

Ageing and Coming of Age in Carlos Saura's *La caza* (*The Hunt*, 1965)



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In a frequently-cited interview, Manuel Gutiérrez Aragón declared that Carlos Saura's third feature film, "dio la vuelta al cine que se hacía en España. En cuanto a tener un lenguaje aseado, para mí hay un cine español de antes de *La caza* y otro después" (Torres 28). However, the status of Saura's 1965 *La caza* as a watershed film has not always been undisputed. Its potential was intuited before the shoot by one of the film's acting leads, Alfredo Mayo, but many producers rejected the project until it was taken on by Elías Querejeta, with whom Saura was to work in creative tandem in twelve further features over the following sixteen years.¹ The reception of the film on its release was also mixed. It was championed by journals like *Nuestro cine*, featuring twice on its front page (Monterde 113n28), yet questioned by *Film Ideal* (Sánchez Vidal 44). While its impact on Spanish

¹ In recent interviews Saura has been keen to emphasize Mayo's contribution to these early stages of the project, which cannot be acknowledged in the film's credits (Óscar de Julián 68; Gómez 363). In the interview included on the DVD version of the film, released as part of the *El País* "Un País de Cine" collection, Saura mentions that ten or eleven producers rejected the piece before Querejeta. Details of credits include: Elías Querejeta (producer); Elías Querejeta P.C. (production company); Carlos Saura and Angelino Fons (script); Luis Cuadrado (director of photography); Luis de Pablo (music); Carlos Ochoa (décor); Pablo del Amo (editor). Principal actors include: Emilio Gutiérrez Caba (Enrique); Alfredo Mayo (Paco); Ismael Merlo (José); José María Prada (Luis) and Fernando Sánchez Pollack (Juan). The film was released in November 1966 (Madrid). The running time is eighty-three minutes.

film-going audiences was negligible, as was typical of the *Nuevo Cine Español*,² it caused a stir at foreign film festivals, such as Berlin (where it was awarded the Silver Bear), New York, London and Acapulco, although it had been rejected by Cannes (Gómez 364; Sánchez Vidal 44). *La caza* has enjoyed more consistent acclaim in later years, and has been praised by both practitioners of, and commentators on, Spanish cinema, especially those concerned with its auteurist traditions.³

Over almost forty years of scholarship on *La caza*, our understanding of the importance of the film, and of the nature of what Gutiérrez Aragón terms its “lenguaje aseado,” has evolved. Critical responses are parables for their own times, as they shift in focus from emphasizing the film’s political import in accounts written during, and immediately following, the dictatorship, to wider concerns in recent years. Thus Manuel Villegas López, who published the first Spanish book on the NCE in 1967, would stress the indirect political critique encrypted in *La caza*, in a style of expression which is itself indirect and encrypted—the result, no doubt, of the time of writing. He describes the film variously as a “máscara. Todo está detrás,” a “fórmula [que] es preciso desarrollar para llegar a su verdadero y concreto significado” (83), a “kábala,” a “jeroglífico, cada uno de [sus elementos] significa una cosa y todos juntos, otra” (85), and finally “Lo que se verá, si se puede, está más allá de lo que se ve: es el secreto del film” (86). This emphasis on the film’s “secret” critique remained central to analyses well into the 1980s. Even though the regime was over and the dictator dead, the fight against Francoism on the ideological front continued in the pages of film criticism. These accounts of *La caza* tended to focus on its evasion of censorship. In particular, the rabbit hunt was understood as a metaphor for the Spanish Civil War; consequently the self-destruction of the rabbit-hunters/war-victors at the end of the film looked forward to the inevitable collapse of the dictatorship established by that conflict (see Hopewell 71–76; Higginbotham 79; Kinder 160; Torreiro 320; Monegal 203–08).

² This refers to those films funded by José María García Escudero’s legislation as Director General of Cinema from 1962 to 1967. For a summary of his protectionist measures, see Faulkner 652–54.

³ I take this expression from Peter Evans’s *Spanish Cinema: The Auteurist Tradition*. For an analysis of the critical privileging of auteurist, as opposed to popular, film, see Triana-Toribio *Spanish National Cinema*.

In 1988, Agustín Sánchez Vidal suggested that political readings of the film were tied to the time of its reception:

Si en su día la construcción arquetípica de los personajes y el sentido parabólico de la película imponían por encima de cualquier otra consideración una lectura política, la perspectiva actual libera a *La caza* de esas servidumbres coyunturales. (48)

Echoing this idea that changing times free *La caza* from the debates of its immediate socio-historical context, critics have suggested further lines of enquiry: these range from the film's exploration of private property (Pérez Rubio); the pictorial antecedents of Saura's hunting imagery (Wood, "Inspiración prehistórica"); and its analysis of illness (Wood, "Stásis y peste"). In the most recent studies (Heredero; Zunzunegui), which form part of the current critical reappraisal of the NCE, there is a new focus on the ways Saura and his team deploy film form.

This article is also a product of its own time, as it draws on this previous scholarship, reacts to a recent emphasis in Spanish film criticism on questions of gender and masculinity, and applies new theoretical insights, such as Gilles Deleuze's concepts of the "movement-image" and the "time-image" in cinema (first published in 1983 and 1985), and Judith Butler's work on the materiality of the body (1993).⁴ First, it argues that the two rabbit-hunt sequences, rather than conspicuous metaphors, are a force of violent interruption in the narrative which prevents the viewer's facile involvement with a straightforward—if shocking—plot, and predictable—if critical—characterization. This main narrative, not the hunt sequences, encodes critique, and its analysis will reveal the wider nature of Saura's satire of 1960s Spain. This is most profound in the treatment of ageing, a question which has received only passing critical attention thus far.⁵ Finally, this piece offers a new reading of film form in *La caza* which draws on Deleuze and Butler, and lays particular stress on the significance of the landscape and body shots of the siesta sequence half-way through the film.

⁴ For studies of gender and masculinity in Spanish cinema, see, for example, Perriam, who has also noted that, from the late 1980s, the body is a new focus in the humanities (10). My thanks to Chris Perriam, who suggested I look at Deleuze and Peter Weir, and to Julián Gutiérrez-Albilla, who pointed out the relevance of Butler's study, in their feedback on a version of this article delivered as a paper at the Association of Hispanists of Great Britain and Ireland annual conference, Cambridge, 2004.

⁵ In his 1997 reference work, D'Lugo notes that the film "takes aim at the aging process of the victors of the Civil War" (44).

Violent Interruptions: The Rabbit Hunt

La caza is the portrayal of a day out hunting. At first we assume that this is an occasion for three old friends to be reunited and to introduce a young relative to the supposed pleasures of the chase. This fictional narrative is interrupted by two sequences of hunting, which, given their accuracy of detail and objective narration, belong to the documentary genre.⁶ The first hunt takes place in the morning, and is carried out by the four armed men using the dog as a retriever, and the second, in the afternoon, involves the introduction of ferrets in the warrens to flush the rabbits out. On a first viewing of *La caza*, these images cause the greatest emotional impact. Despite the fact that they make up only six of the eighty-three minutes of running time, the profound impression they make on the viewer surely explains why the rabbit hunt has become so central to the interpretation of the film. Despite the unsettling directness of these images of the un-staged rabbit slaughter, which at times become almost unwatchable, in critical accounts, the hunt has nonetheless been inscribed into the poetic register of “indirection” (Monegal 203), and understood as a metaphor for the violence and killing of the Civil War.

For instance, Antonio Monegal interprets the hunt sequences as an example of the rhetorical devices that, in spite of being incorporated into the narrative and participating in its development, generate a discourse that is not ruled by narrative economy [...]. We may identify those devices as figural operations, equivalent to metaphor and metonymy, which, when combined, make up the allegorical texture of the film. (204)

While I also consider the hunt sequences to operate outside “narrative economy,” the point I contend here is the extent to which they are “figural” or “allegorical.” Rob Stone has recently argued that the images of cruelty to animals in films like *La caza*, *Furtivos* (Borau 1975) and *Pascual Duarte* (Franco 1975), appeal to us on such a visceral level that we should be shocked by the reality of the slaughter, and not dilute this response by considering it intellectually. “It behoves us,” Stone argues,

to observe the indisputable reality of these incidents rather than the narrative-bound symbolism of the slaughter. [...] Audiences should there-

⁶ Guy Wood notes, with reference to Miguel Delibes’s *El libro de caza menor*, that the level of detail in the hunt sequences reveals Saura’s “conocimientos cinegéticos” (“Inspiración prehistórica” 371n10).

fore not dismiss the slaughter onscreen as a device or an artistic conceit when they are faced with real pain and real killing, because if they do, their critical faculties will keep their understanding at a standstill and they will fail to be affected by the reality. (“ANIMALS WERE HARMED” n. pag.)

The images of the rabbit slaughter in *La caza* are so direct that they must be seen as what they are, rather than as indirect metaphors. We should therefore acknowledge that their role is to deal us “a smack up the side of the head”:⁷ they violently interrupt the narrative and shake us out of our viewing complacency.

Saura’s own statements about his intentions in making the film also lead us to query the hunt-as-metaphor interpretation. In an interview of 1969, he stated that, originally, the idea behind *La caza* had indeed been to make a film about the Civil War. The setting was to be a hunting ground and old Civil War battle field he discovered during the shoot of *Llanto por un bandido* (1963), and the hunting party was to be split between two camps, two men in one, three in the other, clearly to evoke the two opposing sides in the conflict (Torres and Molina-Foix 8). Although the setting was retained, the split-party idea was scrapped:

we took out the allusions to the Spanish Civil War [...]. The basic idea had evolved quite a bit. Of course, there was a Spanish Civil War, but we wanted a broader meaning. [...] We deliberately took out the allusions because that seemed to (sic) easy to us. (Torres and Molina-Foix 10)

The hunt/war metaphor is “too easy.” The documentary hunt sequences interrupt: their function is to jolt us out of our involvement with the narrative, and force us to maintain a critical distance from the film, a process which recalls the work of Buñuel in its appeal to Brechtian aesthetics. For, without these interruptions, and other key moments of self-consciousness and de-naturalization which I discuss in the final section of this article, *La caza* is a conventional narrative, with coherent characterization and a linear plot, which progresses, with increasing inevitability, to its tragic dénouement.

“25 Años de Paz,” 25 Years Older

Saura’s “broader meaning” emerges from the narrative of *La caza*, rather than the hunt sequences. The film is, above all, a critical study of ageing. The development of this theme encodes Saura’s critique of

⁷ Stone, quoting Jean Baudrillard (“ANIMALS WERE HARMED” n. pag.).

Franco's Spain, as it probes current tensions surrounding the age of the dictator and the first generation of Franco loyalists, and the regime's failure to garner the support of middle-class youth, upon which it depended for its survival. The official celebration of the dictatorship's longevity, the "25 años de paz," was a massive attempt to disavow both the decline of those who were ageing, and the discontent of those coming of age. These two preoccupations are visible beneath the surface of the film commissioned for the celebrations, José Luis Sáenz de Heredia's *Franco, ese hombre* (1964). In the final section of this article, I will analyse film form in *La caza* to explore ageing in the wider context of the representation of the body.

We know that the idea for this film came to Saura during the making of his previous film in 1963, and that *La caza* itself was shot in 1965: the project was therefore in preparation throughout 1964. The year in which the "the basic idea evolved" was the year of the "25 años de paz," and while *La caza* is no mechanical representation of events in this period, current causes of anxiety informed its own critical concerns. "25 años de paz" was a propaganda slogan coined by the recently-appointed Minister for Information, Manuel Fraga (he was also responsible for the infamous "España es diferente" tourist catch phrase). Fraga masterminded the nationwide celebrations: there were exhibitions, prizes and extensive press coverage, as well as *Franco, ese hombre*, Sáenz de Heredia's biopic of the dictator (Preston 714–15). "The anniversary revels," Paul Preston recounts in his biography of the Caudillo, "confirmed Franco's belief in his own immense popularity" (714). They may also be seen, however, as an attempt to disguise the disquiet felt in official circles over the continued viability of a leader who seized power in a very different, and long past, era.⁸ The economic and social changes of the *apertura* might be rhetorically spun as part of a planned development of Francoism (Preston 706), but the material manifestation of its anachronism was the physical presence of the dictator. Franco's ageing could not be hidden: he turned seventy in 1962, and his visible decline, accelerated by the on-set of Parkinsons (an illness never officially acknowledged [Preston 729]), became increasingly obvious.

The second cause of concern, the other side of the coin of old age, was youth, or coming of age. The regime was always aware that its survival depended on attracting the loyalty of new generations, as the

⁸ Fraga writes in his memoirs of Franco's evident ageing when he saw him deliver the speech which marked the end of the "25 años" celebrations (Preston 715).

establishment of the Falangist youth organizations in the 1940s made clear. While the failure to win the support of working-class youth, represented in the characters of Saura's *Los golfos* (1959), or Jesús Fernández Santos's *Llegar a más* (1964), might be expected, and thus tolerable, the opposition of the middle-class children of the winners of the Civil War was not. These young people made up the student population, and disturbances and demonstrations at Spain's universities from the 1950s onwards were a thorn in the side of the regime.⁹ Dissident cinema recorded this discontent: Juan Antonio Bardem's *Muerte de un ciclista* (1955), for instance, included a passing, but important, reference to student riots, and Basilio Martín Patino's *Nueve cartas a Berta* (1964), offered a detailed exposé of an angst-ridden student.

The context of the "25 años de paz" also explains the role of the Civil War in *La caza*. Throughout the dictatorship, this conflict was perpetually present in the public sphere, through the media coverage of commemorative events such as the annual military parades of 18 July and 1 April, and the opening of the *Valle de los caídos* in 1959. While there was an apparent shift away from the language of triumphalism by the 1960s, as younger ministers became involved in writing Franco's speeches,¹⁰ this was just rhetorical spin. Constant affirmations of "peace" in Fraga's "25 años" celebrations were, of course, a constant reminder of the war. This obsession with the war of 1936–39 also underlined the differences between young and old in the 1960s. This is a textbook case of generational conflict which is exacerbated by war and its aftermath, whereby the clash between young and old is intensified as it is also one between a group which has fought in a war and a group which has not.¹¹

Ageing and coming of age, key sources of anxiety to Francoism in 1960s Spain, are probed in *La caza* through a critique of masculinity. Saura overturns in this film the kind of homosociality described and prescribed by the consensual Francoist cinema of the 1940s. It has been noted (for example by D'Lugo *Films of Saura* 57) that casting

⁹ *La caza* was made in the year that the student union (SEU) was abolished (Grugel and Rees 92–93).

¹⁰ See the example Preston gives of Fraga and Laureano López Rodó's interventions on Franco's end of year broadcast on December 30, 1962 (706).

¹¹ Participation, or non-participation, in a war not only divides diachronically, but distinguishes between different groups synchronically. At the time of writing, being, or not being, a Vietnam war veteran has marked out a major divide between the two 2004 US presidential candidates.

Alfredo Mayo intertextually evokes the actor's former embodiment of the "galán del franquismo" (Sánchez Vidal 48n24) in films such as *Raza* (Sáenz de Heredia 1941), *Harka* (Arévalo 1941) and *¡A mí la legión!* (Orduña 1942). Santos Zunzunegui has pointed out (417) the similar function of other actors such as Ismael Merlo, who plays José, and José María Prada, who takes the role of Luis, the third member of the trio.¹² The point here is not to repeat the truism that male characterization in consensual Francoist cinema heroicizes, and dissident cinema de-heroicizes, but, rather, to stress that casting these particular actors in *La caza* foregrounds their ages, and their ageing. D'Lugo states that the choice of Mayo, who plays Paco, is "a shattering statement of the passage of time and the transformation of a bygone mythic hero into a venal and narcissistic old man" (57), and the same might also be said of Merlo and Prada. In 1965, the year Franco was seventy-three, these actors were in fact only fifty-four, forty-seven, and forty respectively. But just as Luis Cuadrado's monochrome photography avoided the middling tones of grey in favour of the startling extremes of black and white (Sánchez Vidal 48), so the narrative avoids the middle ground: these middle-aged men are portrayed as old. Furthermore, although the actor Emilio Gutiérrez Caba, who plays Paco's brother-in-law Enrique, was twenty-three in 1965, in a parallel gesture of hiking up excesses, he is infantilized by the film.

Narrative and cinematography were crucial to emphasizing age, but so was performance style. Actors who had previously starred in the popular Spanish cinema of the 1940s cannot simply be dismissed as passive participants in art films, whose material presence was simply manipulated by the director to evoke their earlier films. The participation of Mayo in the early stages of the *La caza* project would indicate his involvement with, or at least knowledge of, the creative development of the work. Saura may have instructed the cast not to act their age, but old age. Still, the strutting arrogance of Mayo's Paco, the stooping bitterness of Merlo's José, the sulking moods of Prada's Luis, combined with the actors' own undoubted awareness of their previous roles, also play an important part in *La caza*'s narrative of ageing.¹³

¹² Recent readings of these films against the grain reveal that their gender dynamics are more complex than hitherto supposed. On *Raza*, see Triana-Toribio, "Ana Mariscal" and Martín-Márquez 89–96; on *Harka!*, Evans, "Cifesa" 218–19.

¹³ Notwithstanding his comments about Mayo (see note 1), Saura, the proud auteur, would play down any actor's contribution to a film in comparison to that of the director. See his interview with Mechthild Zeil, 112–13.

The ageing, anxiety about ageing, and defiance of ageing exhibited by these three old friends is evident throughout the narrative. In the opening sequence Saura is perhaps over-keen to establish character and context—a result, no doubt, of shooting in sequence (Gómez 363). The relationship between the men is immediately explained: they are old army pals, reunited for a day of hunting. “Después de tanto tiempo,” José comments as he puts his arm around Paco in a repeated gesture of forced comradeship, “otra vez juntos.” He then reminisces about a fourth old friend who, we later learn, has committed suicide: “si llega a venir Arturo, los cuatro de siempre. Pobre Arturo.” The intention behind this exchange is to evoke, from the outset, the men’s former youthful and chummy selves to contrast them with their present situation. We soon appreciate that their friendship is now a sham, as all three men are motivated by self-interest. José has only organized the outing as a pretext to ask Paco for a loan, Luis has come along to keep in with his current boss but is keen to find a new one, and Paco just wants to take some exercise. Neither are family ties disinterested: Paco has invited along his brother-in-law Enrique because through him he has gained access to his father-in-law’s jeep.

Saura brings the theme of ageing to the fore through Paco and José, the two older men played by the two older actors. They initially represent two different approaches to ageing, but prove to be mirror images of one another. José is the obsessive. He claims he is ill, complains of stomach pains, and periodically takes pills. The illness is unspecified, but José’s characterization as an ageing ex-soldier is underscored when he admits to Paco: “tengo dolores desde que me dieron el tiro.” During a break before lunch, Enrique takes a snapshot of José as he crouches over a pool to wash. He rips it up then glowers jealously at Paco’s comparatively statuesque physique, while reproaching himself for being old and letting himself go. “Parecí [en la foto] a un viejo de estos que toman el sol en una esquina,” he scolds himself in voice-over, “tengo que llevar cuidado. Es natural. Después de tanto tiempo sin hacer ejercicio. En cambio, él sigue igual. No le importa nada.” Paco is the narcissist. He takes pride in his well-preserved body, and his character anticipates that of Julián of Saura’s next feature, *Peppermint frappé* (1967), in his interest in exercise and cosmetics: while Enrique applies lip salve, Paco is the only character to use sunscreen. In voice-over we learn of his fascist intolerance of the physical imperfections of the weak and the lame. However, just as his confidence driving the jeep at the beginning of

the film is undercut by José's revelation of his former, lowly position as a truck-driver, so his anxiety about ageing is revealed at the end of the film. In the sequence that immediately precedes his murder by José, we see him examine his wrinkles in the drinks-box mirror, then pull at his temples to smooth out the crow's feet. Like José, then, he rejects the reality of his ageing and acts out the equivalent of tearing up the unflattering photograph by altering his appearance before the mirror.

Cinematic form is used so that the whole film may be likened to an unflattering photograph of ageing men. Critics have previously noted the way camera-work, lighting and over-exposure of the film stock depict the oppressive environment of the old Civil War battlefields, but those cinematic resources are also harnessed in order to cruelly expose the ageing and suffering of the body. Cuadrado trains his camera on those bodies in starkly lit medium shots, dehumanizing long shots and cruelly detailed close-ups, which pick out their scars and wrinkles. The men's ageing bodies sweat and burn under a scorching Castilian summer sun. Saura reminds us in interview that no artificial resources were needed to evoke this heat. The sweat and panting were genuine, and experienced by the whole crew during the arduous four-week August shoot.¹⁴

The equivalence between José and Paco is conveyed through their portrayal using the same cinematic resources. Saura also exploits the potential offered by frames and mirrors to reinforce this similarity. The enclosure of the two characters within the same frame becomes a visual leitmotif in the film, which echoes the credit sequence, in which the camera slowly zooms towards two caged ferrets. In the café at the start of the film, for instance, the four men sit together at the bar, but, in medium shot, and through a long take, the camera tracks from side to side to ensure that only two characters occupy the frame at any one time. Again, when Paco drives from the café to the hunting ground, he and José, who sit in the front seats, are linked by *mise en scène*. In a long shot, we see the two men through the car windscreen as it approaches, and the windscreen partition simultaneously divides and unites them. They are trapped by the frame of the windscreen within the frame of the cinema screen in a visual refrain of the two ferrets of the credit sequence, who share a cage which also contains a divide. There follows an exchange between José and Juan's mother which reinforces the similarity between the hunters and ferrets,

¹⁴ Interview, *La caza*, "Un País de Cine" DVD.

introduces the tension which governs the film, and looks forward to its violent end: “[los hurones] se pasan el día gruñendo y removiéndose sin parar [...] Están como locos, y alguno se va a escapar.” Ferrets are “notoriously vicious and ferocious creatures,” Gwynne Edwards notes, “and the pair in the cage are kept in separate compartments to prevent them tearing each other apart” (73), but his reading draws too simple a parallel between the combative animals and the two sides of the Civil War conflict. Through cinematography, editing and mise en scène, the caged ferrets image resonates throughout the film’s portrait of Paco and José, conveying the similarities and rivalries between these two ageing male characters.

Mirrors are also used to link them. For instance, as the group prepare for the hunt, we see José open the drinks box to check its contents in the left side of the frame. Paco is positioned in the right of the frame facing his friend, and between them is the large mirror set in the lid of the drinks box. The image of José in the mirror matches the image of Paco located behind it, and implies that the two characters are mirror images of one another. This mirror-image conceit is used again to indicate equivalence when the two men argue after Paco refuses José’s request for a loan. Both characters stare at the camera straight-on in close-up, as if the camera itself were a mirror, and the images of the two men’s faces are cross-cut ten times. Diegetically, we understand that the characters are staring at one another, thus the sequence implies that each character contemplates not his own mirror image, but the face of the other.

Rather than mirror images, the other two older male characters in the film—Luis, part of the original military foursome, and Juan, the exploited, impoverished keeper of José’s land played by Fernando Sánchez Pollack—are projections of José and Paco’s fears of ageing. Luis’s weakness and clumsiness are caused by alcoholism, but when he falls off a donkey in a rare moment of horse-play early in the film, José does not tease him for his inadequate manhood, which one might expect from a member of a social group who would consider the ability to dominate animals a marker of masculinity.¹⁵ He reproaches him instead for his ageing: “eres más joven que yo y estás completamente acabado.” Likewise, Juan functions as a manifestation of Paco’s fear of physical disability: “no soporto los tullidos,” he complains, “me dan escalofríos. Prefiero morirme antes de quedarme

¹⁵ Saura’s *Los golfos* dramatized this. As María Delgado notes, “[Juan’s] domination of the bull offers an expression of disciplined masculinity” (43).

cojo o manco. Además, dan mala suerte.” Finally, the absent Arturo casts a shadow over Paco and José’s lives, as his suicide signals their own fear of death.

Through this exploration of ageing and anxiety over ageing, Saura exposes what official discourse attempted to disguise in the “25 años de paz” celebrations: the decline of a dictator and a dictatorship which had outlived its time. *Franco, ese hombre* may be seen as an attempt to disguise this anachronism. The title promises an insight into the life of Franco the “man,” but the demonstrative adjective “ese,” which has no equivalent in English as its meaning is somewhere between “this” and “that,” indicates its respectful distance: he is “ese,” not “este,” hombre. Only the start and end of the ninety-six minute film show the Franco of 1964; the biography is mainly a predictable, triumphalist romp through Spanish history of the twentieth century. It is telling that Franco’s youth is emphasized, his early promotions stressed by the voice-over narrator with reminders such as “una vez más se repite la constante de ser el más joven en este empleo.” This is an attempt to link him to the youthful soldiers of the military parade at the beginning of the film, who are described as “hombre jóvenes— los hijos y nietos de los que, bajo el mando de este mismo Caudillo, conquistaron el porvenir de España.” The film culminates with an interview with the revered figure himself, whose pre-prepared monologue features familiar references to the Civil War as a “Cruzada,” and Spain’s high mission as “la reserva espiritual de Europa,” and addresses the young once again with a plea that they should recognize that: “el progreso de la patria se alcanza con las aportaciones de las sucesivas generaciones que constituyen una cadena en la que ellos van a ser un eslabón.” No matter how deferential the interviewer, nor sympathetic the lighting, camera angle and distance, the dictator now appears an out-of-touch old man.

Saura’s film includes a fascinating reference to a similar attempt to disguise old age through manipulating representation. Enrique’s snapshot of the hunting party with the spoils of the morning’s rabbit hunt has become representative of the whole film; the still is reproduced as an illustration in published commentaries (D’Lugo, *Films of Saura* 62; Sánchez Vidal 40) and it is one of the three chosen for Saura’s official website, over which the director presumably has authorial control.¹⁶ This photograph is a reference to masculinist

¹⁶ See <http://www.clubcultura.com/clubcine/clubcineastas/saura/peli-caza.htm>. Consulted 24 March 2004.

hunting and military iconography. It recalls portraits of Franco himself, and may even directly reference the images of the dictator posing with fish and game captured in the pursuit of his favourite hobbies in the credits and at minute ninety of *Franco, ese hombre*. Its general purpose, as Guy Wood has pointed out, is to caricature the kind of hunting images that abounded in the period:

este fotograma [...] es una genial parodia de las “proezas” constatadas por la iconografía cinégetica “oficial” y encierra un fin propiciatorio mucho más sutil. Tenía que haber calado muy hondo en la psique de los espectadores a mediados de los sesenta, público que habría visto y estaría harto de ver poses casi idénticas e igualmente vanas del Jefe del Estado y sus sicofantes después de sus cacerías (sic) en los NO-DO o en la prensa, imágenes con que la maquinaria propagandística franquista intentaba la captura ideológica masiva del pueblo. (“Inspiración prehistórica” 363–64)

The parody is carried out in *La caza* by exposing the artifice of the shot. The four men strike pompous poses—particularly Paco, who puffs out his chest and straightens his back to gain a few inches in height. But their exhaustion and hotness, made visible through the sweat beaded on their brows and soaking through their shirts, debunk the triumphalist visual rhetoric to suggest that this photograph is just a cover for the crisis of masculinity and ageing beneath.

La caza exaggerates age in order to critique ageing. On the one hand, the middle-aged actors portray old age, and on the other, twenty-three-year-old Gutiérrez Caba's Enrique acts like a child. Middle age, old age and fear of old age mark a new departure for Saura in his third feature, but it is a preoccupation to which he returns, for instance in Antonio's anxieties about age in *Carmen* (1983), and the experience of old age in *Goya en Burdeos* (1999). Adolescence, or coming of age, was an interest already explored in Saura's first film, *Los golfos* (1959), although this is carried out in a manner more in keeping with the “angry young man” theme of contemporary New Wave cinemas (Delgado 41–42). Saura's infantilization of Enrique, the young man of *La caza*, in fact looks forward to his exploration of adults behaving as children later in his work. In *Stress es tres, tres* (1968), for instance, he explores, in his words, “tres adultos que se portan como adolescentes” (quoted in Sánchez Vidal 60); *La madriguera* (1969) also investigates the consequences of childhood games played out in an adult context; and both *Stress es tres, tres* and *Peppermint frappé* investigate “el problema [...] del sexo inmaduro en el mundo de pretendida adulez profesional” (Sánchez Vidal 60).

Enrique works with Paco and his father, and he is characterized as a child of the winners. We learn over the course of the film that his father owns land, a factory, and the jeep, and that he has lent Enrique his German gun, which implies that he participated, along with Luis, in the División azul. Enrique is not a student, but the casting of Gutiérrez Caba reminds the viewer of his earlier role as Lorenzo in *Nueve cartas a Berta* of the previous year. The portrayal of Enrique's relations with the older group of men in *La caza* is a typical example of generational conflict: the other men had fought in the war and Enrique had not. But this is not just a case of what is rather fondly evoked as "Loca juventud" in the title of one of the pop songs played on the men's flashy new radio. This conflict is pushed to extremes by the emphasis of the old age of the middle-aged men, and the infantilization of Enrique, the youth.

At the start of the film Enrique commands no interest—in terms of cinematography he never occupies the frame alone, attracts no close-ups or point of view shots, and his face is actually obscured in our first view of him by the visor of his cap. At first he uses the "usted" form to the older men, and throughout the film is referred to by Luis as "muchacho" and by Paco with the diminutive "Quique." There is a visual and acoustic parallel between Paco periodically slapping Enrique on the back and calling him "Quique," and José patting his dog cooing its name, "Cuca." D'Lugo has emphasized the growing importance of Enrique's role as the viewer's figure of identification, or "on-screen observer" later in the film (*Films of Saura* 60–66). The first point of view shot is Paco's, the second is José's, as he observes a couple arrive in the café, then most belong to Enrique. But these point of view shots indicate the inquisitiveness of a child, rather than a masterful control of the gaze. For instance, when Enrique first picks up the gun and we share his point of view as he scans the landscape through the sight, we hear him make the sound "¡pío, pío!"—"bang, bang!" as if he were playing a childhood game. Enrique's clothes are also important in this regard. His extra-short shorts infantilize him and Saura emphasizes this point when the camera tilts down after the scene at the village bakery to take in two small boys wearing identical short trousers. Here we see a man dressed as a child, just as, in terms of characterization, we have a child in an adult's body. Saura is wrong, or forgetful, when he says in an interview of 1996 of his *La prima Angélica* (1973) that "it is the first time in cinema that an adult adopts, let's say, the form of a child and acts like a child" (Castro 129). The adult Enrique dressed as a child in *La caza* is an example of what we

may term generational transvestism, of which there are other instances in the NCE. In Miguel Picazo's *La tía Tula* (1964), for instance, the adult Ramiro wears a bib, similarly indicating his emasculation and infantilization.¹⁷

Through its focus on the extremes of age, *La caza* circles around a void, which becomes an absence which is always present: manhood in its prime. Significantly, this was Saura's time of life: he shot the film in 1965 when he was thirty-three. This is a state for which the older men are nostalgic and which the younger man cannot reach. This absence points to the void at the heart of Franco's patriarchy. If the ageing and fear of ageing of the three war comrades signal the decrepitude of a regime in its twenty-sixth year and a dictator in his seventy-fourth, the infantilizing treatment of youth indicates a new generation ill-equipped to bring about change and assume adult responsibility.

“Idle Periods”: Time, Space, Body

La caza is therefore metaphorical cinema, as it criticizes the regime indirectly through its narrative. But an analysis of the narrative alone, like the excessive focus on the rabbit-hunt sequences, still only leads to a partial interpretation of the film. The reading of *La caza* carried out thus far has shown that Saura uses a conventional film narrative of coherent characterization and linear plot to expose and critique anxieties about ageing which characterized 1960s Spain. This is violently interrupted by the hunt sequences, which establish an important critical distance between the viewer and the narrative. But the progress of the plot is also arrested through “idle periods,” a term used by Deleuze to describe pauses in a film which are not justified in narrative terms.¹⁸ Like the rabbit hunt sequences, these also interrupt the fictional narrative, but unlike those hunt sequences, which reach the viewer through the gut because they launch an assault on our emotions, these idle periods reach the viewer through the mind because they question our knowledge of time, space and the body. There are a number of de-naturalizing moments in *La caza*, which function as minor interruptions to the conventional narrative: the

¹⁷ For further details on this aspect of *La tía Tula*, see Faulkner 659–61.

¹⁸ Deleuze notes of such a pause in Vittorio De Sica's *The Bicycle Thief* (1948): “there is no longer a vector or line of the universe which extends and links up events [...] the rain can always interrupt or deflect the search fortuitously [...]. The Italian rain becomes the sign of idle periods and of possible interruption” (*Movement-Image* 212). As we shall see, in *La caza*, the Spanish midday sun plays a similar role to Italian rain.

two instances where characters speak directly to the camera; the montage sequence when the guns are loaded, which is edited so that the men appear to point the guns at each other; the midday snapshot of the four men with their hunting trophies; the freeze-frame shot of Enrique at the end of the picture; but I will focus here on the unsettling pause which takes place half-way through the narrative—though actually fifty-four minutes into the eighty-three-minute film—the siesta sequence.

This sequence may at first seem justified diegetically, as it is culturally: the two older men take a nap after lunch on a hot day. We might consider it in relation to the film's characterization. Paco and José's siesta is an indicator of class and age—the down-trodden Juan must work, we presume, not sleep, and the younger Enrique and Luis don't bother with a snooze. It is a nice detail of context that in the early 1960s Franco himself began to depend on a daily nap (Preston 700). The siesta sequence of *La caza* therefore debunks, succinctly and effectively, the rhetoric of virile masculinity which reaches its climax in Saura's portrayal of the snapshot of the hunter/warriors with their spoils. In a Western cultural context in which the reclining, sleeping or dead human form is overwhelmingly figured as female, as Elisabeth Bronfen has demonstrated in *Over Her Dead Body*, the focus on these dozing old men, like grotesque "sleeping beauties," is particularly startling. Saura draws our attention to preceding traditions of the gendering of the passive human form by juxtaposing his slow pan over the two men's bodies from left to right in the siesta sequence, with a point of view shot of Enrique's fetishizing gaze drifting, this time from right to left, across the similarly reclining body of a blonde model in one of his girlie mags.¹⁹ Thus Saura parodies his ex-soldier-hunters not only by depicting them in a period of inactivity—which is remarkable in itself in a film about ex-soldiers on a rabbit hunt—but also by portraying them using the fetishizing conventions of pornography. The passive, sleeping bodies of Paco and José reveal their weakness and ageing, and the stillness of their forms looks forward to their ultimate inertia, at the end of the film, in death.

During the siesta sequence we are afforded an insight into Paco and José's dreams through voice-over, which also confirms the

¹⁹ Zunzunegui has pointed out that Saura's treatment of femininity in *La caza* looks forward to his exploration of eroticism in his immediately subsequent filmography (415).

characterization of the two men constructed thus far in the film. Paco's reverie contains a dream within a dream. His son recounts his nightmare of being killed by dogs,²⁰ to which his father responds with a condescending lament about the younger generations, and then a comparison between his son's upbringing and his own: "les enseñan cuatro cosas. No hacen nada en todo el día y sueñan con perros. Si se hubiera criado como yo." José's dream, meanwhile, reveals his anxiety over his emotional and physical failings. His separation from his wife is evoked through an argument with her, and his failing body is alluded to through her accusation: "te has envenenado: tienes la piel vieja y seca."

However, the siesta sequence in *La caza* is unsettling in ways which transcend its role within the narrative. Its experimental filmic depiction wrenches it from the register of the everyday—the nap after lunch to aid digestion and avoid the sun—and from its place in the story—the necessary period of rest during a hot day out hunting. No special effects or change of location here (the budget of two million pesetas²¹ would have permitted neither): using exactly the same actors and location, experimentation occurs by reversing the relation between plot development and its filmic portrayal. In other words, while in the narrative sections, film form advances plot and underpins characterization, in the siesta sequence, narrative is suspended and form is all. It is an instance of formal disruption highlighted by Carlos Heredero in his study of the aesthetics of the NCE, one which "se desentiende de los nexos espaciales y causales hasta escapar de toda referencialidad o vinculación representacional, hasta convertirse en meros iconos de cerrada función expresiva" (152).²² The experimental formal presentation of the siesta sequence is not, therefore, used only to create an oneiric atmosphere, as Agustín Sánchez Vidal suggests (48), because the dreams are linked to narrative and characterization, and they only form part of the second shot. The formal representation of this "idle period" is rather to transcend narrative and challenge the viewer's perception of time, space and the body.

²⁰ Like Rita, who dreams of a big, black bull entering her bedroom to figure Jaime's quasi-rape of the nun in *Viridiana* (Buñuel 1961), so in *La caza* a child's dream encodes adult actions, for Paco will be killed, not by dogs, but by José.

²¹ Saura, interview, *La caza*, "Un País de Cine" DVD.

²² Heredero also interprets the skinning of the rabbit and the burning of the mannequin as disruptive (152), but their comparative brevity and clear function within the narrative (Juan and Carmen are preparing the paella; Luis and Enrique are building a fire) make them less significant than the siesta sequence.

Manuel Villegas López argued that in sequences such as this:

el tiempo es una imagen y la imagen no tiene tiempo. Se ha pasado del propósito de narrar al propósito de expresar, y es la expresión y no la narración lo que da su profunda y definitiva unidad al film. (66)

Herdero has pointed out (141) that this observation anticipates Deleuze's work on the "time-image." We may therefore bring Deleuze's account of the shift from the "movement-image" to the "time-image" to bear on the present consideration of the switch between narrative and experimental sections of *La caza*. Sánchez Vidal's observation that the film is "un relato lineal y de corte realista, 'a la americana'" (46) may be developed if we consider the narrative sections of *La caza* as cinema of the "movement-image," which corresponds, in Deleuze's work, to "classical" film, or pre-World War II American cinema, particularly the Hollywood genre film. In the "movement-image" sections of *La caza*, then, time and space are subordinate to action: the plot unfolds through linear succession in the present tense, and space becomes the specific place of the hunting ground and old Civil War battle field owned by José. Consequently, the characters are bound by the action of the plot, and we may only appreciate their ageing through plot, even if it is exaggerated and reinforced by its filmic portrayal.

Deleuze contends that a crisis in the "movement-image" occurred in post-World War II cinema because the nature of experience in this period so radically altered that a brand new mode of cinematic expression was necessary to represent it (*Movement-Image* 210–11). This is the "time-image," by which Deleuze means post-war "modern" film, such as Neorealism and the French New Wave (Spanish cinema is not mentioned), in which time and space are no longer subordinate to action. Time, in this type of cinema, may thus transcend the tyranny of the present and space may become indeterminate and strange. Characters are no longer bound by action, so ageing, in the siesta sequence of *La caza*, is conveyed uniquely through film form. This sequence of *La caza* might be considered a "time-image," though it is important to stress that this sequence lies embedded in a film of "movement-images." Saura's *La caza* shows that both classic, narrative "movement-image" cinema, and modern, experimental "time-image" cinema are capable of portraying and critiquing a modern world.²³

²³ The application of the concepts of the "movement-image" and "time-image" to this film would seem to expose the rudimentary nature of Deleuze's division. As Donato

If we examine the two sequences at the opening and end of the film which concern the relationship between character and space, the difference between the “movement-image” and “time-image,” and Saura’s use of both, are clear. In the first, we see Paco drive the jeep along a high road through the Castilian plain. The narrative begins when he drives into the foreground of the camera’s range, therefore this specific jeep is singled out for us as the subject of the film from the anonymous vehicles which pass along the road. The jeep continues to approach the camera, there is a hidden cut, then, in medium shot, we see Paco park and get out of the car. A tracking shot, still at medium distance, follows him as he walks away from the car to look at the view, while he polishes the lenses of his sunglasses. We then share the first point of view shot of the film with him as he surveys the skyline. In medium shot we see his eyes move from left to right, then Saura cuts to an eye-line-match point of view shot which scans the landscape in the same direction.²⁴ This is a good example of how, in the “movement-image,” space is transformed into a specific place in relation to plot. Through the point of view shot, this indeterminate space, crossed by an unspecified high road, becomes the specific place where the day’s hunting will occur. Moreover, Paco’s visual ownership of that place through subjective cinematography introduces the conflict with José which will drive the plot forward, for José is the legal owner of that same place.

The final shot of the film focuses on the same landscape. Enrique has run away from the theatre of violence up the valley side. But no

Totaro points out, the “polarity of action-image/American and time-image/European is not that clear cut” (8). Directors who belong to the period of the “movement-image,” like Max Ophüls and Orson Welles, are celebrated as great cineastes of the “time-image” (Totaro 8). Moreover, key notions, such as the opposition of indeterminate space *versus* specific place and the “idle period,” are actually discussed in both realms. Indeterminate “any-space-whatevers,” for instance, are discussed as a dimension of the “movement-image” (*Movement-Image* chapter 7), as are “idle periods.” Cinema of the “movement-image,” Deleuze notes, values “episodes outside the action, or in idle periods between actions” (*Movement-Image* 205)

²⁴ This point of view shot initially encourages us to identify with Paco: he is the active agent of the narrative because he drives the jeep, and the active controller of the gaze, through subjective cinematography and his association with the gaze is reinforced by the detail of him polishing his sunglasses. However, the film recounts the diminution of his narrative agency in the narrative and his control of the gaze. We are encouraged to identify with Antonio at the start of *Carmen* (1983) in exactly the same way, through a point of view shot and an eye-line match as he surveys the dancers in the pre-credit sequence. Antonio, like Paco, loses narrative agency and control of the gaze and his ageing is likewise exposed.

controlling point of view shot is offered here. Rather, he is trapped in the frame surrounded by the landscape, as his panting continues on the soundtrack for a lengthy ten seconds. Critics have previously interpreted this image allegorically: either in a negative sense, whereby Enrique stands for the young generation trapped by the hatred and violence of the older one (Kinder 165; Wood, “Inspiración prehistórica” 369); or a positive one, according to which Enrique represents a generation which has succeeded in running away from these murderous rivalries of the former (Besas 120).²⁵ But if we consider it as a “time-image,” its meaning is more profound. The shot indicates man trapped by time: both the vertiginous rush from past to future (the panting on the soundtrack) and the terrifying stasis of the present (the freeze-frame).

The siesta sequence lasts two minutes and consists of two extreme long takes, one of forty-four seconds and one of seventy-three. In the first, Cuadrado’s camera slowly sweeps from left to right and moves down, in extreme long shot, across the arid landscape of the Castilian valley from a point high up the valley side. This space is not linked to the narrative as in the “movement-image” because this shot is not, as D’Lugo claims (*Films of Saura* 65), the point of view of one of the characters. There is a cut to an extreme close-up of the radio, which is the starting point of another pan, again from left to right, along the sleeping forms of Paco and José in continued extreme close-up.²⁶ There is a jarring contrast between these two shots in terms of proximity to subject—extreme long shot cuts to extreme close-up—yet similarity in terms of camera movement and length of take. At the end of the pan over the men’s bodies, the camera rests on José’s right eye, which cuts horizontally across the screen, because he is lying down and the camera is upright. His eye opens and through a point of view shot we share his view of Enrique in the distance; there follows the point of view shot where Enrique spies on the two-page spread of the magazine model. These two point of view shots mark the end of the siesta sequence and a return to the narrative. On the soundtrack,

²⁵ “Only the young man is spared the onus of the past,” writes Peter Besas (120), a point D’Lugo refutes when he argues that in the last shot, Enrique has lost his “innocence” and must acknowledge “the history he had previously refused to identify as his own” (*Films of Saura* 66).

²⁶ As Sánchez Vidal points out, these extremes of distance and proximity were made possible by using a macrokilar lens. Normally associated with advertizing in the period, this lens “permitía enfocar desde diez centímetros hasta infinito, pasando por todas las distancias intermedias” (48).

during the first shot, the faint sound of the music the group were listening to on the radio is gradually drowned out by the monotonous clicking sound of the cicadas. This forms a sound-bridge to the second shot. The cicadas are audible in the background as we hear the voices of Paco and his son in the first dream. These voices fade out to the clicking sound, then we finally hear the voices of José and his estranged wife in the second dream.

Unlike Deleuze's cinema of the "movement-image," there is no action motivated by the narrative here, nor is there movement in terms of plot. Although the camera moves physically, it is not for the sake of narrative. In the "movement-image," movement usually occurs, in any case, through montage (*Movement-Image* 29). The "time-image" opens up time through tracking shots and depth-of-field (Deleuze draws examples from Alain Resnais and Luchino Visconti for the former, and Orson Welles for the latter [*Time-Image* 39]), and for both of these shots the long take is necessary.²⁷ Deleuze (whose writing on cinema can be at once evasive and engaging, frustrating and fascinating) is characteristically vague on the exact nature of the treatment of time in the "time-image," however, its fragmentation, or stratification, is key. His use of the term "crystal-image" is more helpful, as it indicates this textured temporal quality: "What the crystal reveals or makes visible is the hidden ground of time, that is, the differentiation into two flows, that of presents which pass and that of pasts which are preserved" (*Time-Image* 98). Jacques Aumont, who quotes this passage, summarizes this as "temporal collage" (183).

The notions of the "crystal-image," in Deleuze's terminology, or "temporal collage," in Aumont's, throw light on Saura's treatment of time in the two long takes of the siesta sequence. We are no longer in the present tense of the narrative sections of the film. The extremely long takes emphasize the passage of time, making it both expand into synchronous "presents which pass," and contract into diachronic "pasts which are preserved." In the first shot, the slowness of movement on the imagetrack, and the monotonous rhythm of the cicadas on the soundtrack, expand time to the point that it stands still. Long takes, intense heat, and the drone of the insects are similarly used in Peter Weir's *Picnic at Hanging Rock* (1975) (a film not mentioned by

²⁷ Totaro notes that the "time-image is not necessarily a cinema governed by long takes—though it can be—but a broader, philosophical separation from movement-image. However, much of what Deleuze says about depth-of-field [...] relates explicitly to the long take" (8).

Deleuze). In both Saura and Weir's films, the landscape takes on a hypnotic, static quality, which points to the timelessness of the physical environment, whose monumentality, compared to man's ephemerality, seems overwhelming. On the other hand, that same shot contracts time, and the landscape becomes, in Santos Zunzunegui's words, a "lugar de sedimentación del pasado" (416). With the heightened sensitivity to the image which the long take brings about, this shot becomes a "temporal collage." We witness not only the human time of the twentieth century, when the valley witnessed the Civil War, and left its trace in the form of bunkers (as Zunzunegui points out [416]) but also geological time, when the rock developed into its present formation, and a river, now no more than a stagnant pool, carved out the valley itself.

The second shot, which is both similar, through camera movement, length of take, and the sound of the cicadas, yet different, through the distance between the viewer and the object viewed, also performs this contraction of time. In the "movement-image," the body is most often represented in action, and its movement is paralleled by the progressive succession of shots in montage. This is reversed here. The body is static and the camera slowly moves in a long take. Just as the landscape reveals the strata of time in the first shot, so the body acts as an index of time in the second. Though referring to the cinema of Antonioni, the following passage from *The Time-Image* evokes with accuracy this sequence: "The body is no longer exactly what moves; subject of movement or the instrument of action [as it is in the "movement-image"], it becomes rather the developer [*révélateur*] of time, it shows time through its tiredness and waiting" (xi). The two bodies presented to us by Saura in this second shot thus "reveal" or "develop" time through their agedness: each wrinkle encodes passing human time, like each fold of the rocks in the landscape indicates geological time. The scar on Mayo's upper-left arm recalls the bunkers we see on the hillside. We presume it is a war wound, like the one José complains of, so the scar, like the bunkers, is the trace which remains in space of a human event in time.

In this second shot, the human body fills the frame through excessive close-up just as the landscape fills it through excessive distance in the first, and the slow, tracking movement is the same in each. Here, Saura is experimenting with the equalizing role of the screen as frame. Deleuze, writing at this point on the "movement-image," observes that

the screen, as the frame of frames, gives a common standard of measurement to things which do not have one—long shots of countryside and close-ups of the face, an astronomical system and a single drop of water—parts which do not have the same denominator of distance, relief or light. (*Movement-Image* 14–15)

But these effects of “Gulliverisation” and “Lilliputisation,” to quote Philippe Dubois (Aumont 103), are more than just a curiosity of the cinematic medium. For, if emphasized, their impact on the viewer may be profoundly unsettling. Saura exaggerates scale in the siesta sequence shots and shows that, in Deleuze’s words, “the cinema can, with impunity, bring us close to things or take us away from them and revolve around them, it suppresses both the anchoring of the subject and the horizon of the world” (*Movement-Image* 57).

Following Deleuze, we may therefore conclude that the siesta sequence is unsettling because it disrupts time and space, and thus questions the viewer’s extra-cinematic knowledge and expectation of each, acquired through his or her own perception of “the horizon of the world.” Time no longer unfolds in a linear manner in the present tense, but is fractured and evokes present and past simultaneously. Space is no longer a specific place explained by the plot, and our relationship to it is no longer stabilized through the point of view shots of a protagonist. Finally, our location within space is also disrupted by the radical shifts of extreme distance to extreme proximity. All these elements “suppress,” in Deleuze’s words, “the anchoring” of the viewing subject.

That Saura chooses to portray the human body in extreme close-up is of course especially significant. The over-proximity of this shot renders the body unsettling: simultaneously familiar, yet strange, in the manner of the Freudian *unheimlich*. This shot denies the humanist urge, satisfied by narrative cinema, to link the human form on screen to character and make it a vehicle for narrative. In the siesta sequence, the portrayal of Paco and José by Mayo and Merlo is incidental. Neither actor nor character counts, only the materiality of their bodies—robbed of their individuality through over-proximity—matters. Judith Butler’s insights into the materiality of the body in *Bodies that Matter* (1993) are therefore instructive here, although our concern is with age rather than sex. Butler draws a distinction between the material “facts” about a body which are “primary and irrefutable”—for “bodies live and die; eat and sleep; feel pain, pleasure; endure illness and violence”—and the affirmation of those

“facts” within discourse: “their irrefutability in no way implies what it might mean to affirm them and through what discursive means” (xi). Thus, Butler proceeds to show that “sexual difference [is materialized] in the service of the heterosexual imperative.” In other words, the sexed body is made to “matter” or made “intelligible” through its location within the hegemonical discourse of heterosexuality. Discourse, therefore, has “the power [...] to enact what it names” (187). If we consider *La caza* within Butler’s framework, the body in question is not so much one which signifies sexual difference, as one which signifies ageing. The ideological matrix which gives those bodies meaning, or makes them “matter,” is Francoism. Its discourses of triumphalism and patriarchy are crucial to characterization in the narrative sections of the film. Paco’s beliefs, for instance, lead to his sense of self-worth, and those beliefs hinge on a fascist exaltation of the healthy, male body. Even though, as I discuss above, the narrative itself offers a critique of those discourses, especially through the similarities revealed between Paco and José, the siesta sequence takes the critique further. It wrests those bodies from the discursive constructs which gives them meaning, from the constructs which both signify them and give them significance. For example, war wounds, within the narrative, are a marker of virile heroism and military glory, but in the new “arrangements” thrown up by the “time-image,” they are just scars. In the non-narrative siesta sequence, these bodies are laid bare, as it were, before us: scarred, weak, suffering and ageing.

The radical equivalence between body and landscape implied through these two shots also deserves comment.²⁸ In 1958, Saura described his intention to create such a parallel. The passage reveals the consistency between Saura’s vision and its realization seven years on:

Intentaría un cine brutal, primitivo en sus personajes, un cine para rodar en la Serranía de Cuenca, en Castilla, en los Monegros, en los pueblos de Guadalajara, Teruel . . . allí donde el hombre y la tierra se identifican formando un todo. Seguramente sería un cine no conformista—aquí estaría lo aragonés—, directo, sencillo de forma y muy real. Real en la valoración de las pequeñas superficies: la piel, el tejido, la tierra, las gotas de sudor (Sánchez Vidal 24)

²⁸ Zunzunegui points out the difference between these shots in terms of distance (see the title of his study), and similarity in terms of movement (417). Length of take and the sound-bridge also imply a parallel. He does not explore, however, the effects of these similarities.

The list with which this quotation ends reminds us of the levelling effect achieved through the two shots. In formal terms—and as I have argued, in the siesta sequence, form is all—body and land are equal. This levelling effect has quite startling implications: the landscape is personified, and the human body is, simultaneously, reified. While the former may be an anthropomorphic gesture familiar to us from poetry,²⁹ the latter has a terrifying effect of objectification. The human form becomes no more than inert matter, and Job’s “All flesh shall perish together, and man shall turn again unto dust” (34.15), is enacted through the living body before our eyes.³⁰

This article is divided into three sections, which correspond to the three distinct elements of *La caza*. This division is intended to highlight the important differences and changes in the film between the narrative and non-narrative sections, but it may also suggest that *La caza* is fragmentary. On the one hand, the tripartite structure of this article may be challenged by affirming that coherence is maintained in the film through the strong linear narrative (we know the men are on a day-out hunting rabbits when we see the hunt sequences) and continuity of space and actors (we know Paco and José have a siesta after lunch at the camp). On the other, we may defend this structure by proposing that the disjointed nature of the film is precisely the point. The violent interruptions of the narrative caused by the hunt sequences reinforce the viewer’s distance from that narrative, and encourage his or her scrutiny of its critique of 1960s Spain. Through this narrative, *La caza* launches an assault on fading Francoism by probing the questions of ageing and coming of age, and to ignore this context is to betray the period in which the

²⁹ Consider, for instance, the equivalence implied between female body and land in Pablo Neruda’s love poetry (e.g. poem 1), or the experience of landscape through the poet’s body in Antonio Machado’s *Campos de Castilla* (e.g. “A orillas de Duero,” lines 2–11).

³⁰ This equivalence between landscape and body may have influenced Guillermo Carnero’s “Castilla” (*Ensayo de una teoría* 80–81), published in 1967, the year after the film’s release. “No sé hasta dónde se extiende mi cuerpo [...] Tampoco sé hasta dónde se extiende la tierra” (lines 1 and 6) evoke the experimentation with scale and length of take in the two shots of the siesta sequence, which also render land and body endless. The shift of focus from extension to entrapment between walls in the second part of the poem also brings to mind the freeze-frame ending of *La caza*. Just as the poet recalls Castile’s military past (21–26), Enrique, overwhelmed by a more recent conflict, flees up the valley side to be entrapped by the four walls of the frame. For Carnero, this entrapment indicates future nightmares, by the repeated line “Me han despertado” (21 and 24), or living death, by the description of “estos muros lisos como una tumba” (31).

film was made. However, Saura's feature also moves beyond politics to question the viewer and his or her experience of self and world in a particularly profound way. In the siesta sequence, the "unanchoring" (to use Deleuze's term) of the viewing subject through experimentation with time, space and the representation of the body, brings about a violent interruption to the narrative as the hunt sequences do, though in a very different way. Here the violence is not experienced at the level of emotion—we physically wince as we hear the rabbits squeal and see them die in the documentary footage of a real hunt—but at the level of perception—the excessive distance and proximity of the landscape and body in the siesta sequence, and the disturbing parallel implied between the two, disrupt our knowledge of time and space. The film therefore scrutinizes our emotional experience of violence, our conceptual experience of ageing, and our perceptual experience of our environment through the body and the coordinates of time and space. The latter, in particular, is dependent on Saura's use of film form in *La caza*, the importance of which is implied by Gutiérrez Aragón's reference to its "lenguaje aseado."

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