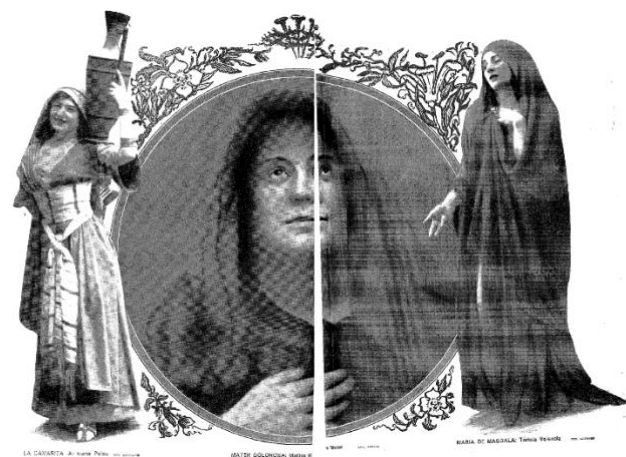


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PhD Student, « Celebrity, glory and fame: public figures in Spain (1875-1936) » (supervisor : Dr. Carolina Rodríguez-López)

“How to reach the glory. Spanish actresses and celebrity at the beginning of the 20th century”

Thanks to my presence in the Métis Summer School called “**Mass Culture : new approaches, new issues (19th and 20th centuries)**”, I had the chance to share part of my work with other colleagues. In my thesis project I am researching the promotion and celebrity of different Spanish actresses in the last years of the 19th century till the beginning of the sound cinema in Spain (1932), date so close to the Spanish civil war (1936-1939). In Spain, the historiography about artists is not so developed. In fact, most of the works that we can find are based on hagiographies, for this reason, one the objectives of the project is to form some biographies of these actresses. Some of the studies cases chosen are: María Fernanda Ladrón de Guevara, Carmen Viance, María Guerrero, Imperio Argentina, Catalina Bárcena... Due to this chronology and the topic of research (SALAÛN, 2011), it was so closed to the mass culture theme and its development in the dates that I work.



The paper presented in the summer school was only based in the study of the press of the époque and the reception of several actresses. This was a great election because most of my colleagues' research also involved this mass media. Due to this fact, a big dialogue started between us. It all started with Jean-Yves Mollier's conference in which one of the transversal topics was the reception and the relevance of the numbers, not so common in

cultural history. Nevertheless, the reception of the press was the main issue in Dietschy, Fromenteze and Endrighetti's works, more specifically, we all were interested in the way the culture industries created the customer loyalty. With this fact, we started to ask ourselves what can we find in the archives or is there any trace of the reception of the costumers? However, even if it is difficult to find traces of an interaction between costumers and the editorial, there is no reason to stop deepening in the reception studies. This will help to better understand the diffusion and reproduction of some objects from the final part of the 19th century till today.

Due to the study of the press in the paper cited, I realised the relevance of the images. It is a wide subject to develop in the thesis project because there is a specific methodology to work with images. Thanks to Valentine Robert's presentation about tableaux vivants, it was way to achieve new bibliography references. What's more, thanks to the feedback after the presentation, I realised the relevance of the images distributed not only in Spain, but also in a generalist context. These images were important because of the negotiation of the representations created by the actresses and the negotiation with the cultural industries. This mechanism helped, or maybe it did not, to see the difference between the character and the persona. So, this is one of the questions to reformulate in my PhD project, not only important in the past but still today as many works about celebrity studies show (REDMOND and HOLMES, 2007).

By approaching to a more general issue, mass culture was a transversal topic, as the study of the press did in my case, in our presentations. In this context the final years of the 19th century is quite important as many things developed during that chronology. For instance, it was in those years that many characteristics of the Belle Époque mature. As Jean-Claude Yon pointed out the relevance of the reproducible objects and the diffusion of them appeared.

Following this point, to be part of this summer school was significant to have in mind the transnational character of the spectacles and the historiography I have been working with. At this point, as a Spanish historian said, Juan de la Madrid (VV.AA., 2006), the idea of star system (idea developed by the Hollywood industry) was developed even before the arrival of the cinema. This was due to the development of a strong tradition of relationships between the artists and people who worked with them that helped to promote them in the spectacle world. However, thanks to Pisu and Puchenkina's presentations, I realized that not all European countries cultivate a star system. For example, the way of creating a star in the USSR was different. So, this idea could also fix in the Spanish case.

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