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Abstracts

INTERVIEW. A WAY OF LOOKING AT THE WORLD *Esteve Riambau / Casimiro Torreiro*

The interview conducted by Esteve Riambau and Casimiro Torreiro with screenwriter Rafael Azcona, whose work includes *El cochecito* (1960), *El verdugo / La ballata del boia* (1963) and *El jardín de las delicias* (1970), delves into several aspects concerning his life and environment which are later reflected in his long list of films. After his discourse on whether or not there is an ideology to humour, he attacks the commonplace and defends individualism. He claims to be anti-hero and justifies Goebbels' satanic methods in *La niña de tus ojos* (1998) as a means of counterbalancing the complete absence of Franco in his screenplays. His childhood recollections in Logroño reveal see the origins of his visceral antagonism of the clergy, as well as his first experiences at the cinema. A fan of Woody Allen and disparager of Ingmar Bergman, he lists his favourite films and then discusses his literary preferences and the specific problems involved in screen adaptations. Sex, women and death also have their place in this interview, at first in more general terms and then going into particular examples. Azcona touches on his inevitable contact with the satirical journal *La Codorniz*, and then goes on to talk about his own screenwriting methods. The self-described "observer of life" uses his own peculiar sense of humour in an overview of some of the filmmakers he has worked with -essentially the Spanish filmmaker Berlanga, and most particularly, Italian Marco Ferreri-.

REALITY, HUMOUR AND VITRIOL. THE WORLD ACCORDING TO AZCONA

Jesús Angulo

After touching on Rafael Azcona's literary debut and his launch into the world of cinema at the hand of novice Marco Ferreri -then a novice- the article examines the filmography of Azcona, who he describes in no uncertain terms as the best screenwriter in the history of Spanish cinema. In his first four screenplays -written for Ferreri and Luis García Berlanga films- we already see a number of themes that are to recur over and over again throughout his career: a corrosive sense of black humour, his relationship with the absurdity of Spanish literature, his ironic and incorruptible criticism of the society of his time, plus underlying constants such as death, sex, loneliness, oppression of the individual by stifling social norms... There is special emphasis on Azcona's work with the filmmakers with whom he felt the closest connections. Ferreri and Berlanga have already been named, but also included here are Carlos Saura, Fernando Trueba and José Luis García Sánchez. In more summarised form, the article takes a look at his work in Italian cinema, his more commercial collaborators (basically in the Seventies), and his sporadic work with such filmmakers as Pedro Olea, Fernando Fernán-Gómez and Juan Estelrich. The article winds discussing his latter period, highlighting screenplays written for Trueba, García Sánchez, Manuel Gutiérrez Aragón and José Luis Cuerda.

AZCONA, NOT AN EASY TONGUE TO GREASE

José Luis Cuerda

José Luis Cuerda, who worked with Azcona in two films, *El bosque animado* (1987) and *La lengua de las mariposas* (1999), tells us about his relationship with the screenwriter. Cuerda says it's not easy to flatter Azcona because he doesn't like people to talk about him -even if it's good-.

WORKING WITH RAFAEL

Fernando Trueba

After trying a number of times to work with Azcona, Fernando Trueba finally managed to co-write a screenplay for the feature film *El año de las luces* (1986). Ever since that time, they've been meeting weekly for lunch, joined by José

Luis García Sánchez. These *rendezvous* were the origin of *Belle Époque* (1992). Although it's true that the director of a film is still considered its "author", where would Berlanga, García Sánchez or Trueba's films be without Azcona? Trueba says that working with Azcona is one of the best things that has ever happened to him, both personally and professionally.

PSEUDONYMS AND ANTONYMS. INTERVIEW WITH LUIS GARCÍA BERLANGA

Jesús Angulo

Berlanga began working with Azcona in two, now legendary pictures, *Plácido* (1961) and *El verdugo / La ballata del boia* (1963). From that time on the arrangement was that Berlanga would come up with the idea for a film, they would then write the screenplay together and Azcona would be in charge of the dialogues. They have worked together on a number of films. In Berlanga's opinion, Azcona is an essential character in the history of Spanish cinema, because thanks to him the role of screenwriter is more highly regarded today. He also feels Azcona is an excellent novelist.

A FLOWING UNDERGROUND RIVER. INTERVIEW WITH JOSÉ LUIS GARCÍA SÁNCHEZ

Jesús Angulo

García Sánchez has been working with Azcona for over fifteen years, ever since they first worked in tandem on *La corte de faraón* (1985). He sees Azcona as a fundamental figure in Spanish filmmaking and talks about the enormous number of screenplays he has written. García believes that Azcona has associated Spanish cinema with the noblest of Spanish cultural roots. Together they have worked on pictures such as *Pasodoble* (1988), *Tirano Banderas* (1993) and *Suspiros de España (y Portugal)* (1995).

INTERVIEW WITH PEDRO OLEA

Jesús Angulo

Olea has worked on two films with Azcona. For the first, *Pim, pam, pum... ¡fuego!* (1975), the two of them spent a good amount of time talking about the plot. Azcona then added a number of suggestions and ended up writing an impressive and solid screenplay. Three years later, he wrote the screenplay for *Un hombre llamado Flor de Otoño* (1978). In both projects Azcona started with someone else's story and turned them in to his own, making a decisive contribution to the outcome of the films.