

INTERDISCIPLINARY STUDIES IN PERFORMANCE 12

Janina Falkowska / Krzysztof Loska (eds.)

Conflict and Controversy in Small Cinemas



Janina Falkowska / Krzysztof Loska (eds.)

Conflict and Controversy in Small Cinemas

This book examines small cinemas and their presentation of society in times of crisis and conflict from an interdisciplinary and intercultural point of view. The authors concentrate on economic, social and political challenges and point to new phenomena which have been exposed by film directors. They present essays on, among others, Basque cinema; gendered controversies in post-communist small cinemas in Slovakia and Czech Republic; ethnic stereotypes in the works of Polish filmmakers; stereotypical representation of women in Japanese avant-garde; post-communist political myths in Hungary; the separatist movements of Catalonia; people in diasporas and during migrations. In view of these timely topics, the book touches on the most serious social and political problems. The films discussed provide an excellent platform for enhancing debates on politics, gender, migration and new aesthetics in cinema at departments of history, sociology, literature and film.

The Author

Janina Falkowska is a retired professor from the University of Western Ontario in London, Ontario (Canada) and Professor at the University of Economics and Humanities (WSEH) in Bielsko-Biala (Poland). She specializes in East-Central European and Western European cinemas and has published extensively on Polish and East-Central European cinemas in journals and books related to Eastern and Central Europe. She has initiated a series of conferences about small cinemas in Europe and organized workshops and conferences on European cinemas in Canada.

Krzysztof Loska is Professor of Film and Media and the Director of the Institute of Audiovisual Arts at Jagiellonian University in Krakow (Poland). He has written extensively on media, popular culture, film theory and Japanese cinema in various journals and collective works. He is Vice-President of Polish Society for Film and Media Studies, and member of the Editorial Advisory Board of the bi-monthly "Ekran".

Conflict and Controversy in Small Cinemas

INTERDISCIPLINARY STUDIES IN PERFORMANCE
HISTORICAL NARRATIVES. THEATER. PUBLIC LIFE

Edited by Mirosław Kocur

VOL. 12

*Zu Qualitätssicherung und Peer Review
der vorliegenden Publikation*

Die Qualität der in dieser Reihe
erscheinenden Arbeiten wird vor der
Publikation durch einen externen,
von der Herausgeberschaft benannten
Gutachter geprüft.

*Notes on the quality assurance and peer
review of this publication*

Prior to publication, the quality of the
work published in this series
is reviewed by an external referee
appointed by the editorship.

Janina Falkowska / Krzysztof Loska (eds.)

Conflict and Controversy in Small Cinemas



PETER LANG

Bibliographic Information published by the Deutsche Nationalbibliothek

The Deutsche Nationalbibliothek lists this publication in the Deutsche Nationalbibliografie; detailed bibliographic data is available in the internet at <http://dnb.d-nb.de>.

Library of Congress Cataloging-in-Publication Data
A CIP catalog record for this book has been applied for at the Library of Congress.

This publication was financially supported by the Jagiellonian University of Kraków, Poland.

Cover image: © marcobarone / Fotolia.com

ISSN 2364-3919

ISBN 978-3-631-75029-2 (Print)

E-ISBN 978-3-631-75517-4 (E-PDF)

E-ISBN 978-3-631-75518-1 (EPUB)

E-ISBN 978-3-631-75519-8 (MOBI)

DOI 10.3726/ b14031



Open Access: This work is licensed under a Creative Commons Attribution Non Commercial No Derivatives 4.0 unported license. To view a copy of this license, visit <https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc-nd/4.0/>

© Janina Falkowska / Krzysztof Loska (eds.), 2018

Peter Lang GmbH
Internationaler Verlag der Wissenschaften
Berlin 2018

Peter Lang – Berlin · Bern · Bruxelles · New York ·
Oxford · Warszawa · Wien

This publication has been peer reviewed.

www.peterlang.com

Table of Contents

Janina Falkowska

Introduction9

Part 1: Politics in Small Cinemas

Iwona Kolasińska-Pasterczyk

1. A call for freedom in the Spanish cinema (from a local perspective)19

Karolina Kosińska

2. The troubled image: The conflict in Northern Ireland
as seen by the Irish and the British33

Katixa Agirre

3. Are they terrorists or victims? Basque cinema, violence and memory.....45

Gorka Etxebarria and Josu Martinez

4. A traditional stereotype for modern Spanish politics: The Basque
pro-independence coalition Herri Batasuna and its depiction in cinema57

Iratxe Fresneda & Amaia Nerekan

5. New content and aesthetics in small cinemas: The case of
the Basque-language films *80 egunean* and *Loreak*.....71

Paulina Cichoń

6. The image of living of local people in the film *Timbuktu*:
Between the literal and the symbol.....85

Part 2: Gender and Sexuality

Jana Dudková

7. Tourists, migrants and travellers:
The role of women in reshaping Slovak (cinematic) identity 101

Katarína Mišíková

8. Reality of corporeality: Female corporeality in recent
Slovak social film dramas..... 115

Gorka Etxebarria and Josu Martinez

University of the Basque Country

4. A traditional stereotype for modern Spanish politics: The Basque pro-independence coalition Herri Batasuna and its depiction in cinema

Abstract: This chapter shows an approach to national stereotypes in the Basque Country, through four different films. It analyses how the pro-independence coalition Herri Batasuna (People's Unity) was portrayed in films in which their plots took place in the 1980s. We propose that its characterisation is ruralised, traditional and irrational, and is built in connection with the new Spanish modern-democratic identity, as its opposite pole.

Keywords: National identities, cinema stereotypes, Basque nationalism, 1980s

The aim of this chapter is to propose an interpretation about how the Basque cinema has dealt with national stereotypes in the Basque Country. For that purpose, we will analyse how the Basque pro-independence coalition Herri Batasuna (People's Unity) has been portrayed in four different films.

Herri Batasuna was formed in 1978, opposed to the approval of the Spanish Constitution. Three years after Franco's death, the Constitution was negotiated among the former Francoist government and the opposition parties that were elected in June 1977. It established the continuity of the Francoist monarchy, the Army, police forces and administration, but assured the multi-party election system and the human and civil rights.

Herri Batasuna characterised the very same Constitution as anti-Basque and anti-workers, arguing that it did not accept Basque people's right for self-determination and that it declared capitalism as the only possible economic system. From the beginning, Herri Batasuna assumed a violent campaign of ETA (Euskadi Ta Askatasuna, Basque Country and Freedom) and supported armed organisation's militants and prisoners.

ETA was an armed organisation founded in 1959. During Francoism, influenced by Cypriot and Algerian independence, and Cuban Revolution, they pretended to encourage a revolutionary mass movement towards an independent and socialist Basque Country. After Franco's death, ETA escalated its killing action, in search for what they called a real breakup with the dictatorship.¹

1 José María Garmendia, *Historia de ETA* (Donostia: Haranburu, 1996); Francisco Letamendia, *Historia del nacionalismo vasco y de ETA* (San Sebastián: R&B, 1994); José

In January 1978, ETA announced a five-point programme that included the conditions for a ceasefire: 1) amnesty for political prisoners, 2) legalisation of every political party (pro-independence parties were not legal), 3) expulsion of former-Francoist police forces from the Basque territory, 4) approval of the working and popular classes' concerns as expressed by their own organisations, and 5) an autonomous government for the Basque Country with the control over Spanish Army in the territory and the right to organise an independence referendum.

The five points were an updated statement from the one presented in 1976: the KAS Alternative (Koordinadora Abertzale Sozialista, Patriotic Socialist Coordination). That alternative was felt as a common-sense proposal, because most opposition parties accepted those terms in 1976. But the situation had changed after the first multi-party elections in 1977, and especially once the Constitution was accepted.

During the 1980s, Herri Batasuna refused to participate in the Spanish parliament or any autonomous parliament, unless the KAS Alternative was accepted by the government. This was a decade led by the political leaders that emerged during the last years of Francoism. In that sense, the 1980s were the context in which a generation that had been politically brought up during the dictatorial rule landed in a Constitutional Monarchy. Both ETA and Herri Batasuna understood that the political reform, led by Francoist government, ended in a covered dictatorship. However, the rest of anti-Francoist main parties accepted the Constitution as the best democracy that could have been achieved.

That is why we have chosen films in which their plot takes place in the 1980s: *Erreporteroak* (*The Reporter*, Iñaki Aizpuru, 1983), *La muerte de Mikel* (*Mikel's Death*, Imanol Uribe, 1984), *Ke arteko egunak* (*Smoky Days*, Antxon Ezeiza, 1989), and *Yoyes* (Helena Taberna, 2000). As can be noticed, the films are from different epochs. Hence, we should analyse each of the films related to their own historical context.

The main political difference in the 1980s was about the essence of the Constitutional Monarchy established in 1978: democracy for most, but covered dictatorship for some. Herri Batasuna contested elections in 1979 for the first time, and their big support in the Basque Country surprised the Spanish public opinion. That difference between the Basque Country and the Spanish public opinion has a lot to do with the national issue, as we will see.

Félix Azurmendi, *ETA de principio a fin. Crónica documentada de un relato* (Donostia: Tartalo, 2014).

That is to say, we will see how stereotypes on national characters were used and which characteristics were added to each national identity, through the chosen films. We will argue that Herri Batasuna was conceptualised as the negative pole in relation with the new Spain that aroused after 40 years of military and conservative dictatorship.

In that sense, another principal idea we will defend is that national identities are built and reproduced in a metaphoric dialogue with other nations. A national definition, as any definition, implies a differentiation. That is to say, to be part of a nation, France for instance, means the denial of the French being German, English, Spanish, etc. The national identity is part of a dynamic process that includes a self-identification (a definition of one's nation) and a categorisation of the others (usually neighbour nations). In other words, every nation is defined in relation to other nations.²

Thereby, we will deal with both the self-definition process and the categorisation of the other process regarding national identity that took place in post-Franco Spain, and specially, in the Basque Country. We have to be aware of both national identities, if we want to understand how national stereotypes are reproduced through the cinema, and, also, how the cinema dealt with the exceptional situation in the Basque Country.

We must remember that Basque society has been exposed to a dual national interpellation since the end of the nineteenth century, when Basque nationalism appeared as a political movement. It was a *fin de siècle* bourgeois-racialist, anti-socialist and ultra-catholic movement in its beginnings, in the vein of French Barresianism and German *völkisch* movement.³ During the first third of the twentieth century, the Basque national identity spread out from its initial narrowness, and different liberal and even leftist political parties defined themselves as nationally Basque.⁴

2 Juan García, "Nación, identidad y paradoja. Una perspectiva relacional para el estudio del nacionalismo," *Reis: Revista española de investigaciones sociológicas*, No. 67 (1994), pp. 165–186; Chris Lorenz, "Representations of Identity: Ethnicity, Race, Class, Gender and Religion. An Introduction to Conceptual History," in: *The Contested Nation. Ethnicity, Class, Religion and Gender in National Histories*, ed. Stefan Berger and Chirs Lorenz (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2011), pp. 24–59.

3 Azurmendi, *ETA de principio a fin*; Javier Díaz Freire, "El cuerpo de Aitor: emoción y discurso en la creación de la comunidad nacional vasca," *Historia Social*, No. 40 (2001), pp. 79–96; Pedro José Chacón, "Introducción al estudio de la etapa barcelonesa de Sabino Arana Goiri (1883–1888)," *Letras de Deusto*, Vol. 42, No. 134 (2012), pp. 155–182.

4 Santiago de Pablo and Ludger Mees, *El péndulo patriótico. Historia del Partido Nacionalista Vasco (1895–2005)* (Barcelona: Crítica, 2005).

In the late 1960s, the Basque nationalist discourse became hegemonic among the anti-Franco movement in the Basque Country, and the idea of a dichotomy between a Basque-progressive-democratic people and an antiquated-fascist-dictatorial Spain was widely assumed by the Basque society.⁵ Both the appropriation of Spanish identity by Franco's dictatorship,⁶ on the one hand, and ETA's violent campaign against the dictatorship and its socialist rhetoric, on the other, were the key elements to the assumption of that national dichotomy in the Basque Country.⁷

It is widely accepted that what was called the Spanish Transition implied an enormous transformation of Spanish national self-identification. Especially after the June 1977 elections, the period between Franco's death and the arrival of the first socialist government (1975–1982) was transmitted by the main media, the government, and the major parties in a very specific way. The period of 1975–1982 was explained as a lineal path that, after four decades of dictatorship, had achieved the emergence of a modern and democratic Spanish nation.⁸ In that sense, key elements were eluded from the Spanish Transition's main narration, such as the government's authoritarian practice that guided the process and the multiple-sourced violence that accompanied that time.⁹ However, it was a very successful narrative.

In the aforementioned context, Herri Batasuna, stuck in the demand that the government must accept the KAS Alternative to be considered democratic, was isolated from the Spanish widely accepted narration of those same years.

5 Francisco Letamendia, *Historia del nacionalismo vasco y de ETA*.

6 Ismael Saz, "Las culturas de los nacionalismos franquistas," *Ayer*, No.71 (2008), pp. 153–174.

7 Mikel Arriaga, *Y nosotros que éramos de HB: sociología de una heterodoxia abertzale* (San Sebastian: Haranburu, 1997).

8 Sebastian Balfour and Alejandro Quiroga, *España reinventada. Nación e identidad desde la Transición* (Barcelona: Ediciones Península, 2007); Jordi Muñoz, *La construcción política de la identidad española: ¿del nacionalcatolicismo al patriotismo democrático?* (Madrid: Centro de Investigaciones Sociológicas, 2012).

9 Ferran Gallego, *El mito de la Transición. La crisis del franquismo y los orígenes de la democracia (1973–1977)* (Barcelona: Crítica, 2008) Gonzalo Wilhelmi, *Romper el consenso. La izquierda radical en la Transición española (1975–1982)* (Madrid: Siglo XXI de España, 2016); Sophie Baby, "Volver sobre la Inmaculada Transición. El mito de una transición pacífica en España," in: *La transición española. Nuevos enfoques para un viejo debate*, ed. Marie-Claude Chaput and Julio Pérez Serrano (Madrid: Biblioteca Nueva, 2015), pp. 75–92.

Moreover, the isolation of Herri Batasuna grew ever larger because they accepted ETA's violence until what they understood as a real breakdown with Francoism was to be achieved.

Herri Batasuna was, according to itself, the heir of the wide anti-Franco movement in the Basque Country and was based on the idea of a dichotomy between a Basque-progressive-democratic people and an antiquated-fascist-dictatorial Spain. Its large support in every election proved that it represented a considerable feeling among Basque society at the time. But after the approval of the 1978 Constitution, a mutual and constant misunderstanding was the rule between Herri Batasuna's self-image and Spanish public opinion, as we will explain.

The first film we will introduce precisely contextualises that breakdown between Herri Batasuna and the widely accepted public opinion. The story told in *Erreporteroak* (1983) shows how this trend in public opinion appeared. Though its quality is not brilliant, we think the film shows in a sincere way the mood of the time and that it has a considerable symbolic importance.

It is the story of two reporters, good friends and flatmates, during 1980 and 1981. But the political developments during that time will put a great strain on their relationship. We will highlight two ideas that are developed in the film: 1) ETA as something from the past, and 2) Herri Batasuna's position as being irrational and non-political.

Once the socialist party reached the government in 1982, the previously explained idea of a modern and democratic Spain was widely accepted. It finally arrived, with the young socialists' government. In that sense, ETA, which appeared during Francoism, was felt as the last breath of a sad past.

Thus, if Spain had obtained finally a democratic political system, the past was a pre-political period. And ETA was categorised as an irrational organisation, something from the pre-political and violent past (the dictatorship). According to Spanish public opinion, ETA was acceptable before, but not in the new political and rational Spain. In a very interesting turn of events, ETA, obsessed with the effective breakup with Francoism through the KAS Alternative, filled the vacuum of fascism left behind by Franco, according to public opinion.

Thereby, Herri Batasuna, which supported KAS Alternative, became the social symbol of the maintenance of ETA, a pre-political, irrational, and fascist phenomenon once Franco died. This process is conceptualised in *Erreporteroak*, where the protagonists part company after the failed Spanish military *coup d'état* on 23 February 1981, and a difference of opinion leads to one of them joining Herri Batasuna. "You're losing the plot!" is his former friend's answer to that decision.

Furthermore, another idea that we must emphasise from *Erreporteroak* is that Basques are seen as a traditional rural community in the modern Spain, as shown through the relationship that both protagonists have with two Spanish girls that are filming a documentary about the Basque people. “For them, the Basque people... in the mountain and the sea,” criticises the one linked to Herri Batasuna, referring ironically to the Basque society of the time that was in fact highly industrialised.

That rural image had been exploited by official media during Franco’s time: it had presented the Basques’ as noble people, ancient because of their language—Basque is the only pre-Indo-European language spoken in Western Europe—and traditions. But the same stereotype had also been used in Basque nationalist imaginary: they were not Spanish, because they were there, before the Spanish came. Indeed, what is interesting for our analysis is how the ruralised and traditional image created a powerful symbolic link between the past, Franco for Spanish public opinion, and those who claimed to be the real defenders of the Basque people, Herri Batasuna, in the new modern Spain of the 1980s.

La muerte de Mikel (1984), the second film we have chosen for this chapter, is the story of Mikel, a homosexual Herri Batasuna militant. The plot emphasises the political isolation of the coalition, as it was the fact for the mid-1980s. It also highlights the importance of Spanish police’s violence in the Basque Country, which in fact was one of the determining factors that made Herri Batasuna’s discourse credible. But the film gives the impression that their claim of this police’s violence as proof of the continuity of Francoism only nourished the violent situation.

The main idea is maintained during the movie: normal Basque people are in the middle, surrounded by two alien elements, two obstacles from the past—the Spanish police’s violence and Herri Batasuna’s attitude. This is the most important image of the film, constructed step by step during the sequence of Mikel’s funeral. His former comrades are gathered outside the church, and Spanish police is located in front of them. Allegorically, the mass becomes a celebration of Spanish modernity, in spite of the people that, outside the church, oppose the new political system.

Overall, Mikel’s problem of accepting his homosexuality, and making himself accepted, is only a metaphor of that image. His exclusion from Herri Batasuna’s city council candidacy is presented as the proof that the coalition does not accept the modernisation of society and that it is clinging to the past. It is presented again as something from the past, an agent who feeds violence and, furthermore, is intolerant to people’s personal decisions.

The director of the film, Imanol Uribe, has recently admitted that he invented the plot to focus on criticising Herri Batasuna's attitude (La 2, 2013). He explained that he heard something about a person excluded from the coalition because of a drug addiction. Nevertheless, he thought that the gay issue would be better for a film, forgetting the fact that the Herri Batasuna was among those political parties that had supported the gay liberation movement since the late 1970s.

A very obvious visual link was constructed in *La muerte de Mikel* that highlighted the stereotyped traditional image of Herri Batasuna: Mikel kisses his boyfriend to say goodbye in his town, and the camera focuses on some old men who wear traditional clothes, behind the gay couple. Upfront, the next scene occurs in Herri Batasuna's headquarters, where Mikel is told that he is not going to be part of the candidacy. He answers angrily: "You're such a priest!" That is to say, the film emphasises the idea that Herri Batasuna is, along with the catholic clergy, an antique obstacle to the modernisation of society.

We can contextualise Uribe's position in the shift that occurred among the public opinion from the late 1970s onwards, regarding ETA's violence. His first film, *El proceso de Burgos* (1979) (Burgos Trial), was a documentary about ETA members that were judged in 1970 by a Spanish military court. And his message was not far from Herri Batasuna's discourse. Two years later, he released *La Fuga de Segovia* (1981) (Flight from Segovia), an action film based on a real escape from Segovia prison that ETA members organized in 1976. In the film, he shared the idea of ETA as something that should have disappeared after Franco. With *La muerte de Mikel*, Imanol Uribe reached the definitive breakdown with the political culture represented by Herri Batasuna.¹⁰

The next film we will analyse tells the story of Dolores González Yoyes. A former prominent member of ETA, Yoyes left the organisation in 1979. In 1985 she came home from exile. She did not formally accept the terms of government's reintegration policy, but she was still an important symbol both for the Spanish Government and for ETA. The Spanish media presented her return as a victory and she was ultimately assassinated shortly after she had returned to her home town. Yoyes' assassination was one of the most controversial murders committed by ETA. Yoyes' story being very well known in the Basque Country—the viewer knows how the film will end—the interesting thing about the movie is how the characters and the main symbolic elements are presented.

10 Larreta C. Roldán, "Una apuesta suicida; ETA en el cine de Euskadi," *Ikusgaiak*, No. 5 (2001), pp. 181–205.

The film *Yoyes* (2000) starts with a robbery committed by ETA during Franco's epoch. The plot assumes the aforementioned idea that ETA should have become extinct after Franco's death. *Yoyes* is presented as an individual who in 1979 realises this historical destiny. In this case, the film does not present any difference between ETA—embodied by her former male comrades—and Herri Batasuna—embodied by her own brother. We should take into account that the film was made towards the late 1990s, when the Spanish Government and the media fully adopted the idea that Herri Batasuna was part of ETA and started a series of procedures to outlaw the political coalition.

The film reconstructs an interview between *Yoyes* and her former comrades where, after asking them, she decided to return home without their permission. However, at home, ETA's voice is still present. His brother is a Herri Batasuna councillor in the town and criticises his sister's decision during a family meal. The idea is that there is a *continuum* between ETA and Herri Batasuna, through men who are rude to independent women. Another member of the family emphasises the idea of the sole commitment to violence, when he assures: "you [Herri Batasuna] run in the elections, but you don't show up at parliament, not even to defend your thing." In concordance with public opinion during the late 1990s, in *Yoyes*, Herri Batasuna is just a loudspeaker for ETA. They are both the same thing.

The director Helena Taberna made a similar use of the character that Uribe made in Mikel's death. She presents a feminist narrative where the protagonist fights against intolerant men. In fact, *Yoyes* was committed to feminist issues during her ETA leadership time.¹¹ But eluding the interesting discussion about revolutionary membership and feminism, a discussion present in every revolutionary organization during the 1970s,¹² ETA's male leadership is just shown as an obstacle to *Yoyes*' personal dignity during the entire plot of the film. The protagonists are presented unambiguously and appear as flat two-dimensional characters.

In essence, the film shows Herri Batasuna–ETA to be intolerant and reinforces the idea of ETA being something from the past. In this case, they were an obstacle for women's liberation. Nevertheless, far from taking into account the feminist critic to the traditional genre and family roles, the film emphasises *Yoyes*' role as a mother and devoted wife, and her public political commitment is seen as an obstacle to her real happiness.

11 Elixabete Lasa et al., *Yoyes. Desde su ventana* (Garrasi: Alberdania, 1987).

12 Cinzia Arruzza, *Las sin parte. Matrimonios y divorcios entre feminismo y marxismo* (Es: Crítica & Alternativa, 2015).

That apart, the final sequence is well constructed, in which *Yoyes'* assassination is represented as a ritual tribal sacrifice. Another link between ETA and the past. The idea is that the scene, set during a day celebrating Basque traditions, is a performance. Everybody knows that the traditional representation of the village is fake: *Yoyes* was assassinated in 1985. People were dressed as if it was a traditional society, but they knew it was not.

Nevertheless, according to the film's sequence, ETA feels that *Yoyes* is tainting the traditional celebration and arrives to the decision she must be sacrificed. In that long sequence, traditional musical instruments are heard for the first time in the film, louder and louder. And *Yoyes'* killer appears to be the priest who is committed to do a human sacrifice to ensure his tribe's ancestral life.

Returning to our argumentation about national stereotypes, *Yoyes* film presents Basque nationalists as the defenders of a lost paradise, a tribal antiquity that in the 1980s can only be represented as a celebration day. Once again, Herri Batasuna appears to be rural and traditional. We must notice that a rural and traditional image of the Basque Country was also recreated by the conservative *Euzko Alderdi Jeltzalea* (Basque Nationalist Party) that led the autonomous government during the 1980s and 1990s. Even if we acknowledge that the traditional imaginary was at some point present in Herri Batasuna's image—as in every nationalist movement—, it cannot be escaped that precisely thanks to *Yoyes* feminist issues appeared for the first time in ETA leadership's publications, and her own sister was deeply involved in the creation of a feminist organisation linked to ETA in 1978: *KAS-Emakumeak* (KAS-Women).

The last film we will analyse is a unique exception in the Basque filmography from the 1980s, because it does not reproduce the usual stereotype about Herri Batasuna. *Ke arteko egunak* (1989) was directed by Antton Ezeiza. Previously linked to the Communist Party of Spain (PCE) and one of the protagonists of the so-called Spanish New Cinema during the 1960s, Ezeiza became sympathetic with ETA during the early 1970s. Exiled in 1973, after his return in 1977, he was involved in the creation of a Basque national cinema.¹³

Ke arteko egunak was the first film in Basque language that was accepted in the San Sebastian Film Festival's Official Selection. The plot is based on Pedro's return from Mexico to the Basque Country in the 1980s. Nevertheless, far from reproducing Herri Batasuna's stereotype as other films from the 1980s did, such as *Golfo de Vizcaya* (*Bay of Biscay*, Javier Rebollo, 1985) or *Ander eta Yul* (*Ander*

13 Josu Martinez, "Ikuska saila: ostarte bat laino itsasoan," *Jakin*, No. 200 (2014), pp. 95–113.

and *Yul*, Ana Diez, 1988), it seems that the director's aim is to make explicit the inevitable existence of the coalition in the modern Basque society.

It is an exception among the series of films that were produced, thanks to Basque autonomous government subsidies during the 1980s, in the so-called Basque cinema's growth. And it is also an exception compared to the films released during the 1990s and 2000s, when ETA members were usually represented as purely fanatic terrorists: *Días contados* (*The Days Are Numbered*, Imanol Uribe, 1994), *El viaje de Arian* (*Arian's Trip*, Eduard Bosch, 2000), *Todos estamos invitados* (*We Are all Invited*, Manuel Gutierrez Aragon, 2008), and so on. Let us explain the idea developed in *Ke arteko egunak*.

As most of the films that deal with Basque politics, *Ke arteko egunak* includes a reference to Francoism. Linked to the idea that armed organisations should have disappeared along with Franco, both the films (*La muerte de Mikel* and *Yoyes*) were obliged to represent, in a way, the popular acceptance of ETA during that epoch, and oppose that to the post-Franco modern Spain.

But in this case, the reference to Francoism is not about ETA. It is about the protagonist's father, who appears to be a prisoner arrested by the Civil Guard during the old times. The symbolical link is made with the protagonist's daughter, who is in prison for being a member of ETA. Thereby, the past-present connection is not symbolised by ETA. On the contrary, it is symbolised by the imprisonment of Basque people. That is to say, the film assumes the continuity of the aforementioned dichotomy between a Basque-progressive-democratic people and an antiquated-fascist-dictatorial Spain.

However, far from simply reproducing that dichotomy, the interest of the film rests on its conflictive approach to the idea through the protagonist, who is an alcoholic unable to maintain social relationships and is a newcomer to the Basque Country in the 1980s. The main theme is that there is a political problem in the Basque Country hard to solve, whether it suits us or not.

It is Pedro's former partner who makes Pedro and the spectator aware of the existence of a political culture linked to her daughter in prison (Herri Batasua). It is not clear if she is of the same opinion or not, but she acknowledges this possibility. Later, by chance, Pedro meets a couple who are Herri Batasuna sympathisers and makes them the centre of his new network of friends. Nevertheless, while he is distracted by his addiction to alcohol, politics is changing the world in which he resides. We must also highlight the fact that the film takes place in an entirely urban environment where, contrary to the ruralised stereotype, in this case, Herri Batasuna is totally integrated in modern society.

The idea of Herri Batasuna as an obstacle to the end of ETA is also present. It is stated that “they do not let” Pedro’s daughter reintegrate, following the government’s policy regarding ETA prisoners since 1984. But one of the main characters, Kepa, pledges that “no one can stop this train,” because politics is bigger than politicians. So, the film runs away from the idea of attributing Herri Batasuna a certain task. What is more, at the end of the film, Kepa joins Herri Batasuna, just as they are organizing Pedro’s daughter’s welcome home event, after her final release from prison. It is also important that Kepa’s militancy starts just when he breaks up with his girlfriend. There is a key moment in the film when Pedro asks Kepa: “So, you are interested in politics?” and Kepa answers: “I can’t escape politics.”

In the final sequence, the welcome home event, there is a parallel to that of Mikel’s funeral. We see a crowd in front of the police. A crowd, a gathering, in which Kepa becomes another anonymous face among Herri Batasuna sympathisers, whereas Pedro marginalises himself in the cocoon of his alcoholism. Overall, the film highlights the isolated position of Herri Batasuna in society too, but in this case, not as an obstacle to normality as in other films. Quite the opposite, Herri Batasuna is understood as the proof of an exceptional political situation.

After having analysed those four films, it is time for conclusions. First of all, we must underline that Herri Batasuna’s stereotype as something from the past, traditional and irrational, was an image built in a confident relationship with the Spanish political developments during the late 1970s and early 1980s. Herri Batasuna had a discourse based on the anti-Francoist opposition from the late 1970s, but once the Constitution was ruling, the very same discourse was seen as an obstacle to the established democracy. That is why Herri Batasuna was stereotyped as something from the past, the B side of the modern Spain. If Spain had become a democratic, rational and modern democracy, Herri Batasuna, who opposed the Constitutional monarchy, was felt as fascist, traditional and irrational by Spanish public opinion. That is the process that appears in *Erreporteroak* and it represents the breakdown between a part of the Basque society and the main Spanish national narration.

In that sense, for those who shared the idea of an emerging modern Spain, Herri Batasuna was conceptualised as its negative pole. Precisely, the opposition of Herri Batasuna and ETA’s violent campaign functioned for the Spanish identity as proof of the new modern Spain. On the contrary, Franco’s heritage, such as the Monarchy, the Army, the Civil Guard and the Spanish indivisibility written in stone in the 1978 Constitution, was for Herri Batasuna the proof that they continued fighting against a conservative-dictatorial Spain, and that they represented the progressive-democratic Basque people. Then, we should understand both

positions' own identification and categorisation of the other, as a reflection of the symbolic dialogue that happens upon every national identification.

Second, we must highlight that ETA's armed campaign made Herri Batasuna unable to challenge the symbolic bond between their political positions and the traditional-irrational stereotype. The bombs and murders were theorised by ETA as the unassimilable element for the bourgeoisie and the necessary element for a revolutionary position. But, in fact, it functioned as an element that created mutual misunderstanding between Herri Batasuna and the Spanish public opinion.

Third, in some films, that stereotype was used as an important cinematic element. But it created inconsistent plots where the stereotyped image was overwhelming and shadowed interesting issues such as gay and women's liberation, which were supposed to be the key elements in those movies.

After the end of ETA's violent campaign in 2011, and the emergence of political movements in Spain that challenge the official narration about the Spanish Transition, we hope that Basque cinema will be able to escape insurmountable mutual national stereotyping.

Bibliography

- Arriaga, Mikel. *Y nosotros que éramos de HB: sociología de una heterodoxia abertzale*. San Sebastian: Haranburu, 1997.
- Arruzza, Cinzia. *Las sin parte. Matrimonios y divorcios entre feminismo y marxismo*. Es: Crítica & Alternativa, 2015.
- Azurmendi, José Félix. *ETA de principio a fin. Crónica documentada de un relato*. Donostia: Tartalo, 2014.
- Azurmendi, Joxe. *Volksgeist, Herri Gogoa. Ilustraziotik nazismora*. Es: Elkar, 2007.
- Baby, Sophie. "Volver sobre la *Inmaculada Transición*. El mito de una transición pacífica en España." In: *La transición española. Nuevos enfoques para un viejo debate*, ed. Marie-Claude Chaput and Julio Pérez Serrano. Madrid: Biblioteca Nueva, 2015, pp. 75–92.
- Balfour, Sebastian and Quiroga, Alejandro. *España reinventada. Nación e identidad desde la Transición*. Barcelona: Ediciones Península, 2007.
- Chacón, Pedro José. "Introducción al estudio de la etapa barcelonesa de Sabino Arana Goiri (1883–1888)." *Letras de Deusto*, Vol. 42, No. 134, 2012, pp. 155–182.
- De Pablo, Santiago and Mees, Ludger. *El péndulo patriótico. Historia del Partido Nacionalista Vasco (1895–2005)*. Barcelona: Crítica, 2005.
- Díaz Freire, Javier. "El cuerpo de Aitor: emoción y discurso en la creación de la comunidad nacional vasca." *Historia Social*, No. 40, 2001, pp. 79–96.

- Fernández Soldevilla, Gaizka. *Héroes, heterodoxos, traidores: historia de Euskadiko Ezkerra (1974–1994)*. Madrid: Tecnos, 2013.
- Gallego, Ferran. *El mito de la Transición. La crisis del franquismo y los orígenes de la democracia (1973–1977)*. Barcelona: Crítica, 2008.
- García, Juan. “Nación, identidad y paradoja. Una perspectiva relacional para el estudio del nacionalismo.” *Reis: Revista española de investigaciones sociológicas*, No. 67, 1994, pp. 165–186.
- Garmendia, José María. *Historia de ETA*. Donostia: Haranburu, 1996.
- Lasa, Elixabete; González Katarain, Glori; González Katarain, Ana; Garmendia Lasa, Juli; Dorronsoro, Juango. *Yoyes. Desde su ventana*. Garrasi: Alberdania, 1987.
- Letamendia, Francisco, *Historia del nacionalismo vasco y de ETA*. San Sebastián: R&B, 1994.
- Letamendia, Francisco. *Juego de espejos. Conflictos nacionales centro-periferia*. Donostia: Trotta, 1997.
- López Romo, Raúl. *Del gueto a la calle. El movimiento gay y lesbiano en el País Vasco y Navarra, 1975–1983*. San Sebastian: Tercera Prensa, 2008.
- Lorenz, Chris. “Representations of Identity: Ethnicity, Race, Class, Gender and Religion. An Introduction to Conceptual History.” In: *The Contested Nation. Ethnicity, Class, Religion and Gender in National Histories*, ed. Stefan Berger and Chirs Lorenz. New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2011, pp. 24–59.
- Martinez, Josu. “Ikuska saila: ostarte bat laino itsasoan.” *Jakin*, No. 200, 2014, pp. 95–113.
- Muñoz, Jordi. *La construcción política de la identidad española: ¿del nacional-catolicismo al patriotismo democrático?* Madrid: Centro de Investigaciones Sociológicas, 2012.
- Roldán, Larreta, C. “Una apuesta suicida; ETA en el cine de Euskadi.” *Ikusgaiak*, No. 5, 2001, pp. 181–205.
- Saz, Ismael. “Las culturas de los nacionalismos franquistas.” *Ayer*, No.71, 2008, pp. 153–174.
- Saz, Ismael. “Regeneracionismos y nuevos nacionalismos. El caso español en una perspectiva europea.” In: *Estudios sobre nacionalismo y nación en la España contemporánea*, ed. Ismael Saz Campos and Ferran Archilés. Zaragoza: Prensas Universitarias de Zaragoza, 2011, pp. 55–78.
- Wilhelmi, Gonzalo. *Romper el consenso. La izquierda radical en la Transición española (1975–1982)*. Madrid: Siglo XXI de España, 2016.