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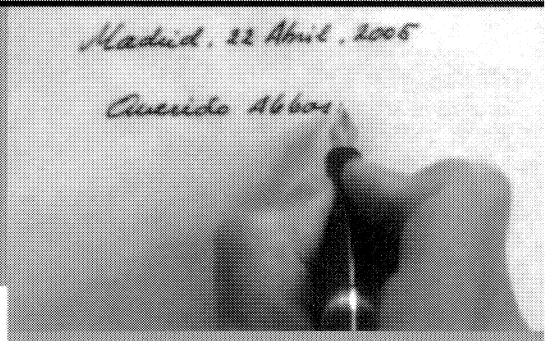


Can Women Direct Films?

A Decided Negative from a Woman who Knows—Frank Stanmore's first Talkie—Lya de Putti Departs —"Police!"

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FILM WEEKLY
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Erice's Songs: Nature as Music/Music as Nature

Linda C. Ehrlich and Celia Martínez García

> Whenever I grow a little tired of cathedrals, dead stones, and soulful landscapes, I have tried to search for the perpetually living elements where the minute does not freeze, elements that live a tremulous present. Among the infinite number that exist, I have followed two: songs and sweets.
>
> Federico García Lorca, "On Lullabies"

There is more music in Víctor Erice's films than most people realize. We're familiar with the evocative scores by Luis de Pablo and by Pascal Gaigne, but, beyond those specific musical references, there are many other songs and natural sounds "orchestrated" as an integral part of the cinematic experience provided by this unique director. In particular, the sound of the ocean, absent in Erice's three feature-length films, appears with considerable frequency in his most recent work. While there is a great deal written about the visual imagery in Erice's films (especially with the thirty-plus anniversary of *El espíritu de la colmena/The Spirit of the Beehive,* ES, 1973), far less attention has been paid to the songs, musical gestures, and natural sounds in his films.

Our focus here is on songs with words, or melodies that imply songs with lyrics. This is not to negate the importance of purely instrumental music in setting the tone of a particular Erice film, but rather to shift the focus slightly. This essay (which developed over several years, and with considerable correspondence between the United States and Spain) offers an analysis of Erice's oeuvre through a rarely explored dimension. Thinking about music and songs as *pieces in time,* we have considered these elements to be as important as other aspects of the films. We have made every attempt to examine all the songs that play pivotal roles, or that propel the narrative from the

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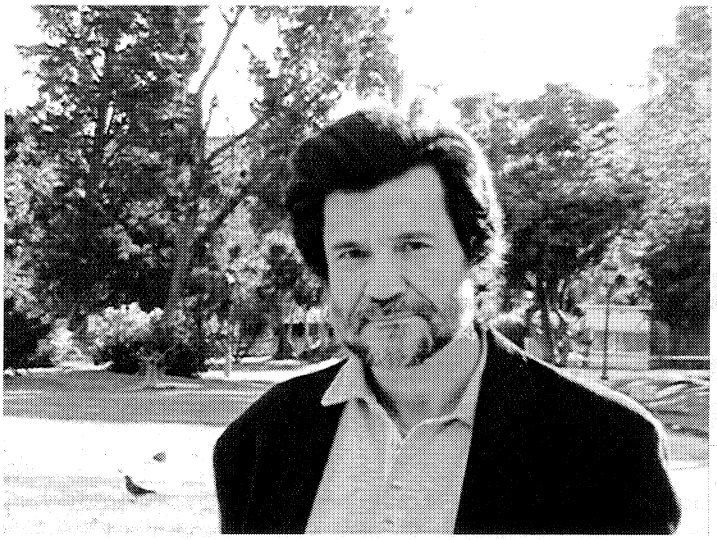


Figure 1. Víctor Erice

background. To explore the songs, musical gestures, and natural sounds in Erice's films is to investigate levels of significance that help us realize how much is taking place underneath and around the haunting narratives and images. In other words, it is to rediscover "melodías medio olvidades" (half-forgotten melodies).[1]

For those who judge a filmmaker by the quality, not the quantity, of his or her work, Víctor Erice stands at the pinnacle of what can be called "poetic cinema." Erice's work includes three full-length feature films: *El espíritu de la colmena/The Spirit of the Beehive* (1973), *El sur* (ES, 1982), and *El sol del membrillo/Dream of Light* (aka *The Quince Tree Sun,* ES, 1992). As film historian and critic Miguel Marías perceptively noted in his essay "Víctor Erice's Reasonable Doubts":

> Curiously, the decade that more or less separates each of the three feature-length films that Erice has directed to date transforms each one of them into something very much like a "first film"; what's more, this cadence makes Erice an eternal "beginner," a sort of perpetual "amateur." Far from acquiring a "trade," it seems as if he keeps on doing things for the first time–a traveling shot, a close-up, a panoramic view, an ellipsis, and besides he does it as if each time the doubts he was raising were deeper, and each decision demanded more reflection, more reasons.[2]

In addition to the three feature-length films, there is also an extensive (published) scenario titled *La promesa de Shanghai* (Areté 2001, available only

in Spanish). Then Erice filmed one segment of the omnibus film *Ten Minutes Older,* titled *Alumbramiento/Lifeline* (ES, 2002). Even more recently, he completed a short film, *La morte rouge* (ES, 2006), commissioned by the Erice-Kiarostami *Correspondencia* exhibition (Barcelona, Madrid, Paris, and Melbourne, Australia), and a series of *videocartas* (video letters) exchanged between the Spanish and Iranian director Abbas Kiarostami (b. 1940) from April 2005 to May 2007.

Born in Carranza (Vizcaya) in 1940, Víctor Erice has spent much of his adult life in Madrid. He entered the Instituto de Investigaciones Cinematográficas (IIEC), Spain's official film school, in 1960. From his youth, Erice has absorbed a corpus of music that means more than a child's songbook or a collection of popular songs, more than Spanish folklore. Erice follows Bresson's dictum that the image and music must never be redundant of each other.[3] In this same spirit, Adrian Danks cites the "ambient, often isolated, perhaps not even adequately sourced sounds" in Erice's films.[4] The songs, however, reveal another dimension. Erice moves from including songs that speak very clearly to a Spanish childhood, to what composer and theorist Michel Chion refers to as a "transsensorial model" in which "the senses are channels [or] highways more than territories or domains," that is, in which no one sense is isolated from the next from the outset of the film.[5]

In this way, the songs in Erice's films evoke something more profound than the mere chronology of events. All of them are connected to communal experiences where he shows us stages of human life–birth, war, childhood, pain, the loss of love. . . . The presence of the songs in the work of this director does not refer to taking sides, or to a confrontation; rather, they are anchored in our life, forming part of our own identity. As Chion has pointed out, music maintains the continuity of subjectivity and the human presence.[6] Thus the moment remains in us forever, spreading out, full of meaning, unrepeatable.

Songs in Erice's films help mark off a setting ("Agora non" in *Alumbramiento,* for example), a historical moment ("Popeye y la Betibú" and "Himno de Riego" in *La promesa de Shanghai*), or moments of spatial and temporal transition. In general, they are songs that belong to a certain generation born in the 1940s and 1950s and raised during the Spanish Civil War and the long years of the Franco dictatorship that followed (like Erice himself). This is especially true of songs like "Vamos a contar mentiras," "Espinita," "Ramito de mejorana," "Soy un pobre presidiario," or "Zorongo gitano."[7] These musical passages maintain an intimate connection between "history and dream," a phrase the director has used in his writings.[8]

In all his films, the music (in the form of singing voice or instrumental music) is heard in a solo or duet, never a grand chorus. This favors intimacy and creates a sense of one-to-one communication, tying two elements together. In *Alumbramiento,* "Agora non" connects a community; in *El sur,* with "En er mundo," father and daughter have a moment that will never be repeated; in *El espíritu de la colmena,* the song "Zorongo Gitano" adds music to

the memories coming from the old pictures (a moment shared between mother and daughter); in *El sol del membrillo,* "Ramito de mejorana" creates a beautiful, if transitory, moment between two friends.

To focus on the songs in Erice's films helps us notice a certain trajectory in his work. Songs are at first associated with the far away–the open Castillian plain–or with merging together (children entering a schoolhouse, a young husband and wife entering a new life together). With *El sol del membrillo,* the texts of the songs move more into the background, while the songs extend deep roots into the present; they are offered more as an indication of being together than for the meaning of the words. *El embrujo de Shanghai* (had it been filmed) would have continued this sense of deep rootedness with a suggestion of the far away (especially in songs from classic Hollywood films). With *La Morte Rouge,* the kind of sound/song montage that Erice and Luis de Pablo used to close *El espíritu de la colmena* returns in a subtle way. But the *cartas* are something else altogether (filmed with a mini-DV camera), and here the song of the waves that had opened *La Morte Rouge* predominates. Erice grew up by the Cantabrian sea, in the city of San Sebastián, and has always felt a special closeness to the sea. The bodies of water in the *videocartas* are other waters, however. The sea becomes an "adequately sourced sound" in the *cartas,* appearing as both sound and image, and, like the quince tree in *El sol del membrillo,* becomes a protagonist in itself.

Now we will examine this trajectory in greater detail, moving chronologically through Erice's films, in the spirit of the tribute given by film curator and historian James Quandt for the Cinemathèque Ontario retrospective of Erice's work:

> With an oeuvre almost as concentrated as one of his heroes, Jean Vigo, Erice has traversed a world from childhood (*Spirit*) to adolescence (*El sur*) to advanced age and mortality (*Dream*), which perhaps implies or imposes a schema where none exists; but, as the title of his 2002 film *Lifeline* suggests, there is a sense of filiation between the films, each descending from and extending the previous one.[9]

El espíritu de la colmena

Michel Chion speaks about diegetic "screen music" (*musique d'ecran*) as opposed to what he calls extra-diegetic "pit music" (*musique de fosse*).[10] *El espíritu de la colmena* offers us rich examples of both types. These include children's songs, sounds from certain objects (like the father's watch), instrumental themes, and even synthesized electronic themes.[11] In this film of little dialogue, the music helps us make connections; for example, it shows us how the monster and the father are connected in the mind of the child Ana (Ana Torrent), and how the haunting sound of the train is associated both with Ana and with her mother Teresa (Teresa Gimpera). In Erice's

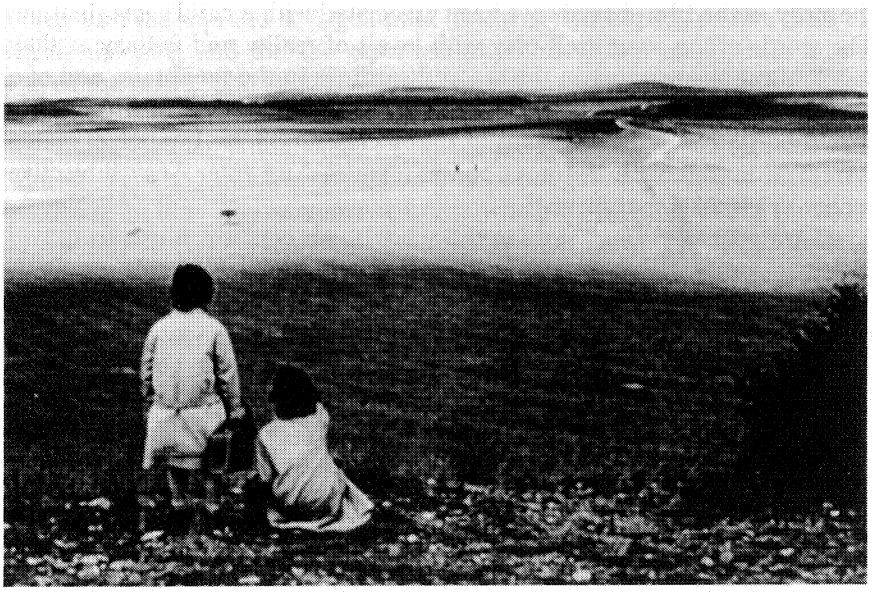


Figure 2. *El espíritu de la colmena/The Spirit of the Beehive* (Víctor Erice, ES, 1973)

first film, the sound of water is not very prevalent, although there is a haunting scene where Ana sees her image and the image of the monster reflected in a pond late one evening.

The Spirit of the Beehive explores both the world of a child's imagination and the alienated conditions in Spain following the devastation of the Spanish Civil War. By presenting the story through the eyes of a small girl in a Spanish village, the film managed to evade Franco's censors by confusing them. Erice explained that he wanted to show "how a child looks at history, without knowing really who Franco was, or the motives of the civil conflict. The only thing that remains for a child is that one should not talk about some things. That was the approach that interested me–the primitive way of seeing reality."[12]

The *cantinela* "Vamos a contar mentiras" (heard in the scene where the children run across the plain) is one of the most popular children's songs in Spain (see appendix 1). It is not associated with any particular game, but rather has traditionally been sung outdoors, such as during excursions or marches. (Although here we transcribe some of the verses, there are many more possibilities.) In *El espíritu de la colmena,* the song is performed without voice, just instrumentally with flute and guitar. We can hear two versions of the song (both arranged by Luis de Pablo, the composer of the sound track); the second one is slower than the first. This song–absolutely coherent with

the story in the film–has always been associated with a child's imagination. The words of the song itself play with levels of reality and fantasy as they speak of rabbits running in the sea and sardines in the mountain, and of a cherry tree from which hazelnuts fall. (Imagine what this magical scene would be like without this song in the background!) As Imanol Zumalde Arregi points out, with "Vamos a contar mentiras" we enter Ana's subjective reality as a transitional space.[13]

The "counting song" sung in the schoolroom contains music from two different songs: "El farolero" and "Tengo una muñeca vestida de azul" (appendix 2). The first one includes the "counting part" actually heard in the film: "dos y dos son cuatro, cuatro y dos son seis; seis y dos son ocho y ocho dieciséis," because it tells the story about a man who likes to count the street lamps as he is turning them on. The song "Tengo una muñeca vestida de azul" tells a story about a doll catching a cold and how the child is told by the doctor to give her cough syrup with a fork. The most popular version mixes both lyrics: the first part about the doll and the second with the "counting part" of "El farolero" ("The Street Lighter"). It would not be unusual to include such songs as part of a lesson in a Spanish classroom of that period:

> "El empleo de canciones–y en general de un conjunto de piezas folclóricas que forman parte de lo que Pedro César Cerrillo Torremocha llama Cancionero infantil–en el aula ha sido uno de los modelos pedagógicos más eficaces que jamás han existido en España."[14]

There is also a third part in the last two verses that we can't forget, where the girls sing: "Ánimas benditas me arrodillo yo" (Blessed spirits, I kneel to you), which doesn't have anything to do with the original musical text, and isn't connected with learning to count. It is important as a sign of the overpowering presence of Catholicism in Franco's Spain after 1939–a presence that, for those who despise dictatorship (like Erice), was a reminder of how the Catholic Church and Franco became more powerful and influential through support of each other. In this sense, both the dictator and the Church form part of the monster of *Spirit of the Beehive.*

The French children's song "Il était un petit navire" (or, in Spanish translation, "Érase un barco pequeñito" or "Un barquito chiquitito," appendix 3) is the music associated with the first excursion out from the house by the father Fernando (Fernando Fernán Gómez). This is an ironic song that tells of a young sailor who is saved from the horrible fate of being eaten by his starving fellow crew members when, after praying to the Virgin, thousands of fish jump onto the ship. This song has a circular nature ("If you like the story, we'll sing it over again"). It returns in Renoir's film *Grand Illusion,* a film embedded in *La promesa de Shanghai,* which the protagonists in Erice's narrative are watching, thus reminding us of circles within and surrounding Erice's body of work.

"Zorongo gitano" (appendix 4), the melody Teresa plays on the out-of-tune piano, is a song that was recorded for the first time by Federico García

Lorca with the soprano la Argentinita (Encarnación López), on five discs in which she sang and did the *zapateado* (rhythmical footwork) while Lorca played the piano. The album, recorded in 1931, gathers together a group of Spanish folk songs that had been forgotten and that Lorca tried to recuperate—songs such as "Anda jaleo," "En el café de Chinitas," "La tarara," and "Zorongo gitano," in which a woman praises her gallant lover and speaks of her desire for him. The reference to Lorca (who grew up in Granada) reminds us of a warmer climate than that of the cold northern setting of *El espíritu de la colmena*. We can't forget how this out-of-tune melody is used in this context: as if there were an out-of-tune relation between a man and a woman that is not worthwhile anymore. There is no way to make it sound good; the best choice is just to close the piano.[15]

In his first two films, Erice includes musical themes that emphasize a sense of "flying," as in Ana and Isabel's exuberant run across the Castillian plain with its striated light and shadow, or the way the father Agustín (Omero Antonutti) in *El sur* picks up the young Estrella (Sonsoles Aranguren) and dances a flowing *pasodoble* with her at the family gathering following her first communion. The child Estrella flies down the path and returns, in an achingly lovely dissolve, as an adolescent, years later. Songs compel the camera to move, as if wanting to see what is far away or on the other side of the door.

El sur

Unlike *The Spirit of the Beehive, El sur* is constructed by means of memories, with the voiceover that of the daughter Estrella as an adult.[16] Based on the eponymous novella by Adelaida García Morales, *El sur* is a recollection of childhood through the eyes of Estrella, a young girl growing up in the north of Spain in the aftermath of the Spanish Civil War. The South is a frequently evoked but unknown and mysterious place, represented by Estrella's father, Agustín, who grew up there and is still haunted by memories connected with that former life.

In this film, memory resides in an elusive South, a site of imagined warmth and color (again in contrast to the cold North of muted tones), and it resides in the act of film viewing itself. This sense of place is created by the music, particularly by a song titled "En er mundo," which, together with Enrique Granados's *Danzas Españolas,* evokes a place that will never appear physically in the film.[17]

"En er mundo" is a *pasodoble*[18] composed by Juan Quintero with lyrics by the violinist Jesús Fernández Lorenzo, written in the early 1930s (appendix 5). The song is performed twice in the film, both times instrumentally. However, we can hear references to Andalucía in the name of the song: "En er mundo (En el mundo)," with a pronunciation typical of some regions in Andalucía where "l" and "r" are neutralized. The pronunciation of the grandmother's maid Milagros (Rafaela Aparicio) takes us there, to the South where the

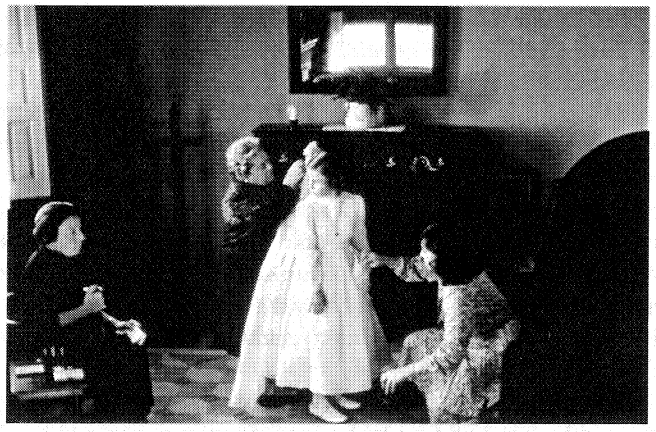


Figure 3. *El sur* (Víctor Erice, ES, 1982)

father grew up. Agustín's identity emanates directly from a song that will be the protagonist of a moment he will never forget. It is first heard in this film on the day of his daughter's first communion.

Dressed as a small bride, Estrella chides her father, who is hidden in the back of the drafty church that to him represents the collusion of the Church with the Franco regime. The little girls sing "La puerta del Sagrario" (appendix 6), a song whose lyrics call to mind a sensualized religious passion. Víctor Erice revealed: "In the scene of the First Communion, when Estrella goes to meet her father who she finds in the rear of the church, we can hear music that I recorded in a convent. I never knew its title, it's a mystery, and I continue to try to ascertain it."[19]

Figure 4. *El sur* (Víctor Erice, ES, 1982)

Figure 5. *El sur* (Víctor Erice, ES, 1982)

At the banquet following the church service, the camera pans gently down the festive table and returns to the father and daughter dancing a tender and resolute *pasodoble* to the song "En er mundo," in which the lover refers to his Beloved as "mi sol y mi luna" and "reina mía" (my sun and my moon, my queen) and invites her to go with him to the April Fair (the most popular fair in Sevilla). This is another clear reference to the South. In this scene, the song underscores how all assembled are happy for a moment that will never be repeated (something that will be confirmed by both father and daughter some years later).

Agustín is a *zahorí,* a water-diviner. As Estrella piles stones in her father's hand, we can almost hear the faint suggestion of water rising up from the hard ground–an impossible water flowing through deep subterranean chambers beyond anything the eye can see. The father and daughter are connected, not only by touch, but by sound–the tapping of a cane against the floor, the barely audible motion of a pendulum being pulled from a special wooden box. The cane is shown as able to discern sadness and resistance, just as the pendulum can hear water flowing underground. Thus, the father and daughter are connected by objects that hear. All the objects in Erice's films move toward the past or toward a time that is real only in the imagination. They are like road marks, irrefutable, and once they have passed from our vision we recall them like objects in a dream.

At another end of the spectrum is the comic song sung by the bespectacled maid Casilda (María Caro) in the kitchen of Estrella's house

(nicknamed "La gaviota" [the seagull]). As if to dispel the gloom that is gradually overtaking the household, Casilda sings a Spanish song praising the arrival of the television ("La television pronto llegará," appendix 7).[20] The singer imagines herself a star of this new medium with "mountains of pretty boys" desiring her.

As time progresses, Agustín becomes immersed in his own dreams of the past–a past illuminated by the cinema. Near the end of the film, in the scene with father and daughter in the restaurant, Agustín connects the song "En er mundo" to memory, but the small child he remembers has grown up (now played by Iciar Bollaín) and no longer perceives the melody the same way. The fact of remembering a song is an element of break in the relationship (as it is in the film-within-a-film starring Irene Ríos), because a sense of complicity doesn't exist between them anymore. (In the B-grade movie in which Irene Ríos [Aurore Clément] appears, her lover accuses her of having forgotten "their song.") Agustín hears the lovely Rodgers and Hart 1934 song "Blue Moon" (appendix 8) in the film he is viewing in the Cine Arcadia–a song that gives us a hint of his increasing sense of alienation. These songs underscore the fact that songs which belonged only to two people have disappeared. "En er mundo" has no special meaning for Estrella; for Agustín (for whom the song encapsulated his relationship with his daughter) all that remains are his memories.[21]

El sol del membrillo

After spending some time during the summer of 1990 with the painter Antonio López García while he was painting urban landscapes, Erice felt moved to start this new film when Antonio López invited him to come view the beginning of a new painting project. The director arrived with a small team. *Dream of Light* (*The Quince Tree Sun*) offers a host of "supporting characters" (including the film camera) interacting with the two protagonists of the film–the painter and the quince tree in the courtyard of the painter's studio. The result is a rich tapestry of conversations and everyday events that cross the line between the documentary and the fictional film.

To fully appreciate the "blurred boundary" between fiction and documentary in *Dream of Light* (aka *The Quince Tree Sun*), we must remember that what Antonio López is painting is not just a mere picture of the *membrillero,* the quince tree; rather, it is a *portrait* of the tree.[22]

The eyes of Antonio López gazing up toward the tree echo Ana's eyes toward the screen, showing us their openness to new experience. The painter hums softly to himself about a "patio sevillano" as he transfers his gaze from the canvas to the tree and back again (appendix 9). This song mixes different *tangos*[23] that were made popular by Pastora María Pavón Cruz, a *cantaora* (singer) known as La Niña de los Peines, who was one of the most popular flamenco singers in Spain.

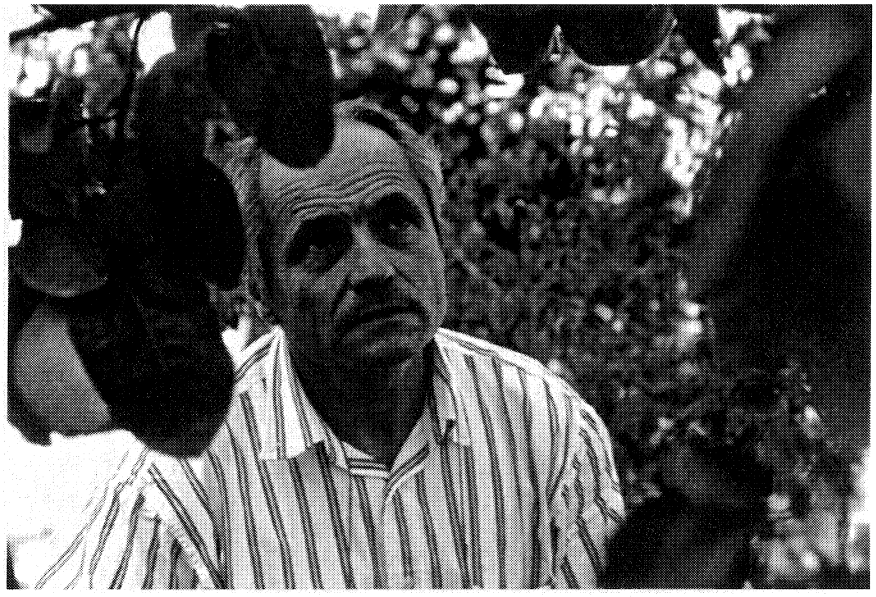


Figure 6. *El sol del membrillo/Dream of Light,* aka *The Quince Tree Sun* (Víctor Erice, ES, 1992)

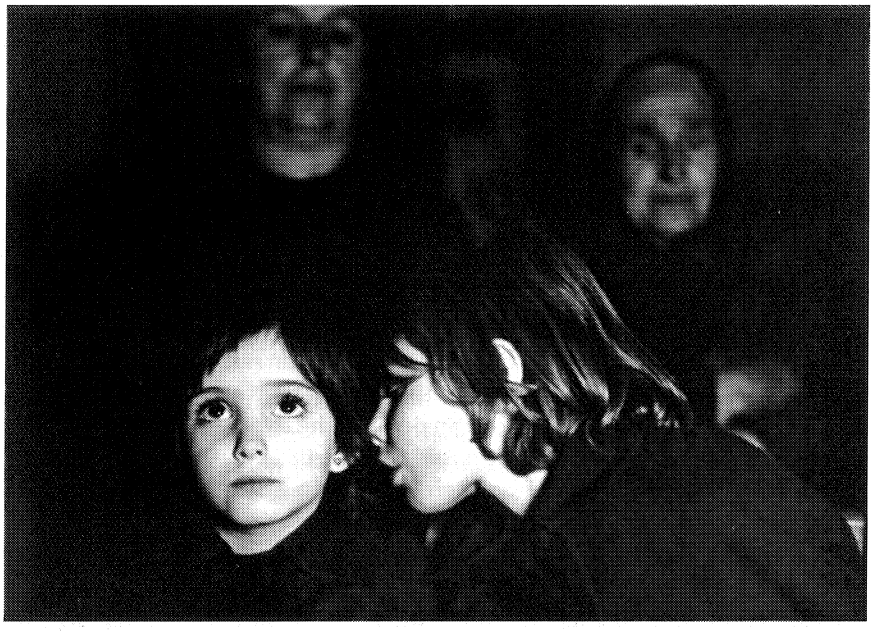


Figure 7. *El espíritu de la colmena/The Spirit of the Beehive* (Víctor Erice, ES, 1973)

Figure 8. *El sol del membrillo/Dream of Light,* aka *The Quince Tree Sun* (Víctor Erice, ES, 1992)

Songs of transition are particularly appropriate in *Dream of Light* (*The Quince Tree Sun*) because the tree, although the subject of a still life, is actually in a complex process of change. In fact, as Antonio López and his friend, fellow artist Enrique Gran, sing the *pasodoble* "Ramito de mejorana" in the courtyard, they seem to be the ones who are more rooted than the tree (appendix 10).[24] Now, years after the film's release, we are aware of the human changes of those men, and of ourselves, more poignantly. But at that moment they are just two friends singing in a garden, and the present moment is full of value. This folk song helps turn back many years and yet it also refers to the *ramito* (small branch) that Enrique Gran is helping to hold at a particular angle for the exacting painter. Singer Juanito Valderrama sang "Ramito de mejorana" throughout his life–sometimes with his wife Dolores Abril–making it very popular throughout Spain, and the two painters also embark on this duet with a sense of comfort and familiarity.

Could this song be sung elsewhere–out in the street, or with a party of friends in a private room? Perhaps. But at this moment, in this specific courtyard, the wind beckons as the conductor and the leaves follow the rhythm. It's such a natural moment that "if this weren't so serious, it would be humorous," Enrique Gran quips, as he enjoys the afternoon with his friend. These are verdant songs that cleanse the air, even as car exhaust and factory smoke

invade, as does the news of battles and popular "elevator music" emitted by the radio. A torrential rain, threatening to drench both the painter and his model in the courtyard, continues the subtle introduction to the sound of water in Erice's films.

La promesa de Shanghai

This is a story of an ultimate silencing–the silencing of an entire film.[25] In 2001 Erice published *La promesa de Shanghai* (literally, *The Promise of Shanghai*), the screenplay for what could have been his fourth feature film.

As Hispanicist Juan Egea describes:

> Based on the novel *El embrujo de Shanghai,* by Juan Marsé, the script titled *La promesa de Shanghai* will, however, remain just that: a promise. (*El embrujo de Shanghai* can be translated literally as "the spell [or bewitchment] of Shanghai.")
>
> With the director already casting and scouting locations, the producer, Andrés Vicente Gómez, objects to the three-hour movie the written text is bound to become. By the end of 1998, Vicente Gómez is presented with a shorter version of the script, yet to no avail: he abandons the project altogether. Another director, Fernando Trueba, will bring Marsé's novel to the screen. Erice is then left with an unused script he nevertheless gets published in 2001. . . .
>
> *La promesa de Shanghai* tells the story of Dani, a fatherless teenager living in a popular Barcelona neighborhood. The movie focuses, to be precise, on the thirteen-year-old boy's association with the old–and apparently delusional–Captain Blay in order to save their community from the harmful effects of a nearby factory. The year is 1947. A second story line introduces Susana, a sick young girl whose father had to flee the country after the Spanish Civil War. News from her father and his presumed place of exile, Shanghai, come via the mysterious Forcat, a friend of the family who has returned from his own exile. The two story lines meet when Captain Blay commissions a sketch of Susana from Dani: a dramatic drawing to advance their environmental cause. Dani falls immediately under the spell both of the girl's beauty and Forcat's storytelling. The shorter version of the script, the one intended to appease the producer, ends with Dani leaving the neighborhood. An extra chapter and an epilogue present us with Dani's return four years later.[26]

Had the producer allowed this film to be made, we would have seen some familiar character types–a young girl, a magician-father (figure)–but also a density of narration not present in the earlier three feature films by Erice. Like *El sur, La promesa de Shanghai* is a literary adaptation (this time based on a novel by Juan Marsé), and there is also the theme of finding out the truth behind a father's mysterious disappearance.[27] The shadow of the Spanish Civil War hangs over all the events, as it did in the first two Erice films. Like *El sol del membrillo,* one of the main narrative threads concerns the painting of a challenging portrait. The songs in *La promesa de Shanghai* provide the kind

Figure 9. Published screenplay of *La promesa de Shanghai* (2001)

of subtle underscoring seen in the earlier films but are even more varied than those of the previous films. It is important to note that they were added by Erice–except for a mention of the song "Amapola" ("Poppy"), they do not appear in the original.[28]

The postcards the young Susana (believes she) receives from her father echo the ones that point toward the legendary South for Estrella in *El sur.* Like the 1907 O. Henry short story "The Last Leaf," they provide a kind of "proof" of another life and a reason for a young girl to try to recover from illness. In one postcard of a Chinese garden and pagoda Susana intuits "que hay en el aire una música exótica" (that there is an exotic music in the atmosphere). Yet the romanticized scene of snow in that distant garden would have been followed by a shot of a fallen Republican soldier in the snow. Here, and in the subsequent *La Morte Rouge,* Erice forces us to confront the horrific nature of war and how it twists lives out of control.

The songs mentioned in the screenplay range from a spirited rendition of "Dixie" by one of the street boys, the Chacón brothers, to relieve the melancholy of Captain Blay (and sung again at Blay's funeral), to classical Hollywood numbers like "I've Got You Under My Skin," and a song about Popeye and "Betibú" (the nickname for Blay's wife Doña Conxa and a reference to Betty Boop). "Popeye y la Betibú" is a song that was used to accompany a game of ball and has rather nonsense words; the music is derived from the main titles of the television show *Popeye* (appendix 11).

The singer of songs in this screenplay is primarily the street kid Juan Chacón. As mentioned earlier, Erice includes a song featured in Renoir's *Grand Illusion* (*Il était un petit navire*) and in *The Spirit of the Beehive.* We also would have heard "Himno de Riego," a military march composed by José Melchor Gomis in 1822,[29] the *pasodoble* "Soy un pobre presidiario" and three romantic songs: "Te quiero, dijiste," the *bolero* "Espinita," and "Amapola" (appendix 11). All these were popular in the 1940s and 1950s in Spain, the years of Erice's childhood and adolescence. These are songs of nostalgia and also of reenergizing.

Alumbramiento *(Lifeline)*

A baby's cry actually opens this short film, along with the title in white on a black background. We hear this film before we even see any images.

Alumbramiento is Erice's ten-minute contribution to the omnibus film *Ten Minutes Older: The Trumpet* (ES/UK/DE/FI/CN, 2002), which also includes short films by Werner Herzog, Chen Kaige, Wim Wenders, Jim Jarmusch, Spike Lee, and Aki Kaurismaki. *Alumbramiento* offers a gentle homage to village life and a reminder of a turning point in Spanish history. This short film is captured in a muted tone that evokes long-treasured photographs. Time becomes a central concern for a sleeping mother and baby as blood starts to seep from the baby's umbilical cord that has been inadequately tied. As the

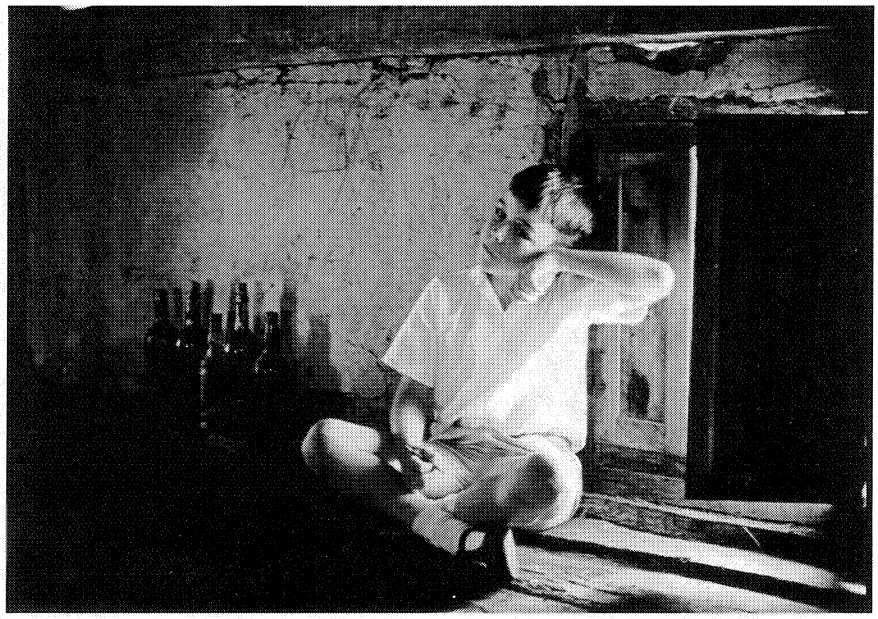


Figure 10. *Alumbramiento/Lifeline* (Víctor Erice, ES, 2002)

crisis is resolved, *Alumbramiento* resumes its tribute to slower rhythms of life, and to a community rallying together in an emergency.

Sounds become protagonists in this poetic ten-minute piece: quiet sounds like that of the sleeping mother's breathing, an apple falling to the ground or a fly buzzing in a field, the scraping sound of a man sharpening a scythe and the scythe cutting tall grasses, or the soft whirring of a sewing machine treadle. The small boy in the attic "hears" the ticking of the watch he has drawn on his wrist. The boys playing in the abandoned car "honk" the horn with their own voices, and the girls, pretending to be fashionable ladies in the back seat, utter the first words of the film (about halfway through): "Más de prisa" (Faster!). The sound of water enters into this film with water poured into a mound of flour and into a basin.

Suddenly all this activity is broken by the baby's and mother's cries. After the necessary human intervention comes the soothing, full-throated song "Agora non" in *Bable,* the Asturian dialect (or, in Castillian, "Ahora no") (appendix 12). The song settles over the village like a fine mist, as everyone resumes the work abandoned so suddenly at the distraught mother's scream. The tone of this kind of children's song was described in the following way by the poet Lorca: "I found that Spain uses its very saddest melodies and most melancholy texts to darken the first sleep of her children."[30]

Figure 11. *Alumbramiento/Lifeline* (Víctor Erice, ES, 2002)

This song—called "Nana de adúlteras" by Lorca—could have a double meaning: it could be addressed to a baby or to a lover. But this double meaning is not intended as any suggestion of adultery in *Alumbramiento.* Erice used it, surely, for its reference to time ("ten minutes older") and specific place (Asturias) and for its haunting tone.[31] It is sung so beautifully, not by a professional singer but rather by a person of that locality. In fact, all the people who appear in this short film belong to that locale and are not professional actors. Despite the brevity of *Alumbramiento,* the song and the unaffected movements of the actors immerse us in a sense of authentic place.

This short film continues many of the recurring philosophical and formalistic motifs that distinguished Erice's earlier work. While the majority of the footage in *Alumbramiento/Lifeline* constitutes a loving tribute to the rhythms of village life and to the immediate crisis of the baby's bleeding, the final image repeats a headline from a paper dated June 28, 1940 (glimpsed earlier), which marks the day the Germans arrived at Hendaya, at the border between France and Spain (several days before the director's own birth in the northern village of Carranza).[32]

La morte rouge

This short film was commissioned for the Erice-Kiarostami *Correspondencia* exhibition, in Barcelona (Centre de Cultura Contemporània, 2005), Madrid (Casa Encendida, 2006), Paris (Centro Georges Pompidou, 2007), and

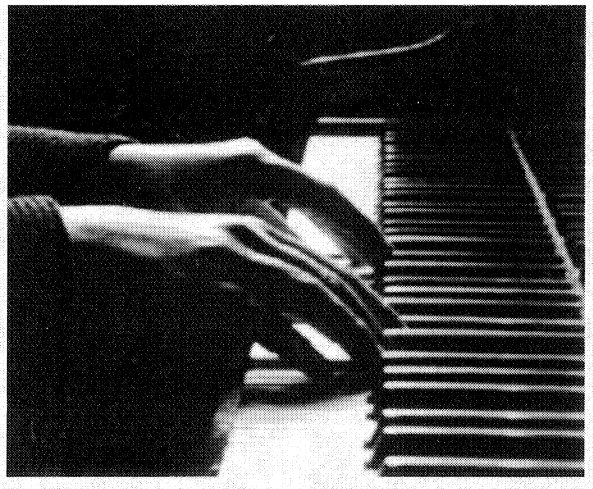


Figure 12. *La morte rouge* (Víctor Erice, ES, 2006)

Melbourne (ACMI, 2008).[33] In his voiceover, the director recounts his first filmgoing experience (in 1946), when he was taken by his older sister to a movie "palace," the Gran Kursaal, to see *The Scarlet Claw,* a 1944 B-grade Sherlock Holmes movie (chosen by his sister from among the ones playing that day). The film starred Basil Rathbone and Nigel Bruce and was directed by Roy William Neil. Erice's recounting of this early adventure becomes both an autobiographical work and an exploration of early cinema, as well as a metaphysical musing on what endures in memory.

The musical sound track is from the Estonian minimalist composer Arvo Pärt, and the music that the boy in *La morte rouge* hears played on the piano is "Música callada" by the Catalan composer Federico Mompou (1893–1987), performed especially for this film by Irene de Juan. The visual images and diegetic and non-diegetic music engage in a powerful dialogue in *La morte rouge.*[34]

Right at the opening of *La Morte Rouge,* a figure seems to emerge from the ocean, and the first words of the voiceover narration (by the director himself) are "el mar" (the sea). The movie palace Erice remembered from his early childhood is described as being "like a boat." The sound of waves returns intermittently throughout the film, especially at moments when the city of San Sebastián is mentioned. This short film truly mixes poetry and history. As Juan Egea notes, "Some movies can be called poetic or lyric when they make evident that their representation of a subject is at the same time the projection of subjectivity."[35]

In this film, Erice speaks directly of the real fear engendered by the outside world, by the Franco era and Nazism, rather than relying on the

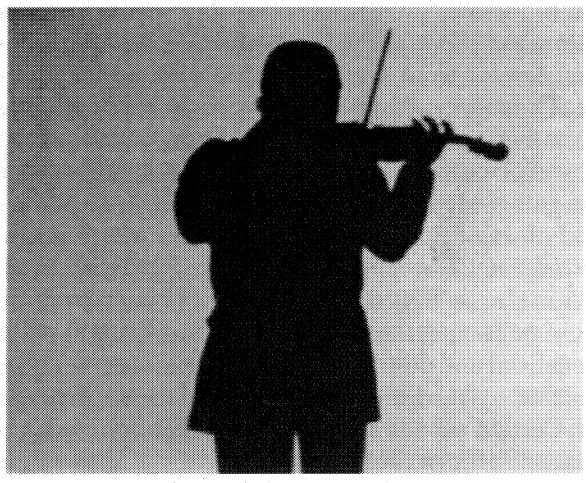


Figure 13. *La morte rouge* (Víctor Erice, ES, 2006)

kind of ambiguous images he used in his first two films. In *La morte rouge* he shows us harsher images directly–aerial views of bombed buildings, a prisoner in a concentration camp–but then he dissolves to a film still of Basil Rathbone and Nigel Bruce, the actors who play Sherlock Holmes and Mr. Watson in the movie *The Scarlet Claw* (Roy William Neil, US, 1944) that he saw as a child, and another dissolve to a photograph of himself as a five-year-old. In this way he illustrates the confusion between fiction and reality that makes up a child's world (reminding us of Ana's state of mind in *The Spirit of the Beehive*). As Miguel Marías has indicated, a darker side has always been present in Víctor Erice's films, not only in the obvious examples of the Frankenstein monster but also in so many unseen figures, including the mysterious recipient of Teresa's letters in *The Spirit of the Beehive,* the unseen "Carioco" boyfriend of Estrella, the unseen father of Agustín in *El sur,* and the postmen and the shadowy violinist in *La morte rouge.*[36]

The last images of *La morte rouge* are those of the ocean and the footsteps in the sand once again. The sound of the ocean continues throughout the credits.

Cartas

A series of *cartas* (letters) between Víctor Erice and Iranian director Abbas Kiarostami, filmed with small mini-DV digital cameras, occupies the central section of the exhibition space of the *Correspondencia* exhibition. While much of the rest of *Correspondencia* (except for *La morte rouge* and the

split-screen introductory films) draws on earlier work, the *cartas* represent a new exploration and serve as the heart of the installation. The ten filmed letters link but are far from symmetrical; the linkages between them are often oblique. The *cartas* compel us to ponder: What does it mean to correspond with another person? To send greetings, queries, invitations from one geographical place to another? What do those correspondences become when they are gathered in one site? When they linger on film?

The sound of water flows throughout Erice's *cartas,* from the rain in the first (*El jardín del pintor/The Painter's Garden,* ES, 2005) to the gentle waves in the last (*Escrito en el agua/Written in the Water,* ES, 2007). From *The Spirit of the Beehive* (the poisonous mushrooms) to the last *carta,* Erice has shown nature as potentially beneficial and destructive at the same time.

The *videocartas* open with the quiet sound of the scratching of a fountain pen on paper. Certain sounds call to mind images from earlier Erice films–the distant roar of traffic in the first *videocarta* brings back memories of *El sol del membrillo,* filmed before the grandchildren featured in this short piece were even born! (In his commentary on the *Correspondencia* exhibition, Jaime Pena calls this first *videocarta,* with its unexpected moments of humor, "the perfect epilogue for *El sol del membrillo.*")[37]

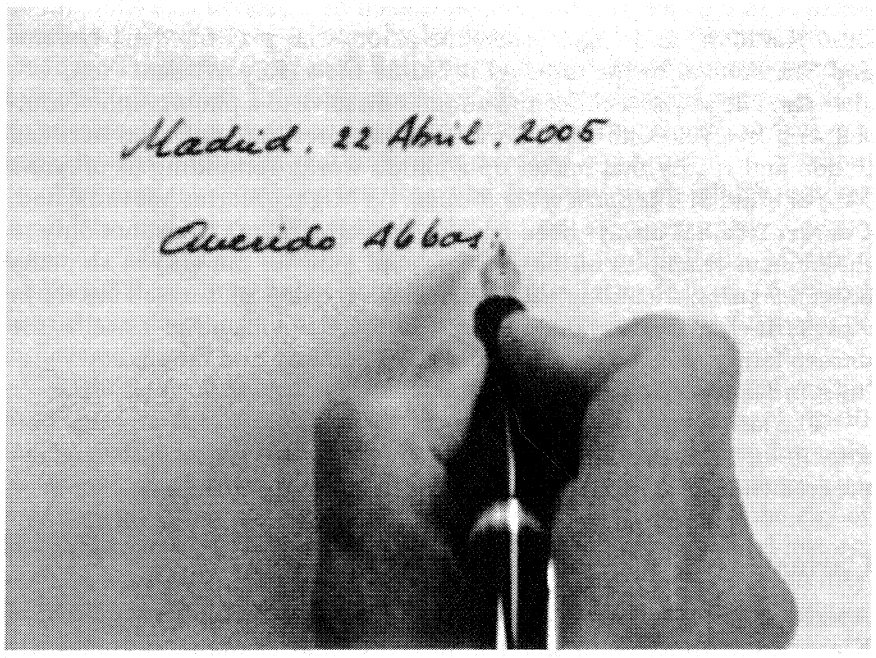


Figure 14. *Videocarta #1* (from the *Erice–Kiarostami Correspondencia* exhibition, *El jardín del pintor/The Painter's Garden,* Víctor Erice, ES, April 22, 2005)

The *cartas* carry on a tradition common to Erice's work, that of a dialogue between artists. At times the participants in this dialogue are established artists like Antonio López and Abbas Kiarostami; at other times they are child-artists like Ana Torrent or the delightful grandchildren of Antonio López in the first *carta* who offer their own watercolor renditions of the quince tree. And we, as viewers, are called upon to become artists, to help complete the circle, because watching a film by Víctor Erice is never a passive experience.

In the first *videocarta,* little Carmen sings a made-up song about the rain, calling to mind the songs her grandfather sang to himself and with Enrique Gran while Erice recorded *El sol del membrillo.*[38] An unexpected rainfall threatens the painters again, but this time umbrellas will (almost) suffice to keep the rain off the drawings.

In the third *videocarta* (*Arroyo de la Luz,* Erice, ES, 2005), we hear the instrumental Persian music that makes up part of the musical sound track of Kiarostami's 1987 film *Khane-ye doust kodjast?/Where Is the Friend's Home?* (IR), which the schoolchildren in the southern town of Arroyo de la Luz are watching in the classroom. In the subsequent *cartas,* we rarely hear vocal or instrumental music. Instead, we hear the soothing tinkling of bells slung around the necks of a herd of sheep (#5, *José,* Erice, ES, 2006), the crying of a little Moroccan boy encountering the ocean for the first time (#8, *A la deriva/Adrift,* Erice, ES, 2006), and then, in *cartas* 7 and 10, the human voice gives way to the sound of the waves.

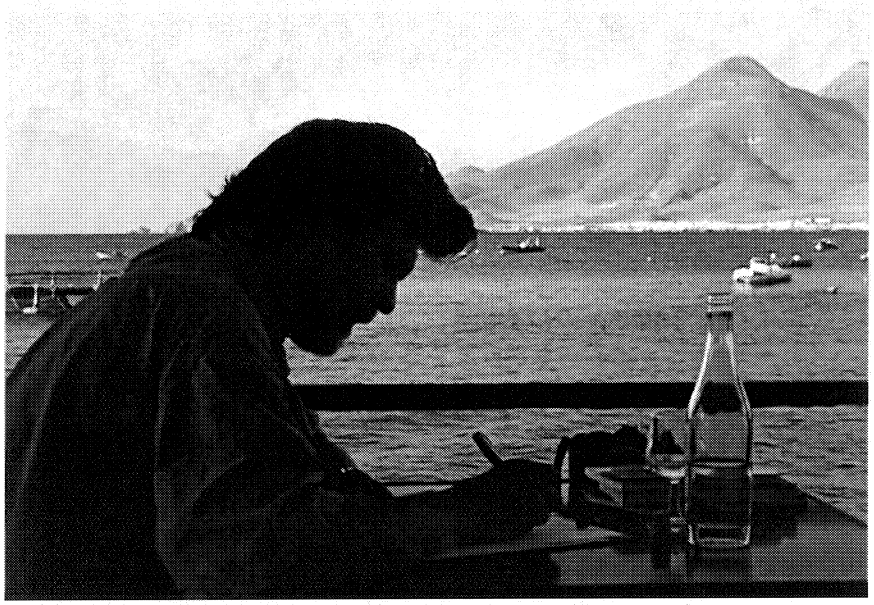


Figure 15. *Videocarta* #7 (*Sea Mail,* Víctor Erice, ES, August 10, 2006)

In *carta* 7, titled (in English) *Sea Mail* (Erice, ES, 2006), a man (the director himself, unidentified) sits on a terrace overlooking the waters of the southern harbor of Isla del Moro. Wordlessly, he looks at pages of a beautiful poem from the *Rubaiyat* and at a book by the courageous Iranian female director and poet Farough Farrokhzad (1935–67).[39] This image of one of Farrokhzad's books of poetry in this *videocarta* ties in a reference to classical poetry (in the name of the island) with a contemporary reference acknowledging the resistance movement fueled by artists like Farrokhzad and Kiarostami. After writing a letter to Abbas Kiarostami, Erice rolls it up and places it in a bottle (first finishing the bottle's contents–a kind of recycling!). The splash of the bottle as it hits the water is like a shout. His message-in-a-bottle will travel to Iran from Isla del Moro, via various seas (the Mediterranean, the Red Sea) to Kiarostami's homeland. The bottle is carried at will by the waves–at times lodging beneath some ocean rocks until the waves release it again. In *A la deriva/Drifting* (*carta* #8), some children are intrigued by the bottle with a message inside but toss it back into the waves when forced to choose between it and a soccer ball that has gotten away, or a crying baby brother. The cries of the gulls overhead in *A la deriva* could perhaps be a reference (intentional or unintentional) to *la gaviota,* the name of the isolated house in *El sur* where Estrella grew up.

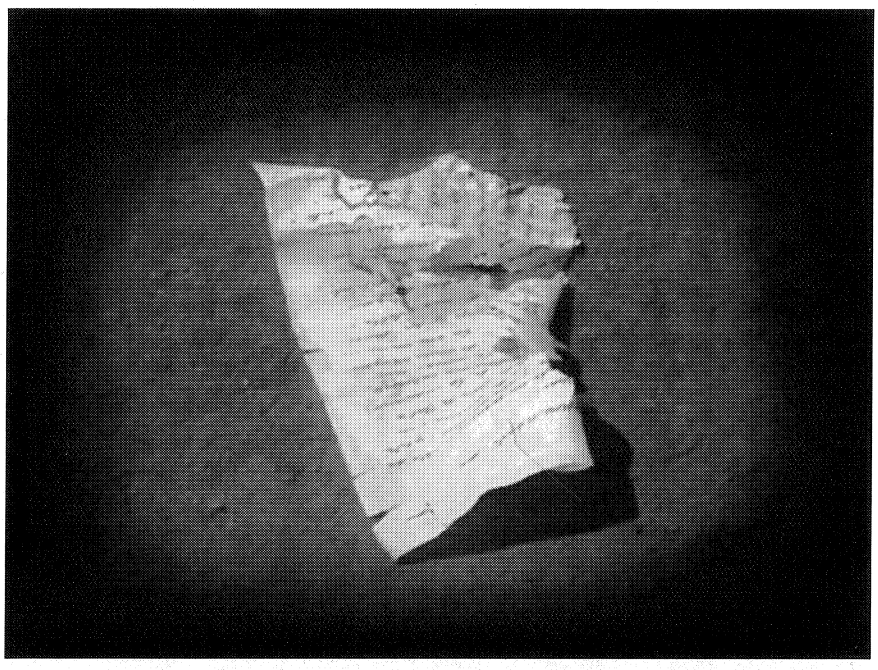


Figure 16. *Videocarta* #10 (*Escrito en el agua/Written in the Water,* Víctor Erice, ES, May 2007)

Up to this point, the *videocartas* (like all correspondence) are whimsical, at times difficult to "read," and even overly "drifting." The final *carta,* less than three minutes long, takes us to another level entirely. It is at once profoundly lonely and profoundly generous. A slow and sensual dance of the decomposing letter in the textured patterns of the waves ends with Erice's hand slowly writing these words by the Spanish poet José Bergamín (1895–1983):[40]

Lo que dice el viento, lo que dice el mar, me parece un cuento de nunca acabar.	What the wind says, what the sea says, seems to me a story without end

The sound of the ocean continues incessantly, at times rising or falling in volume with the waves. This calls to mind Kiarostami's extraordinary documentary *Five Dedicated to Ozu* (IR, 2003), a five-part film full of the sound of the waves and resounding silences, which is itself an homage to the Japanese director Ozu Yasujiro. This points to yet another circle within a circle in Erice's artistic universe. As a whole, the *videocartas* remind us that sounds and songs emerge out of silence, rouse our energies, connect us to earlier times, and then reenter silence. Paradoxically, Erice allows the narration to stop at points to create moments in which silence itself becomes musical.

Concluding Notes

Lullabies, *pasodobles,* hymns, songs of play, *boleros,* and also the sounds of the sea are incorporated into Erice's films, creating a rich sound range. Songs of childhood, of resistance, of ties to the land, remind us of the pull of history and the hidden presence of dreams. While there may be a certain melancholic "lingering tone" in Erice's creations–a keen sense of time passing coupled with the static value captured in a frame–there is also a refuge in memory, a faith in the redemptive powers of nature, a delight in the antics of children, and a love of the purity of the early cinematic image. In the documentary *Un lugar en el cine,* directed by Alberto Morais (ES, 2007), Erice refers to filmmaking as "una búsqueda, una aventura" (a search and an adventure).[41]

Erice's first two films feature characters, particularly women, who weep soundlessly. Children don't just wait by the train tracks; they actually listen to them. His last two short films are full of the dense silence after battle. In *Alumbramiento* the young man with the amputated leg is silent, as is the scarecrow in the field wearing the helmet of a Republican soldier. One moment (which passes in an instant in the film) shows the young boy with the "ticking" watch superimposed over an image of the scarecrow–a premonition?

Writing about Erice's first two films, Floreal Peleato points out the flux that circulates between shots, a flux born of "silence and patience," and Alet

Figure 17. *Alumbramiento/Lifeline* (Víctor Erice, ES, 2002)

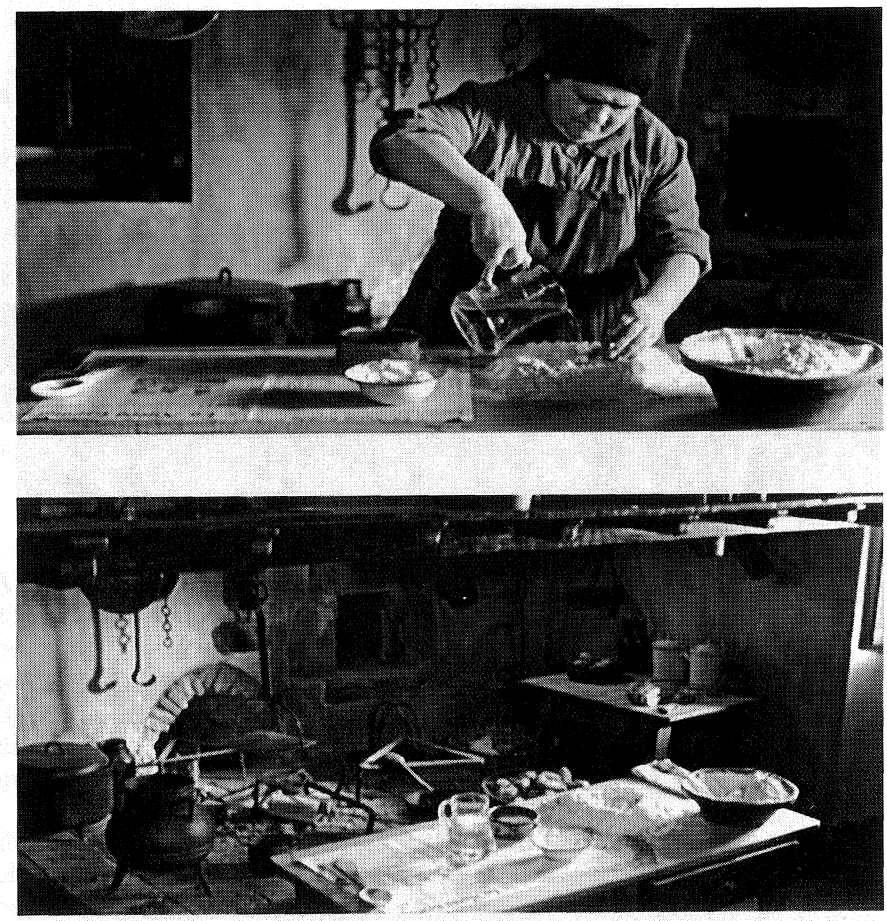
Valero comments on the "unique density of the silence" in the post–Spanish Civil War period.[42] For Bernard Gille, the music in Erice's films echoes and "digs into" the silence, a silence in which, paradoxically, "every single creaking noise unfolds vertiginous perspectives."[43] Yet along with this sense of vertigo, we can recall the words of film historian Béla Balazs: "Sound differentiates visible things; silence brings them closer to each other and makes them less dissimilar."[44]

This pattern–sound followed by silence–is subtly evoked in a series of shots in *El sol del membrillo* and *Alumbramiento,* calling to mind an unforgettable sequence in Ozu's *Late Spring* (*Banshun,* JP, 1949). This kind of silence partakes of equal shares of fullness and emptiness and remains before us, even years later, like a blank canvas (see figures 18–23).

Thus, Víctor Erice has found the images to express his musicality, images full of intimacy where space becomes a reality and time stops; where the instant has great value thanks to a song.[45] That is how we can experience the lullaby from *Alumbramiento,* the *zorongo* in *El espíritu de la colmena* while Ana is leafing through her parents' photo album, the *pasodoble* that father and daughter dance in *El sur,* or the song sung by Antonio López with his friend in *El sol del membrillo.*

Although Víctor Erice tends to make films about interior worlds–whether they are the solitary moments of a painter, or the barely expressed inner worlds of a child–the director himself has stated that the cinema is a kind of *convivencia,* a being-together. We see, for example, how visitors enter and leave Antonio López's courtyard to chat, sing, hold up those endlessly sagging branches of the quince tree while the artist is painting, or just pass

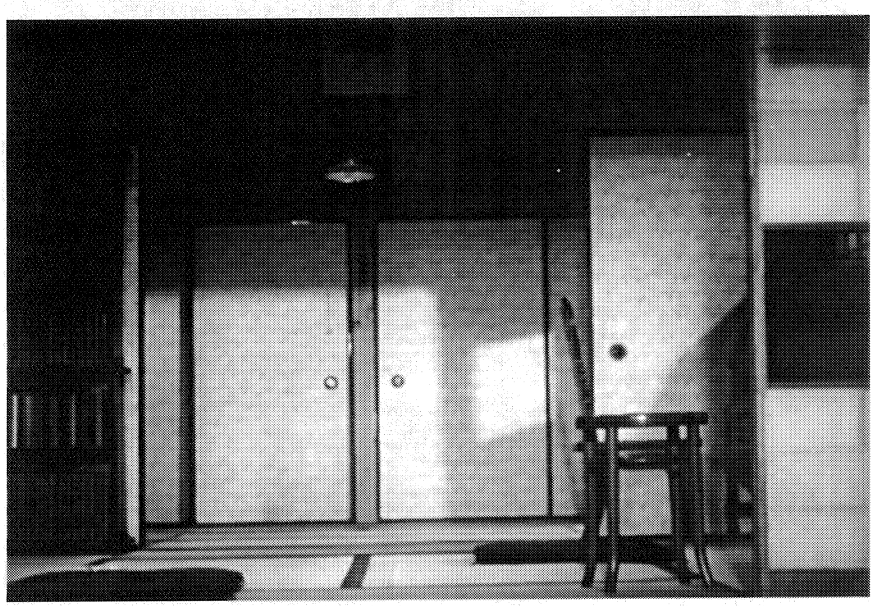
Figures 18 and 19. *El sol del membrillo/Dream of Light,* aka *The Quince Tree Sun* (Víctor Erice, ES, 1992)



Figures 20 and 21. *Alumbramiento/Lifeline* (Víctor Erice, ES, 2002)

the time. In *La morte rouge,* the child Víctor is joined in his adventure of his first film viewing by his older sister, who guides and taunts her younger brother in equal measure. Even Ana in *The Spirit of the Beehive,* alone on the Castillian plain with her vision of the monster, flees from a silenced family home to the potential companionship of a figure she believes can assume any form. At the end of the film, Ana doesn't want to awaken from her vision, like a moviegoer who doesn't want to reenter everyday life at the end of a particularly engaging film (see figure 24).

That the sea or ocean should figure so prominently in Víctor Erice's recent work is not surprising, given the importance it plays in his memories of



Figures 22 and 23. *Banshun/Late Spring* (Ozu Yasujiro, JP, 1949)

Figure 24. *El espíritu de la colmena/The Spirit of the Beehive* (Víctor Erice, ES, 1973)

Figure 25. *Chichi ariki* (*There Was a Father,* Ozu Yasujiro, JP, 1942)

his childhood. What seems somewhat more surprising is the emphasis on the sound of the waves in the last *videocartas*–their varied cadence–which almost overpowers the image itself. Here we are reminded that the voices of the wind and the ocean surpass chronological time. The *videocartas* offer us a silence accented by flowing rain and the waves of the ocean.

Erice is a great admirer of the classical Japanese filmmaker Ozu Yasujiro. Ozu referred to himself as "just a tofu maker." Different varieties of tofu, perhaps, but still only tofu, not beef steak and certainly not tempura. In the same way, Víctor Erice refers to himself as a "fisherman" (*un pescador*). Songs and natural sounds play a special role in Erice's waiting (or "fishing") for linkage and flux. These songs and natural sounds appear suddenly, through an ocean of time, filling it with life. They form a part of the aesthetic voice and artistic gaze of this fine "visualist of the ear" (to use a phrase by Chion). They are not only "vertiginous," as Gille noted, but also full of warmth and human qualities. Like water coaxed out by the diviner's hand, Erice's films reveal songs hidden deep within the texture of our lives.

Linda C. Ehrlich, associate professor at Case Western Reserve University, has published articles on world cinema in Film Quarterly, Cinema Journal, Senses of Cinema, Literature/Film Quarterly, Film Criticism, Journal of Film and Video, Ethnomusicology, Cinema Scope, *and* Journal of Religion and Film, *among others. She has co-edited (with David Desser)* Cinematic Landscapes, *an anthology of essays on the interface between the visual arts and cinemas of China and Japan (University of Texas Press, 1994; reprint, 2008). Her second book,* The Cinema of Víctor Erice: An Open Window, *appeared in the Scarecrow Press Filmmakers' Series (#72) in 2000 (expanded paperback edition in 2007).*

In addition, she has published poetry in International Poetry Review, The Bitter Oleander, Southern Poetry Review, Literary Arts Hawaii, *and other literary journals. Her taped commentary on* The Spirit of the Beehive (El espíritu de la colmena) *is featured on the Criterion DVD of this film.*

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Notes

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The epigraph is taken from Federico García Lorca, "On Lullabies," in *Deep Song and Other Prose,* ed. and trans. Christopher Maurer (New York: New Directions, 1975), 7–8.

1. Nancy J. Membrez, "Apostillas a *El espíritu de la colmena* de Víctor Erice," in *Cine-Lit III: Essays on Hispanic Film and Fiction,* ed. George Cabello-Castelet, Jaume Martí-Olivella, and Guy H. Wood (Corvallis: Oregon State University Press, 1997), 113.
2. Miguel Marías, "Víctor Erice's Reasonable Doubts" [Las dudas razonables de Víctor Erice], trans. Guy H. Wood and Julie H. Croy, in *The Cinema of Víctor Erice: An Open Window,* 2nd rev. ed., ed. Linda Ehrlich (Lanham, MD: Scarecrow Press, 2007), 257.
3. Robert Bresson, "Notes on Sound," quoted in *Film Sound: Theory and Practice,* ed. Elisabeth Weis and John Belton (New York: Columbia University Press, 1985), 149.
4. Adrian Danks, *Senses of Cinema,* "Great Directors" index (http://archive.sensesofcinema.com/contents/directors/03/erice.html).
5. Michel Chion, *Audio-Vision: Sound on Screen,* trans. Claudia Gorbman (New York: Columbia University Press, 1994), 137.
6. Michel Chion, *La música en el cine* (Barcelona: Ediciones Paidós Iberica, 1998), 228.
7. These were songs Erice remembered from his childhood (personal correspondence, 2009). For additional information about songs of the Spanish Civil War period, note the 1971 film by Basilio Martín Patino titled *Canciones para después de una guerra,* which offers a montage of images of the years 1939–53 with a sound track of related songs. This film was prohibited by the Francoist censors and first received a viewing in Spain on November 1, 1976, less than a year after Franco's death on November 20, 1975.
8. Note the essay "Between History and Dream: Víctor Erice's *El espíritu de la colmena*" by Santos Zunzunegui, in *Modes of Representation in Spanish Cinema,* ed. Jenaro Talens and Zunzunegui (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1998), 128–54. Zunzunegui draws on Erice's essay about *The Leopard,* "Entre la historia y el sueño (Visconti y *El gatopardo*)," *Nuestro cine* 26 (January 1964): 13–25.
9. James Quandt, "Lifelines: The Films of Víctor Erice film selection," Cinemathèque Ontario, 2007 (www.cinemathequeontario.ca).
10. Chion, 151–55.
11. The one unidentified song in *El espíritu de la colmena* is the one played by the father's watch. Even the director is not sure of its origin (personal correspondence, 2009).
12. Alain Philippon, "Víctor Erice: Le detour par l'enfance," *Cahiers du cinéma* 405 (March 1988): 6. Trans. Martine Thibonnier.
13. Imanol Zumalde Arregi, "Lo sonoro en *El espíritu de la colmena,*" *Orhum* 3 (July 1993): 17.

14. Cerrillo Torremocha, Pedro César, *Sobre el aprovechamiento didáctico del cancionero infantil* (Biblioteca virtual Miguel de Cervantes). [The use of songs–and in general of a group of folkloric pieces that form part of what Pedro César Cerrillo Torremocha calls "cancionero infantil"–has been one of the most effective pedagogical models in the Spanish classroom.]
15. Note how Erice adds the dialogue-less role of a piano tuner to the restaurant scene in *El sur* as well; such a character does not appear in the novel on which the film is based. That scene also depicts a relationship that is "out of tune."
16. The original plan for *The Spirit of the Beehive* was based on this model, but the director decided to change it to a more directly unfolding narrative.
17. Along with the *Danzas Españolas* of Granados, other instrumental music featured in the film includes extracts from Ravel's String Quartet in F Major and Schubert's Quintet in C Major (performed by the great Catalan cellist Pau Casals), as well as the music for "La cumparsita," a *tango* heard in the Grand Hotel in the wedding music playing while Estrella and her father are eating. "La cumparsita" was composed in 1914 by the Uruguayan Gerardo Matos Rodríguez. It had no words until 1924, when the Argentinians Pascual Contursi and Enrique Pedro Maroni wrote some and renamed the music "Si supieras."
18. "Danza, baile, música incidental o música de concierto de carácter marcial, escrito en compás de 2/4, con tempo más movido que la marcha, pero no precipitado. Tradicionalmente se considera destinado a ser interpretado por bandas militares para que los ejércitos marchen al paso. [. . .] Parte de la popularidad lograda por el pasodoble en las últimas décadas del s. XX se debe a los conjuntos orquestales de música de baile que actuaban en salas de fiestas y clubes nocturnos y a la difusión lograda a través de los medios de masas" (Ramón Sobrino, "Paso doble," in *Diccionario de la música española e hispanoamericana,* ed. Emilio Casares Rodicio [Madrid: Sociedad General de Autores y Editores, 2001], 8:502). [Dance, incidental music, or concert music of a military nature, written in 2/4 time, with a more stirring tempo than the march, but not a precipitous tempo. Traditionally it was interpreted by military bands so the army would march in step. . . . Part of the popularity of the *pasodoble* in the last decades of the twentieth century was due to the combined orchestras of music for the dance performed for parties and clubs, and by its diffusion throughout the general public.]
19. Personal correspondence, 2009.
20. This song was sung in Cuba by the great Beni Moré and made popular in Spain by the Spanish singer Lolita Garrido.
21. In the unfilmed second half of the scenario, Estrella does meet her half-brother Octavio in the south. She teaches him how to hold the diviner's pendulum (left to Estrella by her father after his death). Estrella leaves the pendulum with Octavio, thus bringing full circle one stage of the process of maturing and moving on. (The second part of *El sur* remained unfilmed because of a decision of the producer Elías Querejeta.)
22. The phrase "blurred boundary" comes from Bill Nichols, *Blurred Boundaries: Questions of Meaning in Contemporary Culture* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1994).
23. "Baile andaluz procedente de las colonias americanas que se popularizó a principios del siglo XIX. También, género del flamenco y complejo genérico

que agrupa a otros como los tientos, los tanguillos, las marianas, la farruca, el garrotín, la zambra, la rumba y el taranto" (Faustino Núñez, "Tango," in *Diccionario de la música española e hispanoamericana,* ed. Emilio Casares Rodicio [Madrid: Sociedad General de Autores y Editores, 2001], 10:154). [An Andalucian dance suitable for the American colonies that became popular at the beginning of the nineteenth century. Also a kind of flamenco and a genre that grouped together other dances like the *tientos, tanguillos, marianas, farruca, garrotín, zambra, rumba,* and *Taranto.*]

24. "Ramitos de mejorana" was sung by Miguel de los Reyes and Concha Piquer.
25. For more information about this film, see Ehrlich, *The Cinema of Víctor Erice,* 27–28.
26. From Juan Egea and Linda Ehrlich, "Víctor Erice's *La promesa de Shanghai:* The Promise of Words, The Promise of Time," *Cinema Scope* 23 (Summer 2005): 19–23.
27. "Shanghai," in the film, is represented only by a fan and a Chinese dress, a *chipao.* It is described as "Lejano Oriente" (the distant Orient). Erice considered various titles for his film but finally settled on *La promesa de Shanghai.* Note the narration on page 300 of the screenplay: "La decidida voluntad de Forcat de mantener a toda costa en el ánimo de Susana aquello que la medicina no podía darle: una suerte de esperanza, la promesa de una vida feliz" (Víctor Erice, *La promesa de Shanghai: Guión cinematográfico* [Barcelona: Areté, 2001]). [Forcat's firm will to maintain at all cost Susana's spirit, that which medicine couldn't give her: a kind of hope, the promise of a happy life.]
28. *Amapola* (Poppy) is mentioned on page 130 of the English translation of the novel (by Nick Caistor [London: Harvill Secker, 2006]), and the songs "Bésame mucho" and "The Continental" are mentioned on page 162, all in connection with the Yellow Sky Club in the Shanghai of Forcat's story and the memory of a happier time in a dance hall in Barcelona called Shanghai.
29. This song, dedicated to Lieutenant Colonel Rafael de Riego, was the national song during the Trienio Liberal (1820–23) and became an official song of the Segunda República Española (the Second Spanish Republic, 1931–39).
30. Lorca, "On Lullabies," in *Deep Song and Other Prose,* 9.
31. Pauline Reay (citing Gorbman) writes that "songs require narrative to cede to spectacle, as it seems that lyrics and action compete for attention" (*Music in Film: Soundtracks and Synergy* [London: Wallflower Press, 2004], 39). Erice's evocative use of the folksong "Agora non" offers yet another form of interaction from the one mentioned in the quote above.
32. The director recalls that opposite the window of his room in his house in San Sebastián, there was an office of Nazi propaganda and information where German residents in the city, and Spanish sympathizers with the Nazi cause, would go to get foods they couldn't find in the marketplace (personal correspondence).
33. For more information on this exhibition, see Linda Ehrlich, "Silencing the Clamor of the World: Erice-Kiarostami *Correspondences,*" *Senses of Cinema* 41 (October–December 2006), www.sensesofcinema.com.
34. As Amy Herzog writes (citing Chion and Gorbman) in *Dreams of Difference: Songs of the Same/The Musical Moment in Film:* "In musically based works, all visual movements are in a sense abstractions in that they are dictated by the logic and

temporality of music rather than narrative. The elements within the film frame, set in motion by the music, become mobile, freed, at least to a certain degree, from the burdens of signification, motivation, and logical development."

35. Juan F. Egea, "Poetry and Film: *El sol del membrillo* and *Los amantes del círculo polar,*" *Hispanic Review* 75 (Spring 2007): 177.
36. Personal correspondence, March 2008.
37. "Tren de sombras" 6 [January 2006], online.
38. Que salga el sol (bis), / Let the sun come out,
que no nos gusta la lluvia. / we don't like rain.
Que salga el sol (bis), / Let the sun come out,
que no queremos que se nos mojen los dibujitos. / we don't want the drawings to get wet.

Que salga el sol (bis), / Let the sun come out,
que no llueva más, más, más. / let it not rain more, more, more.

Following the style of other songs about rain, like

Que llueva, que llueva, / Let it rain, let it rain,
la Virgen de la Cueva. / the Virgin of the Cave.
Los pajaritos cantan, / The small birds sing,
las nubes se levantan. / the clouds rise.

which offer a repetitive structure and a very simple melody.

39. Farough Farrokhzad was an outspoken Iranian poet whose writing and life helped inspire women in Iran, and around the world, to reexamine the limitations of their role in society. When she died in a car accident at the age of thirty-two, this eloquent writer and filmmaker was already the subject of a 1963 film produced by UNESCO and a fifteen-minute film by Italian filmmaker Bernardo Bertolucci.
40. This poem is from his final book *Esperando la mano de nieve* (Madrid: Editorial Turner, 1985).
41. *Un lugar en el cine* also includes interviews with directors Theo Angelopolous, actor Ninetto Davoli, and screenwriter Tonino Guerra, among others.
42. Floreal Peleato, "Nostalgie d'un songe," *Positif* 519 (May 2004): 59, and Alet Valero, "Les silences dans *L'esprit de la ruche,*" in Centre d'Etudes et de Recherches Hispaniques du XXe Siècle, *Voir et Lire Víctor Erice: L'Esprit de la ruche* (Dijon, France, 1990), 63. All of these translations from the French are by Bernadette Beroud.
43. Bernard Gille, "La musique au seuil du silence," in *Voir et Lire Victor Erice,* 81–82.
44. Bela Belasz, "Silence and Space," in Weis and Belton, *Film Sound,* 118.
45. In terms of *The Spirit of the Beehive,* for example, Membrez reminds us that "Erice ha dicho que era consciente de crear una estructura lírica para la película" (Membrez, "Apostillas a *El espíritu de la colmena* de Víctor Erice," 120). [Erice has said that he was conscious of creating a lyrical structure for the film.] As another example, Erice noted his use of the music of Arvo Pärt in the editing of *La morte rouge:* "se ajustó a las imágenes, en general" (personal correspondence, 2009). [The music was adjusted to the images, in general.]