

# Filming *The Taming of the Shrew* in Franco's Dictatorship: *La fierecilla domada*

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## Abstract

In Sam Taylor's film of *The Taming of the Shrew* (1923), Mary Pickford winked at the camera after Kate's submission speech, linking the start of Shakespeare's sound film career to a tradition of interpreting *The Taming of the Shrew* within the boundaries of modern sexual correctness. As films and theater productions started to mitigate or expose Katherina's denigrating submission, in 1956 Spain provided the optimal context for an overtly doctrinal and regressive rewriting of the initial text. This essay describes how *La fierecilla domada* appropriates Shakespeare's play to reinforce a conservative view of national, social, religious, and sexual identity under the Franco dictatorship. The essay explores some of the connections between the film's production team and the regime, then analyzes the filmic text's (re)vision of Shakespeare within the context of the Spanish dictatorship.

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*"Set Speeches, high expressions; and what's worse, / In a true Comedy, politique discourse." — John Fletcher, Prologue to The Woman's Prize*

Analysis of *The Taming of the Shrew*'s representation of gender and power has been enlarged by critical works that have put a renewed emphasis on contextualizing Shakespearean drama within standing ideological parameters at the time of production.<sup>1</sup> Still, investigation of male/female relations within the established order of Elizabethan rule have led to a multiplicity of critical positionings. In this way, contrary to the new historicist perception of Shakespeare's *Shrew* as an ideological vehicle for the perpetuation of dominant patriarchal discourses, a number of critics have underlined those elements that characterize the play as a much more subversive cultural product. By focusing on the play's farcical elements, Katherina's exposure of marriage as "a sexual exchange in which women are exploited for their use-value as producers" (Newman 1986, 94), the possibility of an ironical reading of Katherina's submission speech, the open-endedness of the play's incomplete metatheatrical frame, the ambivalent overtones provided by boy actors on

the Elizabethan stage, and the ambiguous meaning of Lucentio's closing line — to name just a few elements at work in the play's characteristic polysemy — *The Taming of the Shrew* has been made to illustrate a more complex gender scenario than that advanced initially by new historicism.<sup>2</sup> In agreement with Terry Eagleton's definition of ideology as "never a simple reflection of a ruling class's ideas," but a "complex phenomenon, which may incorporate conflicting, even contradictory, views of the world" (1976, 6-7), critics have subsequently privileged the idea that *The Taming of the Shrew* is capable of containing disparate ideological messages.<sup>3</sup>

While the discussion seems far from closure, in the meantime, questions raised regarding the function of the play within Elizabethan gender parameters may serve as point of departure for a broader exploration of how cultural objects relate to the conditions in which they were produced. In this way, recent debates regarding the contextualization of Shakespeare's play may prove central to an analysis of Antonio Román's *La fierecilla domada*, a rewriting of *The Taming of the Shrew* that was produced in 1955 and premiered in Spanish movie theaters in 1956. The relationship between *La fierecilla domada* and the dominant political configuration at the time of production is at the heart of this essay, which seeks to explain not only how the film rewrites Shakespeare's play by privileging its regressive potential, but also how it participates in the promotion of the dominant *falangist* ideology — that is, how the film can be seen as a product of its Francoist context.<sup>4</sup>

Stephen Greenblatt's statement that "Shakespeare's theatre was not isolated by its wooden walls, nor was it merely the passive reflector of social and ideological forces that lay entirely outside it" (1992, 97) can be extended to *La fierecilla domada* as an active cultural agent in the context of Franco's regime. At the same time during Franco's dictatorship, other cultural objects were challenging the regime's ideological parameters. *La fierecilla domada*, however, proves symptomatic of the early stages of a regime so unthreatened by social pressure that it allowed almost no space for cultural subversion. It is, then, the ultimate aim of this essay to arrive at an interpretative scenario that accounts more precisely for how, in 1955, the Spanish dictatorial regime provided the optimal context for a singularly patriarchal film version of Shakespeare's *The Taming of the Shrew*.

In order to support my argument, I will first consider the conditions under which the film was produced, contextualizing *La fierecilla domada* within the Francoist film industry. To illustrate the ideological boundaries within which the film was produced, the discussion will take into account other works by *La fierecilla domada*'s director (Antonio Román), producer (Benito Perojo), set designer (Siegfried Burmann), and scriptwriter (Alfonso Paso) to establish the film as characteristic of the consenting post-Civil War first wave cinema, prior to the mild cultural

apertura or relaxation of control of cultural production during the late 1950s and 1960s. The essay continues with discussion of the film's representation of gender roles within the boundaries of Francoist ideology. This section considers how the film mediates some of the concerns of Franco's administration, particularly its policies on gender and morality, and analyzes how within these parameters, the film functions as an ideological vehicle. Analyzing *La fierecilla domada* through seminal works by Louis Althusser and Laura Mulvey, the essay closes with a revision of some of the questions raised throughout the discussion and reconsiders the extent to which the film participates in the circulation of the Franco dictatorship's dominant gender models.

### The People Behind *La fierecilla domada*

The film credits of *La fierecilla domada* reveal a large team of scriptwriters: José Luis Colina and the director himself, then M. Villegas López and J. M. Arozamena (secondary position in the title credits), and finally, Alfonso Paso and Mariano Ozores for "additional dialogue." Bearing in mind that it took up to six writers to deliver the script, together with over fifty other people (twenty-one actors and actresses, and another thirty-one people, including technicians and the production team), it would be hard to argue that *La fierecilla domada* is one man's vision of Shakespeare's *Shrew*. From this perspective, *La fierecilla domada* should be seen as a collaboration by many individuals and, inevitably, as a product of the social, political, and cultural conditions at the time of production.

The conditions of the Spanish film industry during Franco's dictatorship (1939-1975) call for an examination of the relationship between the film's collective authorship and the socio-political structure of Spanish systems of cultural production. Franco's dictatorial regime imposed a production system in which the hiring of actors and technicians would necessarily go through the Guild of Cinematography while, at the same time, the Censorship Committee supervised, and could alter, cut, or prohibit the release of a film (Moreno Sáez 1999, 185). Without clear censorship rules or guidelines, filmmakers were left to square their own artistic interests with a range of ideological pressures long before the films were approved, at a later stage in production. In this way, the production of the film from the beginning of the creative process in 1955 to what Spanish cinemas showed in *La fierecilla domada*'s premiere of 1956 can be seen as a negotiation with both the English text and socio-political conditions in Spain after the Civil War. Thus, the relatively autonomous status traditionally attributed to art within the ideological context in which it is produced was, in this context, mediated by the state's control of cultural production. The administration's control over and regulation of the Spanish film industry initially resulted in the

concentration of cultural production in the hands of a limited group of people, a model that paralleled the autarchic distribution of power at the state level.

Antonio Román, director of *La fierecilla domada*, was — together with fellow directors José Luis Sáenz de Heredia and Rafael Gil — part of the "important trio of Spanish post-Civil War filmmakers" (Pérez Gómez et al. 1978, 273; emphasis in original). Román's partnership with Sáenz de Heredia, a central figure of Spanish cinema in the 1940s and 1950s, and his affinities with the dictatorial regime enabled Román in these two decades to direct over twenty films and to work on several scripts, short films, and other collaborations. For example, in 1941, together with the head of the state, *Caudillo*<sup>5</sup> Francisco Franco, Román co-wrote the script of *Raza* (*Race*, 1942), the dictator's personal project, which was directed and also co-written by Sáenz de Heredia. Other war films by Antonio Román include *Escuadrilla* (*Squadron/Troop*, 1941), *Boda en el infierno* (*Wedding in Hell*, 1942), and *Los últimos de Filipinas* (*The Last Ones in the Philippines*, 1945), all examples of triumphalist propaganda that earned Román both awards and public funding. These war movies were promptly considered "of national interest," an exclusive category for those films that embodied the regime's idea of nation and national culture, which helped to subsidize the director's prolific career within the post-Civil War film industry. Like most productive directors of the time, Román's filmography is varied, ranging from war films to literary adaptations, crime thrillers, bull-fighting movies, or light comedies such as *Congreso en Sevilla* (also 1955), a film devoted to showing the potential of Southern Spain for foreign tourism that starred Carmen Sevilla, the leading actress of *La fierecilla domada*.<sup>6</sup>

Benito Perojo, producer of *La fierecilla domada*, began his career adapting novels and plays for the silent screen in the 1910s and 1920s. During the Spanish Civil War (1936-1939), Perojo directed three of the five films produced by the *Bando Nacional*, the victorious faction of the Spanish conflict led by the future dictator Francisco Franco. Perojo shot these films at the UFA studios in Berlin during Hitler's dictatorship, and they premiered in Spain after the Civil War had ended (Caparrós Lera 1983, 25). As producer, Perojo released *Sangre en Castilla* (1950), one of the many pseudo-historical films that addressed Spain's War of Independence against France as a means of reconstructing the national past, a "clear-cut nationalist reference in tune with the xenophobic mindset that characterises the administration's preferences" (Heredero 1993, 179).<sup>7</sup> Together with other early 1950s films such as *Agustina de Aragón* (1950), *La leona de Castilla* (1951), and *Alba de América* (1951), Perojo's *Sangre de Castilla* (1950) exemplifies the consolidation of the national-historical genre:

The victors have to reassert themselves in their victory and not let anyone forget. Even more so in the case of Spain, where the war was fought against other Spaniards who would continue to be a part of the country. Post-Civil War cinema had to insist on victory, make it palpable and constant. (Vizcaíno Casas 1976, 105)<sup>8</sup>

Like a number of English and Soviet post-World War II films, these productions idiosyncratically focus on rewriting past events of Spanish history — namely, the expansive and culturally prestigious Spanish sixteenth century, the War of Independence against France, and the recently concluded Civil War itself (Caparrós Lera 1983, 33).

German artistic director Siegfried Burmann, who arrived in Spain in the 1910s and also worked in the UFA studios in Berlin during the Spanish Civil War,<sup>9</sup> was responsible for the set designs in all the national-historical films mentioned above, and also those of *La fierecilla domada*. Burmann's aesthetics and his use of architecture have been harshly described as the key "imperial set designs in the moribund historical-patriotic films of the Spanish autarchy" (Herederó 1993, 143).<sup>10</sup> Alfonso Paso — one of the six scriptwriters credited in this film — was a prolific playwright. In his early phase during the late 1920s and early 1930s, Burmann wrote drama with certain social aspirations; after the Civil War, his plays exhibit a moralizing tone that exhibits a degree of servility to the ideological standards of the regime. As late as 1974, only a year before the end of Franco and his regime, Alfonso Paso wrote a discourse titled *Falange y futuro* (Ríos Carratalá 2003, 135, 142).<sup>11</sup>

The cases of Siegfried Burmann and Alfonso Paso illustrate that the connections established in this essay between those involved in the production of *La fierecilla domada* and Franco's administration do not necessarily suggest personal political affiliations. In the same way that Paso addressed social concerns before the Civil War, Burmann spent most of the 1910s, '20s, and '30s building set designs and collaborating with playwrights and theater directors of different backgrounds and ideologies.<sup>12</sup> The underlining of connections between the film's production team and different layers of the regime is intended not to establish private political inclinations, but to illustrate the relationship between the film's conditions of production and the regime's control over the system of cultural production. Ultimately, this circuit can be seen to have a direct relation to the film as artistic product, for the evident ties between Antonio Román (director and script writer of *La fierecilla domada*), Benito Perojo (producer), Siegfried Burmann (set designer) and Alfonso Paso (additional dialogue) and the established ideology of the dictatorship (or the dictator himself, as in the case of Román) are typical of the configuration of the Spanish film industry at the time.

In 1938, a year before the end of the Civil War, Franco's alternative illegitimate government (*Junta Técnica del Estado Español*), a self-imposed shadow administration during the period of the Spanish Republic, had already created the National Department of Cinematography.<sup>13</sup> Two of the main functions of this department were to make sure that films were produced according to the "spiritual values of our country" and to supervise the production of news broadcasts and propaganda documentaries (Fernández Cuenca 1972, 238). After Franco won the Civil War and the *Junta Técnica del Estado Español* became Spain's only government, this Department of Cinematography supervised every Spanish film production. Thus, Spanish film production during the 1940s and 1950s may be analyzed in terms of the regime's dominant discourses, since films, like other objects in post-Civil War Spanish culture, were controlled by the selective mechanisms enforced by the administration. Reactions to this situation, significantly, are rare. *Surcos* (*Furrows*), a film directed by José Antonio Nieves Conde in 1951, has been credited as the only Spanish film in this period to address the problems of Spanish society (rural immigration to the cities, poverty, the black market, and prostitution; Aragüez Rubio 2005, 130). Together with Juan Antonio Bardem's *Muerte de un ciclista* (*Death of a Cyclist*, 1955), Nieves Conde's film can be seen as a singular attempt to test the boundaries of the regime, for only during the late 1950s and 1960s did filmmakers like Carlos Saura and Luis García Berlanga start providing alternative aesthetic and ideological discourses to mainstream Spanish cinema.

At the same time, *La fierecilla domada* can be seen as a vehicle for one of the most successful actress-singers of the time. The film is a product explicitly designed for and directed at an audience of devotees, eager to watch Carmen Sevilla sing and perform on the screen. Sevilla belonged to "the forefront of a kind of cinema rooted in the public's taste and, above all, in the administration's preferences" (Heredero 1993, 93).<sup>14</sup> Sevilla and actresses like her monopolized both the film and the music industry, with their songs being played constantly on the radio at a time when Spanish television was only in its early stages, and not yet accessible to most Spanish families.<sup>15</sup> *La fierecilla domada's* poster — where Carmen Sevilla is twice the size of her male counterpart, Alberto Closas — evokes the paradoxical matriarchy of the Spanish star-system within the patriarchal system of film production, where the popularity of prominent female figures during the first half of the 1950s exceeds that of any other actor or singer at the time. These actress-singers often play well-differentiated roles within the cultural parameters of the Franco dictatorship. In contrast to Lola Flores, a folk/flamenco singer and dancer from the Gypsy ethnic community known for her intensity and racialized sensuality, Carmen Sevilla has been described as a "prodigy of feminine honesty" (Taibo 2002, 196). Both figures, however, were useful to the

regime for their iconic potential: Carmen Sevilla portrayed the chastity of the decent Spanish girl of Catholic morals, the regime's model of femininity, while Lola Flores embodied the (stereotypical) representation of the Spanish gypsy-woman, a type that embodied romantic clichés ranging from dissident wildness to subversive passion. Flores provided the sort of controlled subversion that the dictatorship was willing to allow when she became, in 1954, the first woman to show a hint of the shape of her breasts after the film's director reached an agreement with the Censorship Committee.<sup>16</sup> In turn, as an iconic embodiment of prudish morality, chaste love, and measure, Carmen Sevilla's public image was appropriated by the Franco administration when the actress visited the Spanish troops deployed at Sidi Ifni (Morocco) at Christmas in 1957. The contrast between Sevilla's eroticism, in this context, and her role as Spain's chaste sweetheart is central to *La fierecilla domada*.

### Filming *The Taming of the Shrew* in Franco's Dictatorship

In a tradition that goes as far back as Garrick's *Catharine and Petruchio*, *La fierecilla domada* includes no Induction, framing devices, or alternatives to the Sly character, while the Bianca plot is rewritten as a short side-story, so that practically the whole film — running time a little under ninety minutes — centers around the relationship between Catalina and Beltrán, the film's equivalents for Katherina and Petruchio. This "free version of the work of William Shakespeare" (title credits) includes practically none of Shakespeare's lines. The writers devised a script that contains only a few verbal echoes of the English source, as in Catalina and Beltrán's debate about the sun and the moon from *Shrew*'s 4.5.<sup>17</sup> In turn, parallels with the play are provided at the level of plot, Shakespeare's *Shrew* being the source for some of the film's dramatic scenarios, such as Beltrán's odd appearance and behavior at his return for the wedding, Catalina's starvation and insomnia during the taming process, or the rewriting of some of the play's quarrels between the two main characters. At the same time, *La fierecilla domada* alters *The Taming of the Shrew*'s historical setting and location. Through a mixture of Burmann's studio settings and outdoor locations, costumes, and the occasional use of certain archaic inflections of the Spanish language, *La fierecilla domada* places the narrative sometime during the Spanish late-Middle Ages. As the characters disclose at several points in the film, the action is also set in the east of Spain. In this fictional journey back from the 1950s, perhaps the closest available points of reference for the audience were precisely the national pseudo-historical films by Perojo — which bear some aesthetic resemblance to *La fierecilla domada* and which were produced within similar material conditions — or the historical Hollywood films of the 1930s and 1940s shown in Spanish movie-theaters of the time.

## (a) Initial (Mis)representations

*La fierecilla domada* starts with Beltrán (Petruccio) leaving for Gandía to meet with the merchant Bautista of Martos after saying good-bye to three young women, possibly transitory partners from Beltrán's previous night in town. Even his squire's one-night stand falls in love with Beltrán when she meets him briefly, just before he resumes his journey onto Bautista's household. These opening moments are charged with harmless sexual innuendo that sets an initial pseudo-erotic tone, which will increase moderately as the film develops. Right after the opening scene — running time three minutes — *La fierecilla domada* presents Beltrán/Petruccio and Catalina/Katherina's first encounter: Beltrán finds a deer lying by a tree; when he intends to take the prey, a figure in the distance shoots an arrow and approaches to fight Beltrán and claim the deer. After they wrestle on the ground, Beltrán discovers his enemy's identity:

*Beltrán:* You are a woman!

*Catalina:* Just as if I were a man! (*She gets on top of him and threatens Beltrán with a knife to his throat.*) And now, do you think I need to be a man to win this game? Insolent idiot: I could kill you.

*Beltrán:* If you want to kill me, put the knife away and keep staring at me. That would be enough.

*Catalina:* Keep your compliments to yourself. I'm not one of those who melts with a few words.<sup>18</sup>

From the perspective of gender power relations, this first encounter represents a subversion of the patriarchal model, as Catalina is shown wearing men's clothes, skilfully riding her horse, and defeating Beltrán in physical confrontation. Furthermore, Catalina's initial representation is constructed through a re-enactment of the myth of Diana (she is shown carrying a bow and arrows, hunting deer with her hounds, and riding a horse). Through the film's initial presentation of Catalina through the symbolism of the goddess of hunting, the character can be perceived as incorporating features associated with the goddess of chastity, all of which can be related to the casting of Carmen Sevilla, with her status as icon of modest femininity, in the role of Catalina. Shakespeare's *Shrew*, in fact, contains a passage in which Petruccio compares Katherina to Diana:

*Petruccio:* Did ever Dian so become a grove  
As Kate this chamber with her princely gait?  
O be thou Dian, and let her be Kate,



And then let Kate be chaste and Dian sportful! (2.1.248-51)

Catalina's presentation reverses the sexual connotations in Petruchio's lines. Identifying Catalina and Diana, the film reinforces the assumption of Catalina's virtuous nature.

In the next scene, as Catalina rides boastfully into her father's castle, screaming for the servants to attend her, Bautista (Baptista) informs her that a lord — Don Mario de Acebedo — is asleep waiting for Catalina's return in order to marry her. This addition to the Shakespearean plot allows the film to demonstrate Catalina's rebelliousness when, once in her chamber, she explains to her maids how she has no intention of marrying:

*Maid 1:* With all the gentlemen that you have rejected in a month, there'd be plenty to please every single woman in this kingdom.

*Maid 2:* And that Don Mario de Acebedo looks no worse than the other suitors.

*Catalina:* What do I care about his looks? Handsome or ugly, cross-eyed or bowlegged, he'll turn out to be like the rest: a man. And what is a man?

*Maid 1:* I, madam, only know by hearsay.

*Maid 2:* And I've only been told about it.

*Maid 3:* And *these two* have told me. (*They giggle.*)

*Catalina:* Men think that they were born to rule women, but if we know how to win the first battle we will always have them at our feet.

*Maid 1:* (*Sighing.*) I would like to be ruled.

*Maid 2:* (*Sighing.*) That must be so beautiful.

*Maid 3:* (*Sighing.*) Yes, indeed.

*Catalina:* You fools! The most beautiful thing is to defeat a man who insists on ruling us. Only if you knew what I just did . . .<sup>19</sup>

In the context of the Franco dictatorship, the film's initial scenes can be seen as a subversive vindication of female independence, constructing Catalina as a character who exceeds the boundaries of gender and social conventions. Catalina's words during her first confrontation with Beltrán and throughout the scene with her maids actually go beyond the initial Shakespearean source, for the English text contains no such patent inscription of feminine assertiveness (it may even contain misandry). Partly due to Shakespeare's investment in multiple plots, Katherina does not focalize representation as much as Catalina does in *La fierecilla domada*. In the play, the Bianca sub-plot has a more predominant role but, more significantly, Petruchio delivers almost twice as many lines as Katherina. In fact, the male suitors of Shakespeare's play double their

feminine counterparts in text lines. By doing away with Sly's Induction and reducing the Bianca sub-plot, *La fierecilla domada* provides a more formally balanced exploration of the Catalina/Beltrán relationship.

In her role as Catalina, Carmen Sevilla monopolizes the screen at several points in the film. For example, during the scene between Catalina and her maids, Carmen Sevilla strips out of her Amazon clothes while she delivers a feminist manifesto. There is just a suggestion here of nudity as her body, which is first covered by a sheet and then hidden behind a folding screen, is washed by her servants. As she grows more and more animated explaining how she subdued Beltrán, the extremely long towel enwrapping her body slips back to reveal her shoulders. Apparently, the scene contains nothing that the Censorship Committee would find reprehensible: Catalina's words are moderate and demure, the big sheet — more like a Roman toga — reaches her ankles; her maids, arguably acting as a choir of overdressed nuns, add little to the erotic potential of the scene. Still, the film's negotiation of sexual innuendo and rigid morality is difficult to assess from a contemporary point of view. Bearing in mind the limited room for maneuver in the Spanish film industry and the film's repeated investment in framing Carmen Sevilla's body, it can be argued that this scene — together with the river and the cave scenes — stands close to the margins of the censorship standards while, at the same time, revealing a certain prudishness in the way the actress struggles to keep the towel in its place. In any case, so much for progressive discourse: just as Catalina finishes explaining to her maids how she confronted and defeated Beltrán, one of them asks:

*Maid 1:* That's terrible, madam! Was he very strong and brave?

*Catalina:* I barely noticed him. I only remember that . . . (*Pause. With a tender expression on her face.*) . . . that he was tall, brown-haired, green eyes, with a beaked nose, well-defined eyebrows, and a mole. (*Pointing.*) Right here, under this ear.

*Maid 2:* Oh, madam, what things would you say . . . (*Ironically.*) if you had noticed him.

*Catalina:* (*Angrily.*) Now, that's enough!!<sup>20</sup>

Only ten minutes into the film, Catalina accidentally reveals her true feelings: to her own surprise and distaste, she has fallen for the macho Don Juan.

The concept of women and their place in Spanish society in the eyes of those in power during Franco's dictatorship has been widely covered by recent Spanish social historiography. In 1939, the dictator Francisco Franco delegated the education of women to an organization called *Sección Femenina* (Feminine Section/Faction).<sup>21</sup> Spanish Civil War specialist Encarna Nicolás Marín define three fundamental principles underlying this organization's ideology:

(a) A specific political education, promoting learning guided to create good housewives, differentiating educational contents for men and women.

(b) Religious and political indoctrination since, together with Catholic and *Falangist* principles, there is a practical goal: to make women useful to the system through their work within the family, the basic cell for the continuity of the dictatorial regime.

(c) The reiterative circulation of a feminine model characterized by its political passivity and absolute withdrawal from public life, arguing that women's only natural activity is to look after their loved-ones. Politics and labor were the sole province of men.

(Nicolás Marín 1991, 32)<sup>22</sup>

Beltrán's reaction to Catalina's initial threat during their first confrontation can be explained within this context. While Catalina holds the rapier to his throat, the broad grin on Alberto Closas's face, together with his scripted answer — "if you want to kill me, put the knife away and keep staring at me" — shows how, despite her initial assertive representation, Catalina has been constructed to convey no serious threat within the patriarchal narrative of the film. It is, in fact, Beltrán's deep-voiced, disempowering response that constitutes a threat to Catalina's rebellious aspirations. Even though Carmen Sevilla will maintain a confrontational and self-assertive tone in the next scene and throughout, only ten minutes into the film the disclosure of her feelings towards Beltrán undermines the premise that this shrew can maintain her independence.

### (b) An Extra Wedding Scene and Catalina's Decency

Before Catalina and Beltrán continue the gender battle initiated in the film's first scene, Román's version of *The Taming of the Shrew* introduces an addition to Shakespeare's plot. Right after the initial hunting scene, at her return to the household castle, Catalina is informed that her father has arranged her marriage to Don Álvaro de Acebedo. This scene continues to build on Catalina's impersonation of chastity and Catholic morality while it explores the titillating potential of the actress on the screen. For the wedding scene, Carmen Sevilla is dressed in a luxurious white bridal gown, in which she finally shows both her shoulders and the upper part of her breasts. Don Álvaro approaches Catalina, kisses her hand, then begins moving up along her arm; to prevent Don Alvaro touching her skin, Catalina stops him right around the end of her glove. Then, just as she is about to be married, she decides to test Don Álvaro by making up a story and observing his reaction. Catalina explains that her father had previously sold her to a Moorish King in exchange for a large stock of wine:

*Catalina*: The blackest truth, the most frightening: six long years at the Caliph's harem, subdued to his caprice, undergoing the most shameful humiliation. How scared I was when night came until my escape put an end to my torture.

*Bautista*: But Catalina, my child, behave! What are these gentlemen going to say?

*Don Álvaro's father*: We are going to say that, whether the Caliph story is true or not, our noble Castilian lineage will not tolerate dishonour or mockery.

*Don Álvaro*: Father, hold! Dishonour and mockery I can stand, but if her honour is stained . . .

*Catalina*: The stain will be on your face, you rogue! (*Throws an inkwell at Don Álvaro.*) To believe such a story. . . How dare you suspect my good name, you crook!<sup>23</sup>

In her role as Catalina, Carmen Sevilla is living up to both her audience's and the regime's expectations of her as an icon of chaste femininity. Her selection for the part, together with the way in which the Shakespearean text is rewritten, establishes an intimate relationship between the film and the social requisites of the dictatorial regime, since sex had always been one of the main taboos for the administration, mostly due to the abiding influence of the Catholic Church on Spanish morality. As Nicolás Marín points out, "civil and church governors shared the vigilance over morality, prohibiting balls and dances during the Carnival and other festivities, films with *distasteful* scenes, and inspecting dark corners in parks and public gardens so that couples would not commit *indecorous acts*" (Nicolás Marín 1991, 84; emphasis in original).<sup>24</sup> Female morality was fundamental for the dictatorship, so while the educational system, media, and ecclesiastical authorities constantly promoted prototypical images of femininity, the administration enforced laws to underwrite this model. For example, in 1938 the Birth Rate National Prizes promoted procreation within married couples; in 1941, the regime passed severe laws against abortion and pro-abortion groups and in 1944, laws against adultery; in 1958, women were allowed to be witnesses in a judicial process, and remarried widows regained parental rights over previous children, but the law did not change those articles that forced women to owe obedience to their husbands and follow them wherever they wanted to settle the household, while husbands continued to be the only possible legal representation of married women before a judge (Sánchez López 1990, 44). From the pulpits, sermons were read against lipstick, short skirts, nail polish, indecent hairdos, bike-riding, and figure-skating: sexuality — always restricted to the marital institution — was, in essence, a necessary evil limited to procreation, a conception that stigmatized female sexual pleasure completely (Ruiz Carnicer 2001, 122). This anxiety to restrict the social role of women to procreation and domesticity is manifest at different moments in *La fierecilla domada*. It is perhaps

best exemplified at the point where Bautista (Catalina's father) addresses the issue by accusing Catalina: "Only a woman like you can refuse to make me a grandfather."<sup>25</sup>

### (c) A Kiss to Prove a Woman

After Don Álvaro doubts her chastity, Catalina destroys the wedding banquet, throwing plates at her failed suitor, smashing a cream pie in his father's face, and throwing a copper tray at the wedding official. In the meantime, Beltrán has arrived at the castle and has been watching Catalina's brutish manners, yet while everyone else is terrified by Catalina's violent rampage, he continues to show a smile on his face. After settling business with Bautista, Beltrán ignores Catalina, walking past her to leave the castle. But just when he is about to reach the exit without looking at Catalina, she says:

*Catalina:* Father, let him go. His throat is still delicate from being close to my cold steel.

*Beltrán:* Well, it is you, the forest hunter! Forgive me if I didn't recognize you, since you're wearing women's clothes.

*Catalina:* Well, I am a woman!

*Beltrán:* That we'll have to see. (*Goes up the stairs and kisses Catalina. Shift in music.*) Well, yes. She is a woman. Good-bye, gentlemen! (*Turning to Catalina.*) And let the party continue.<sup>26</sup>

In the scene, Beltrán kisses Catalina while she tries to resist. Then, the extradiegetic music changes from the theme used in action scenes — bearing overtones of tension and distress — to the joyous main theme of the film, just as Catalina gives in to her repressed feelings for Beltrán and passionately kisses him back. Reenacting this contradictory combination of pseudo-eroticism and rigid morality, after Catalina moves from resistance to submission the film shows a reaction shot of her anger and guilt as Beltrán leaves the castle. Thus, the scene reveals to the audience that Catalina does not accept that her feelings for Beltrán are stronger than her desire to be a freely independent woman. In this way, the relationship between Catalina and Beltrán is not represented as a mutual understanding between the couple, but as the woman's inability to maintain her independence when confronted with the male figure.

Catalina's desires are represented as being in conflict with her rebellious attitude, yet these moments of weakness are initially constructed in the film as brief attacks of temporary insanity. They, of course, undermine Catalina's capacity to stand as a representative of a truly independent womanhood, yet her aggressiveness is maintained throughout the film, prompting a

serious confrontation between the two main characters. This portrayal of Catalina can be seen as an especially perverse variant of gender relations, since by portraying her overall as an independent woman with occasional outbreaks of repressed feelings towards Beltrán, the film is showing how Catalina is betraying her true dependent and submissive self. Catalina's submission and dependence on Beltrán are not presented as a matter of social circumstance — she belongs to a wealthy family with plenty of resources for her to live independently — but as an outcome of women's true essence: their very need for male discipline, support, and dependence. As one of the texts written by the *Sección Femenina* affirms:

Nothing is more pleasing to male psychology than women's submission, and nothing is more pleasing to female psychology than submissive surrender to male authority [. . .] Let us conceal or diminish our presence at work. Let us be little ants, graceful and kind [. . .] Men have been very competent at work and have already formed an opinion about things [. . .] Why try to impress them with our improvised achievements, if we know we are offending their judgement and their tradition of superiority? (Werner 1942, 55-57)<sup>27</sup>

In *La fierecilla domada*, the taming process and the submission scene are rewritten through such a direct and unequivocal depiction of male supremacy/female dependence that the absence of fissures in the film's patriarchal narrative arguably exceeds both Shakespeare's initial text and many subsequent twentieth-century productions of *The Shrew*.

#### (d) Taming Processes: The River and Cave Scenes

*La fierecilla domada*'s rewriting of *Shrew* is developed further by providing different comic scenarios while the fight between Catalina and Beltrán continues. After a series of slapstick incidents, Beltrán finally marries Catalina, and in the meantime, Blanca announces her wedding with Lisardo, a servant who turns out to be a lord in disguise. Pretending to be mad, Beltrán takes Catalina to his castle after the wedding to start the taming process. Their confrontation continues when Beltrán harmlessly wrestles Catalina in a hay-barn, providing in the last few minutes of the film one final scene of dispute and erotic innuendo. Catalina's resistance to Beltrán is transformed into an erotic game of possession when, in the "river scene," Catalina finally surrenders herself: half-naked behind the riverside reed-bed, Catalina asks her husband to join her.

At this point, *La fierecilla domada* takes yet another detour from Shakespeare's plot line as Beltrán, after some hesitation, rejects Catalina. The film shows that Beltrán, who has been portrayed as a womanizer at different moments in the film, is reluctant to give away his autonomy and settle into the committed monogamy of marriage. Now, it is Florindo (Grumio) who acts as moral chorus

when — very much in tune with the regime's prohibition against divorce — he complains: "But she is your wife, before God and men."<sup>28</sup> Still, Beltrán has decided to take Catalina back to her father, which will only prolong the taming process. While Shakespeare's play ends with the public wager scene, for its last ten minutes *La fierecilla domada* moves to a solitary cave to concentrate on the Catalina/Beltrán relationship. Dispensing with the rest of the characters, the film articulates Catalina's unequivocal capitulation through a conflated version of *Shrew's* 4.5, which includes Petruchio and Katherina's argument over the sun and the moon and the submission speech:

*Catalina*: You could not rule me because I would only give up my fierceness for something you could never give me: a love so great, so excessive, so fierce that your soul would not be able to contain it. (*She sobs.*)

*Beltrán*: You know, I had almost believed you, but I know you too well. You would never tame your pride for ten times the love you have just described. In any case, if you really fancy this business, start by submitting to your husband. You hardly have any time: from here to Gandía.

[. . .]

A woman who trusts her own eyes better than her husband's will never be a good wife. [. . .]

*Catalina*: Beltrán, I don't like going back. I don't want to go back, you know?

*Beltrán*: Why?

*Catalina*: It is not right. No, it is not right. They [in general; the people] will slander me. They will say I am no good as a married woman. They will, I am sure.

*Beltrán*: Well, *that* everyone assumed already.

*Catalina*: Why?

*Beltrán*: Because you are no good as a married woman.

*Catalina*: As good as the next.

*Beltrán*: Oh, no. What would you think of a man who ran away from risks, who wouldn't know how to fight, who didn't have a beard?

*Catalina*: I'd think he is not a man.

*Beltrán*: Then, what would you think of a woman who, after getting married, didn't behave as a married woman in the least.

*Catalina*: (*Caressing his face; enchantedly?*) You have a beard.

*Beltrán*: Of course. A nightingale doesn't caw. A lion doesn't cluck. A woman should not be humiliated for being a woman. To be a woman, Catalina, is to be weak, is

to yearn for protection, is to know how to cradle a child, to look gently. To be a woman, Catalina, is . . . is to be frightened by a mouse. (*They kiss.*)

[. . .] (*Still raining.*)

*Beltrán*: The sun is shining brightly.

*Catalina*: Yes, Beltrán, it is daylight now. Now I see that it's a spring morning, with the sun, the birds, and flowers. (*Beltrán gives a thistle to Catalina.*) And if you say that this is a rose, for me this is a rose. (*They kiss.*)<sup>29</sup>

For this last scene, the tone of the film, the music and the acting have transformed from the comical/farcical to the melodramatic. The film's submission scene leaves no room for alternative interpretations as the last ten minutes of the film are solely devoted to staging Catalina's unfaltering resignation from independent womanhood. The film's last image is a shot of the thistle — in Spanish *cardo*, referring to the flower but also meaning "unsocial" or "unfriendly" person — which progressively fades out into a rose right before the final credits.

By rewriting the characters of Bianca and Petruchio, as well as that of Katharina, *La fierecilla domada* provides two additional taming processes. The film establishes a contrast between Catalina and Blanca through their relationship with their father. In an early scene, Bautista complains about Catalina's unwillingness to marry when Blanca retorts: "I assure you that, if you give me the chance, I will give you grandchildren as frequently as nature allows."<sup>30</sup> Taken literally, Blanca's request resembles the sermons from the Spanish Catholic Church, but the film provides evidence to doubt the reliability of Blanca's comment. The tone in the delivery of these lines and a quick close-up of Blanca's suspicious face at the end of the banquet scene discloses that she has a hidden agenda. Finally, when Bautista and Catalina leave the room, Blanca runs to meet her secret lover. In this way, just as Catalina is represented as the hallmark of chastity and decency, Blanca is portrayed through a certain lustful inappropriateness. In contrast with the potential eroticism of Carmen Sevilla — merely an "object of desire" depicted through the passive exhibition of her body — Blanca's active sexuality is, from the standpoint of the 1950s dictatorial morality, perverse and reprehensible. Subsequently, however, Blanca is redeemed and readjusted through her marriage with Lisardo. When her suitor turns out to be a lord in disguise, she is allowed to marry within her social scale and thus conform to social stability or moral convention. Thus, what the film initially presents as a truly independent, sexually autonomous character is redirected within the film's social and moral system.

Together with Catalina's domestication and Blanca's social readjustment, Beltrán's licentiousness is also reshaped according to the permissible parameters of Francoist morality. From



the beginning of the film, Beltrán has been depicted as a promiscuous womanizer, and when Catalina finally surrenders in the final twist in the film's plot, he is hesitant about accepting her. This allows the film to extend Catalina's submission, but also to stage Beltrán's redemption. In conformity with sexual standards during Franco's administration, Beltrán's sexuality is not depicted negatively, yet at the end he faces one final dilemma: having finally tamed Catalina, he has to decide whether or not he will commit to faithful marriage.

Spanish authorities in the 1950s were familiar with this kind of problematic; although much has been written about the sexual repression of women during the dictatorship, there is also a conversely distributed pattern of male sexuality during the Francoist dictatorship. The church's official guideline on male sexual education was abstinence during bachelorhood and fidelity in married life, yet the existence of a double standard for men and women was "exemplified by the existence of brothels, or *Casas de Tolerancia* (Tolerance Houses), which were sanctioned by the administration and considered natural outlets for men's tensions, in contrast to the prescribed purity of women, who were destined to the higher goal of taking responsibility for the future of the Spanish race" (Ruiz Carnicer 2001, 94).<sup>31</sup> Beltrán's readjustment can be seen as an idealization of Catholic morality over the active conditions of male sexual conduct. In this light, with his entrance into a valid, stable partnership, Beltrán's final commitment to marriage provides the male Spanish audience with yet another model of moral readjustment. It is only then that Beltrán and Catalina are allowed to spend the night together, which is shown eloquently in the film by a shot of their clothes scattered on the floor.

In this way, *La fierecilla domada* provides a dogmatic reinterpretation of Shakespeare's text, where the characters and the narrative are constructed through unequivocal representations of commitment, fidelity, chastity, procreation, and submission, which were the cornerstones of the Franco regime's moral programme. Despite those critics who describe Spanish cinema in the 1940s and 1950s as purged of political discourse (Caparrós Lera 1983, 30-32), the ascription of Catholic and Francoist morality characterize *La fierecilla domada* as an overtly ideological cultural product. In the 1940s and '50s, religion and politics were an underlying presence in public events, so to underplay the political-religious-moral relevance of the dictatorship's cultural products would reinforce the denial that traditionally had characterized critical revision of the Spanish dictatorship, which only recently has been corrected by modern historiography. It is perhaps symptomatic that the only Spanish film version of a play by Shakespeare from the period is a patriarchal rewriting of *The Shrew*; considering socio-political conditions after the Civil War, it is hard to think of a better choice from the Shakespearean canon to both entertain and distract a society being

reconstructed after severe fracture while simultaneously lecturing the Spanish audience with a solid moral discourse to take back home with them.

### Visual Pleasure, Interpellation, and Ideology in *La fierecilla domada*

*La fierecilla domada* presents a compensated distribution of screen time and lines of dialogue for the representation of the main characters' relationship, yet despite this formal equilibrium, the film outlines two clearly unbalanced trajectories regarding the characters' autonomy within the narrative. At the narrative level, both Catalina and Beltrán are initially represented as active agents. On the one hand, during his journey to Gandía, Beltrán is shown as engaging in commercial activities after having seduced several women; on the other, Catalina is shown riding a horse and hunting deer with her hounds in a reenactment of the myth of Diana, and later, breaking up the frustrated wedding banquet in what proves to be her last active and autonomous scene — a little over eighteen minutes into the film. After the wedding banquet, the film's balanced narrative treatment of the two characters — already undermined by Catalina's admission of her attraction to Beltrán — ends. From there on, the film maintains Catalina's disempowered and passive position within the narrative.

*La fierecilla domada* supports Laura Mulvey's idea that, in classical or traditional cinema, a film's "narrative structure" is controlled by "an active/passive heterosexual division of labor" (2000, 488). In *La fierecilla domada*, this "division of labor" is literal, for Catalina's taming process entails a readjustment of the character to the duties prescribed for women during the dictatorship, which confined them to the space of the household while men provided economic sustainment. For Mulvey, this dichotomy stands at the very base of both the cinematic reification of femininity and the audience's experience of the film. Thus, although the screen time of Catalina and Beltrán is much more balanced than Katherina and Petruchio's participation in Shakespeare's play, the camera treats Carmen Sevilla and Alberto Closas in significantly different ways: that is, in *La fierecilla domada* Catalina is represented both narratively and visually as a passive partner to Beltrán.

Through the way in which Carmen Sevilla's body is captured by the camera, *La fierecilla domada* demonstrates what Mulvey refers to as cinema's recursive "highlighting [of] a woman's to-be-looked-at-ness" or ability to turn actresses into "the spectacle itself" (2000, 493). This can be observed through many of Carmen Sevilla's reaction shots, different fragments of the wedding banquet, and especially the river scene, where the film's action freezes and the camera concentrates on her performance of the film's theme song through three close-up shots of fifteen, twenty, and thirty seconds long, respectively. This visual treatment of femininity can be extended, as it is by Mulvey, to Hollywood productions of the 1930s, '40s, and '50s and to "all the cinema that fell within

its sphere of influence" (2000, 484). Although previously modified by the censorship committees, Hollywood cinema in fact offered an alternative to national productions in Spanish cinemas and provided an active model for much of the Spanish film production of the time. The patriarchal gaze of traditional cinema includes a large number of film productions in these decades both in Spain and abroad, yet the film's representation of Catalina can be seen as an extension of the regime's specific social configuration, concurring with the idea that "the image of woman as (passive) raw material for the (active) gaze of man [is taken] into the structure of representation, adding a further layer demanded by ideology of the patriarchal order as it is worked out in its favorite cinematic form — illusionistic narrative film" (493). Through its visual representation of the film's characters, *La fierecilla domada* can be related to the dominant ideological discourses at work during the time of production. According to Mulvey, cinema offers the spectator the possibility of a "process of identification," which can be "associated with ideological correctness and the recognition of established morality" (491). Thus, through the interrelation of two of the mechanisms involved in the spectator's experience of a film — two variations (voyeuristic and narcissistic) of Freud's notion of scopophilia — the audience is invited to obtain pleasure (a) by "using another person as an object of sexual stimulation through sight," or (b) through "identification with the image seen" (487). Her approach is relevant for this discussion as much for the relationship established between the spectator and the screen as for the socio-political implications of that relation. If *La fierecilla domada* is seen in light of Mulvey's description of the viewer's experience, the gender roles represented on screen can be understood as interrelating with the spectator's voyeuristic aspiration to/identification with the images and characters represented onscreen. In this way, male and female spectators are invited to engage with the film through these mechanisms of desire and identification while, at the socio-political level, *La fierecilla domada* can be argued simultaneously to establish what Louis Althusser refers to as the "ideological recognition function" (1971, 172), a central concept in his notion of interpellation, where dominant ideology is characterized by its attempt to obtain the subject's recognition that he or she "occup[ies] the place it designates for them as theirs in the world" (178). In this way, *La fierecilla domada* provides a network of interpellative relations that permit the audience to assume the subject position of dominant discourse. The pleasurable relation that the film offers for the spectator — through identification with/admiration of its main characters, narrative structure, and visual representations of femininity — and the network of ideological gender relations offered to the spectator are precisely those of the dominant *falangist* and Catholic discourses.

Although *La fierecilla domada* interpellates its audience into the subject position of dominant patriarchal ideology, the film also offers marginal spaces that escape the tight corset

of strict Catholic morality. On the narrative level, *La fierecilla domada* — like, to a certain extent, Shakespeare's *The Taming of the Shrew* — offers an inescapably conflicted structure of readjustment, where a transitional state of disorder is needed in order to provide a fiction of corrective transformation. In this transitional state, the audience is provided with a space for subversive identification, and although *La fierecilla domada's* resolution establishes a moralizing closure of social readjustment, it is debatable whether the ending neutralizes the conflicting signifiers constructed throughout the film. Although at the end the main characters are transformed into morally acceptable gender models within the boundaries of the regime, for the most part of the film's narrative, Blanca is represented as an inappropriately active — even lustful — model of femininity, while Beltrán, in contradiction to the Church's agenda of abstinence and fidelity, is constructed as a promiscuous womanizer. Furthermore, Catalina's rebelliousness is maintained throughout much of the narration, offering disruptive models of femininity in the "Diana scene," the "wedding banquet scene," and other confrontational moments in the power struggle between her and Beltrán. In an alternative (heterosexual) reading of the film, for a male audience *La fierecilla domada* offers the counter-possibility of identifying with Beltrán's promiscuity, while the camera's capturing of Carmen Sevilla's body promotes sexual responses that exceed Catholic decorum. The female spectator is offered the possibility of identifying with Blanca's inappropriate sexuality or of responding to Beltrán's adulterous appeal. Then also, female audiences might reassert themselves through Catalina's shrewish behavior or relate to Carmen Sevilla's emergent presence as the Spanish equivalent to the relatively progressive model of Hollywood actresses.

Carmen Sevilla's dominance of the camera's gaze and the relatively daring construction of some of the film's passages open up the experience of watching *La fierecilla domada* to a number of potentially unsuitable audience reactions, associations, identifications, and desires. Mulvey's historicization of the camera's patriarchal gaze within the Hollywood films of the 1930s, '40s, and '50s applies to *La fierecilla domada*, for Catalina is visually constructed through "traditional Hollywood" conventions, "highlighting" her "to-be-looked-at-ness." Contextualized within the ideological idiosyncrasy of the authorities, paradoxically some of these cinematic conventions proved unacceptable for the regime's moral standards. Thus, censorship not only controlled messages articulated through a film's language — hence, Franco's law for compulsory dubbing of all films screened in Spain after 1941 — but American movies from this period were also stripped of uncomfortable visual material, such as representations of sexual intimacy. In this context, some of Carmen Sevilla's titillating scenes can be characterized as potentially subversive.

## Coda

*La fierecilla domada* is quintessentially a product of the Franco regime's control of culture. The film's script presents several passages in which the dominant gender policy — that of the church or *sección femenina* — is rearticulated in the characters' dialogues. On the narrative level, *La fierecilla domada* presents a triple process of readjustment, in which the behavior of Catalina, Blanca, and Beltrán are corrected to make them fit into the dominant socio-ideological models of behavior. Elements in Shakespeare's play that have allowed modern criticism to relativize *The Taming of the Shrew's* gender discourses are excluded, blocking the film's potential to readdress the narrative of *Shrew*. In this way, *La fierecilla domada* is symptomatic of the administration's influence on cultural discourses, which especially affected the field of dramatic and cinematic production. As the TRACE (Censored Translations Database) research project shows, the "vast majority" of films and theater productions during the Franco administration were modified — voluntarily or coercively, to various degrees — in order to conform to the regime's cultural standards. Raquel Merino, member of the TRACE project, extends this analysis to all cultural production in the period: "No cultural or textual activity remained free from the omnipresent influence of censorship, since the translation of foreign texts, original production, and [. . .] adaptations were all originally conditioned by the existence of a [. . .] filter for any cultural product, which was ultimately offered in a modified state to the public."<sup>32</sup>

In Althusserian terms, this scenario shows a radicalization of the dependent relation between the RSA or Repressive State Apparatuses (those operating through "violence" or "force," in institutions such as the government, administration, the army, police, courts, and prisons [Althusser 1971, 142-43]) and ISA or Ideological State Apparatuses (operating through "ideology," in institutions such as religion, education, family, and culture [173]). In his work, Althusser suggests that:

Whereas the (Repressive) State Apparatus constitutes an organized whole whose different parts are centralized beneath a commanding unity, that of the politics of class struggle applied by the political representatives of the ruling classes in possession of State power; the Ideological State Apparatuses are multiple, distinct, "relatively autonomous," and capable of providing an objective field to contradictions. (1971, 149)

In the context of the Franco dictatorship, the State's social control over the relative autonomy of cultural production is intensified as it intervenes directly in cultural production through the use of censorship mechanisms, marginalizing cultural objects such as *Surcos* and *Muerte de un ciclista* as members of the subaltern, repressed expressions of latent social tensions. This relationship accounts

for the central signifiers in *La fierecilla domada*. Still, *La fierecilla domada* provides spaces for marginal subversive signifiers through both formal (internal) and contextual (external) factors.

Like *The Taming of the Shrew*, *La fierecilla domada* is constructed as a narrative of passage. Despite the film's erasure of metatheatrics and self-referentiality or the transformation of those passages in which the play opens the Katherina/Petruchio relationship to a plurality of signification through the rewriting of the narrative, *La fierecilla domada* does not suppress the representation of the subversive previous to the characters' social readjustment. Although the film presents a narrative conclusion that works to control subversive signifiers, the narrative of passage provides a marginal space for the resonance of these elements of dissension. *La fierecilla domada*'s potential challenge to dominant social roles is reinforced by external factors that affected the production of films in Spain during the dictatorship, where the assimilation of film modes imported from Hollywood contradicted the cultural control imposed by the regime. In the following years, Carmen Sevilla would continue to establish herself as a Hollywood diva.<sup>33</sup> Just as *La fierecilla domada* can be formally seen in the light of 1930s Hollywood films, Carmen Sevilla can be seen as bringing overtones of Greta Garbo to *Queen Christina* (1933), or resonating, in the maid's scene, with Viven Leigh in *Gone with the Wind*'s famous dressing scene (1939).

Early new historicist accounts accepted that "there is always a gap between what discourse authorizes and what people do" (Howard 1986, 26) and that "there is no necessary relationship between the intentions of actors and the outcomes of their actions" (Montrose 1986, 10). Hence, the processes of production and reception must be distinguished in the case of *La fierecilla domada*. From the perspective of production, there are differences between *Y me tengo que callar*, *Surcos*, or *Muerte de un ciclista*, where the central signifiers bring into question or expose the standing ideological tensions at the moment of production, and a film like *La fierecilla domada*, whose potentially subversive content comes from reading against the grain of the film; a number of marginal ideological tensions arise from what Raymond Williams has described as the fluent "interrelations between movements and tendencies both within and beyond a specific and effective dominance" (1977, 121). In this way, *La fierecilla domada* can be ideologically circumscribed within the boundaries of dominant ideology as the "conscious and direct product of one power group or class's attempt to control another group or class by the misrepresentation of their historical condition" (Howard 1986, 28). As a result, in 1956 the Guild of Cinematography — the same institution that regulated contracts for the production of films during the dictatorship — gave Carmen Sevilla the best actress award for her role in *La fierecilla domada*. In hindsight, this prize can be seen as a self-congratulatory strategy designed to perpetuate the regime's modes

of cultural production. In 1955, representatives of the Spanish film industry had gathered in the Salamanca Talks to address the economic, aesthetic, and intellectual problems of Spanish film production, yet emerging social dissent would take its time to make its way into the Spanish culture landscape. It is not until the 1960s and 1970s that the Spanish cultural context allowed other modes of contestation.<sup>34</sup>

Very much rooted in the dominant ideological discourses of 1955, *La fierecilla domada* stands as a product of Franco's dictatorship, which found Shakespeare's *The Taming of the Shrew* to be a productive template for the representation and dissemination of dominant ideology. Yet, while transforming Shakespeare's play into a vehicle for the administration's paradigms of gender and family, the film also provides a glimpse of Hollywood's eroticism. In this way, it is opened to alternative readings from the perspective of production and reception. Thus, *La fierecilla domada* makes use of romance and eroticism to project an orthodox and patriarchal image of Francoist gender and familial relationships. At the same time, despite the administration's enforcement of dominant ideology through the control of cultural production, the film offers spaces for the spectator to ignore its patriarchal framework and privilege its titillating wrinkles.

### Filmography

- *Agustina de Aragón*. 1950. Dir. Juan de Orduña. CIFESA.
- *Alba de América*. 1951. Dir. Juan de Orduña. CIFESA.
- *Antony and Cleopatra*. 1971. Dir. Charlton Heston. Folio Films/Ízaro Films.
- *Boda en el infierno*. 1942. Dir. Antonio Román. Hércules Films.
- *Congreso en Sevilla*. 1955. Dir. Antonio Román. Producciones DIA.
- *Don Juan*. 1956. Dir. John Berry. Producciones Benito Perojo.
- *Dos novias para un torero*. 1956. Dir. Antonio Román. Atenea Films/Mier y Brooks.
- *Escuadrilla*. 1941. Dir. Antonio Román. Productores Asociados S. A.
- *From This Day Forward*. 1946. Dir. John Berry. RKO Radio Pictures.
- *Fuenteovejuna*. 1947. Dir. Antonio Román. Alhambra Films/CEA.
- *Gone with the Wind*. 1939. Dir. Victor Fleming. Selznick International Pictures/Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer (MGM).
- *King of Kings*. 1961. Dir. Nicholas Ray. Samuel Bronston Productions.
- *La danza de los deseos*. 1954. Dir. Florián Rey. Suevia Films.
- *La fierecilla domada*. 1956. Dir. Antonio Román. Producciones Benito Perojo/Vascos Films.
- *La leona de Castilla*. 1951. Dir. Juan de Orduña. CIFESA.

- *Los clarines del miedo*. (1958). Dir. Antonio Román. Procusa/PCU/Producciones Barbachano Ponce.
- *Los últimos de Filipinas*. 1945. Dir. Antonio Román. Alhambra-CEA.
- *Miss Susie Slagle's*. 1946. Dir. John Berry, Paramount Pictures.
- *Muerte de un ciclista*. 1955. Dir. Juan Antonio Bardem. Suevia Films/Guión Producciones Cinematográficas/Trionfalcine.
- *Pacto de silencio*. 1949. Dir. Antonio Román. Emisora Films.
- *Queen Christina*. 1933. Dir. Rouben Mamoulian. Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer (MGM).
- *Raza*. 1942. Dir. José Luis Sáenz de Heredia. Cancillería del Consejo de la Hispanidad.
- *Sangre de Castilla*. 1950. Dir. Benito Perojo. Filmófono S. A.
- *Surcos*. 1951. Dir. José Antonio Nieves Conde. Atenea Films.
- *Último día*. (1952). Dir. Antonio Román. Velázquez P. C./CIFESA.

### Notes

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2. As an example, Karen Newman concludes her analysis by establishing that female transgression in the play "is no more than a release mechanism" and that "by transgressing the law of women's silence, but far from subverting it, *Shrew* reconfirms the law" of dominant ideology. Yet in her final paragraph, she argues that the presence of boy actors finally "deconstructs [the play's] own mimetic effect" and, by foregrounding this "artifice," the "indeterminateness of the actor's body [. . .] therefore subverts the play's patriarchal master narrative" (1986, 100).
3. See John Bean (1980), Graham Holderness (1989, 20-25), or Ann Thompson's revision of her second edition of the play for the New Cambridge series (2003, 42-49). For a parallel (and yet unresolved) dispute on the space for female subjectivity in film adaptations of the play, see Henderson (1997, 2003) vs. Hodgdon (1998).
4. Although tempted to replace the word *falangist* with "fascist" in order to provide an immediately close synonym for the English reader, for the sake of accuracy I will continue to use *Falange* and *falangist* to refer to this political party and its members. I believe that obvious similarities between *falangism* and fascism would obscure the religious connotations associated with the *Falange*, a Catholic interpretation of revolutionary syndicalism, or national syndicalism, as it was called in Spain. In any case, the *Falange*, the political party founded in 1933 by the son



of the preceding dictator Primo de Rivera, was assimilated after the Spanish Civil War within the *Movimiento Nacional*, a totalitarian mechanism inspired by fascism and the only Spanish political party during Franco's dictatorship.

5. *Caudillo* is the Spanish equivalent of the German *Führer* or the Italian *Duce*. Parallelisms and contrasts among Franco's, Hitler's, and Mussolini's regimes, together with the dictators' personal meetings, have been widely researched (see Nicolás Marín 1991, Sánchez López 1990, Moreno Sáez 1999, Ruiz Carnicer 2001).
6. Together with "folklore films" (a typically Spanish genre that mixes techniques and structures from both musicals and melodramas), films constructed around the character of the bullfighter constitute one of the most distinct sub-genres of Spanish post-Civil War cinema (Heredero 1993). Román's bull-fighting films are *Dos novias para un torero* (1956) and *Los clarines del miedo* (1958). There are also literary adaptations/versions: Lope de Vega's *Fuenteovejuna* (1947) and Shakespeare's *La fierecilla domada* (1955); and crime thrillers: *Pacto de silencio* (1949) and *Último día* (1952).
7. All translations from Spanish sources are provided by the author: "Nitida referencia nacionalista como aval para conectar con el talante xenófobo que distingue las preferencias de la administración."
8. "Los vencedores tienen que reafirmarse en su victoria y no hacerla olvidar. Más aún en un caso como el español, en el que la guerra se debatió contra otros españoles, que permanecieron luego en igual medida formando parte del país. El cine de posguerra debía por tanto, insistir en la victoria, hacerla palpable y constante."
9. For more on Spanish-German filmmaking relations during the Civil War and the early years of Francoism, see Nicolás Meseguer's unpublished Ph.D. thesis (2008).
10. "Escenografías imperiales del agonizante cine histórico-patriótico de la autarquía."
11. See note 4.
12. Before the breakout of the Civil War, Burmann had worked with some of the most progressive theater practitioners in Spain, such as Gregorio Martínez Sierra, and had helped introduce the aesthetics of German expressionism to Spain. During the 1940s, Siegfried Burmann was also hired as set-designer for the Teatro Español (Spanish National Theatre) by artistic director Cayetano Luca de Tena. See Burmann and Burmann 2006 and Dougherty and Vilches 1992.
13. One of the Department's first directors was José Luis Sáenz de Heredia, cousin of José Antonio Primo de Rivera, former Spanish dictator (1923-1930) and co-writer of the film *Raza*, together with Antonio Román and Francisco Franco.

14. "Abanderadas de un cine asentado en los gustos populares y, sobre todo, en las preferencias de la administración."
15. After several technical tests, a daily schedule for Spanish television was finally broadcast in October 1956.
16. *La danza de los deseos* (1954), directed by Florián Rey. See Taibo 2002.
17. References to Shakespeare's *The Taming of the Shrew* are from Thompson 1986.
18. *Beltrán*: ¡Pero si sois una mujer! *Catalina*: Para el caso como si fuera un hombre. ¿Y ahora, crees que me hace falta ser hombre para ganar la partida? Estúpido insolente: podría matarte. *Beltrán*: Si quereis matarme, apartad el puñal y seguid mirándome. Será suficiente. *Catalina*: Guarda tus cumplidos. No soy de esas que se enternecen con cuatro palabras.
19. *Maid 1*: Con los caballeros que habeis despreciado en un mes habría para complacer a todas las solteras del reino. *Maid 2*: Y el tal Don Mario de Acebedo no parece menos apuesto que los demás pretendientes. *Catalina*: ¿Qué me importa su apostura? Guapo o feo, bizco o patizambo será como todos: un hombre; nada mas que un hombre. Y vamos a ver, ¿qué es un hombre? *Maid 1*: Yo, señora, solo lo sé de oidas. *Maid 2*: Y yo por referencias. *Maid 3*: Y yo cejas. *Catalina*: El hombre cree que ha nacido para dominar a la mujer, pero si sabemos ganarle la primera batalla siempre lo tendremos a nuestros pies. *Maid 1*: A mi me gustaría ser dominada. *Maid 2*: Con los hermoso que debe de ser eso. *Maid 3*: Ay, sí. *Catalina*: Que bobas. Lo más hermoso es vencer al hombre que se empeña en dominarnos. Y si supierais que me acabo de dar ese gusto . . .
20. *Maid 1*: ¡Qué horror, señora! ¿Y era muy fuerte y gallardo? *Catalina*: Apenas me fijé en él. Sólo recuerdo que . . . que que era alto, de pelo castaño, ojos verdes, nariz aguileña, las cejas bien dibujadas, y un lunar. Aquí debajo de esta oreja. *Maid 2*: Oh, mi ama. Qué cosas no diríais de él . . . si os llegáis a fijar. *Catalina*: ¡Bueno, basta!
21. *Sección Femenina*, which has been compared to the Italian *Fasci Femminili*, was a part of the only Spanish political party during Franco's dictatorship, *Falange Española Tradicionalista y de las Juntas de Ofensiva Nacional Sindicalista*. Anticipating the level of violence that would surround *Falange*, José Antonio Primo de Rivera, founding member of the party and son of Spain's earlier dictator Miguel Primo de Rivera, initially banned women's participation. A year later (1934), women were integrated within the *Falangist* political structure through *Sección Femenina* under the condition that their functions were always subordinated to male decisions. The *Falange* considered woman as "a weak and frail being, who should be protected from the dangers of life and political activity" (Sánchez López 1990, 19).

22. (a) Una política de adecuación específicamente femenina, potenciadora de las enseñanzas encaminadas a crear buenas amas de casa, diferenciándose los contenidos compartidos para ambos sexos. (b) El adoctrinamiento político y religioso, ya que junto con la difusión de los principios falangistas y católicos se pretende lograr una finalidad práctica: hacer mujeres útiles al sistema mediante su labor en la familia, célula básica para la continuidad del régimen dictatorial. (c) La difusión reiterada de un modelo de mujer caracterizado por la pasividad política y el absoluto alejamiento de la vida pública, alegando que la mujer tiene en el cuidado de los suyos la única actividad que le corresponde por naturaleza. La política y la vida laboral eran ámbitos de exclusivo acceso masculino.
23. *Catalina*: La verdad más negra, más espantable: séis largos años en el harem del califa, sometida a su capricho, soportando la más vergonzosa humillación. ¡Cuánto temor veía al llegar la noche, hasta que la fuga puso fin a mi tormento! *Bautista*: Pero Catalina, hija mía, ¡repórtate! ¿Qué van a decir estos caballeros? *Don Álvaro's father*: Vamos a decir que, sea o no cierto lo del rey moro, nuestra alcurnia de nobles castellanos no tolera el deshonor ni la mofa. *Don Álvaro*: Teneos, padre. Por la bufa y la mofa aún pasaría, más "si en el honor a caído alguna mancha . . ." *Catalina*: La mancha va a caer en tu cara. ¡Sinvergüenza! Haber creído semejante historia . . . ¿Cómo te atreves a sospechar de mi buen nombre?
24. "Gobernadores civiles y eclesiásticos compartían la vigilancia de esta moral que prohibía los bailes de carnaval y otras festividades, las películas con escenas *escabrosas*, inspeccionaba los lugares oscuros en parques y jardines para que las parejas no *cometieran actos indecorosos*."
25. "Sólo una mujer como tú puede negarse a convertirme en abuelo."
26. *Catalina*: Padre, dejadle que se vaya. Su garganta está delicada por haber sentido cerca el frío del acero. *Beltrán*: Ah, pero sois vos, el cazador del bosque. Perdonad que no os haya reconocido; como ahora vais vestido de mujer. *Catalina*: ¡Es que soy una mujer! *Beltrán*: Eso habrá que verlo. Pues, sí, es una mujer. ¡Abur, señores! Y que siga la fiesta.
27. "Nada complace tanto a la psicología masculina como la sumisión de la mujer, y nada complace tanto a la psicología femenina como la entrega sumisa a la autoridad masculina [. . .] Disimulemos o disminuyamos nuestra presencia física en el trabajo. Seamos hormiguitas graciosas y amables [. . .] El hombre lleva muchos siglos de 'oficio' en el trabajo y tiene su criterio hecho [. . .] ¿A qué tratar deslumbrarlos con nuestro improvisados éxitos, si sabemos que ofendemos su criterio y tradición de superioridad?"
28. "Pero es vuestra esposa. Ante Dios y ante los hombres."
29. *Catalina*: No me someteríais nunca porque yo sólo rendiría mi fiereza por algo que no habéis sido capaz de darme: por un amor tan grande, tan desmedido, tan fiero, que no cabría en vuestra

alma. *Beltrán*: Sabes, he estado a punto de creer en tus palabras. Pero ya te conozco demasiado. No amansarías tu soberbia ni a cambio de diez amores como ese que acabas de describir. Y en todo caso, si de verdad te gusta el negocio, empieza por someterte a tu marido. Apenas tienes ya tiempo: de aquí hasta Gandía. *Beltrán*: Una mujer que se fía más de sus ojos que de su marido, nunca será buena esposa. *Catalina*: Beltrán, no me gusta volver. No quiero volver, ¿sabes? *Beltrán*: ¿Por qué? *Catalina*: No está bien. No, no está bien. Me difamarán. Dirán que no sirvo para mujer casada. Lo dirán, estoy segura. *Beltrán*: ¡Bah! Eso ya se lo suponía. *Catalina*: ¿Por qué? *Beltrán*: Porque no sirves para mujer casada. *Catalina*: Como cualquier otra. *Beltrán*: Ah, no. ¿Qué pensarías de un hombre que huyera del peligro, que no supiese combatir, que no tuviera barba? *Catalina*: Que no era un hombre. *Beltrán*: Pues entonces qué pensarías de una mujer que después del matrimonio no se hubiese comportado como casada en ningún sentido. *Catalina*: Tienes barba. *Beltrán*: Claro. El ruiseñor no grazna. No cacarea el león. La mujer no se humilla por serlo. Ser mujer, Catalina, es sentirse débil, tener ansias de protección, saber acunar un hijo, mirar dulcemente. Ser mujer, Catalina, es . . . es asustarse de un ratón. *Beltrán*: Qué fuerte esta el sol. *Catalina*: Sí, Beltrán, ahora sí es de día. Ahora veo que es una mañana de primavera, con sol, con pájaros y flores. Y si tu dices que esto es una rosa, para mí esto es una rosa.

30. "Os aseguro que, si me dáis la ocasión, yo os daré nietos con la frecuencia que per mita la naturaleza."
31. "Ejemplificada en la existencia de lupanares o 'casas de tolerancia' permitidos por el Estado y considerados un desahogo natural del hombre, frente a la obligada pureza de la mujer, llamada a altos destinos como responsable del futuro de la raza española."
32. See Merino 2001 and Rabadán 2000. For exhaustive work on the censorship of Shakespeare's plays during Franco's regime, see Bandín's unpublished Ph.D. thesis of 2007: "Ninguna actividad cultural o textual quedó libre de la influencia de esta omnipresente censura, pues tanto la traducción de textos extranjeros, como la creación original, y la adaptación de textos en español (catalán, gallego o vascuence) estaban desde su origen condicionadas por la existencia de un filtro universal para todo producto cultural que se ofrecía modificado al público."
33. Immediately following *La fierecilla domada*, Carmen Sevilla starred in *Don Juan* (1956) — a film by John Berry, who had previously directed Veronica Lake, Lillian Gish, Joan Fontaine in the 1940s — and, in 1961, she played Mary Magdalene in Nicholas Ray's *King of Kings*. For John Berry's 1940s films, see *Miss Susie Slagle's* (1946) and *From This Day Forward* (1946). In her other Shakespearean role, Carmen Sevilla would play Octavia in Charlton Heston's *Antony and Cleopatra*, shot in Spain in 1971.

34. For an account of the political overtones in Claudio Guerin's filmed theater production of *Hamlet* in 1970, see Tronch-Pérez (2010).

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