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Autor/es:
Nosferatu

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Entidades colaboradoras:



donostiakultura.com

Abstracts



Los contrabandistas de Moonfleet

AMERICA SEEN THROUGH AN EYE PATCH AND A MONOCLE

Quim Casas

According to this article, it doesn't make much sense to establish a clear difference between Fritz Lang's European and American periods due to the fact that the Viennese moviemaker's entire work obviously follows a common thread. Based on this starting point, the author analyses Fritz Lang's career in America, looking at the difficulties he experienced on trying to enter the Hollywood industry, his constant changes from one studio to another and even the failure of his own production company. An epigraph to the article makes a detailed analysis of the outlandish tale (probably falsified by Lang) of his flight from Germany in 1933, subsequently going over the director's two trips to the US (prior to *Metropolis* and in 1934), his first filming projects and his movies, his period with Fox and his international recognition, while underlining some of the keys to his style and particular understanding of the cinema.

FRITZ LANG OUT WEST

Jordi Batlle Caminal

Fritz Lang once said to Peter Bogdanovich that there wasn't much of a difference between the Nibelungs and western movies. And he proved his words by making three westerns as genuinely American as they were Langian in their completion. He was offered the first two by Darryl F. Zanuck. Though imbibing the sequel to *Jesse James*, *The Return of Frank James*, with his typical rigidity, Lang makes obvious concessions to humour (the trial scene), meticulously portraying contemporary journalism, in what is virtually a precedent for *While the City Sleeps*. Placing greater accent on the epic but with no less detail as far as historical documentation is concerned, *Western Union* evokes the similarly named first transcontinental telegraph line. Backed by another production tycoon, Howard Hughes, his third western, *Rancho Notorious*, stands on a higher level: just as romantic and tragic, impassioned and baroque, told to the tunes of a ballad, *Legend of Chuck-a-Luck*, the movie outlines a tale of hatred and vengeance parallel to a love triangle featuring the kind of delirium and poetical strength only finding its American cinema counterpart in *Moonfleet* and, as a western, in Ray's strange, unsettling flower amid 50s westerns, *Johnny Guitar*.

THE OTHER SIDE OF AMERICA. THE FILMS NOIR OF A VIENNESE MOVIEMAKER

Antonio Santamarina

Having given a few brief details about Lang's films noir, the author proceeds to divide the moviemaker's work into three areas (the films of social denunciation in the 30s, the criminal psychology of the 40s, and the social pessimism of the 50s), before going on to analyse each one. Like a slowly smouldering photograph, the author tries to show how, as Lang's filmography progresses, his portrayal of US society becomes progressively darker; how his initial regenerationist expectations are followed by the sceptical pessimism of his last movies, in which confidence in the individual, in justice or in institutions, are nothing but an ash-tinged shadow.

MELODRAMA IN THE CINEMA OF FRITZ LANG

José María Latorre

Having established that the narrative outlines and generic framework of Lang's American work mainly correspond to his European phase and to the serial genre, the author establishes the difficulties of classifying Langian melodramas, the steps of which can be traced to his westerns, to his films noir and to his adventure movies. He then goes on to exalt (always briefly describing the different storylines) the melodramatic subtlety of *You and Me*, to criticize the cheap psychology of *Secret Beyond the Door*, although he highlights the *mise-en-scène* of certain parts of the film (particularly those at the beginning) and, finally, to indicate the dramatic strength of two of his best films: *Clash by Night* and *Human Desire*, two acid portrayals of human beings with nothing ahead of them in life.

AN ANTI-NAZI TETRALOGY

Pablo Fernández

A brief introduction indicating the works belonging to Lang's American anti-Nazi tetralogy serves as the gateway to a detailed analysis of each of its four films. The method of study employed is similar for each one, hence the author looks first of all at the storyline, going on to indicate the main thematic and stylistic features, lastly placing them within their context while underlining specific elements of the way the actors work and the *mise-en-scène*, looking at them all from the context of war movies and Lang's own filmography.

FROM WAR MOVIES TO ADVENTURE FILMS

Jesús Angulo

Having indicated the generic and production framework potentially linking *American Guerrilla in the Philippines* to *Moonfleet*, the author analyses the former, underlining the producer's impositions with respect to Lang whom, while having been prevented from further intervention in the movie, nevertheless managed to leave the imprint of his unmistakable style on the shooting of the action scenes. Subsequently, having once again taken a look at the producers' meddling in the shooting of *Moonfleet*, to the extent of imposing the ending as we see it, the author makes a comparative study between the film and the book, both from the point of view of the plot and of the *mise-en-scène*, underlining the film's profound lyricism, which he relates to two of its most important scenes. A short epilogue finally looks at the two last adventure movies made by the filmmaker on his return to Germany while describing their most outstanding features.

SCULPTING THE ODD FORM OF VISIBILITY

Àngel Quintana

Prior to analysing the principle features of Lang's working method, the author endeavours to correct a mistake, underlining (based, among others, on the numerous personal documents entrusted by the moviemaker to Lotte H. Eisner) that concern for *mise-en-scène* was similar in both his European and US periods. His analysis then concentrates on the latter in order to highlight two key elements of his style: the look in the eyes (related by the author to the construction of the story, the *mise-en-scène*, and the expectations created in the audience) and the immediacy/essentiality which abruptly emerge from the first shots of his movies to leave an indelible trace on the story and the Langian way of telling it.

WHEN YOU DON'T SEE THE KIDS... PERSONAGE, BIOGRAPHY, TRADITION

Carlos Losilla

The author of this text tackles Fritz Lang's universe based on his experience of Central European culture, on German romanticism and on several of the filmmaker's biographical experiences. This permits him to flee from certain topics and repeat the question of the Langian hero from a much wider point of view: life as representation and man as a puppet, a hero-child confronted with the surrounding unreality, all inherited from Hoffmann, Goethe, Rilke, Thomas Mann and the so many others who drove Lang to live a life that was never his own.

AMERICA ACCORDING TO FRITZ LANG. PORTRAIT OF A NEVERENDING CRISIS

Antonio José Navarro

Having indicated the ability to disturb of Fritz Lang's cinema during his American period, the author analyses what Europeans have thought (especially artists and writers) of the US in the last two centuries, comparing it to the moviemaker's own impressions before immigrating to the country in 1934. From here on, he describes Lang's process of insertion into US reality and the difficult evolution of the latter between the 30s and the 50s. Finally, a last section relates this information to the filmmaker's work in order to demonstrate, analysing aspects such as the part played by popular culture or the media within these narrations, Lang's pessimist portrait of the American dream.