

SPECIAL:

ARRABAL and Picasso's horse

José Ortega - Here I have expressed the actual situation of our experience. Here we can see the dictator and all his set, pictured against the background of a flag which is red; and death to many, many men and death to culture.

And then, you see, a figure, sorry, several figures which as we can see are desperate, terrorized, whilst on the earth only thorns can be found to find themselves in this condition of complete desolation and death where a skeleton and a buried dead man can be seen in the fields, with these elements of desperation, these elements which you can see here as in the abandoned houses of Matera, this window which seems to be asking who is responsible for this terrible situation. Because the truth is that this is already part of the past, a past which is already far behind us in our memories, because the truth of today is the truth which already no longer represents the past, it represents today, it represents a rebellious people, a people which reclaims the right to its flag. It is obvious that it is here that we can find the mechanism of repression, here is the brute force which continues to massacre and has always massacred right up to this minute, we can see this in all of this piece; a dead man: it's a comrade who died within this repression, because it would be very difficult, very difficult, for the men who came to power through the shedding of blood, to give up their rights to blood, whilst actually in power. But I actually believe that this is a hope we can hope for, that this past is coming to an end, and that this past will change.

Arrabal - The landscape is austere and solemn. The fortifications rise majestically to the sky, there where winging eagles trace out concentric circles of sinister beauty. The city is surrounded by the Agueda river as if by a sword of hope in an earth dried by centuries of time. A Roman bridge with eleven arches connects Villa Ramiro to the rest of the world. It is 1936 - eight days before the coup d'état against the Republic took place.....

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Arrabal - My world is a world of images.

It was a pity not to have done certain things in the world of the cinema, but it is not that I prefer the cinema as opposed to other forms of art. There are certain things which cannot be done on the screen. That is why I chose the cinema only for certain things. It's a film about the Civil War, a film about freedom. It is much more universal than just the Spanish Civil War, it is a film about justice and freedom.

The last time I was in Spain, I was in a prison.

It was not possible to film there, I had to find a place which looked like Spain. I travelled around and visited many towns, very many of them were beautiful and then finally I arrived here. It was a revelation for me: it was more beautiful than the original..... because I am describing a town which I knew very well which is called Ciudad Rodrigo. I don't know exactly what a film should be. All that I know is that I have written the arrangement of the scenes, I know that whilst filming I shall drop out a great many of these scenes and I know that, when the film is put together a great deal of what I have filmed will be put aside.

..... I know that when I started filming, on the first day, some tests were made, and I said to the director of photography: "I would like the camera to slide like a penguin", and he turned to me, annoyedly, and said "But this is called a trolley!", that's easy but why not say to slide like a penguin?

Voice of the Interviewer: Arrabal, can you tell me about the tree of Guernica?

Arrabal - Shall we make a test? Yes! Let's make a test.

Voice of the Interviewer: All right so we'll talk after the test.

Arrabal - You don't mind?

Voice of the Interviewer: No.

Arrabal - O.K.

Arrabal - You can imagine what an emotional moment it was for me to see, here in a democratic country, to see at last the tree of Guernica rising up in all its freedom. It's a dream to see it, it has such a great symbolic significance for Spain and for the Basque Provinces that I think we can consider it a universal symbol, an extraordinary symbol. We should remember that sometimes history combines with poetry. And when the Civil War started the Condor legions bombed Guernica, they razed it to the ground, and the whole of the town was destroyed, nothing stood, nothing but the tree of liberty. I think that the situation in Spain is like that, everything has been razed to the ground, but the tree of liberty still stands and I think that soon we shall be able to

Question: Ortega, how is it that you came to Matera?

Ortega - I came to Matera just like many others of my countrymen who have had to go into exile and who have been around the world looking for their environment, a place suitable for them to work in. I arrived here in Matera and I found a niche which is almost my own, it is almost the spiritual niche for which I have been looking for so long - the spirit of Spain, which as you all know, I had to leave. Really it's just the same as if someone asked an Italian in Sweden: "What are you doing here?". We all have to do this, having left our countries and living all over the world. Obviously it is a little different from the Italian who does not go abroad for political reasons, but leaves because of the necessity which forces him to become an economic emigrant; this is obviously not my own case, since I am a political emigrant. But, in the end, when you come down to it, it is the same sort of thing, because all of us carry our countries within ourselves and hope to return to them. I know that there is another Spanish intellectual here and I am not at all surprised about that. If I have found a spiritual atmosphere here where I can spread the roots of my inspiration, I am not at all surprised that a man who is making a film which investigates into our intimate selves, into our past as intellectuals during the

last forty years, also finished up by staying here, using all the roots of his inspiration And listen to those explosions, they are Arrabal's, he is finishing his film which as you know is about the great bombing of Guernica, which inspired the famous painting..... they are reconstructing all that.

Arrabal - It is the film that I have always wanted to make. You know that the Civil War was lost for one reason, because the Republican Army did not have money. And the same goes for this film: why has such a film never been made by the Spanish? because they never had the money to do it. And I, who by chance have been able to make films, have always dreamt of making this film, and now that the economic means have been found, we have made it. It's my life's dream. At last to be able to make a film about Spain, made by ourselves by a Spaniard. Because several films have been made about Spain, the films by Hemingway, by Malraux..... All right, but they were not films made by Spaniards. Or there have been films made by Spaniards, but by pro-Franco Spaniards. This is the first film of freedom made by a Spaniard. So you can imagine with what emotion and with what passion I am making it.

Comrade: Vandale, just arrived from Guernica, the city razed to the ground, would like to speak to you.

Vandale - Men and women of Villa Ramiro it is better to die standing upright than to live on bended knee. It is better to die standing upright than to live on bended knee.

Men and women of Villa Ramiro, it is better to die standing upright than to live on bended knee!

The fascists who razed Guernica to the ground but were not able to destroy the tree of liberty.

They want to take Villa Ramiro. But Villa Ramiro will be the tomb of fascism and of despotism and of the privileged!

Men, pick up your arms!

And if you have no arms, take them from the dead enemies. Men, jump on to the backs of the mules, and if you have no arms take them from the dead enemies! Those who have no faith in victory are cowards! The men who destroyed Guernica's inhabitants with steel and fire will never govern Villa Ramiro or Spain. Every house, every house will be a trench, every neighbourhood a circle of fire and steel! Take up arms, people of Villa Ramiro! The world is looking to Villa Ramiro, they shall not pass! Take up arms!

Question: What can you tell me about the film, do you know the story?

1st Boy - Well, the story it's a revolutionary film, from what I have heard, it's set in 1936, when the revolutionary war in Spain took place between Franco's army and the Republican army. Well, I am beginning to enjoy the film, I'm also working to see how the make-up, the scenery are going

Question: I have been told that you are a friend of Arrabal's.

1st Boy - Yes I am a friend of Arrabal's. When Arrabal came to Matera I was the first boy to get to know him...I accompanied him down there where the stones are to look for the places where he could film some scen

Question: Is it true that you play cards together.

1st Boy - Yes we play "scopa", I taught him that - it is a card game... we play with Arrabal and some of the others.

Question: And you, what do you think of the film?

2nd Boy - If I am not mistaken it's about fascism in Spain and then about the struggle of the partisans to establish a more democratic government, no?

Question: Where are we here? I can see so many notices in Spanish all around us, are we in Spain?

1st Lady - In Spain, we're in Spain.

Question: But aren't we in Matera?

1st Lady:- No, no, we're in Spain!

Question: Only in Spain!

1st Lady - Yes, yes.

Question: What are you doing?

Small girl - Us? Well

Question: What does well mean?

Small girl - Well, we're playing....

Question: What are you playing?

2nd Lady - We are playing at girl and boy comrades

1st Old Man - The women, the more the sun beats down the more clothes they take off. It would be much safer if they were locked up in the house and did not see anything. Because life gradually gets spoilt obviously, and I can't resist.

Question: Tell me, what film is this?

2nd Old Man - It's a Spanish film, about the Civil War in '36.

Question: Have you been to Spain by any chance?

2nd Old Man - No, to Spain no, I've been to Switzerland, Germany, Africa

Question: But do you know the story of the film?

2nd Old Man - Yes, the story of the film is the Civil War.

Question: And what happened in the Civil War?

2nd Old Man -they fight the Civil War to end the war, it was more convenient like that.

Question: Yes, but who won?

2nd Old Man - Who won? Democracy won.....

Question: But now in Spain there is no democracy

2nd Old Man - No, there are the communists.

Question: In Spain?!

2nd Old Man - In Spain.

Question: The communists are there?!

2nd Old Man - Yes.

Interviewer: Do you know that I have been talking to some inhabitants of Matera and it seems that in Spain the communists are in power?

Arrabal - Yes, but I think that this film is a forewarning. When this film comes out I hope that the situation in Spain will be different. People see communist Spain and that is fantastic and because of the film people change their ideas completely

Ortega - Really you are too young to be able to understand the events that took place in Spain. The Dictator arrived in our country. He appears at a window and talks to the masses, he makes promises, he makes loads of speeches, he says that we must renew

Here you can see a wall

Some signs And God, and the Fatherland, and the empire, and so many other things and I, really, can see no fatherland and no empire. In our case, I am forty years old, where is the empire? Where is our fatherland? How can I know where God is or the concept of I have of God, if at the same time I am not able to understand what their idea of God is. I think that, in the end, their idea of God is very different from the people's idea of God. He is their navel, He is their interests, a whole series of things which have no relation to any of us. And by way of their demagogy, their sense of property, they manage to confuse a whole people which really needs a revolution.

Arrabal - one of them comes down so low as to alight on the nest anchored on to the high tower of the castle of the Counts of Cerralbo. Engraved high up into the wall, a coat of arms of the Spain of Charles V with its stone eagle's wings outspread and with the shield held tight between its claws, dominates the castle

Cinieri - Rafael is a fascist by vocation and through his position. That is to say, it is the ruling classes who rebel against the will of the

people and organize themselves to defend their privileges at any cost, against any kind of morals, defending their own morals in actual fact. The ruling classes have always been like this, from the moment they undergo a defeat, when the people become aware and press for the end of privileges, and those classes defend their own privileges at all costs. Violence is their way of thinking, it is the education they have received, and is therefore a class Rafael is therefore the symbol of a class, he is the symbol of that mystical kind of fascism, which has caused us to go through so much trouble, in fact. And no type of violence is spared, he is the one who gives the orders and has the right to everything, and Vandale as well, because of the fact that this film is really a love story which takes place during the Spanish war, Vandale also wants everything to be hers at all costs, using any type of violence and without any clear logic, without any respect for the human being, which is what fascism actually is.

Cinieri - Rafael says some things which are rather monolithic and show very clearly what his ideas are.

- Everything has been worked out, we will carry out a coup d'état, the army is with us. You can join us at any moment. The password is C.A.F.E.: Compañero Arriba Falange Española.

- This is about Spain, you can't refuse to take an interest in it. Spain is part of our universal destiny, and to be Spanish is one of the greatest, most exceptional things which can happen to you.

- The Republican Government, miserable bastard born of the union between liberals and socialists, will soon be dead, after the action of the Spanish army supported by the church and the ruling classes. Spain, the real Spain, is about to fight the dragon. And very little time will pass before our Falangist flag will be flying over Madrid and over the whole of Spain. Spain will be saved and the rabble who resist the rebellion will be killed like dogs!

Cinieri - Well, I think I have been quite clear: Rafael is a very inconvenient character.

Melato - My character is one which we could normally call a passionate person, and that's it. In actual fact behind this story of a woman there are many other implications, there is magic, there is witchery, there is the Spain of myths and religion, its strength, its power, its tragedy, its charm. Perhaps I have said too much, but I think that Vandale is a little bit of all of these. She is, apart from this, a woman who, through a banal love story, becomes politically aware, that is she becomes a woman who is aware of herself, of a certain type of freedom, of what freedom can mean, what communism means, through a love story.

Arrabal - She is an exceptional character in my world, because it has always been said that women, that women characters in my world are either objects or prostitutes or women and this woman is not an object, nor a prostitute, the wronged mother she is an exceptional woman, she is the woman on the move. I think that I am Vandale. She is a character without any ties, but when there is an important event like the civil war, she becomes involved.

Question: Arrabal, what is the funeral of the sardine?

Arrabal - It is an ancient Spanish traditional feast which has always taken place, even during the inquisition, in a clandestine way. At lent time, the Spanish catholic church which had come into power, a dictatorial power, a monarchist power, ordered the people not to make love and not to eat meat, but to eat sardines. So the peasants protested against this order and hid away the sardines as if to say that they would make love and eat meat. It was a kind of Dionysia ceremony in which everyone expressed himself and contested the power from above, they contested society in general and all forms of power. It is a feast which I had witnessed since a child and which was then suppressed. It has always fascinated me and I would like to be able to reproduce it.

Question: They say that Arrabal would never stop giving parties to keep away from his bad dreams.

Arrabal - Who said that? Only a slanderous person would say a thing like that.

Question : Your critics say it.

Arrabal - May be, may be, but I am too tired to give real parties. I give parties because there are no parties in my everyday life, I am a very simple person and have to compensate.

Arrabal - For me reality does not consist only of the everyday aspects but it also consists of the world of fables in our dreams, our hidden most secret desires, of our fantasy; all this makes up reality, the reality which I feel. What I don't like are the type of fables invented by poets, which have nothing whatever to do with reality. There may be some problems in the film, for example when I bring in some dwarfs and ask for some costumes for them. One could imagine that I were asking for costumes for imaginary dwarfs but that is not so, I want dwarfs who are reality. I think that we are living in a time when we are beginning to break down most types of racialism. We are beginning, we are trying. We are going towards a type of society which will not take these discriminations into account. There is beginning to be less discrimination as regards women, as regards negroes. But I think that there is one type of discrimination which still exists, which is real and against which we can do nothing, and that is the discrimination against small people. And then the small people, the dwarfs, dwarfs make one laugh, or provoke people, and it is like the quintessence of ourselves, it is we who are dwarfs in one way or another. **And it is** they who are giants in one way or another. Why not therefore regain possession of an aspect which symbolizes ourselves? I am sorry for Fellini, who is at present making Don Giovanni, Casanova with a seductive playboy. He should have used Adriano or Gini to make it. I ought to write to him. Because otherwise what would people say? They would'nt say: that's no good; but they would say: he's small, he's small. But small or large it could be all the same. What does that mean? I would'nt make any grotesque scenes with dwarfs. I have always tried to maintain the greatest

dignity with them. In this film which will be dealing with the discrimination between the rich and the poor, between those with power and the rest of the people, it is a good thing that there should be this antagonism which will symbolize all the other antagonisms. These dwarfs up against the tall: we must be on their side. They represent our very selves.

Question: The critics say that in your work one side there is Kafka's universe belonging to the adults with a methodically organised oppression, and on the other side the unearthly, un-materialistic, non-moralistic universe of childhood, with all its poetic, erotic and extremist powers.

Arrabal - Yes No what happens is that from my point of view the world of bad things is defined by adults in a rather confused way, that is to say taking into account economic interests. There are the intermediaries of good and the intermediaries of bad. It's like religion. Whilst things are fairly direct for children. Things are seen in all their innocence and in all their bestiality, because the child is not good, he is not good and he is not bad, he is like nature and reacts like a plant, like a flower. Childhood combines together very well with nobility of spirit, with revolution in fact. And this is why I like making this combination so much.

Marzouk - Arrabal from his childhood, since when he was 10 or 11 years old His father was a real revolutionary, was all for his country and all that, but he was denounced by his mother and this fact has stayed with him, a great shock, and up until now he doesn't know they brought his father before him. He cried out, all this, he has looked everywhere and up until now he has found nothing, he doesn't know whether he is dead or alive, he knows absolutely nothing about his father. It is like a kind of mark on him, and that is why in his films you will always see people who are anti-Franco or anti

Question: So Marzouk you think it may be a personal thing?

Marzouk - No, I don't think so. A little personal yes, but Arrabal is very revolutionary, he has been in prison, he was in prison in Spain. And he still cannot return to Spain. Up until now he has made himself quite well known, he has written many books, he wrote a book called "The letter of Franco" which is very well known. This book explains all these things, always and

Faber - I worked in a play called "Put handcuffs on the flowers" taken from his experiences. Towards the end of the sixties he returned to Spain to see his sister. They could not arrest him because of what he had written, so they sent a young boy to him with a copy of one of his books. They could not arrest him for his written works because permission for publication had never been granted in Spain, for any of his books. Therefore he signed a dedication for a copy of this book: "I must not serve my country" or something to that effect and they threw him into prison for, I have forgotten what the actual charge was, for contempt of something. He wrote this drama from his experience in prison. In prison, the only characters in the drama were the prisoners. In their dreams they become warders, judges and assistant gaolers, etc. His idea was that in the dreams of the prisoners themselves are the things which oppress them, just as can happen in each one of us. The warder and the prisoner and society all emerge from our fantasy in one way or another ... And this was rather terrifying to observe. So, in a certain sense, he possesses a double vision and in this we can observe how we each build up our own prison and how much it takes to fight against this prison. And then we ask ourselves in some way the question, the problem: how can we struggle against this, internally or externally? or perhaps in both ways.

Question: Rohn, do you think there is any relationship between the characters of Goya and of Arrabal?

Faber - Oh, yes It is the dichotomy of the artist and the revolutionary. In our country, it was a negro writer, Lee Roy Jones, who felt the problem of wanting to become an artist and then to eventually become a politician, because art and politics mix together in rather

a strange way. In fact there is almost a necessity to be involved in art and in the same way one may become involved in political problems, because as human beings we have the duty to be interested in everyday problems. Therefore, the two fields must find a place to meet and that is always difficult. In this way Goya, the artist, and Goya, the revolutionary, expressed this struggle, to find a revolutionary conscience within oneself.

Arrabal - I am never completely involved, I am a free man, I belong to no-one, but there are certain things which strike us as being too outrageous and we cannot tolerate them. That is to say that an artist is a man who admires justice, liberty and equality in such a way that he is compelled to testify what he sees around him. But I am just a small poet. I am not a leader.

Ortega - It is difficult for the intellectual, the man who is crystallising within an idea, to forget that in this situation he is a fighter, that he is struggling for something as necessary to us as the sun, water: that is freedom. Arrabal in his own way and I in mine, we put forward our experience to be used at the service of the cause for freedom, for the freedom of our people. We cannot say that we are setting an example, but we can say that we are doing our best. It is not possible at certain moments in history, it is not possible to dedicate oneself completely to the problems of this people. The intellectual at these moments feels the necessity for being a revolutionary but to be a revolutionary in a context which is a very important one for us artists and that is to express the revolution within the whole form of our work when the impulse given by its contents is revolutionary. And both Arrabal and myself, like many others, believe very deeply that the most important factor today is the artistic elements which call out to the people, call out in favour of a struggle for freedom, so that others can understand, so that we in our turn can make other people understand as we have already understood.

Arrabal - Do you know something? Franco held us up, he suppressed

many things. And he stopped us from speaking our own language. We are nothing now. I am talking to you in French, it is not my language. They have even taken our language away from us. I have more right to write in Spanish that the tree has a right to the ground, or at least the same right. There are so many people like me. Well, we are making this film, and when the film comes out things will change.

T H E E N D