

## RESEARCH



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## AUTHORSHIP IN CLASSIC HOLLYWOOD CINEMA

## LA AUTORÍA EN EL CINE CLÁSICO DE HOLLYWOOD

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## ABSTRACT

From the beginning of the cinema, in which only one person took care of almost everything, the organization of a film progressively evolved, and the different functions in the process got wider and more specialized. The notion of collective authorship is a difficult concept to approach and understand in all its dimensions. In this article we try to clarify it after analyzing how the structure of team collaboration at that time influenced its creators, and why some can be considered authors while others are denied that status. In order to examine in depth what was the real procedure of the different trades, professional journals have been consulted, looking for interviews with photography directors, writers, directors, producers... in addition to previous studies in books, magazines and documentaries. It is found that there are certain figures that have been unfairly ignored, like the producer, the director of photography, the editor or the supervising editor, because their contribution was not a merely technical or managerial job. The case of the producer is specially discriminatory as it is usually thought they were exclusively focused in the economical aspects of the production, while they assumed key roles now usually part of the directors duties.

**KEY WORDS:** cinema – classical – Hollywood – author – creator – audiovisual – film.

## RESUMEN

Desde los comienzos del cine, en los que una sola persona se ocupaba prácticamente de todo, la organización de la creación de un film fue evolucionando, y las diversas funciones del proceso fueron aumentando y especializándose progresivamente. La noción de autoría colectiva es un concepto difícil de abordar y de comprender en toda su dimensión. En este artículo se pretende analizarlo, tras estudiar de qué modo la estructura de colaboración en equipo de aquella época influía en sus

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creadores, y por qué razón se considera que unos son autores, mientras a otros se les niega esa condición. Para examinar a fondo cuál era el sistema de trabajo real de los distintos oficios se han consultado -además de estudios anteriores en libros, revistas y documentales-, las revistas profesionales, buscando entrevistas a directores de fotografía, guionistas, directores, productores... Se ha constatado que hay ciertas figuras clave como el productor, el director de fotografía, el montador o el supervisor de montaje cuyas aportaciones a la autoría han sido ignoradas pensando que su labor se ceñía a responsabilidades meramente técnicas, logísticas o de financiación. En concreto, el caso del productor es especialmente sangrante, pues incluso tiene fama de arruinar el trabajo del resto del equipo para obtener un mayor beneficio económico, cuando lo cierto es que desarrollaban funciones clave, que en la actualidad se atribuyen al director.

**PALABRAS CLAVE:** cine – clásico – Hollywood – autor – creador – audiovisual – película.

## A AUTORIA NO CINEMA CLÁSSICO DE HOLLYWOOD

### RESUME

Desde o começo do cinema, em que uma só pessoa se ocupava praticamente de tudo, a organização da criação de um filme foi evolucionando, e as diversas funções do processo foram aumentando e especializando-se progressivamente. A noção de autoria coletiva é um conceito difícil de abordar e de compreender em toda a sua dimensão. Neste artigo pretende-se analisa-lo, depois estudar de que modo a estrutura de colaboração em equipe daquela época influía em seus criadores, e por qual razão se considera que uns são autores, enquanto outros são negadas esta condição. Para examinar a fundo qual era o sistema de trabalho real dos distintos ofícios foram consultados ademais de estudos anteriores em livros, revistas profissionais, buscando entrevistas aos diretores de fotografia, roteiristas, diretores, produtores etc. Foi constatado que há certas figuras chave como o produtor, o diretor de fotografia, o montador ou supervisor de montagem cujas contribuições à autoria foram ignoradas pensando que seu trabalho se ajustava à responsabilidades meramente técnicas, logísticas ou de financiamento. Em concreto, o caso do produtor é especialmente sangrento inclusive tem fama de arruinar o trabalho do resto da equipe para obter um maior benefício econômico, quando o certo é que desenvolviam funções chave, que na atualidade se atribuem ao diretor.

**PALAVRAS CHAVE:** cinema – clássico – Hollywood – autor – criador – audiovisual – filme.

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## 1. INTRODUCTION

Since the beginning of cinema, in which a single person took care of practically everything, the organization of the creation of a film gradually evolved, and the various functions of the process increased and specialized progressively, and new positions emerged, although the general responsibilities of some of these professionals hardly varied, as will be analyzed throughout the study. At first, camera operators such as the famous Edwin S. Porter chose the plot, directed the participants in the scene, configured lighting and sets, opted for a model of lenses, a certain frame, the type of virgin film... And after the shoot, they took care to develop the impressed material and give it meaning in the montage room.

However, this system became very slow to respond to the demands of the exhibitors, which already in the first decade of the twentieth century were requiring manufacturers an average of twenty to thirty weekly premieres, according to Janet Staiger (Bordwell, 1997, p. 133). And she added: "*The Selig plant is a huge art factory where films with the same level of organizational efficiency, division of labor and material handling are produced, as if they are locomotives or sewing machines*". Although, during this stage, directors-producers like D.W. Griffith were the main responsible for the films, the specialization by departments had turned the cinema into a collective art.

Although not all the voices were pronounced in favor of the Hollywood domain: the famous expression "*factory of dreams*", so often named in a positive sense, was actually coined by the critic Ehrengurg in 1931 as a denunciation of the role of the film industry, responsible for "*mind- numbing films that engulfed millions of people*" (Ehrengurg , 2008). Due to the haste with which the works were carried out, Jack Warner went on to say ironically: "*I do not want it to be good, I want it on Tuesday*" (Apple, 2006).

The early use of the term "art" in the article cited in Bordwell on Selig plant is striking, because, according to Gubern (2016, p. 151), the writer and journalist Ricciotto Canudo was the one who dared to name cinema "Seventh Art" in his *Manifesto of the seven arts*.

Although, as Gutiérrez García points out, cinematographic works would not be legislatively recognized as such until the 1948 Brussels Conference: The terms "*literary and artistic works*" include all productions of literary, scientific and artistic domain, whatever the mode or form of expression, such as [...] cinematographic works and those obtained by a procedure analogous to cinematography. (Gutiérrez García, 2018, p. 3)

The first allusions to the cinematographic invention were recorded in the Berlin Act in 1908. At that time, it was considered only as a means of "reproduction and representation" and the regulation focused on protecting the preexisting works on which films were based. (Gutiérrez García, 2018, p. 3). In this sense, the litigation about the adaptation of the literary success of *Ben Hur* became famous in Hollywood.

Kalem filmed an unauthorized adaptation without regard to intellectual property rights and was sued both by the editors of Lee Wallace's original novel and by buyers for their theatrical version. The courts decided that the term "work" that the laws of American intellectual property historically collected included materials that need not necessarily be printed, so films were subject to these regulations, both to fulfill and to achieve protection against possible infractions (Bordwell, 1997, p. 143).

## **2. OBJECTIVES**

As reflected in the title, the main objective of this article is the study of the figure of the author of cinematographic works in the classic Hollywood system. This dimension is not made only for practical reasons, to reduce the issue and therefore the scope of research, but there is a more important reason: the classical system of production is invariably considered the canon, either to follow it or to consciously turn away from it. And yet it is known badly. As a general rule, a series of stereotypes, far from reality, are repeated, without deepening the processes of cinematographic creation of the studios.

This article aims to analyze how that particular system of teamwork influenced its creators, and for what reasons we call some of them authors and deny others that condition. In this sense, special attention is paid to the figure of the producer, since it is a profession that has been reviled throughout history, but that deserves the highest recognition. In the Anglo-Saxon tradition, they have enjoyed a certain prestige, although rather associated with the idea of industrial entrepreneurship, not artistic. That is, as the person who summons a group of talents around a project, and deals with organizing and managing finances. In the best application of capitalist doctrine, successful producers were the ones who obtained the most money from their products, and that is why stories abound in which, with that priority objective, they despise and are despised by the rest of the filmmakers, as well as by the critics, and in general by the most intellectual tradition. Although there may be exceptions that do correspond to that bad reputation, producers were not usually those operetta demons, but very intelligent people who tried to make the best films they were capable of within the budget limit, that is, more or less the same as the rest of the authors in their field.

Other figures are also analyzed, such as the editor or the director of photography to check to what extent they should be taken into account as authors. In fact, one of the objectives of this article is precisely to research on the meaning of the expression collective art, a habitual concept, even persistent, but poorly resolved. In this line, the attention to some directly ignored professionals such as the montage supervisor, who exerted a great influence on the final finish of the films, is not lost either. Their contribution to film grammar is still forgotten, but a scientific approach to film authorship must have all the elements that have influenced creation, both for good and for bad.

Finally, we have not forgotten the screenwriter or the director, because, although there is a huge theoretical body on their work, in general it has been done from a

romantic perspective, with a focus on the most legendary aspects of their mission, instead of framing their responsibility from a pragmatic point of view.

### 3. METHODOLOGY

The very concept of classical cinema is a notion that has changed its essence. Some theorists limit it to the period circumscribed to the Hollywood of the 1930s and 1940s, while others include the 1950s, and even later. In this study, the emphasis is placed on the work system of the studios, and therefore their survival is what marks the frontier of the stage in question. At the moment when the process changes and independent productions begin to be the norm, instead of the exception, then a new dynamic begins to dominate the authorship relationships of creators. It is not that there is a revolution among filmmakers but that the panorama is changing, also due in part to the irruption of the director's conception as the undisputed author, advocated by the theorists of the *Nouvelle Vague*.

This issue of the temporal dimension is relevant since it limits access to the original sources and therefore influences the methodology. Of course, it has still been feasible to analyze the films of that period, which has proved useful for our research, but what is not possible is to speak directly with the authors, since most of them have already died. The search for information on their working methods, the different responsibilities of each profession or even of each work step in a certain field has been made thanks to the statements of professionals of that time that were embodied in previous studies (in books, magazines or documentaries), as reflected in the bibliography section.

However, although we have also consulted some reference manuals or some classical academic works, our approach to this period is different from the usual one. In general, the magnifying glass is usually placed on the finished products, the cinematographic works, and the multiple interpretations that can be made of their content. Or the artists are studied by scrutinizing every last detail of their biography. Instead, here the objective is the examination of the trades so as to find out what the standard system of creation was, which, although not radically different from the current one, does have certain peculiarities that are often ignored and that help to better understand the concept of authorship of both the past and the present.

For that reason, in order to research more deeply what the methods preferred by the workers were, we have also resorted to other types of more technical publications such as professional journals, especially seeking interviews with specialists, such as cinematographers, screenwriters, directors, producers...

As a last point, it is necessary to mention the previous work experience as film editors of the researchers of this article. Although it is a scientific writing, all that previous knowledge that professional wisdom acquired after years of effort is put at the service of a strictly academic point of view that undoubtedly helps to solve certain gaps that are not learned in any other way.

## 4. DISCUSSION

### 4.1. Collective authorship in cinema

The notion of collective authorship is a difficult concept to address. In fact, the very definition of authorship, even when we refer to an isolated artist, is a rather modern idea, derived and modified throughout history by the successive visions on Art that the Renaissance, Romanticism or contemporary movements brought with them. But this concept, complicated in itself, becomes even more complex if it is about works in which there is not only one person in charge but several people (many or few, that is indifferent), who collaborate with each other until reaching a common result. In addition, the repercussions of granting the author status to one or the other are not purely intellectual, of the kind with which artistic critics would enjoy, but have direct consequences in the economic, moral and criminal spheres.

As explained by Elisa Gutiérrez, the legislation on the subject of copyright has two trends according to the legal tradition of the Anglo-Saxon countries and the countries of continental law:

In the former, the rights were granted to persons, natural or legal, who took on the initiative and responsibility of the film, which fits in the definition of the figure of the producer (...). This system was called "copyright". The continental countries opted for the system of "copyright", preferring to grant authorship to certain people who had made artistic and/or literary contributions to the resulting work. (Gutiérrez García, 2018, p. 8).

Specifically in the Spanish legal system, it has been considered that the authors of an audiovisual work were the scriptwriter, the director and the musician. Of course, it is difficult to accept that the legislator can decree who the authors of a work of art are beyond what the creators themselves think, although it is a constant that the laws lag behind the social reality they are trying to regulate. Of course, this criticism is extensive to scientific articles, like this one, that insist on unraveling a curiously elusive world, which is always one step further.

The consideration of author, in the meaning granted by the law, has a practical sense: they are granted a moral and patrimonial right over the audiovisual product. That is to say, that apart from their salary, and in concept of author's rights, they will receive a small percentage of the collection of the box office<sup>2</sup>. In general, it is not a large sum, although in some cases where success is achieved, the figure rises proportionally. This percentage is different and independent of whether authors negotiate a participation in the profits, something that in classical cinema was reserved for only a handful of names in all history, because even the most famous actors were permanently incorporated into a studio that only offered them a regular salary whether they rolled or not.

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<sup>2</sup> Specifically 1.55%, which in turn is divided equally among the authors.



At present, the moral right also gives them control over their work, such as preventing its modification without permission, or the scope of its dissemination. Contracts usually have these circumstances in mind, although, as the moral right is inalienable, it could be the case that a screenwriter dissatisfied with the result (for example, the writer of the original novel, who is the owner of the plot), prevented a movie that is already finished from being marketed<sup>3</sup>. The producer could ask for a strong compensation for damages, but it would be difficult to oppose it.

The Spanish legislator and, in general, the European, chooses a specific list on which only the director, the musician and the scriptwriter are found, and now it also includes the director of photography. It is clear that these are positions of great responsibility in a film, and therefore there is nothing to object. That is, it is clear that the screenwriter deserves to be considered the author of the films he writes, as well as the director or the musician. However, it is legitimate to ask why these people and not others. For some time we have tried to show, through several articles, that there are also other film workers, such as the artistic director or the editor, who are equally essential for cinema, and who in certain cases even constitute their main creative force, since from the films created in the Golden Stage of Hollywood to the most recent ones of the national panorama.

The fundamental question that arises is what the essence of the author is or, in other words, if a person develops a work in a work of art, does that person automatically transform into an author? When works are the responsibility of a single individual, as in literature or painting, there is usually no debate. However, the case of cinema is very different, because it is a collective art. Although it is usual to have a central figure that coordinates or directs the other contributions, the key is that the final result comes precisely from the collaboration. It is not a mere sum of wills that accumulate their strength to raise a project, instead, there is an interaction, a mutual influence among them that causes very different results.

At the end of the process, it is impossible to know who was responsible for each idea, not only due to lack of memory, but rather because, from the original idea to the one that remains on the screen, the personal interpretation of each artist gradually polishes, or contradicts, the previous one. An example of this is found in classic cinema: According to what several authors have narrated, the final sentence that Rick told Captain Renault in *Casablanca* (Michael Curtiz, 1942), "Louis, I feel that this is the beginning of a beautiful friendship", was actually written by the producer Hal B. Wallis (Ros, 2017, p. 38). Later, in view of the great success, both the Epstein brothers and Koch claimed their predominant role in the writing of the work, including this key closing.

In the Intellectual Property Law of our country there is a valuable definition that we include here:

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<sup>3</sup> For years it was rumored that Patricia Highsmith, dissatisfied with the version of *The American Friend* (Der amerikanische Freund, 1977), that Wim Wenders made about her novel *The Game of Ripley*, had prevented its re-release in movie theaters.

[A collective work] is constituted by the meeting of contributions of different authors whose personal contribution is based on a unique and autonomous creation, for which it was conceived without being possible to attribute separately to any of them a right over the whole of the work done.<sup>4</sup>

We fully agree with it, but that does not solve the problem that had already been announced for cinematographic works. Its collective nature is recognized, but author status is restricted to a small closed list. So the question still stands, why the director, the scriptwriter or the musician? Why was the director of photography included later? Is there such a difference between the artistic work of some and the professional routines of the rest of the team? So as to offer a reasonable explanation, you have to resort to tradition. These professions already had organized groups that were in charge of defending their copyright prior to the arrival of cinema. It does not take many arguments to argue that if the writer or the musician are considered authors when they work alone, they will be treated the same way when they do it together. On the other hand, the figure of the director has followed another trajectory.

#### **4.2. The role of the director compared to the creative producer**

In reality, the vindication of the figure of the director/author does not reach the French New Wave. Before that time, no director would have called himself an author, which does not mean that they underestimated their own value or did not think of cinema as an artistic manifestation. But their role, although it was fundamental, was still a link in the chain of the studios. In Hollywood, their work was restricted to filming and with less freedom of action than at present. We are used to thinking of filmmakers who control almost every aspect of a film from the beginning to the end but, in the golden age of cinema, those who exercised a real creative control over all aspects of the film were the producers. It is almost a problem of nomenclature, because you could say that the producer of that time was the equivalent of the director now, since he had the last word in creative decisions, with the difference that the producer delegated someone to supervise the shooting. The definitive proof is that most of directors did not go to the editing room, but rather it was the editor himself, in solitude or collaborating with the producer, who decided the definitive structure of the film. Of course, in the classical system, the figure of the montage supervisor or the executives of the studios, who could exert a great influence, had to be taken into account too: if it could be said that the directors exercised a leadership role in the teams, this would have been limited to what Vidal Ramentól and Fuertes Camacho (2012) call a participative leadership.

At that time, the absurd expression, in which, at the beginning of the titles of credit, it is said "a film by [the name of the director]" did not exist. Now it is so familiar that it is accepted without questioning it. But it is not an innocent cliché. With it, it is understood that the director is the true author of the film, and that is why he

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<sup>4</sup> Spain. Royal Legislative Decree 1/1996, as of April 12, approving the Revised Text of the Intellectual Property Law. Article 8. Collective work.



leaves his signature. Although, reluctantly, the help of other participants is recognized, it is a limited admission, just enough not to take away the director's absolute protagonism.

It is pertinent to note that, when in the world of theater they say "a work by", nobody refers to the director of the staging but the writer of the text. The author is the creative dramatist of the libretto, without any discussion. Moreover, the director of a play, however famous he may be, does not even receive royalties. Only the musician gets a small percentage, since almost the entire amount goes to the writer.

André Bazin and his disciples argued that "*An author is that director who achieves, through a unique stylistic stamp in the way he uses the filmic language, to express his vision of the world, his ideology, and his obsessions*" (Gutiérrez Correa, 2014, p. 7). In the classic cinema of Hollywood, they emphasized Alfred Hitchcock, Orson Welles, Howard Hawks and William Wyler at the beginning, and they gradually expanded the list in their writings of *Cahiers du Cinéma*.

The American Andrew Sarris, a film critic in the journal *Film Culture*, echoed in his country the ideas of the French critics. Some voices like that of Pauline Kael, of the well-known *New Yorker* journal, openly opposed, arguing that "*in most films, the director is not the head of the film, which is the product of the creative work of several people from their different jobs*" (Gutiérrez Correa, 2014, p. 16).

These alternative ideas of the New Wave, which in principle were circumscribed to a local group, very theoretical, have spread to the rest of the world, marking so deeply the conception of the modern director, even in the United States, that now it seems natural or the only possible thing. There will always be a person who takes on the artistic initiative of a project, and the fact that it is the producer or the director has both advantages and disadvantages. It is important not to forget that there are other alternatives to the method in force today.

Nobody would hesitate to consider John Ford as a legendary author, and yet, when he finished shooting, he would go on vacation. The only advice he gave the editor is that he did not mess up the movie. It was not an eccentric behavior, it was usual. What other filmmakers did was link a shoot with the following, of successive projects, which left them no time to sit down with the editor. For example, John Huston followed a similar model, and still remains a world reference. In the magnificent book *Picture, Rolling with Huston*, journalist Lillian Ross described the painful birth of the film *The Red Badge of Courage* (1974). Huston appears in the title and the cover photo, but the text, essential to understand the system of classical Hollywood studios, reveals that it was the producer, Gottfried Reinhardt, who worked with Benny Lewis in the montage of the film (Ross, 1986).

Of course, there were exceptions in which certain directors supervised the entire process, such as Alfred Hitchcock or Charles Chaplin, but they stood out precisely for that reason. Chaplin was his own producer thanks to the studio that he created, United Artists, along with other Hollywood greats Douglas Fairbanks, Mary Pickford

and D. W. Griffith, who for a time remained as an independent producer with unequal luck (Gomery, 1986, p. 209). At the beginning of his American stage, Hitchcock also had problems to attend montage, until he could accumulate enough prestige and independence to become a producer. This was the natural path of those creators who wanted to have maximum creative control.

After these precisions about the creative producer, the reasons of the Anglo-Saxon law to designate this one as the depository of the copyright are much better understood. In our country, it seems an arbitrary decision, but the fact that it has a bad reputation does not diminish its artistic capacity. In the same way, it is also understood why the Oscar awards of the Academy of Hollywood for the "Best Film" are collected by its producer, because that person is considered the creator, the real responsible for the work as a whole.

#### **4.3. The architects of the stories**

In the early years of Hollywood cinema, there was not even what today is understood as "screenplay". Only a slight idea of the plot was enough to start the shoot. They progressively realized that grouping the shots that happened in the same enclave, instead of following the natural order of the story, made this phase faster and more efficient. And, with movie theaters imposing, at a given time, a standard length, they were forced to spend more time preparing the screenplays so that the narrative retained a balanced structure of beginning, climax and outcome inherited from its literary predecessor.

New demands to increase the quality and the footage of the films made better planning necessary and the detailed screenplay became an indispensable tool to calculate the costs of the final product and to favor the efficiency of the work of the team. Filmmakers lost old roles with the new system and became experts in directing actors and coordinating the different technical heads during filming, but under the supervision of the producer.

Later on, numerous studios adopted the formula of "continuity screenplay" in which the actions to be carried out in the staging were described in detail. If we compare it with the model that is currently used, it would be halfway between a script and a technical report (camera, script, and laboratory) as it collected notes on footage, effects to be made, instructions on tints and notes for the editors.

And, faced with this strict model of operating, there were other methods such as those by Griffith's, also shared by Chaplin, who used to shoot a barely outlined screenplay. According to Bordwell (1997, p. 153), his editor remembered how the filmmaker proceeded through long rehearsals, then he filmed general shots, and after the first tests, deciding where he wanted the close-ups. He could afford to be as slow as he wanted since he was not paid according to the invested time but to the benefits, and he did not have a distribution deadline either; both privileges achieved in part thanks to their box office successes. As explained in the same paragraph, Cecil B. De Mille also moved away from the dominant practices in the industry. In

order to achieve a greater dramatic intensity of the actors, he rolled in the natural order of the story and placed several cameras to achieve all shots in one shot. With this system, great continuity was obtained and the actors were favored but it entailed some complication when it came to illuminating the first shots and required a large number of operators, which could have been expensive. However, the reduction of the shooting time and the quality of the final result convinced the production company in this case.

As the complexity of films increased, the screenplay writing and review departments became more and more numerous. It was a common practice to have different professionals work in the treatment of a topic, sometimes leaving the visible head behind, who used to be the famous writer hired by the studio to give fame to the project. According to Nacache (1995, p. 66), the Screenwriters Guild had to resolve more than once a case of paternity to respond to "the claims of some screenwriters excluded during a duly stratified writing procedure". Louis B. Mayer argued that the function of the films was to entertain, so when a screenwriter complained that they had modified their work, he always answered: "*The most important book of all times was written by a committee. It was the bible*". (Ross, 1991, p. 145).

The first credit of a screenwriter (the screenwriters' head, not the continuity technicians) that appeared was used in 1912 by Edison (Bordwell, 1997, p. 349) for the purpose of encouraging other writers to send their stories and reduce the risk of plagiarism. The problem arose when the companies refused to list in the films all the participants in the text, who could be as many as ten. There was not in the authors so much a search for recognition by the public but by the industry because being the author of a prestigious film allowed better working conditions, higher fees and the possibility of getting new projects. In this regard, the Academy of Motion Picture Art & Sciences, apart from organizing the annual awards of the different categories for "Best Film" or "Best Photography", published a monthly bulletin detailing all the participants in the screenplay of a specific title, to be distributed among the managers of the companies.

Many famous novelists, such as Raymond Chandler, Scott Fitzgerald, or Dos Passos, were called by the studios to adapt their novels, although their relationship with the producers was based on a mutual suspicion, which usually led to endless arguments. Others, on the other hand, like the playwright Lillian Hellman, knew how to adapt to the office of screenwriter and changed their initial rejection for great enthusiasm towards the multiple options that the new medium provided.

However, complaints about the little attention paid to their talent were more frequent, since producers used to request the revision of their contributions by other salaried professionals of the studio, more pragmatic and with less intellectual pretensions. According to scholars such as Enric Ros (2017, p. 38), William Faulkner barely contributed a few lines to the screenplay of *Land of the Pharaohs* (Howard Hawks, 1955), after the production defrayed him a four-month trip to Egypt. The imposition of the discipline of high performance and compliance with schedules of

the studios did not favor the inspiration of this type of artists. Raymond Chandler described his collaboration with Billy Wilder in *Double Indemnity* (1944) as "a murderous experience that probably shortened my life, but I learned how to write a screenplay, as much as I am capable of learning, which is not much" (García, 1999). Wilder thought he could contribute valuable elements to the story: "He was interested as I was in the atmosphere of a city, a situation, a person. He had an ear for the nuances of "slang". Besides, he was not only an author who could describe in a wonderful way but he could also write dialogues". (García, 1999).

However, he was soon aware of his difficult character and his manifest disdain for the screenwriter's job, as Cecilia García recalls.

Maybe the novelist, like so many others coming from literature, felt insecure when it came to writing a film, according to the letters sent to his friend, actor Charles Morton:

A body of screenplay bibliography is not available, because they belong to the studios, not to the authors, and the studios will not show them. For example, I tried to borrow from Warner the screenplay for *The Maltese Falcon*; they did not give it to me. All the writer can do is watch the movies. (...) You cannot make a detailed study and a reconstruction of the problems. (Chandler, 2013).

He also denounced the contradictions of the system: "*The screenplay as it exists is the result of a bitter and prolonged battle between the writer (or the writers) and the people whose objective is to exploit his talent without giving him the freedom to use that talent*" (Chandler, 2013). Despite this, he ended up praising, in the same letter, the generosity of the audiovisual companies that, unlike his editor, when he achieved great success, negotiated with him again: "*And when I write something that gives profits, then it breaks my contract and writes a better one I cannot despise an industry that does that*" (Chandler, 2013).

#### **4.4. The different disciplines**

The demands of higher quality films, with the ability to be credible, to excite and impress the viewer, encouraged companies to hire the best professionals in the world of theater, music, fashion ... Numerous artists from other disciplines like painting or architecture became expert advisors of the different cinematographic categories. This massive arrival increased specialization and favored the improvement of the techniques in all fields, giving rise to new jobs.

The figure of the *script* (which until a few years ago was still dominated by women) became essential when it came to rendering the required attention to the *raccord*, and to serve as a bridge between the shoot and the editing room. That person was in charge of supervising the respect for the continuity of the shots filmed at different times that would later appear on the screen in a row. And, in turn, they wrote annotations that could help to organize the material. That is, as today.

The responsibilities of the assistant director who had to group the shots that were to be filmed each day were gradually broadened, and the lighting of the set, the sets, the costumes and the exterior locations were monitored. This way, it freed the director of the pre-shooting tasks and established a connection between the director, the production and the staff of the set.

One of the first artistic directors who started as apprentices in film studios was Anton Grot, who was nominated for an Oscar for *The Sea Hawk* (Michael Curtiz, 1940). With the support of the research staff, he avoided anachronisms in the sets, but in addition to the decoration, he had to have technical knowledge about the construction of structures, the characteristics of the celluloid and the response of the different objectives. Initially he designed sets for the producer Sigmund Lubin in the traditional way but he would soon develop revolutionary methods. According to cameraman Arthur Miller, Grot made carefully shaded pencil drawings that were especially useful when lighting. He adds that Grot devised a "decreasing table", using different lenses and marking in photographs the way in which the depth of field receded into the background. This procedure stimulated his later experiments with a false perspective, allowing spectacular spatial effects at very reduced costs (Ramírez, 2004). It was also common to use miniature models of the sets that helped to previously plan the camera angles, the lighting and the position of actors.

#### **4.5. Collaboration in the shooting**

In any film, the involvement of all the professionals who participate in it is necessary, even now, and in the enormous machinery of Hollywood cinema, from workers of lower scales to the highest executives of production contributed to the development of each project, to a greater or lesser extent.

The director of photography Lucien Ballard, responsible for the film *The Killing* (Stanley Kubrick, 1956) once said: "*Another thing you learn is that the camera operator cannot make a movie as he wants because he is not the one who commands. It is collaboration between the director, the artistic director and the operator*" (Bordwell, 1997, p. 156).

It is also worth mentioning special effects technicians at this point. In the case of *Citizen Kane* (Orson Welles, 1941) they were responsible along with the cinematographer Gregg Toland for the most innovative shots of that work.

Higher-budget movies such as blockbusters became, according to researcher Jacqueline Nacache, an "*ambiguous terrain, a place of elections and contradictions, where gigantism can amplify the voice of an artist or sink it completely*" (1995, p. 81). Therefore, she stated that the dominant figure of this type of films used to be the producer, offering as a paradigmatic example *Gone with the Wind* (1939), with three directors, George Cukor, Sam Wood (both excluded of the credits) and Victor Fleming, but "*a single true responsible person: David O'Selznick*" (Nacache, 1995, p. 81).



Depending on the company in which they worked and also on the personality of the producer who was responsible for the coordination, filmmakers had more or less room for maneuver. Filmmakers used their well-known fame to achieve as much control as possible, at least during the filming phase.

Director Vincent Sherman, author of *All Through the Night* (1942) remembered:

After having seen many of John Ford's films, I can imagine that he does a lot of editing with the camera. At Warner Brothers, we could not do it. If we had done it, we would have got into trouble immediately. We knew that we had to cover a scene from different angles so that there were different options, so that Wallis and Warner could choose what they wanted. (Bordwell, 1997, p. 367).

Minnelli, who worked in the production unit of MGM with Stanley Donen and Gene Kelly, said in his memoirs that, thanks to producer Arthur Freed, the musical comedy developed that way: "*He is the one who gave all creators as much freedom as possible and that is the mark of trust indispensable for any creation*" (Minnelli, 1975, p. 123).

#### **4.6. Choosing the cut**

The final editing, in most cases, was not supervised by the director, as it is conceived today, but it was the producer who accompanied the editor in this phase of creation of the film. The director used to limit himself to controlling the shooting process. Only some filmmakers proposed this possibility to the studio, as long as they enjoyed a high status that allowed them to negotiate their conditions. In the 1920s, Lubitsch negotiated with Warner Bros. to have control over the final cut as well as the final word about the cast and plot (Bordwell, 1997, p. 154). As we pointed out in a previous paragraph, Hitchcock achieved, by means of a deliberate plan, to be required in the editing room, since he shot in such a way the material of *Rebecca* (1940), his first movie in the United States, that the editor saw forced to resort to him for the movie to make sense.

The figure of the montage supervisor also played an important role in this process since it acted in the name of the study, coordinating the different professionals in the same direction. Margaret Booth was one of the most outstanding of the profession. Many felt that it was a very strict film language also in terms of editing, which editors knew they should not break. Booth was said to be the most feared and implacable of the MGM but, on the other hand, according to the testimonies about what he used to tell to film editors, he did not seem so inflexible in style since he prioritized other questions about the *raccord*: "*If you think you have to cut at a point whether it matches or not, cut. You cut looking for emotion and you get a lot acting like that*" (Apple, 2006).

Editor Adrienne Fazan, who was responsible for the editing of *Singing in the Rain* (Stanley Donen and Gene Kelly, 1952), reported that the stern supervisor expected him to use close-ups in a Vincente Minnelli's film. However, it was not possible because he had decided not to shoot them. The director planned to make long shots with camera movements on purpose so they would not make changes in the editing



room. Then, in the study, they enlarged these frames by reframing, to obtain, this way, the first shots non-existent at the beginning (Bordwell, 1997, p. 368).

According to Nacache, in classic cinema, especially in the studio of Warner Bros., a style of rapid editing was developed, that is, with plenty of ellipses and shots without excessive duration, since it allowed them to "*tell complex stories, even dark ones, without producing traumas in the spectator*" (Nacache, 1995, p. 33). It was said that Jack Warner forced the fragments showing a character going from one place to another to be cut as they were useless for the narrative and only "*wear out shoe soles*" (Coursodon, 1991).

These innovative ideas were not repeated in all the films of the industry, since many directors, mainly those of European origin, such as Stroheim or Sternberg, were reluctant to shorten the shots, because it constituted for them a betrayal of their particular way of expression. Welles, within his modern proposals, also did not advocate transience on the shots. In fact, in several of his works, such as in *The Magnificent Ambersons* (1942), we can see how he forces this deliberately slow style.

Throughout the period of classic Hollywood cinema, there were different production systems that gradually developed certain cyclical tendencies in terms of creation, but only the confluence of all the professionals specialized in the different aspects necessary to compose a film, created a style that continues to exist today in world cinematography.

## 5. CONCLUSIONS

The figure of the producer must be taken into account. Without doubt, his image has been criticized and his role has given rise to many detractors. To many, there is the erroneous belief that the mission of a producer is solely to manage the economic aspects of the film and give special value to those that allow the director maximum autonomy. Indeed, throughout the history of filmmaking, we can find people with lack of cultural interest, ignorance of the environment or simply lack of talent, but it is also true that, in contrast to them, many producers have left a deep mark by their participation, due to their intelligence, interest and experience. This circumstance occurs especially in the golden age in Hollywood, with prominent names such as Arthur Freed or David O'Selznick, and it is still maintained in the United States today.

The incorporation of the figure of the producer in the group of recognized authors of a work can raise objections as happens with the rest of other participations, including, to name a few, those of actors, editors or other collaborators as those who participate in the sound, the decoration... But the truth is that all those who contribute with their work should be considered, though, each in connection with their contribution (Lara, 2006). For example, the job of the assistant director is extremely important even if he is under orders from the director. In fact, the term "assistant", from its use in classic cinema, does not reflect his value, since in reality he is the true shooting director. And yet his contribution to authorship is maybe more limited than in other trades.

A scale would have to be established that could be incorporated into an intellectual property law, in which none of the authors would be excluded, even if they were proportionally distinguished with respect to their contribution. Since the beginning of cinema, this question has not been resolved and maybe, at some point, this multiple reality of the concept of author will be adapted to a regulation.

It is difficult to know the complexity involved in the creation of a film. The spectators that come to movie theaters receive the titles of credit with resignation and, on many occasions, they do not even wait and leave before concluding the projection. A pedagogical task would be to explain that there are necessary tasks in the realization of a film and that many of the trades, for example, laboratory technicians, are essential. This does not mean that they are authors. Many people work to get to carry out each project, from the person responsible for catering to the drivers, but not all of them must be considered artists. The question would be to ask whether the final work would be modified by replacing one with another, if this would have a direct influence on the result.

Walter Murch, one of the few editors whose name has come from anonymity, considers Cinematographic Art to be an essentially collective activity, one of the characteristics that makes the difference with other forms of artistic expression (Murch, 2003). Others think the same. However, in the audiovisual world, still unpredictable changes will continue to occur.

For example, filming will undergo such a huge transformation that it will not look like we know it today. Many of the trades that currently create the film image and that, in the future, will be replaced with a few people, or maybe only one provided with a computer, will disappear. Of course, the fundamental thing will always be the inspiration and talent of the creators.

With the passage of time, the possibilities of technology on the one hand and the development of the generations associated with it ["Net generation" (Oblinger and Oblinger, 2005), generation ND (Born Digital), generation C – "Creativity, Content, Share"- (Búa, 2010), Echo Boomers (OMD, 2012), or, more commonly referred to, generation Y or Millennials as concluded by Alonso Mosquera, González Vallés and Muñoz de Luna, (2016)] by another may make the collaboration is eliminated, and a single author concentrates in himself to all the technical and artistic team, in a more individual work, similar to that of a writer or a painter. One wonders where these changes will take us, far from the traditional cinematic language, created and refined throughout the iconic classic stage of Hollywood.

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