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Milana Bonita

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The very recent death – only a few days ago – of the great Alfredo Landa, makes one think of the great titles of his filmography, just like all types of events for which one of the best Spanish comics - this being the honourable title owed to the greats of the big screen - was, or wasn't, responsible.

Among these events figures the rivalry between him and Paco Rabal (another genius comic) for the *ex aequo* obtainment of the Palme d'Or at the Cannes Film Festival, for the character interpretation of Paco el bajo and of Azarías, his brother in law, in Mario Camus' 'The Holy Innocents'. This indispensable great of Spanish cinema has been remade, the viewing of which has allowed me to observe aspects and nuances that did not catch my attention when the film premiered.

The film is based on an excellent novel written in 1981 by Miguel Delibes, which boasts all the characteristics of his literary style; the creation of characters with their own stature, the recreation of the rural ambience of 60s Spain, the toughness of life for workers on an estate belonging to an aristocratic family, which spends its time at competitive hunts, but above all, and of great importance, the love for nature and the respect for the lives of others, with contention and without song and dance.

If you can remember the piece and the more or less anecdotal aspects of the plot, what indelibly stays in mind is Azarías' expression of happiness, his toothless mouth, the country-style beret, and the glow in his eyes as he calls a black jackdaw to his shoulder, "Milana bonita!" His treasure, the source of great emotion - the kindness and loyalty of an animal as innocent as he himself. The relationship between man and bird is beautiful. A man with diminished mental capacity, contemptibly used by the owners of the estate, but cared for by his family as one of them and with the same respect for his companion animal, the beautiful Milana, which is even more significant in the working environment of a hunting estate where partridges are killed for fun and servants are treated like objects.

Delibes was a passionate hunter; his "Diary of a Hunter" is a personal homage to hunting, by which he knew the ancient rules of killing without cruelty and necessity. The continuation of hunting and the way it is practiced – in many cases on large scale and indiscriminately - is debatable nowadays. It is in this way that the novel and the film amount to a flawless critique of cruelty and disregard for animals and for the beings that are considered 'inferior'. It is not without reason that the final shot of the film shows the application of the *lex talionis* in its most basic form, as the young master Ivan, frustrated after a day without hunting, kills Milana as it happily flies towards Azarías, despite his attempts to stop him, shouting in his clumsy language "Milana, Milana bonita!!"

There is a lot to be delved into regarding the link between humans and animals, and there is a necessity to do so imposed by the damage caused by the lack of an ethic on nature,

and by not reviewing the laws that should include such an ethic as an unavoidable principle. A respectful relationship with animals is promoted through knowledge of their interests, through study and through reflection. This is what we aim to do with these pages, with these initiatives that we constantly implement, all of which result from the desire to train new generations of professionals with better instruments for increasing excellence. Our personal improvement is a global improvement for the situation of animals across the world. This is what we consolidate through the Animal Law and Society Master, the inscription for which is already open.

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