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[DOI](#): 10.4185/RLCS-65-2010-912-460-471-EN – ISSN 1138 - 5820 – RLCS # 65 – 2010

Women, engagement and censorship in the Spanish Cinema. 1939-1959

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Abstract This article analyses the formation of women's identity in relation to love and courtship in the Spanish cinema during the first Franco regime (1939-1959). To this end, two hundred films produced in Spain during this time were analysed. These films were chosen based on two criteria: Their permanence in the box office and their relevance to the subject under study. This research was complemented with the analysis of the censorship reports about these films, which facilitated the understanding of the guidelines and influence of the government towards the representation of an official model of the Spanish women. Moreover, in order to know whether other media also contributed to the creation of the feminine identity, we consulted the most important women's magazines and compared their messages with those offered to women on the big screen.

The analysis shows that the cinema of this years present a vision of love that was very far from the romantic and passionate feeling that appeared in other artistic representations. Female audiences that went to the cinema during this time assimilated a concept of love intrinsically linked to marriage and the formation of a family. This reality was in consonance with the mission to which, according to the Francoist regime, the Spanish women were destined.

Keywords *Franco regime; cinema; censorship; women; reception.*

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Translation by **Cruz Alberto Martínez-Arcos** (University of London)

1. Introduction

Once the civil war ended, the family unit was one of the fundamental pillars of the reconstruction of the social fabric that furthered the Franco regime. Of course, the concept of family was based on Catholic and traditional conceptions where women had very defined roles: mother and wife. This was, it was affirmed, the ultimate objective of the good Spanish woman:

"If you ask any girl [...] what are her ambitions and her destiny, she will talk, showing a doll and already dreaming of things that she still does not understand, about love and maternity. Not a single woman, provided life has not cut her wings of hope, dreams of achieving independence and solitude" (*Medina*, 7/8/1942).

Women's apparent destiny was instructed through two fundamental means: love and courtship. The main vehicle for the dissemination of this ideology was provided by the Women's Section of the (Spanish) Falange, which facilitated the controlling and ideological indoctrination of women, in spite of the fact that this organization never enjoyed an excessively high number of members (Loring, 2003: 55). Most gender studies on this period focus on the influences generated by the Feminine Section of the Falange (Cenarro, 2008). The significance of this indoctrination practices does not hide other indoctrination practices exercised on Spanish women and society at all levels through all available media, particularly magazines and radio programmes (Gil y Gómez, 2010).

Based on this explanatory framework, this research provides an analysis of the model of the creation of women's identity as wife and mother through the Spanish fiction cinema presented from 1939 to 1959, a period that the official historiography has defined as the first Franco regime (Montero, 2004: 651). The article examines models and norms of behaviour whose objective was to offer examples of conduct for Spanish women (Butrón, 2007: 72-75) in relation to love and courtship, whose ultimate purpose was marriage.

In spite of the hardness of the post-war period, cinema was one of the most popular forms of entertainment in the

Spanish society during the Franco regime (Díez, 2003: 35-39). According to data from the Board for the Protection of Minors (from 1948), Madrilenian people spent about two hundred and fifty million *pesetas* per year in cinemas and theatres. That means, in terms of frequency, that each Madrilenian went to the cinema about forty five times a year. Between 1938 and 1948 thirty eight cinema theatres were built in Madrid against only twenty five churches (Montero, 2002: 180).

But cinema was not only understood as a form of entertainment. Its organization responded to totalitarian ideas that conceived it as a means of indoctrination due to its expressive capacity and the authenticity granted to images [1]. Studies on cinema representations, which have been many, have emphasised the ability of cinema to reflect social realities (Amar, 2006: 77-79). In short, audiovisual entertainment formats are not innocent and inform, consciously or unconsciously, about many issues that affect the society that produces, receives and assimilates them (Chicharro, 2009: 52).

These issues have been cited to explain the production and dissemination of cinema, in the Spanish case, under a dictatorship with a strict information control system (Díez, 2008: 108) and strong set of political and moral beliefs (Hueso, 2009). To be brief, it was a regime that saw cinema as an effective medium to disseminate its new doctrines, seemingly in a harmless way, among the cinema spectators:

"Needless to say, cinema influences customs, fashion, and art. Women walk, look, laugh, dress, and put make up like their favourite film actresses. Pitifully, many women even fake love-making –that very intimate and personal thing- to imitate what they see or hear in the films". (*Primer Plano*1940)

1.1. Sources

The sources used for the preparation of this article are very diverse in nature. Firstly, the study used sources directly related to the Spanish film production during this period. A total of two hundred Spanish films premiered between 1939 and 1959 were analysed.

The selection of these films was based on two criteria: They had to be popular (and thus we chose the films that stayed longer in the box office [2] because it is assumed that they were the films that could influence the public the most), and they had to be relevant to the object of study (and thus we chose productions in which women had a prominent role independently of their success [3]).

The qualitative analysis (which was performed following the guidelines of Höijer, 2008: 275-294) of the 200 films focused on different aspects. The fundamental objective was to detect the most obvious stereotypes: who were the women considered good and therefore the models that the spectators should follow, and who, on the contrary, were considered as falling outside the socially established parameters. To this end, we studied the appropriate and inappropriate behaviours in several areas: love, work, friendship, intellectual formation, physical appearance, leisure organization, family relations, and the active participation in public life.

This work was complemented with the review of the script and censorship reports of each of these films, which were obtained from the Spain's General Archive of the Administration. This review enabled the analysis of the explicit and implicit discourses of censorship of that time and the assessment of the fears, ideals, and official mentality that governed the film production. This source is greatly important because it allows the analysis of each movie from the pre-production stage, which starts with the synopsis presented to the Censorship Board to obtain the permission to carry out the project, to the final result, i.e. the movie that was finally shown in the cinemas. The comments made and modifications requested by the censors, as well as the cuts required by the censorship team once the film was shot allow the deeper understanding of the mechanisms of control and the types of messages imposed by the Francoist regime on the Spanish cinema.

The study also included the analysis of some women's magazines published at the time by Women's Section of the Spanish Falange (*Teresa, Medina* and *Y*). They are an interesting additional source because these magazines worked as the "particular vehicle promoting the national integration and the daily recreation of local membership" (Alonso, 2007: 2). The inclusion of these sources allow us to compare the messages presented in women's printed media with the ones presented on movies, and thus verify whether these teachings were a reflection, completely or partly, of the films produced during this time. Finally, the study also included the review of the most important and latest bibliographic references on women, cinema and censorship during the Franco regime.

The results obtained from this research offer a new vision to the existing studies on the role of Spanish women during the Francoist regime, centred on the teachings and doctrines directly established by the Women's Section of the Falange. This study, on the contrary, examines the models of behaviour that the Spanish women received, and seemingly assimilated in an indirect and innocuous way, from the most popular entertainment medium: cinema.

2. Representation of love in the cinema and magazines produced during the first Franco Regime (1939-1959)

The National-Catholicism implanted in Spain after the civil war by the victorious group drank from three major streams of influence: the conservative (inherited from the traditionalist ideology of the 19th century), the groups framed in the ideology of political Catholicism, and the strictly Catholic sectors of the Spanish Falangist Movement. The predominant trend was eminently anti-liberal, patriotic, loyal to the imperial past of the Austrians, and of course Catholic.

The new reality imposed after the Republican defeat required a new vision of society and established a specific role for the Spanish women. The fundamental task of the Spanish woman was to be a mother and a wife: to create a home, not only to satisfy the personal desire, but in order to fulfil a social obligation. This logic was reflected in the magazines of the time:

"Women's essential duty is, almost exclusively, this. All other female roles must be subordinated to this one, which is the most important and decisive. No longer under a cold economic criterion... It is good that there are children for the nation and for God. But it is so good that there are parents, women and men that are linked to the nation and are seeking the satisfaction and the care of children". (*Medina*, 8/5/1940)

As this text indicates, the ultimate goals for women were, therefore, marriage and motherhood. Love was from this logic, the sublimation of their existence. Love absolutely permeated the lives of the Spanish girls during these years. Their readings, the music they listened to, the films they watched, even their own education, all were aimed at making their romantic dream come true.

This was the honourable and good path towards marriage. In this sense it was more a medium than an end; at least for most ordinary people. Marriage allowed the constitution of a family, social stability, a possible progress, and especially the conception and education of children.

Falling in love, starting a formal relationship, engagement, and the wedding were the most important topics for the ordinary single women of this era. Most women's magazines focused on romantic themes and even some teens' comics (*Serenata*, *Susana* and *Rosas Blancas*) were dedicated to recreate amazing love stories.

Romance was the main theme of almost all artistic manifestations. There were stories that showed romance -especially the process of falling in love- as an extraordinary adventure full of magic and emotion. After this initial stage, courtship, which was always oriented to marriage, ended up being presented as a feeling of tranquillity and serenity that would serve to maintain the family life.

In spite of this idea, relationships between men and women were clearly unequal in the Francoist Spain. Love relationships were conceived as the eternal struggle between men and women, as a way of measuring their forces. Discussions and disagreements were presented as a very positive factor for a couple. It was understood that the clash constituted a form of mutual understanding and dialogue between a man and a woman. The topic of reconciliation, after a quarrel, was maintained as a romantic element of the culmination of love.

"Your problem, what you call a problem, is not such a thing, but seems to be quite the opposite. If you are a perfect couple that never fights, you certainly are under the serious risk of getting bored. Peace, in love, is a state that inevitably leads to tediousness. These storms save you from this danger. The fact that he knows that as soon as you lose sight of him you have attacks of indifference is a great thing. Maintain your displeasures as gold in cloth! And every three weeks, reconciliation". (*Teresa*, 1/4/1954)

There was also a different, although related, idea that arose during these years: the idea that women could change the negative personality traits of a man. A bad, unsociable and even timid personality made women desire to conquer the heart of that man who seemed inaccessible. Because all men, even if they did not know it, were destined to find a couple and form a family. *Medina* magazine advised one of its young readers:

"Based on what you say, I am sure that in spite of his reserved and dry personality, he really loves you. You must not, therefore, feel annoyed or make futile recriminations which given his personality will only make him bitter. Instead, you should guess what he is not telling you and would like to tell you, and above all, make him happy, which is the way to make yourself happy too". (*Medina*, 8/5/1941)

The theory was clear: relationships are outlined as a closed circle in which success and responsibility were, only, in female hands. The only problem was guessing what men were not saying. This task was too difficult even for the ideal type of woman. Love was thus a thing of women, which, from time to time, involved men.

The Spanish women of this period lived a dichotomy. On the one hand, their most immediate references spoke to them about extraordinary passions and eternal love, and on the other hand, there was a hard and sometimes unsatisfactory reality. Spinsterhood was conceived as a tragedy and in order to avoid it many women had to accept the man they had available, whether they like him or not:

"You are not you in love. You have certain feelings towards this potential husband that gets near you when the mirror tells you that your youth is vanishing... Now well: If you have discovered an effective vocation for maternity, you must idealise this gentleman that is suitable to make your dreams come true. Somewhat you must adjust your thinking, your imagination and your will. Many things can be achieved when ones renounces to the auto command." (*Medina*, 21/1/1942)

This text shows what was really important, the real purpose of the couple and marriage in the first decades of the Franco society. Love, when it existed, was presented as something wonderful, but it was not necessary, or at least not in fully, to be happy. The main things sought by the Spanish women were the possibility of forming a family, having company, identify with someone, and feel secure.

3. The realities presented in the cinema

The film industry developed in Spain in the first decade of the Francoist regime was characterized by the production of stories with a strong tendency to evasion. Far from the terrible social reality ravaging the country, especially during the post-war, cinema presented luxurious environments, historical and exotic scenarios populated by rich, young and handsome characters.

Over the next decade, the 1950s, a supposedly more social cinema began to be produced [4]. The millionaires who used to take the leading roles in the romantic comedies of the previous decade gave way to ordinary citizens with common professions. Although the main characters of these stories were taxi drivers, saleswomen, clerks or waiters, the cinema of this decade neither reflected the real situation of the country. The excess of sweetening and the lack of criticism in these movies placed them far away from the still very complicated reality [5].

The scripts written during these years were characterized by the simplicity of their approaches. The conflicts faced by the characters tended to be, generally, of a sentimental nature. The love that was displayed on the screens was limited to a certainly tiring conquest. The obligation of finishing the love relationship in a wedding imposed an interesting and peculiar vision of love and romantic relationships. Although virtually all of the arguments treated the theme of love, very few of these stories could be qualified as romantic.

3.1. Engagement in the movies

The relationships that were portrayed in the movies of these decades correspond to the type of cinema normally produced during these years. In the 1940s, cinema moved absurdly far away from reality. Relations were consolidated with such rapidity that they are illogical. In fact, the relationships portrayed in the films of this decade were so short-lived that the couple began to talk about the imminent wedding since the beginning of the relationship. The big loves, the big passions, were never stopped by issues of a technical nature. Long-lasting relationships were not suitable for film stories nor managed to make the excited female spectators to sweet-dream because they already were suffering enough with their own situation.

While films of the 1940s were characterized by luxury and the dream of passionate and immediate love, the 1950s presented the importance of affection and conformity.

In the second decade of Francoism the big love stories set in luxury mansions were replaced by the ordinary stories filled with disappointments rather than tragedies. These stories were less pink and more grey, but also more authentic and credible.

Compared to the previous vehemence, in the 1950s relations were very long lasting and calm. The low and low-middle class characters exteriorized the problems that the lack of money could provoke in a couple.

El pisito (The little house), produced in 1958, is a clear example of the misfortunes that the impossibility to get married could provoke in a couple. In this case, the impossibility was caused by the lack of a house to live together. Pedrita and Fito maintained a relationship for so many years that they had already lost the illusion. "She already began to bore me because she is a little overweight. I met her when she was sexy, really sexy" says the protagonist to one of his friends. She, on the other hand, says: "I have lost everything. Youth, illusion, life, and at this stage I do not know what to do".

In spite of the disenchantment, the inertia and the long duration of their relation force them to remain together. Although this case is certainly extreme, the situation is presented as something common in films of the 1950s. Almost none of the female characters in these stories recognised being deeply in love, and when at the end they admitted to love the man they were going to marry there was no passion, only the acceptance of a situation and the need to formalise an excessively long relationship.

The most important concern about love in 1950s cinema was marriage and its delay. Brides complained that their partners, despite having already talked about this issue, do not earn enough money or do not dare to take the final step. *El malvado Carabel (Evil Carabel)* and *Los tramposos (The cheaters)*, produced in 1954 and 1958, respectively, posed a basic problem for women longing and hoping to leave their job to start their true life, the married life. Men suffered this situation only insofar as women pressure them, either by provoking their jealousy or directly by abandoning them.

It is interesting to observe how cinema addressed this issue. Although the viewer was supposed to assume that male and female characters wanted to get married, the film only shows the desperation of the girl caused by the delay of the event. Once a girl started dating a man, she invested a great deal of time, effort and illusion in him. Relationships, in spite of indications against it, were long lasting due to the economic circumstances and this weakened the patience of a few women who wanted to start as soon as possible their new life, for which they were intended, according to the teachings they received since they were little.

For the women of this epoch, love seemed to be an absolute necessity, a social imposition rather than a feeling freely chosen. For man, on the other hand, love is a burden, a hook that they should finally bite. Women are subjected to a continuous push and pull to achieve their objective, and they need to use all their weapons to reach the goal.

The lessons of these movies is that the first thing to do is to choose the "prey" (the man to be conquered), and try to get

it by all means. Work will be hard and complicated, but the reward for the effort is worthwhile.

From these films the female spectators could learn a number of tricks that according to mothers and friends of the interested female character were vital to preserve the men: to behave a little arrogant and indifferent at the possibility of an encounter; to never reveal the whole truth, and give the information away little by little; do not contradict the man and instead act they like what they do and make it look as if it was his idea; and to cause situations that facilitate intimacy [6]. Olga, one of the characters of *Las chicas de azul* (The girls in blue), produced in 1957, says:

"Men do not take the first step, we do it. We fix our hair or let it hang out or whatever. We put high heels, we stare at them or let them take our hand or give them a slap when needed. They count for nothing, poor men. The only thing they do is to go through the formality of proposing which is a very hard; they get very serious and very nervous. Men light a cigarette and then another, and bite it, they are great.

The female protagonists of these stories establish different strategies to achieve the desired ring. Some characters have an active attitude. They are women who struggle and fight with all their weapons to get the man they want [7]. The desire of these characters is not so much the man they fight for, but rather to find stability and forming a family.

"And to better demonstrate their admiration they dress him with the husband's uniform, the glorious and heroic morning coat. The city is a huge marital cage full of problems that too often have a tiny and noisy solution... Is not so easy to put the morning coat on a man (*Las chicas de azul*)".

The men that women wanted to marry were very elusive and did not want to show too much interest in the girl in question. Men only looked for a superficial friendship, and to occasionally date a beautiful girl who does not cause problems. This situation is presented in movies like *Se le fue el novio* (The groom is gone), produced in 1945, *Ana dice sí* (Ana said yes) produced in 1958, and *Los maridos cenan en casa* (Husbands dine at home) produced in 1957. This issue that worried the young women of that time was also addressed in the women's press of the time.

"Since the marital crisis not only continues but is getting worse; and since the number of beautiful girls who face spinsterhood increases, women have learnt that they have to hold on to the man they have chosen. Women accuse men of insufferable pride and offensively over-pricing themselves because they are aware of their scarcity, which is characteristic of the black market, but incompatible with the concept of romantic love repeatedly exposed by all sentimental literature". (Y, 1/8/1944)

This text shows some interesting issues. It puts in evidence, on the one hand, one of the fears of any young woman of that time: spinsterhood. Men's awareness of this fear and their limited number obtained power over women, are thus behaved reserved and elusive. This behaviour also occurred in the cinema where most of the male characters attempt to escape the inevitable engagement. The most obvious stereotype is that of the bachelor (which had appeared timidly in some comedies from the 1940s) splendidly interpreted in both decades, by Fernando Fernán Gómez, as a not too young man with an average profession, not very graceful, and not flattering or affectionate at all. These men, although resisted in really alarming manner, eventually succumb to the "harassment and knock down" of the women who chose them.

Women that want the men are young and beautiful. It is not really explained what is what women find attractive in these men, although we can assume it is the mere challenge, the desire to turn a timid man into a romantic person.

A good example of this situation is the film *Muchachas de azul*, produced in 1957. Ana, the shop assistant of *Galerías Preciados*, is in love with her co-worker Juan. They often go out together but they are only friends. After one of these encounters, Ana believes that Juan has declared his love even though he has said absolutely nothing about it. The girl gets back home excited and gives the news to her parents, while Juan, surprised and tired, tells his friend Alvaro about the misunderstanding that has occurred. Juan is already sure that: "As long as one does not want, two cannot marry".

Ana is obsessed with her future engagement. Opposing Alvaro's signals ("rudeness is the only effective tactic against marriage") are the morals of the girl's mother ("You are wrong Ana, you must forgive. Men are like that, particularly the shy ones. If you knew how your father's bachelorhood ended, he was brought to the Church by two friends, but eventually got married").

Finally Juan and Ana get married, as it commonly happened to all shy men appearing in films. In spite of their apparent attitude, they unconsciously want to abandon their condition and top give in the temptation of love. They do not do it because of the shame they feel. Or, as inferred from the films of the time, because they have not found the adequate woman who knows to treat them. Because, according to the arguments of these years, a woman, if she wants and makes an effort, can change a man.

The 1951 film *El capitán Veneno* (Captain Veneno) illustrates perfectly the male stance on this issue:

"I have always had instinctive aversion to women, natural enemies of men's force and dignity. For example, Eva, Armida, and the ruffian one who cut Samson's hair and many, many more. But if there is something that frightens me more than a woman is that innocent and sensitive young lady with dove eyes and glossy lips, with body of paradise's snake and mermaid's voice, with white hands like lilies that hide the tiger claws, and the crocodile tears capable of deceive and lose all the celestial court"

El malvado Carabel (Evil Carabel) shows this pressing female desire to form a family. Carabel and Silvia have been dating since years ago. The boyfriend does not earn enough money to be able to marry. The problem of both of them is that Silvia's mother wants to marry her daughter at whatever cost. "We have waited for so long and you just cannot decide, set a date for the wedding, you can do it" says the future mother-in-law. "The truth is that we cannot continue like this eternally without a solution. I have to obey my mother" says the girl a little angrily. Silvia's mother decides to intervene and engages her daughter to a dentist.

Poor Carabel sees how the love of his life is going to marry another guy who she does not love, just because he can support her economically:

"I am delighted to hear the news, I have been praying for you to sort everything out, because I love you Amaro [Carabel]. And in spite of Solá, we could marry if you want... I just want to add one thing; I will wait for you for 20 days. Today is the 1st and Solá wants to marry me on the 21st, so if by then you have not sort out your life, I mean, our life..."

Silvia's attitude is confusing. During much of the film she acts as an object, an award that can pass from hand to hand (from Amaro Carabel to Solá, the new suitor) at the wishes of her mother. "Amaro you have to understand that a girl cannot waste her time" tells the mother to the boyfriend. After all, that was the goal according to the magazines of the time:

"The choice between the dismissive handsome man and the ugly lover is rather easy, especially taking into account the ugly ones are more long lasting. The former type -who has already made you suffer before-, is likely to not miss the new opportunities that he gets to make you suffer hereinafter. There isn't a more exciting sport for a handsome man like this than destroying a girl's life. Your ugly suitor, on the other hand, is loyal and respectful and truly loves you..." (Teresa, 1/5/1954)

What is important, according to the text, is not so much to feel attracted by the chosen person, but that the chosen man is able to provide you with security, regardless of his physical appearance, or the feelings he provokes on the girl.

Another type of women appearing in the films of the 1940s and 1950s are passive women. They are usually chosen by men who tend to fall in love with them only because of their physical appearance. In the 1940s this passivity was taken to excessive limits, especially in the speed with which the romances developed.

In the 1942 film *El hombre que se quiso matar* (The man who wanted to kill himself), Irene, the girl that Frederick falls in love with in the two days he had left to live, flees with him when these days are over. In *Huella de luz* (Light footprint), produced in 1943, the time that passes between the first encounter of the protagonists and Octavio's love declaration to Nelly is more or less a week. Things happen even more quickly in *El emigrado* (The émigré), produced in 1946. Ignacio, who has seen Dorothy only once in his life, meets her again few years later. At dinner, the same day the reencountered, he kisses her passionately on the balcony of his house.

The protagonist likes girls who, although initially offer some resistance, often show consent through silence when he begins to be more friendly. Men are absolutely in love while women are limited to show their best smile

Another type of passive women appears frequently in the 1950s cinema. They are beautiful but poor girls who date guys who are not very honourable, but are rich (or at least well off), attractive and cheeky [8].

These female characters, happy about their relationship with good-looking and wealthy men, are impressed by the cars, invitations to luxurious sites, the compliments and the flattering comments. The dates with these guys, however, end up in little recommended sites, that are far from the city. Indecent places from where the girls return alone and disillusioned. These men, in comparison to the humble ones, do not intend to marry or establish a serious relationship with the girls they date, especially if these girls are lower class. They only want to have fun and, if they can, to abuse their dazzled companions.

Childhood friends tend to be always secretly in love with these women. These lovers look after them and occasionally save them from danger situation. These girls always suffer failed love affairs (the man they were dating was not a saint) and end up realising that the person they really love is their ugly and poor neighbour, who has always remained by their side. This situation is seen in films such as *El tigre de Chamberí* (1957), *El Andén* (1957) o *Manolo guardia urbano* (1956).

The male characters in these films believe they have rights over the girls they fall in love with. They consider that they can ask women to explain where they go, what they do or who they relate with. They even demand explanations about behaviours that they consider inappropriate. They know better than anyone else what the girl of his dreams needs, although she is temporarily obsessed by a rich and handsome man.

The idea that is repeated in these stories is that the lover, as long as he is a man and in love, seems to have rights over the object of his passion. Female characters timidly complain about the lack of privacy. They are always guarded by their suitors. However, they feel secretly flattered by the interest they arouse. Deep down they know eventually they will date because the adequate couple belong to the same social classes.

While the female character admits wanting to be with the friend and even says that she loves him, the truth is that her attitude is quite half-hearted and she does not show a great passion or overly profound feeling towards him. Instead, their behaviour seems to respond to the desire of not being alone, of not missing a suitor willing to marry. A good and honest man, who wants her and respects her.

3.2. Inclusion of kissing scenes

Despite the Franco regime advocated a strict moral behaviour [9] throughout its existence, cinema showed a somewhat different reality, even in the 1940s, the hardest and most repressive decade of the dictatorship.

The films shown in the cinema were subjected to the consideration of a Censorship Board that decided what matters were permissible and what deserved to be banned. This control was exercised at different times. In the first stage the screenplay for the film was submitted to the censor board. The examination allowed censors to control the film from the outset by indicating the need to modify or delete scenes or situations considered inadequate. This was the process in which the Board was more rigorous. Once it was finished, the film was subjected to a final analysis in the board indicated the cuts it considered necessary (Gubern and Font: 1975).

Generally the censors showed their disagreement towards the portrayal of effusive demonstrations of love and warned of possible further cuts when these kinds of scenes appeared in scripts. However, they rarely prohibited kissing explicitly. Kisses appeared in the movies in a higher proportion than they were on sight in the prudish Spanish society of these years [10]. Sometimes there were even several kisses in movies like *Calle sin sol* (Street without Sun) (1948), *Una mujer cualquier* (An ordinary woman) (1949), or *Los cuatro Robinsones* (The four Robinsons) (1939). Usually kisses were presented at the end of the movie, after the problems were resolved and the girl and the boy imagined a future together.

What seemed to mainly worry the censors was not the existence of demonstrations of love themselves, but the way in which they could be portrayed. Because not all the kisses are the same nor they are displayed with the same sensuality. Censorship did not try to ban kisses, but tried to assure that they were presented in the most pure possible way. Most times there are no indications of prohibition, but only warnings about their portrayal. Proof of this is, for example, the comments in the censorship report of the film *Obsesión* (1947): "the 'passionate' kisses marked in the script should only be suggested" [11]. Another proof is the brief annotation of the censor, requesting a subtle 'care', in the following part of the script of *Los cuatro Robinsones*:

"Gerundio stares at her eyes and like the last time, offers his mouth. Gerundio kisses her. Leoncio arrives dressed as Chinese and witnesses the scene, which makes him to be outraged and so he coughs up excessively. Concha detaches from Gerundio. Leoncio pretends he did not see them [12]."

Eroticism is the sexual charge contained in an image. The kisses that appear in the Spanish cinema of the 1940s are very brief and innocent. Sometimes they are shot from an angle that only shows the actors' head, which only suggests the act (like in *Campeones*, produced in 1942). On other occasions closeness is obvious. In both cases the eroticism is inexistent. Many dance scenes are more sensual than kissing scenes.

What censorship prohibits is arousal, sensuality, the ostentation of the kiss, and thus invigilates that the portrayal of certain scenes is carefully produced. In *Goyesca* (1942), for example, the censors indicated:

"We would like to warn the author that situations and scenes about love and other subjects, which are already open to the harshness or the voluptuous suggestion, should be portrayed with decorum, sensitivity and elegance, because otherwise the film can be rejected by the Commission of censorship or at least mutilated in many parts [13]."

The verbs that are used (warn, expose, and reject) are certainly menacing but never definitive.

The existence of these manifestations of love, and the treatment given by censorship board is an example of its indoctrinating character. Passion and desire are vanished but shyness and innocence are accepted. Girls are taught that if they must kiss their boyfriend, they must do so briefly and with closed mouth.

In cinema, with the exception of kissing, there are few examples of intimacy between unmarried couples and when there are they are never displayed, only mentioned or suggested. And usually they tend to end up with the girl's pregnancy, the consequent disgrace and the abandonment of the family and the father of the child. This is seen in *Audiencia Pública* (Public audience) (1946) and *Alma de Dios* (God's Soul) (1941). It should not be forgotten that the real purpose of censorship is to exemplify, and to protect the viewer from what according to the censor can damage their sensitivity.

During the 1950s these samples become more frequent and deep. Relationships, more real than in earlier times, sometimes carry certain physical activity. The emergence of kisses in the lips increases in comparison to the previous decade.

Censorship appears to have assumed its necessity in certain stories. The comments from script readers do not longer

prohibit or warns about kissing [14]. The absence of comments shows an acceptance and normalisation of this act, at least in the cinema. In the 1950s, the self-censorship of the past decade was reduced along with a shy openness towards the representation of this and other subjects (Gubern and Font, 1975: 67)

In this decade the representations of physical affections (which is the real problem of censorship, and not the kisses) became more obvious in some films. For instance, the censorship report of *Calle mayor* (Major street) [15] states: "7th roll: the love effusions between the couple at the door of the house shall be reduced to the initial kiss and the farewell". The inclusion of couples in bed, or women in the shower make kissing look like less evil thing, provided they remain chaste, as shown in the report of the 1958 film *¿Dónde vas Alfonso XII?* (Where are you going Alfonso XII?): "Delete the kiss on the mouth, eliminate the open mouth kiss" [16]. And this is because one must not confuse liberty with license.

Although the comments, expressions, and tone used are similar, what varies is the object they are talking about. Before it was the kissing and now is a higher degree of intimacy:

"The author must be careful, and so the director of the film, so that in the scenes where Bertha and Jordan -intimate scenes- are passionately involved, there is no vulgar detail of bad taste or obscene pornography, which the spectator will reject" [17].

During the 1950s the censors were concerned with "intimate scenes" and "passion", which were absolutely unthinkable in the previous stage.

In spite certain demonstrations of affection begin to gradually appear in the Spanish cinemas, the film industry itself considers that this is not enough. "Come on man! The have cut the Kiss" says a spectator of a cinema showing that was attended by the protagonists of the 1953 film *Esa pareja feliz* (That happy couple). The film *La gran mentira* (The big lie), produced in 1956, shows the back side of a cinema, its miseries and its greatness. In one of the parties attended by the female protagonist, a paralytic town teacher, viewers can hear the following conversation between a film producer and the censor that reviews the film:

- "But Mister Censor, I have made the film suitable for all audiences. Robert Taylor is no longer the lover, is now the father"
 - "That is worse"
 - "No, no, no, don't you see that the father repents before dying? The movie no longer has legs, kisses, cleavages, or anything."

The cinematographic unmarried couples of these decades could keep certain physical intimacy as long as it was decent and honourable. It was understood that the language and the film industry demanded, to certain extent, some licenses. Wherever they were circumscribed to the screens and could serve as an example to the spectators. In view of the inevitable kiss, it was understood that it was better for the spectators to watch a chaste and silly Spanish kiss that would not provoke shocks, than watching a foreign, probably more passionate and sensual kiss that would arouse them. Censorship was meant to ensure this, among other things, and to show where they limits were, or should be. Even in matters of love.

4. Conclusion

Female characters presented in films produced during the first two decades of the Franco regime have as unique mission to find a boyfriend who can be turned into a husband. This goal is not only evident in movies but also, as it has been shown, in women's magazines published during these years. The vicissitudes experienced by these fictional women are closely related to the mission to what, according to the teachings of the epoch, women were destined: the creation of a family. To achieve this goal it is necessary to use all the weapons available to women: their beauty, craftiness, and the wise advices of their mothers and female friends.

These stories show two types of women who adopt different positions when facing the fear of a possible spinsterhood: the active women, those who must fight to convince the chosen man, and the passive women, who are chosen by the male protagonist, and are limited to accept the situation. In both cases the attitude shown is very similar. There are no grand declarations of love, but instead there prevails the idea of a rational choice. An election that takes into account the pros and cons of a relationship and in which often the wisdom and the need to solve practical issues is more important than desire or passion.

In order for cinema to be believable the reality of the public must be involved. For example, films must present situations that allow viewers to identify with what they see on the screen. The difficulties faced by the country during these decades obliged producers to present, especially during the 1950s, the problems faced by couples when trying to form a family. The lack of money deteriorates romantic relationships and makes them tedious and monotonous.

But cinema is also, especially in a society with an authoritarian regime, a way to indoctrinate the population. In this case, to counteract the crazy, febrile and passionate love, the feeling that was repeated in the Spanish cinema of this time was indifferent and diffuse. Romanticism gave way to half-heartedness and conformism. A good example of this is the control that censorship appears to apply on physical demonstrations of love. Although Kisses appeared more than one might expect in the movies, they are in most cases, and thanks to the censorship that controlled their portrayal,

chaste and innocent.

The duality experienced by the Spanish women who lived during the Franco regime is manifested in the sublimation of the concept of love through most of the influences they received (cinematographic, literary, musical, etc.) and the reality they eventually assumed. This is proved by the fact that, according to the movies analysed, most women end up accepting more or less willingly one of their suitors, which will allow them to take the role they have been for so many years preparing for: the obedient wife and the loving mother.

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Magazines:

Medina (1941-1945), *Y* (1944), *Primer Plano* (1940-1945), *Teresa* (1954-1963). These sources were obtained from Spain's National Library.

6. Notes

[1] Certainly this was not the only seemingly innocuous entertainment form used by the Franco regime. Advertising, for example, was another important method used to achieve a true indoctrination of society. (Rodríguez Mateos, A., 2009)

[2] The data used to establish the popularity comes from Román Gubern (2004), Carlos F. Heredero (1993) and Valeria Camporesi (1993), as well as the references and comments of the most important film magazines of the time: *Primer Plano*, *Radio Cinema*, and *Cámara*.

[3] This is the case, for example, of the movie *Porque te vi llorar* (1941) o *Rojo y negro* (1942). The former film was not particularly successful but is relevant to the study of the Spanish women during the Franco regime because it addresses the subject of rape and its consequences in the victim. The latter, on the other hand, is a truly Falangist film of the Spanish cinema, which has as a protagonist a member of the Women's Section of the Spanish Falange. (Castro, 2006: 33-35)

[4] The remoteness of the bloody war that had imposed a desire of oblivion and entertainment along with a life style improvement for the Spaniards thanks, among other things, to the end of rationing in 1952 allowed displaying a Spain that was not rich but neither miserable. The short period in which García Escudero occupied the General Direction of Cinematography allowed a light change in the criterion, as it is testified by the classification of *Surcos* (1951) as a movie of national interest. V.V.A.A. (2004: 246-247)

[5] In 1957 only 1% of the population belonged to the upper class. 38.8% was middle class and 60.2% was working class. Data taken from J. Cazorla for the FOESSA Foundation in 1970, in Moradiellos, E. (2000: 177). We must not forget that it was not until 1952, when the rationing ended, that the country achieved production levels like the ones prior to the war. Cenarro, A. (2005: 93-94)

[6] These same advices appear in magazines of the time: "the more interest you show for him, the less you interest you will get from him. You have to be desirable, and to be a little flirt." (*Medina*, 27/3/1941)

[7] These types of women appear in *Se le fue el novio* (Her boyfriend left her), *Ella, él y sus millones* (She, he and his millions), *Las chicas de azul* (The girls in blue), *El capitán Veneno* (Captain Veneno), *La vida en un block* (Life in a block), *Aquellos años del cuplé* (Those years of the *cuplé*), *Así es Madrid* (Madrid is like this), *La violetera* (The female violet seller), *El último cuplé* (The last *cuplé*), *Muchachas de vacaciones* (Girls on vacations), *Morena Clara* (Light Brunette). A woman who does not want to marry also appears in the film *La fierecilla domada* (The tamed little beast). A wild and undisciplined girl whom after a great deal of work must calmed down by her husband.

[8] *El tigre de Chamberí* (Chamberí's tiger), *Muchachas de azul*, *El andén* (The platform), *Manolo guardia urbano* (Manolo, urban guard), *Balarrasa* and *Facultad de letras* (Faculty of Literature). However, the character from the latter film does not conform completely to the described stereotype.

[9] "And regarding 'intimate obligations' –the phrase is yours– of the couples you question. In a textbook that we can edit, if you authorise me, I will present the following: holding hands in the park –that is all they allow–; looking at each other in the eyes with complete disregard of the film's values; every day write each other very long letters that begin with "My life!" and include many admirations; making drawings of the living room and the cactus that will decorate the windows; neglecting studies and occupations; and wanting to take complete control of the partner's future." (*Medina*, 16/11/1941)

[10] The protagonists kiss in, among other films of the 1940s: *Alma de Dios* (God's Soul), *Boda accidentada* (An eventful wedding), *El emigrado* (The émigré), *Viaje sin destino* (Journey without destination), *Castañuela* (Castanets), *Dos cuentos para dos* (Two stories for two), *Campeones* (Champions), *El hombre de los muñecos* (The man with the toys), *El santuario no se rinde* (The sanctuary does not surrender), *El clavo* (The nail), *El hombre que se quiso matar* (The man who wanted to kill himself), *La calle sin sol* (Sunless street), *La torre de los siete jorobados* (The tower of the 7 hunched men), *La reina santa* (The holy queen), *Los últimos de Filipinas* (The last ones from the Philippines), *Los*

cuatro Robinsones (The four Robinsons), *Noche fantástica* (Fantastic night), *El escándalo* (The scandal), *Inés de Castro*, *La duquesa de Benamejí* (Benamejí's Duchess), *Martingala* (Martingale), *Cuatro mujeres* (Four women), *Dos mujeres en la niebla* (Two women in the fog), *Se le fue le novio* (Her boyfriend left her), *Obsesión* (Obsession), *una mujer cualquiera* (A hussy woman), *Filigrana* (Filigree), *La dama del armiño* (The Lady of the ermine), *Lo que fue de la Dolores* (What happened to Dolores), *Angustia* (Anguish), *Si te hubieses casado conmigo* (If you had married me), *La malquerida* (The disliked woman), *Malvaloca* (Hollyhock).

[11] General Archive of the Administration: Box 36/03308 dossier 7673 *Obsesión*.

[12] Original screenplay of *Los cuatro Robinsones* taken from the Spanish film library.

[13] General Archive of the Administration: Box 36/04557 dossier 807-42 *Goyescas*.

[14] There are very few references on this topic. They do appear in the reports of *La canción de Malibrán* (General Archive of the Administration, Box: 36/04723 dossier 12-51). The censor comments on page 96 of the script: "he should not kiss her". In *El último cuplé* a scene is cut: "9th Roll suppress the kisses between the bullfighter and Mary at her house".

[15] General Archive of the Administration: Box 36/03562 dossier 14633 *Calle mayor*.

[16] General Archive of the Administration: Box 36/03691 dossier 18714 *¿Dónde vas Alfonso XII?*.

[17] General Archive of the Administration: Box 36/04730 dossier 14-52 *Los ojos dejan huella*

* This article is part of the research carried out by the authors in the framework of the project: *Historia del entretenimiento en España durante el franquismo: cultura, consumo y contenidos audiovisuales (cine, radio y televisión)* (History of entertainment in Spain during the Franco regime: culture, consumption and audiovisual content (cinema, radio and television)) recognized and funded by the Ministry of Science and Innovation (Reference number HAR2008-06076/ARTE) and the Complutensian research group *Historia y estructura de la comunicación y el entretenimiento* (History and structure of communication and entertainment) (940439), call for proposals 2009-2010 (GR58/09).

HOW TO CITE THIS ARTICLE IN BIBLIOGRAPHIES / REFERENCES:

Gil-Gascón, F. and Gómez-García, S. (2010): "Women, engagement and censorship in the Spanish Cinema. 1939-1959", at Revista Latina de Comunicación Social, 65. pages 460 to 471. La Laguna (Tenerife, Canary Islands): La Laguna University, retrieved on ____th of ____ of 2_____, from http://www.revistalatinacs.org/10/art3/912_UMA/34_GomezEN.html
DOI: 10.4185/RLCS-65-2010-912-460-471-EN

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