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SPANISH AND PORTUGUESE REVIEW

OPEN ACCESS

Review: Grau, Jordi. *Confidencias de un director de cine descatalogado.*

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Spanish and Portuguese Review 1 (2015): 152–54

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collaborators and guerrilla groups, and then Franco's perspective shifts slightly. Throughout the entire book, she spotlights the victim, but in chapters 6, 7, and 8, Franco does so more directly, devoting her attentions to those who have survived extreme cruelties or torture, and disappearance.

The greatest strength of this book is the ease with which Franco unfolds the story for us, effortlessly incorporating a wide array of texts that will make this an engaging study for the graduate students—who will no doubt be reading this book for years to come—and scholars already well-versed in Latin American cultural studies. Franco writes with clarity and conviction, assertively challenging major figures like Mario Vargas Llosa and Susan Sontag, and integrating theory and cultural production into a coherent, convincing narrative.

The book's final chapter is appropriately titled "Apocalypse Now," which deals with the Mexico of recent years. By closing with events as recent as 2012, and discussing a novel set in the future (Roberto Bolaño's *2666*), *Cruel Modernity* forcefully reminds us that the problem is now. In her afterword, Franco is clear that "the problem with making the crimes unspeakable is that they become mystical, outside the bounds of political action" (248). *Cruel Modernity* refuses to let the crimes of modern Latin America become unspeakable, exhibiting an ironic sense of hope. The stories Jean Franco tells are grim and disheartening, but it is for this reason that she has written the book. Action can be taken.

Cruel Modernity is not a book likely to be widely read by the general public. Its intended audience is certainly an academic one, but it is an important text that builds on a significant foundation of research, opening a new perspective and challenging the reader to further research and action.

Daniel Runnels

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Grau, Jordi. *Confidencias de un director de cine descatalogado*. Madrid: Calamar, 2014. Pp. 240. ISBN 978-84-96235-49-6.

Jordi Grau (Barcelona, 1930) is the director of one of the biggest success stories of the 1970s in Spanish film. More than two million people waited in line to enter theaters playing *La trastienda* (1975). This was the first Spanish commercial film to show a nude female, even if it was only for a few seconds. By the 2000s, Grau was already retired after having directed more than twenty works, including fiction and documentary-style films. It was at this time that the director realized that his movies were no longer in stock, and perhaps being forgotten in history. From there comes the title of his memoirs, published in April 2014, referring to himself as "an unlisted filmmaker." This memoir gives readers an ironic yet honest overview of Grau's life work. The tone is sincere without the nostalgia sometimes found in the writings of artists of his time. The author focuses mainly on the aspects of his professional life, although many of those situations inevitably intersect with his personal life. This travelog is

therefore incomplete because the author describes some moments of his career in great detail and does not mention others, leaving the reader with many gaps to fill. *Confidencias* draws readers down a path of more than thirty years, highlighting Spain's evolution, from dictatorship to democracy, from black and white movies into color ones, and hence a time when he was not allowed to use his Catalan name Jordi and was known as Jorge Grau.

In the prologue of the book, writer Manuel Espín outlines the “rebelliousness” and “independence” of Jordi Grau’s memoirs, described as “full of surprises.” This book is exactly that, the leitmotif of the book is to be the *trastienda*—literally meaning the back room of the shop—of his films, with the purpose of bringing to light what was once in the shadows. Grau’s modest personality was shaped by a difficult childhood (during the Spanish Civil War) and his teenage years (he was forced to drop out of high school to work). His first experiences with film were in Barcelona, in the 1950s, where Grau joined a film club organized by members of the Opus Dei. That proximity to a religious and ultraconservative institution would haunt him in the future and would be part of his eternal contradictions: his rebelliousness not welcomed by the Catholics, but his connections to Opus Dei misconstrued in the leftist circles he sought to be a part of years later. Another internal conflict is when Grau established his residency in Madrid making him a Catalan in the Spanish capital.

There were also some moments of fortune in Grau’s career; one very important event was when he won a scholarship to study at a film school in Rome. Some crucial moments of his life, the author considers that his “guardian angel” appeared. That is the spiritual reason that he gives to describe his luck in moments of struggle. After living in Rome for a year, his life and his views change direction from his background of nationalistic and Catholic Spain. The immersion into modern European movies, at that time being led by Rossellini and Antonioni, is the key point of development for his emerging film career. The most influential filmmaker for Grau was Federico Fellini. The way he describes his interviews with the Italian director in Rome says a lot about the picaresque drive needed to create your own path in show business. The occasional encounters and anecdotes with Fellini are probably the few moments when the author inevitably shows vanity. He spent years developing his first screenplay, *Noche de verano* (1962), which was informally presented to Fellini. The struggle Grau had producing this film was surrounded by issues with the budget, the cast, and censorship. A photograph taken of Grau and Fellini during one of their encounters gave Grau’s project the notoriety it needed in order to get produced. They became friends and Grau consecrated his book *Fellini desde Barcelona* (1985) to the master director. In general, Grau’s memoirs describe with more honesty than accuracy the unexpected events that occurred during his consecutive film projects.

During the first half of the 1960s, his films were a part of the Nuevo Cine Español, a group of young filmmakers dealing with social themes through

a realistic esthetic. By 1965, due to his Catalan roots, his works were linked to the experimental wave of the Escuela de Barcelona, a heterogeneous group tied to the more avant-garde cosmopolitan ambiance of the *gauche divine*. The filmmaking of *Tuset Street* (1967) brought up many issues. That project could have been his first big blockbuster, but his misunderstandings with the star Sara Montiel moved him to renounce the project. Grau's humble demeanor is a testament to his inconformity to the status quo. He never surrendered to comprising situations and his contacts in Italy presented him with the opportunity to show his newest works *The Legend of Blood Castle* (1972) and *Let Sleeping Corpses Lie* (1974) to an international audience. It is fascinating that these two movies brought him more international acclaim than any of his other films, and can be accredited with giving Grau the label of *cult director* in the horror movies circuit. Nevertheless, as he insinuates in the title of his memoirs, it is complicated to categorize him, and if we could do so, it would be as a man who was faithful to his principles.

Besides filmmaking, his other passion was bullfighting. It is an important aspect of Grau's life that deserves to be more deeply analyzed because it is a recurrent theme in some of his works. The unpredictable success of *La trastienda* helped Grau continue to make movies until 1994, but none of them were as notorious as the previous films mentioned. Despite the important contributions that he made, Jordi Grau has not been considered a relevant figure in Spanish culture in the post-Franco era. A career filled with so many accomplishments, which are embedded in the cultural transformation of Spain, deserves more attention and should be reclaimed under a new perspective.

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Lázaro-Reboll, Antonio. *Spanish Horror Film*. Edinburgh: Edinburgh UP, 2012. Pp. 308. ISBN 978-0748636396.

En *Spanish Horror Film*, Antonio Lázaro-Reboll nos ofrece un muy recomendable ensayo dedicado al desarrollo del cine de terror español y al análisis del género a través de algunas de sus películas más representativas. Contrariamente a casi todo lo publicado en el tema, este no es un libro de historia, sino un análisis cultural de momentos concretos de la historia del cine español y el género de terror desde muy diferentes perspectivas. Lázaro-Reboll no se centra, como es habitual, en la producción de las obras, también se adentra en terrenos como la recepción, la producción o la distribución, fundamentales para cualquier ensayo sobre cine que, como este, desee reclamar el valor cultural de un género a menudo marginado.

Para ello el autor nos presenta un texto anti-cánones, reclamando la importancia de algunos títulos y autores, como Eloy de la Iglesia o Jesús Franco, que han sido tradicionalmente olvidados o ignorados en los libros de historia tradicionales, devolviéndoles su merecida posición en el área de los estudios