveal that the sequence is being projected onto a screen in a theatre empty except for Franco himself (*el caudillo* is actually seated in the movie theatre he had built in his private residence). We feel that Franco has suddenly appeared among us, and we find ourselves fellow spectators with him; like us, he too is passively observing an objective presentation beyond his control. The implicit message of this rhetorical maneuver is clear: Franco is both leader and comrade, possessor of his special role as national guide not through any personal quest for power, but by supernatural decree. Sáenz de Heredia concludes the film by interviewing Franco, who pretends to answer questions spontaneously about Spain's bright future, while obviously reading from cue cards. As he speaks, Franco's actual voice is, as always, high, lisping, and weak, but the film's larger ideological voice speaks resonantly and deep.

### **THE ANTI-FRANCO MYTH: RAZA, EL ESPÍRITU DE FRANCO**

The death of *el caudillo* naturally led to the production of films intent on challenging the established Franquist mythology by stripping the memory of Franco of its carefully polished sheen.<sup>17</sup> Thus Spanish cultural historian Román Gubern has observed that the «frustrations that had been generated by the cultural repression of Francoism and by its monochord propaganda encouraged filmmakers after 1976 to answer and settle old accounts with the dictatorship.»<sup>18</sup> But the desire to settle accounts did not automatically translate into effective repudiation of the Franquist myth. Many transition films failed to escape that mythology's seductive form, and thus reproduced, in significant measure, the formal, if not the political, hegemony that was a cornerstone of Franco's own propaganda machine. Indeed, few films were able to break the grip of that hegemony by suggesting ways to confront the mythology's form as well as its content.

One of the many that did not was *Raza, el espíritu de Franco*, a promisingly clever, direct answer to *Raza*. Its director, Gonzalo Herralde, suggested that his purposes in making the film were not political, but the film's structure suggests otherwise. Released in 1977, the film actually progresses along the same lines as the original *Raza*; it goes through many of the original film's scenes, in order, and matches them with on-camera comments, taken from interviews with Franco's sister, Pilar, and with Alfredo Mayo, the actor who played Franco's alter ego in the 1941 *Raza*. By conspicuously mirroring the earlier film in this way, *Raza, el espíritu de Franco* sets the stage for an interesting double critique of *Raza*'s historical interpretations and applications.

First, the film traces the origins of *Raza*'s thematic contents, demonstrating in the process that its storyline consisted of little more than a projection of Franco's imagination. Pilar Franco's lengthy comments about her brother are barbed counterpoints to the images on screen, and emphasize the almost absurd degree to which *Raza* was organized around incidents in the dictator's own life. Pilar's delightfully forthright responses make clear that *Raza* is neither an accurate nor a complete account of Franco's experience, but rather a sanitized version of that unmistakable life.

Second, this later film exposes *Raza*'s artifice as a film. Alfredo Mayo is shown walking around *Raza*'s original set, which is now a barren field; he frankly admits that he has no idea what the notion of «race» means in the context of the film; and he talks about his own reasons for getting involved in the war, more pragmatic than heroic (whereas in *Raza*, José fought for the Nationalists out of a heroic sense of duty; in this film, Mayo suggests that his own involvement in the war -and his decision to side with Franco- was largely circumstantial). These scenes undermine the seamless and heroic national portrait painted by the original film. Although *Raza, el espíritu de Franco* is not explicitly political, then, it nonetheless implies a pointed critique of *Raza*'s particular mythology .

The self-conscious quality of *Raza, el espíritu de Franco*, in which one film mediates another, is obviously innovative at a certain level, for it magnifies the actual process of film mythmaking, foregrounding those self-conscious gestures that remind us that we are watching a film. Yet in so doing, it also actually conceals its own nature as a film, a manufactured presentation. Although it performs the traditional unveiling function of documentary critique, *Raza, el espíritu de Franco* does little to examine its own epistemological assumptions and representational strategies, abstaining from the critical turning-of-the-gaze that is crucial for establishing unimpeachable credibility in relation to the film it examines. Addressing this distinction, film historian and theorist Jay Ruby argues that to be reflexive is to structure a product in such a way that the audience assumes that the producer, the process of making, and the product are a coherent whole. Not only is an audience made aware of these relationships, but it is made to realize the necessity of that knowledge... Being reflexive means that the producer deliberately... reveals to his audience the underlying epistemological assumptions that caused him to formulate a set of questions in a particular way, to seek answers to those questions in a particular way, and finally to present his findings in a particular way.<sup>19</sup>

In failing to be self-critical instead of merely critical, *Raza, el espíritu de Franco* participates in the same discourse, using the same discursive techniques, as *Franco, ese hombre*. Merely retelling the tale of *el caudillo* in terms contrary to his own, the latter film thus manages only to depict a Franco who is sinister instead of benevolent, manipulative instead of just, this instead of that. Like *Raza* and *Franco, ese hombre*, *Raza, el espíritu de Franco* continues to tell the story of binary opposites. While a useful meditation on the mythologizing power of a particular film, it does not make the important step of interrogating how that power operates in its own production of meaning, coercively or otherwise, and thus how it would function in the film medium generally. In the end, *Raza, el espíritu de Franco* can claim only an anti-rhetoric rhetoric of documentary, one that implements only an anti-mythology mythology.

## **BEYOND THE ANTI-FRANCO MYTH: CAUDILLO**

Herralde was not the only director to enter into dialogue with his predecessors. In reply to *Franco, ese hombre*, Basilio Martín Patino made *Caudillo*. In many ways this film employs the same myth-unveiling strategy as *Raza, el espíritu de Franco*. Released in the same year, *Caudillo* was actually made earlier, since Patino began compiling material for the film clandestinely in 1974, using footage that he had smuggled into Spain from archives around Europe. The film opens with shots showcasing the death and destruction wrought by the civil war upon the Spanish people, followed immediately by a slow pan over a grandiose portrait of a flag-draped Franco. A narrator proclaims, «Once upon a time there was a man sent by God to save Spain.» With a sense of irony established, the film then parallels *Franco, ese hombre* by charting Franco's rise to power, ending with the conclusion of the civil war.

Although often classified as merely an unfavorable documentary biography, *Caudillo* achieves a degree of critical self-consciousness greater than the vast majority of films surrounding Franco. It not only criticizes and offers an alternative to a particular instance of propagandistic filmmaking, it also underscores the inevitability of this tendency in filmmaking altogether. When it was released, many complained that *Caudillo* was too long and insufficiently direct in its argument. The film does assault the viewer with an abundance of , footage surrounding Franco, and it leaves most of the narration to recorded voices offering individual testimonies, songs, poetry readings, dramatizations, and so forth. Yet through this quilted narrative, Patino actually draws attention not only to the methods and media that construct public memory, but also to the viewer's access to such memory.

Patino also uses red and blue tinted shots to flag opposing political factions (red with the left, blue with the right) -but he does not pattern these shadings rigorously, so that there are some scenes, for example, in which Franco is seen in a reddish -that is, leftist- light. This move, along with a variety of special effects, as well as the use of rhythmically distorted popular songs and voices speaking in foreign languages (in one case an American reads Spanish with a conspicuously strong accent) in the sound track, help draw the audience's attention to the constructed nature of the film. *Caudillo* is a collage of international voices, languages, forms and media -an example of Bakhtinian heteroglossia.

*Caudillo* elevates its critique to address not only a specific political agenda, but the process of mythmaking itself. For example, the film begins to expose the fabricated nature of the Franco myth by first juxtaposing it with other, competing mythologies, including the cult of personality that grew up around the Anarchist leader (and eventual martyr) Buenaventura Durruti.<sup>20</sup> By doing this, Patino draws attention not only to the objectionable contents of a particular myth, but to the process by which such mythologies, regardless of political content, are generated. In other words, his critique is anchored in more than simple anti-Franco politics.

This comprehensive critique of the process of myth culminates late in the film. In a striking sequence, Patino employs a shot in which Franco encourages his daughter, Carmencita, in an ostensibly spontaneous moment, to pronounce a message to the children of the world. She wonders aloud what she should say, and he tells her, «Whatever you want.» She then addresses the camera and recites a short speech, expressing her desire that they be safe and happy and that they not suffer what the children of Spain are then suffering. While Carmencita is talking, Franco, clearly believing that he is outside the camera's frame, reveals the actual source of his daughter's «impromptu» speech as he silently mouths each of her words, just slightly ahead of her.<sup>21</sup> By itself, it is a remarkable sequence, but Patino enriches its effect by repeating it in slow motion. Simply showing the clip would lead its viewers to feel they had in some sense unveiled Franco, catching him, as it were, in flagrante delicto as he labored at his own myth; Patino's distortion of the shot's «normal» time perspective invites the film's viewers to question the formal qualities of their own observational viewpoint.

In short, *Caudillo* not only encourages a thorough critique of the contents of the particular Franco myth, but also of the ways by which any myth is created, amended and perpetuated. Patino thus underscores the audience's complicity in the general process of mythmaking, because his film takes unique pains to address *itself* -its own materials and processes of construction. *Caudillo* suggests that the creation of a myth is a collective, social process -a suggestion that constitutes a profound critique in a contemporary Spain eager to move beyond its forty years of dictatorship. While neither Patino's point, nor mine, is that there aren't better and worse, more and less responsible ways to represent the past, we must yet acknowledge that history is always made up of countless private and public mythologies; it is always much more complicated than simply heroes versus villains. *Caudillo* questions the means by which films participate in the construction not only of the Franquist mythology, but of any kind of mythology.<sup>22</sup>

I do not want to argue that binary models of interpretation are always useless or inaccurate in shaping a meaningful understanding of an historical phenomenon like Franco, but I do want to suggest that such tools are crucially incomplete, attuned to what this or that fact might say about an historical persona instead of what the processes of myth-making and myth-breaking suggest about us as members of the communities that both produce and are subject to the changing horizons of meaning that are endemic to mythmaking.

At his funeral, supporters of the deceased dictator joined in emotional cries of «*Francisco Franco aún vive!*»<sup>23</sup> For Spanish filmmakers attempting to grapple with his image and his legacy, Franco did indeed live on. His voice so permeated public discourse that critics of all stripes found it difficult to break from his vocabulary. The films that surrounded the entire phenomenon of Franco, whether they supported or opposed him ideologically, conspired, at least formally, to create and maintain a kind of Franquist mythology. Paul Preston claims that the «greatest obstacle of all to knowing Franco is that, throughout his life, he regularly rewrote his own life story.»<sup>24</sup> It is by examining this very process of rewriting that we can perhaps most clearly assess the shadow Franco cast over Spain's public discourse. We might say then that with precious few exceptions, Franco lives on in the voices of those who, like it or not, learned to speak in his tongue.

## NOTES AND REFERENCES:

(0) This article would have been quite different, and considerably poorer, without the resources graciously afforded me by the Filmoteca Española. I would like to thank Marga Lobo, Dolores Devesa, and Trinidad del Río for their kind assistance. Ferran Alberich provided me with valuable information about the biography of *Raza*. In particular, I would like to express my gratitude to Alfonso del Amo, who patiently answered my endless questions, and who generously allowed me direct access to materials that he has been carefully working to preserve, document, and catalogue for several years.

(1) STRADLING, R. A. «The propaganda of the deed: history, Hemingway, and Spain», *Textual Practice*, Vol. 3, No.1 (1989): 16.

(2) Consider, for example, the relatively recent B.B.C. production of «Franco: Behind the Myth" (1990), a film which -true to its title- employs a surface/depth model of interpretation to lay bare numerous myths that purportedly have clouded our historical view of the dictator and his political career. Although the film is undeniably captivating, its aggressively suspicious tone and plot (the film is structured somewhat like a detective story) actually obscure much subtle understanding of the role that Franco's propaganda efforts (indeed, his mythology) played in his rise to power.

(3) KUNDERA, MILAN. Cited in APPLEBY, JOYCE; HUNT, LYNN; JACOB, MARGARET. *Telling the Truth About History*. New York: Norton, 1994, p. 270.

(4) Several recent works address the history and function of NO-DO; here I have relied primarily on SANCHEZ-BIOSCA, VICENTE; RAFAEL R. TRANCHE. *NO-DO: El tiempo y la memoria*. Madrid: Filmoteca Española, 1993.

(5) «Edición especial: la muerte de Franco» [«The Death of Franco»], *Noticiarios y Documentales Cinematográficos «NO-DO»*, 24 November (1975).

(6) *Raza*, dir. JOSÉ LUIS SAENZ DE HEREDIA, 1941; *Franco, ese hombre*, dir. JOSÉ LUIS SAENZ DE HEREDIA, 1964; *Raza, el espíritu de Franco*, dir. GONZALO HERRALDE, 1977; *Caudillo*, BASILIO MARTÍN PATINO, 1977. My treatment of all four films is indebted to several seminal works on Spanish cinema, most notably: DEL AMO GARCÍA, ALFONSO (ed.) *Catálogo general de cine relacionado con la guerra civil española*. Madrid: Filmoteca Española, forthcoming; GUBERN, ROMÁN. *1936-1939: La guerra de España en la pantalla: de la propaganda a la Historia*. Madrid: Filmoteca Española, 1986; ---. «*Raza*: un film-modelo para un género frustrado», *Revista de Occidente*, No.53 (October 1985): 61-75; SALA NOGUER, RAMÓN. *El cine de la España republicana durante la guerra civil (1936-1939)*. Bilbao: Mensajero, 1993; HOPEWELL, JOHN. *Out of the Past: Spanish Cinema After Franco*. London: British Film Institute, 1986; BESAS, PETER. *Behind the Spanish Lens: Spanish Cinema under Fascism and Democracy*. Denver: Arden Press, Inc., 1985. KINDER, MARSHA. *Blood Cinema: The Reconstruction of National Identity in Spain*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1993.

(7) DEL AMO GARCÍA, ALFONSO. *Catálogo general de cine relacionado con la guerra civil española*. Madrid: Filmoteca Española, forthcoming. Entry No.590.

(8) PRESTON, PAUL. *Franco*. New York: Basic Books, 1994. p. xviii.

(9) Del Amo shares this view. The bulk of the information about this episode in NO-DO's history comes from two interviews with del Amo at the Filmoteca Española in Madrid, conducted by the author 25 July 1994 and 10 August 1995.

(10) DE ANDRADE, JAIME. *Raza*. Second ed. Madrid: Fundación Nacional Francisco Franco, 1982.

(11) ORWELL, GEORGE. *Nineteen Eighty-Four*. London: Harcourt, 1949, p.43. [emphasis mine]

(12) [ «. nada artificioso encontraréis.» ]

(13) *Raza's* biography as a film is indeed a remarkable one. Originally produced by the Cancillería del Consejo de la Hispanidad in 1941 and premiered on January 5, 1942 at the Palacio de la Música in Madrid, it won Spain's Premio del Sindicato Nacional del Espectáculo before disappearing. Just over a year ago the Filmoteca Española came into possession of an old, deteriorated, black-market copy of the original version of *Raza*. Shortly thereafter, while looking in the film archives of countries friendly with Spain (Italy, Germany, Portugal, for example) during the years of *Raza's* production, investigators discovered another copy of this original version in the vaults of the film archive in Berlin, likely intended to be dubbed into German and shown to audiences there (the film actually won a prize at the Bial de Venecia).

As Ferran Alberich, one of the those involved in the Filmoteca's restoration of *Raza*, noted in an interview with the author on 20 July 1994: "What's interesting is to consider what image the Franco

regime wanted to give of itself after the second World War. From a psychological point of view, there's not much change in versions. From the political point of view, there's a real significance. It reminds me of a story by Borges about the librarian who thinks that he can change the history of the world by rearranging the books in the library".

Alberich offers a theory about who actually changed the film: "NO- DO did it. I recently read something that talked about the influx of political progressives into NO-DO in the 1940' s. I suppose, then, that one of these types, seeking political points, did this. Saenz de Heredia didn't intervene in this, but he complained that he wasn't consulted for reediting. The original actors complained because their voices were changed. I suppose that this was because these people -director and actors- were part of the more conservative faction, while the progressive people were concentrated in NO-DO. I supposed, then, that someone, perhaps the director of NO-DO -and this is from testimony given me by a worker from NO-DO- had the original negative of *Raza* locked in the safe at the Banco Central, and he went with a military official, whose identity is not known, to the Banco Central and got the copy and took it to NO-DO. No one knows what happened to it while it was at NO-DO, but a few weeks later it was returned to the safe at the bank. It was probably changed while it was at NO-DO.

"The NO-DO facilities don't include equipment for shooting film, only for editing, cutting, and sound synchronization and dubbing. So nothing new was filmed, only new images from the archive were added. For example, the final parade, in the original version, is from the actual military parade in 1939 image from the archive. In the second version, the images don't correspond to the year 1939 -the images of the military in the parade are more modern, most likely from the archives at NO-DO. In other words, the infrastructure, the means to change these images like this, and to replace them with the ones they did, is at NO-DO.

"What's curious is that in all the film histories written, they've known that there were two versions of *Raza* but they always passed over this fact." [translation mine]

(14) Alberich recalls a popular rumor in which Saenz de Heredia, unhappy that all the fascist salutes had been cut out of his film, joked about writing a segment of dialogue that would allow one of these salutes to remain, but under a different guise («Look, sir, there's something flying overhead!»). [translation mine]

(15) It is worth noting that when Alfonso del Amo, who heads the Departamento de Investigación at the Filmoteca Española, and who is currently involved in the restoration of the 1941 version of *Raza*, described in an interview with the author how Franco's regime transformed the original version of that film, he too specifically referred to Orwell's Nineteen Eighty-Four and likened the Spanish government's revision of *Raza* to Big Brother's re-writing of history. Del Amo noted that "the process used to revise the film was very clever -it was a system of re-inscription... It's the most effective way to change a text, because even if I cover an original text with dark ink, there will always be some way to read what was written beneath that ink. But if I write over that initial text using the original pencil, then in effect, I erase the first text completely. This is the way they changed *Raza*, and it's the best method if your purpose is to obscure the past." [translation mine]

(16) For a discussion of what would have been the third of Saenz de Heredia's film treatments of Franco, see BERTHIER, NANCY. "*Eultimo caído* de Saenz de Heredia, un poema documental sobre Franco", *Secuencias*, No.2 (April 1995): 9-29. The film, which was conceived in 1975 during Franco's last days but was never completed, provides an interesting comparison with the never-released NO-DO newsreel homage to the dictator that I discuss above.

(17) See GUBERN, ROMÁN. *1936-1939: La guerra de España en la pantalla: de la propaganda a la Historia*. Madrid: Filmoteca Española, 1986; - «The Civil War: Inquest or Exorcism?», *Quarterly Review of Film and Video*, Vol. 13, No.4 (1991).

(18) GUBERN, ROMÁN. «The Civil War: Inquest or Exorcism?», *Quarterly Review of Film and Video*, Vol. 13, No.4 (1991): 109.

(19) RUBY, JAY. «The Image Mirrored: Reflexivity and the Documentary Film», *New Challenges for Documentary*, Berkeley: University of California Press, 1988. p.65.

(20) Early in the film, Patino employs footage from Durruti's funeral, including clips from spoken eulogies whose rhetorical form and political content are as exalted and righteous as any Nationalist propaganda.

(21) This clip is actually taken from a Nationalist propaganda film that, for obvious reasons, was apparently never shown. See DEL AMO GARCÍA, ALFONSO. *Catálogo general de cine relacionado con la guerra civil española*. Madrid: Filmoteca Española, forthcoming.

(22) The trajectory of this argument about self-reflexivity in documentary in the context of Spanish cinema would naturally lead, I believe, to a discussion of *La vieja memoria* (1977), a film by Jaime

Camino that in my opinion does the best job of foregrounding, and thus explicitly engaging, the issues surrounding the construction of public memory through film.

(23) [«Francisco Franco still lives!»]

(24) PRESTON, PAUL. *Franco*. New York: Basic Books, 1994. p. xix.

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