

Dossier: Correspondencia entre Luis Buñuel y Amos Vogel

Jo Evans y Breixo Viejo
University College London

Abstract

This dossier contextualises and reproduces the correspondence between the New York-based Austrian film curator Amos Vogel and the Spanish-Mexican filmmaker Luis Buñuel between 1954 and 1976. Buñuel and Vogel exchanged fifteen letters that have not yet been published as a whole. All 15 have been edited and reproduced here for the information they provide into Buñuel's relationship with Vogel and the original insight they bring to the reception of Buñuel's cinema in the US from the 1950s onwards.

Este dossier introduce y contextualiza la correspondencia entre el cineasta español Luis Buñuel y el comisario de cine austríaco afincado en Nueva York Amos Vogel. Se trata de quince cartas originales fechadas entre 1954 y 1976, nunca antes publicadas en su totalidad, que se incluyen íntegras tras la introducción de los editores. El principal valor del epistolario reside en que aporta información inédita no sólo sobre la relación personal entre ambas figuras sino también acerca de la recepción del cine de Buñuel en Estados Unidos a partir de la década de 1950.

Keywords

Luis Buñuel, Amos Vogel, correspondence, Cinema 16

Como parte de nuestro proyecto actual de editar un volumen con las cartas escogidas de Luis Buñuel, hemos transcrito recientemente su correspondencia con el historiador y comisario de cine Amos Vogel (1921-2012).¹ Se trata de quince cartas originales fechadas entre 1954 y 1976 y depositadas en dos legados diferentes, el Archivo Buñuel en la Filmoteca Española de Madrid y los Amos Vogel Papers en la Columbia University de Nueva York. El principal valor de esta documentación reside en que aporta información inédita no sólo sobre la relación personal entre ambas figuras sino también acerca de la recepción del cine de Buñuel en Estados Unidos a partir de la década de 1950.

Amos Vogel nació en Viena en el seno de una familia judía y, tras la anexión de Austria por parte del Tercer Reich, se exilió a Nueva York, donde, en 1947, fundó Cinema 16, 'the most successful and influential membership film society in North American history'.² Como co-director de este cine club junto a su mujer Marcia, estrenó por primera vez en Estados Unidos largometrajes de cineastas como Michelangelo Antonioni, Robert Bresson, John Cassavetes, Nagisa Oshima, Roman Polanski y Alain Resnais, entre muchos otros. Su papel en la exhibición del cine experimental americano de la época—desde Kenneth Anger y Maya Deren a Stan Brakhage y Shirley Clarke—fue también pionero y antecedió en este sentido al célebre Anthology Film Archive.

Aunque las primeras películas de Buñuel se habían proyectado ya en esporádicos pases en Nueva York y Los Angeles en las décadas de 1930 y 1940,³ fue Cinema 16—que llegó a contar con 7,000 miembros—donde por primera vez se dio a conocer *Un Chien andalou* (1929) y *Tierra sin pan* (1933) ante un público amplio en Estados Unidos. Vogel proyectó el cortometraje surrealista en noviembre de 1948 y diciembre de 1950, y el documental sobre Las Hurdes en marzo de 1949 y mayo de 1952. El éxito de estas proyecciones, así como cierto impacto causado por el estreno en salas comerciales de *Los olvidados* (1950)—

¹ Este proyecto de edición, titulado *Luis Buñuel: A Life in Letters*, es posible gracias a una generosa Beca de Investigación (2015-2018) de The Leverhulme Trust.

² Scott MacDonald, *Cinema 16: Documents toward a History of the Film Society* (Filadelfia: Temple University Press, 2002), 1.

³ Fernando Gabriel Martín, *El ermitaño errante: Buñuel en Estados Unidos* (Murcia: Tres Fronteras, 2010), 136-154 y 792-793.

bajo el título de *The Young and the Damned*⁴—en marzo de 1952, hicieron que Vogel se animase a organizar el primer ciclo retrospectivo sobre el cine de Buñuel en Norteamérica.

Por dicho motivo se inició la correspondencia entre ambos, intensa pero intermitente, que, a nivel cronológico, puede hoy dividirse en tres grupos correspondientes a tres décadas diferentes. El primer conjunto está formado por siete cartas fechadas entre marzo de 1954 y junio de 1956; el segundo, por dos misivas de junio de 1960 y octubre de 1963; y el tercero, por seis cartas escritas entre octubre de 1972 y enero de 1976.

Década de 1950

Vogel escribió por primera vez a Buñuel el 16 de marzo de 1954 presentándole Cinema 16 e invitándole a dar una charla con motivo del ciclo. Como en las siguientes semanas no obtuvo respuesta, reenvió esa misma carta a México el 4 de mayo de 1954, esta vez con un pequeño añadido: 'I am certain that the proposal made in it for a guest appearance at Cinema 16 would be of definite mutual advantage. As a long-time admirer of your work I would feel privileged to be able to arrange for this special event and am confident to hear from you in the affirmative'.⁵ La respuesta de Buñuel, que en mayo de 1954 estaba en Francia ultimando el contrato de *Cela s'appelle l'aurore* (1956) y formando parte del jurado del 7º Festival de Cine de Cannes, no llegó hasta el mes siguiente, para informar a Vogel que no podría asistir a Nueva York debido a su trabajo en los rodajes de *El río y la muerte* y *Ensayo de un crimen*, ambas estrenadas en México en 1955.

⁴ José Rubia Barcia, "Luis Buñuel's *Los olvidados*", *The Quarterly of Film, Radio and Television*, 7:4 (verano de 1953), 392-401.

⁵ Carta de Amos Vogel a Luis Buñuel, Nueva York, 4 de mayo de 1954. Como tampoco recibí respuesta a esta segunda carta, reenvió una tercera el 21 de mayo de 1954, esta vez a nombre de Lotte Escoffier (pseudónimo de Lotte Eisner), a la Cinémathèque française de París: "Dear Mr. Buñuel: I contacted you in Mexico a few months ago but since I had no reply, I assume that this letter did not reach you. Permit me to paraphrase it below". Para evitar redundancias, no hemos incluido estas dos versiones de la primera carta de Vogel a Buñuel; ambas se encuentran en Amos Vogel Papers, Rare Book and Manuscript Library, Columbia University (Subseries I.2: Correspondence, 1947-1996; Box 5, Folder 13).

Pero es indudable que Buñuel entendió la propuesta de ‘mutual advantage’, pues el 17 de septiembre de 1954 envió un conjunto de recortes de prensa sobre *Él* (1953) para que Vogel pudiera preparar adecuadamente la presentación del film en Cinema 16. En la carta que acompañaba los recortes de prensa, Buñuel revelaba además varios datos importantes sobre la película, como la duración del rodaje, el presupuesto final de producción, la crítica velada que el largometraje hacía a la moral burguesa y la descripción ‘objetiva’ del comportamiento paranoico de Francisco, el protagonista del film.⁶

La carta de Vogel del 3 de febrero de 1955 es especialmente valiosa, pues describe la tumultuosa reacción del público ante las que fueron las cuatro primeras proyecciones de *Él* en Estados Unidos, el 25 y 26 de enero de 1955.⁷ En este sentido, complementa perfectamente otra carta, la que Buñuel envió a sus amigos Luis y Janet Alcoriza unos meses antes, donde el cineasta comentaba con detalle la acogida entre numerosos psiquiatras franceses (incluido Jacques Lacan) tras la proyección del film organizada por la Unesco en París en mayo de 1954.⁸

Vogel informaba además de la reacción positiva en Nueva York del historiador de cine Jay Leyda, a quien Buñuel había conocido en París en 1925 y con quien había coincidido trabajabando para el Museum of Modern Art (MoMA) en 1940.⁹ Frente a algunas críticas negativas de *Él* que Cinema 16 publicaría en sus hojas de sala de marzo de 1955, la posición de Leyda a favor del film quedaba bien clara: ‘*Él* embodies some of the basic weapons of the Surrealist movement—it employs melodramatic means to attack the poison of melodrama; it insults the passive audience (but not the audience’s intelligence) and turns passivity into boiling, troubling thought’.¹⁰

⁶ La carta del 17 de septiembre de 1954 se reproduce en *Cinema 16*, pp. 239-240.

⁷ Notas al programa de Cinema 16 (25-26 de enero de 1955), que incluyen extractos de un texto de Georges Sadoul y de una ‘informal interview with Buñuel’ de Henry Hell; Amos Vogel Papers (Subseries I.3: Program Notes, 1947-1963, Box 8, Folder 27).

⁸ Carta de Luis Buñuel a Luis y Janet Alcoriza (París, 9 de mayo de 1954), en Archivo Alcoriza, Filmoteca Española, Madrid (ALC/01/02), y publicada en *Brújula*, Vol. 8 (2010), pp. 26-27.

⁹ Carta de Luis Buñuel a Jay Leyda, Nueva York, 3 de octubre de 1940, Jay and Si-Lan Chen Leyda Papers, Taminent Library, New York University (TAM.83, Box 3, Folder 7).

¹⁰ Notas al programa de Cinema 16 de marzo de 1955; Amos Vogel Papers (Box 8, Folder 27).

Es grato comprobar que *Él* se estrenó en Cinema 16 con su título original traducido (*He*) y no con el impuesto por Noel Meadow (*This Strange Passion*), el empresario americano que proyectó la película en salas comerciales a partir de diciembre de 1955. En su carta Vogel mostraba su creciente interés por proyectar *L'Âge d'Or*, cuya distribución había sido censurada tras su estreno en París en 1930, así como por obtener más información acerca del film sobre Goya que, en realidad, Buñuel nunca llegó a realizar.¹¹

¿Se encontraron Buñuel y Vogel en la ciudad de México cuando éste la visitó en junio de 1956? No tenemos constancia de dicho encuentro, pero sí de otro ocurrido en Nueva York, posiblemente hacia 1959 o 1960, que el propio Vogel describiría años más tarde al rememorar las actividades de su cine club: 'Wonderful, unexpected things kept happening [at Cinema 16]. One day a man in a flaming red jacket appeared at my office door, unannounced. It was Luis Buñuel'.¹²

Década de 1960

El segundo grupo de cartas lo conforman dos misivas de Vogel a Buñuel, de 1960 y 1963, respectivamente, en las que el comisario comenta la exhibición y distribución de las películas del director español en Nueva York. Es un período crucial en la vida de ambos: la difusión internacional de las películas Buñuel aumentó notablemente tras la polémica concesión de la Palme d'Or a *Viridiana* en el Festival de Cannes de 1961, y Vogel, que se vio obligado a cerrar Cinema 16 en 1963 por falta de apoyo institucional, co-fundó ese mismo año junto a Richard Roud el New York Film Festival, del que sería coordinador y programador hasta 1968.

La carta del 20 de junio de 1960 relata el estreno de *Nazarín* (1958) en Cinema 16 ante un público en el que se encuentran algunos de los críticos e historiadores de cine de mayor renombre del momento—William Everson,

¹¹ Luis Buñuel, *Goya. La Duquesa de Alba y Goya* (Teruel: Instituto de Estudios Turolenses, 1992).

¹² Amos Vogel, "On Cinema 16", en ed. P. Cronin, *Be Sand, Not Oil: The Life and Work of Amos Vogel* (Viena: Österreichisches Filmmuseum, 2014), 87. Después de 13 años sin visitar Estados Unidos, Buñuel estuvo en Nueva York en septiembre de 1959 y en abril y octubre de 1960 (*El ermitaño errante*, 785).

Arthur Knight, Siegfried Kracauer, Herman Weinberg, Archer Winsten—así como cineastas independientes—Lionel Rogosin, Shirley Clarke—e incluso compositores como Marc Blitzstein. Buñuel no debió pasar por alto la presencia entre el público de Ed Harrison, el primer distribuidor de Akira Kurosawa y Satyajit Ray en Estados Unidos. Una vez más, Vogel le ofrecía su ayuda para dar a conocer la película en América, aunque advertía a Buñuel de la ‘essential conservative and commercial attitude’ de los distribuidores y exhibidores estadounidenses. En efecto, el productor Manuel Barbachano Ponce no distribuiría *Nazarín* en salas americanas hasta junio de 1968.¹³

¿Respondió Buñuel a esta carta de 1960? No lo sabemos, pero, conociendo la práctica epistolar del cineasta, resulta difícil creer que no contestase, aunque fuese brevemente. Y más si tenemos en cuenta que Vogel trataba otros asuntos importantes, como el ciclo que Richard Griffith quería dedicarle en el MoMA o la posibilidad de proyectar en versión original subtitulada *La vida criminal de Archibaldo de la Cruz* (título alternativo de *Ensayo de un crimen*). Sea como fuere, hoy sí sabemos que Cinema 16 estrenó este film el 16 de mayo de 1960 y que el MoMA organizaría retrospectivas de Buñuel en mayo de 1966 y enero de 1967—ambas, al parecer, con la presencia del director.

Que Vogel decidiese inaugurar el primer New York Film Festival con la proyección de la que por entonces era la última producción de Buñuel, *El ángel exterminador* (1962), demuestra hasta qué punto tenía al cineasta español en alta estima. En el programa de dicho festival, tras describir el argumento del film, se decía: ‘For ninety hypnotic minutes Buñuel shatters all conventional notions of social logic and ethics. Never before has he been able to give such free rein to his vitality, wit and iconoclasm, his power to surprise and shock’.¹⁴ El estreno de *El ángel exterminador* en Nueva York fue, como dice Vogel en su carta del 9 de octubre de 1963, ‘a resounding and splendid success’. Como muestra de ello, adjuntó para Buñuel, además del programa del festival, algunas de las

¹³ Nótese que Buñuel, a diferencia de otros directores-autores, no recibía porcentaje sobre los resultados de explotación: cobraba una tarifa fija al entregar al productor la película finalizada, independientemente del resultado del film en taquilla.

¹⁴ Amos Vogel y Richard Roud, *The First New York Film Festival* (September 10-19, 1963), [1].

entusiastas reseñas publicadas por la prensa americana.¹⁵ Al año siguiente, en la segunda edición del certamen, Vogel estrenaría *Le Journal d'une femme de chambre* (1964) y conseguiría proyectar finalmente, tras varios años intentándolo, la obra maestra de Buñuel, *L'Âge d'Or*.

Década de 1970

El tercer y último grupo de la correspondencia lo conforman seis cartas escritas entre 1972 y 1976. En octubre de 1972, Vogel, que por entonces preparaba ya la publicación de su libro *Film as a Subversive Art*, dejó una nota manuscrita a Buñuel en The Pierre, el hotel donde éste se alojaba en la Quinta Avenida con la calle 62, para felicitarlo por el estreno en Nueva York de *Le discret charm de la bourgeoisie*—motivo de la visita del cineasta a la ciudad. Vogel aprovechaba esta felicitación para pedirle el permiso de reproducción de algunas imágenes de sus películas en *Film as a Subversive Art*. Sabemos que Buñuel se lo concedió, porque, más adelante, en octubre de 1974, Vogel le regaló un ejemplar del libro que, en efecto, incluía numerosas imágenes de los films de Buñuel.¹⁶ Esta primera edición en tapa dura y con sobrecubierta, publicada por Weidenfeld and Nicolson en Londres, tiene como epígrafe inicial precisamente una frase del director español: 'But that the white eye-lid of the screen reflect its proper light, the universe would go up in flames'.¹⁷ Como se sabe, Buñuel tiene un especial protagonismo en el magnífico libro de Vogel, quien, a su vez, siguió promoviendo la obra del director español, ahora mediante sus clases y escritos.

En la carta de octubre de 1974 Vogel solicita a Buñuel un *endorsement* para incluir en la edición americana en rústica que publicará más adelante Random House. Aunque el 15 de octubre de 1974 Buñuel le dice que está *debordé*—posiblemente por su trabajo en la promoción de *Le Fantôme de la liberté*, estrenada en Nueva York el 27 de ese mismo mes—más adelante el

¹⁵ Véase la carpeta dedicada a *El ángel exterminador* en el Archivo Buñuel, Filmoteca Española (AB/2050).

¹⁶ El ejemplar se conserva en el Archivo Buñuel (AB/296).

¹⁷ La frase original en castellano—"Bastaría que el párpado blanco de la pantalla pudiera reflejar la luz que le es propia para que hiciera saltar el Universo"—la pronunció Buñuel en su conferencia "El cine, instrumento de poesía", presentada en la UNAM, México DF, en 1953, y publicada más adelante en *Universidad de México*, XIII: 4 (diciembre de 1958), 1-2.

director no solo contribuirá su endorsement particular al libro, sino que apoyará a Vogel como referee cuando éste consolide su plaza de profesor en la Anneberg School de la University of Pennsylvania en 1976.¹⁸ Efectivamente, en la contracubierta de *Film as a Subversive Art*, junto a otros *endorsements* de Norman Mailer y Nat Hentoff, aparece la frase de Buñuel (adaptada por Vogel): ‘*Film as a Subversive Art* takes an outstanding place, if not unique, in the already extensive literature of film. Its pictorial enlightenment and its text make it an invaluable work... an intense garden with the inducement of a fruit longtime forbidden’. Es este libro, que dedica numerosos párrafos a explicar el carácter incendiario de la obra Buñuel, donde Vogel definió al cineasta como ‘a master subversive, one of the great directors of world cinema’.¹⁹

La correspondencia, que se había iniciado en marzo de 1954—cuando Buñuel era prácticamente desconocido en los Estados Unidos—, concluye en enero de 1976, con un Buñuel ya septuagenario y galardonado con la Palme d’Or en Cannes y el Oscar de Hollywood. El tono de las primeras y últimas cartas entre Vogel y Buñuel es, no obstante, muy parecido: refleja un respeto mutuo basado en la convicción compartida de que el verdadero cine ha de subvertir los códigos morales del *establishment* para despertar e incomodar a las ‘peacefully sleeping movie audiences’ (como las llamaba Vogel en su carta a Buñuel del 20 de junio de 1960). La frase del poeta Gunter Eich que a menudo citaba Vogel—‘Be uncomfortable, be sand, not oil in the machinery of the world’²⁰—bien podría servir como motto para definir el impulso creativo y siempre transgresor de Luis Buñuel.

En tareas de edición y transcripción, nos hemos limitado a corregir errores tipográficos menores y a homogeneizar el orden de la información referente al lugar, fecha y dirección del receptor de la carta. Hemos dejado los párrafos en francés cuando aparecen en dicho idioma en el original. Las características físicas y la ubicación de cada carta se incluyen al final de su

¹⁸ Véase la carta de George Gerbner a Luis Buñuel, 16 enero de 1976, Archivo Buñuel (AB/1402.60).

¹⁹ Amos Vogel, *Film as a Subversive Art* (London: Weidenfeld and Nicolson, 1974), 293.

²⁰ Citada por Scott MacDonald, ‘Film Comes First’, in *Be Sand, Not Oil*, 109.

transcripción. Creemos que la contextualización de la correspondencia en esta pequeña introducción permite su transcripción sin ningún tipo de anotación, algo que sin duda facilitará su lectura sin interrupciones.

Querríamos finalmente agradecer a Juan Luis Buñuel y Steve Vogel, herederos respectivos de Buñuel y Vogel, su amabilidad a la hora de permitirnos reproducir las cartas de sus padres, y dar las gracias a David Cortés y al personal de los archivos de Filmoteca Española y Columbia University por su inestimable ayuda a la hora de facilitar los materiales consultados.

[New York]
16 March 1954

Mr. Luis Buñuel
Extremadura núm. 36
Mixcoac, Mexico DF

Dear Mr. Buñuel,

You may know that Cinema 16 is America's largest film society and that among our 5,000 members are leading personalities in the fields of the cinema and the arts.

Over the past seven years we have not only presented outstanding documentary, avant-garde and feature film classics of all nations, but have also introduced as speakers such personalities as Norman McLaren, Jean Renoir, Willard Van Dyke, Maya Deren, Dylan Thomas and Arthur Miller.

I am very interested in presenting a special evening during our fall 1954 to spring 1955 season devoted entirely to your work. The program would include representative films of various periods in your life, including possibly *Un Chien andalou*, *Land without bread*, *Los olvidados*, *El*. However, the most important feature of the evening would be a personal appearance by you—to talk about your films and possibly answer questions from the audience.

I would certainly be prepared to contribute toward your expense in coming here to the extent of several hundred dollars. Do you think arrangements can be made—or are you possibly already contemplating coming here in conjunction with the release of *Robinson Crusoe*?

We can discuss further details later on, after I have your agreement in principle.

I should appreciate hearing from you at your early convenience.

Sincerely,

Amos Vogel
Executive Secretary

Typewritten on carbon copy paper; unsigned. Amos Vogel Papers, Rare Book and Manuscript Library, Columbia University (Subseries I.2: Correspondence, 1947-1996; Box 5, Folder 13)

*

[Mexico City]
24 June 1954

Mr. Amos Vogel

Executive Secretary
Cinema 16 Inc.,
175 Lexington Avenue,
New York 16, NY

Dear Mr. Vogel,

I am very sorry that I have not answered your letter of March 16 but I have just come back from France where I attended the Cannes Film Festival and did some work on a film in Paris.

Thank you very much for your invitation to attend your special program but I find myself forced not to accept your invitation. Here in Mexico I have two films to make by the end of the winter and in the spring I have to return to France and to finish the film that I started this past month.

Thanks again for your invitation,

Sincerely,

Luis Buñuel

My new address:
Cerrada Félix Cuevas # 27
México DF

Typewritten on white paper; handwritten signature and postscript with new address. Amos Vogel Papers, Rare Book and Manuscript Library, Columbia University (Subseries 1.2: Correspondence, 1947-1996; Box 5, Folder 13)

*

[New York]
19 August 1954

Mr. Luis Buñuel
Cerrada Félix Cuevas # 27
Mexico DF

Dear Luis Buñuel,

Thank you for your recent letter; although I was sorry to hear that you would not be able to appear at our special Buñuel event at which we will present both *Un Chien andalou* and *El*.

To make this event a success with both the audience and the American critics who will be attending I wonder if you could help us in two respects:

1) The American distributor of *El* has absolutely no material on the film and it would be extremely interesting for our audience to have some kind of personal statement by the producer, used in our program notes, either verbatim or in para-phrase. This statement should cover your thoughts about this film, your intention in making it and how well you think you achieved your purposes, production costs and problems, etc. It could be as short or long as you wish to make it.

2) We have also thought that it would be very interesting if—as a substitute of your appearance—you could put a five to ten minute introduction to the film on tape and mail us the tape to be used here at the time of the showing. We have a standard tape recorder taking 7 inch tape (1/4 inch wide). I am sure it could be sent by mail without difficulty.

I do hope that the above does not sound like too much of an imposition but I feel that your cooperation would materially contribute to the success of this evening. I would like to receive this material before October, if you are agreeable to the above.

Thank you in advance for your cooperation.

Very sincerely yours,

Amos Vogel
Executive Secretary

Typewritten on carbon copy paper; unsigned. Amos Vogel Papers, Rare Book and Manuscript Library, Columbia University (Subseries I.2: Correspondence, 1947-1996; Box 5, Folder 13)

*

México,
17 September 1954

Mr. Amos Vogel
175 Lexington Ave.
New York

Dear Mr. Vogel,

First, I want to excuse my delay in answering your letter of August 19. I am the first one in criticizing my falt [sic] in punctuality. It is perhaps, my bad English, that prevents me of maintaining a correspondence.

It gives me great pleasure to send you some material on *El*. It is a selection of articles recently written in Paris about the film, by some important critics and with whose judgement I generally agree. I suppose that, out of them, you can take some information for a better explanation of the film.

The cost of *El* was about 100.000 dollars and it took four weeks of filming. I tried to describe objectively a paranoiac character with delirium of interpretation. In the case of *El* it is a jealous one but with a Spanish or Latin American kind of jealousy.

The character of Francisco is taken from real life and not from 'imagination'. Under a melodramatic form there is a critique of the bourgeoisie and its fundamentals of which each spectator is allowed to interpret in his own fashion or not interpret at all.

I thank you very much for your interest.

Very truly yours

Luis Buñuel

Typewritten on white paper; handwritten signature. Amos Vogel Papers, Rare Book and Manuscript Library, Columbia University (Subseries I.2: Correspondence, 1947-1996; Box 5, Folder 13)

*

[New York]
3 February 1955

Mr. Luis Buñuel
27 Cerrada Félix Cuevas
Colonia del Valle
Mexico DF

Dear Luis Buñuel,

Our screening of *El* has just taken place and it certainly was one of the most interesting and controversial screenings we have presented at Cinema 16. It was shown to four different audiences. The reaction at all presentations was the same: loud applause and a few hisses.

There have not been many films in the last few years that have divided our membership as much as *El* did. Some of them thought it was an uninteresting, poorly made, melodramatic film. The majority, I am happy to say, disagreed and understood your intentions. One of the most laudable comments came from the film historian Jay Leyda who considers *El* one of your best works. The many other critics who attended were very favorably impressed or liked the film with reservations.

I am sure you need not to be told that *El* is one of your more controversial films.

I am also very happy to say that as a direct consequence of our showing, *El* was bought by an American distributor (Noel Meadow) for regular theatrical distribution. He will of course subtitle it.

I am very happy to have been able to show it at Cinema 16 and to thereby have provided an opportunity for interested critics and film people to see it.

At this time I want to discuss with you the problem of *L'Âge d'Or*. I would, needless to say, be very interested to show this film at Cinema 16. What information can you give me? Do you have a print in Mexico? Or are the only remaining prints in Paris and if so, where? I would be personally responsible for the safety of any print sent here and would be very happy to make appropriate financial arrangements. I am sure you will agree that it would be important for the film to be shown here. Cinema 16 is not subject to the usual censorship restrictions and no legal problem would arise in connection with such a showing. The transportation from abroad could, in my opinion, also be arranged without any difficulties.

Jay Leyda has also drawn my attention to your Goya film. Can you tell me where I can obtain it? Is there a print in America?

I shall appreciate hearing from you at your early convenience.

Very sincerely yours,

Amos Vogel
Executive Secretary

Typewritten on carbon copy paper; unsigned; 2 pages. Amos Vogel Papers, Rare Book and Manuscript Library, Columbia University (Subseries I.2: Correspondence, 1947-1996; Box 5, Folder 13)

*

[New York]
28 March 1955

Mr. Luis Buñuel
27 Cerrada Félix Cuevas
Colonia del Valle
Mexico DF

Dear Luis Buñuel,

I was hoping to hear from you by this time concerning *L'Âge d'Or* and also your Goya film.

As I told you, I am interested in presenting *L'Âge d'Or* in America. Do you have a print in Mexico or do you have access to a print elsewhere? I would be personally responsible for the safety of any print sent here and would be very happy to make the necessary financial arrangements. As I told you before, due to our status as a private, non-profit membership organization, we are not subject to the usual censorship restrictions and no legal problem would arise.

With best personal regards.

Very sincerely yours,

Amos Vogel
Executive Secretary

Typewritten on carbon copy paper; unsigned. Amos Vogel Papers, Rare Book and Manuscript Library, Columbia University (Subseries I.2: Correspondence, 1947-1996; Box 5, Folder 13)

*

[New York]
7 June 1956

Mr. Luis Buñuel
27 Cerrada Félix Cuevas
Colonia del Valle
Mexico DF

Dear Luis Buñuel,

I am planning to be in Mexico from the middle of June to the middle of July (if I ever get through with my work).

I would be very interested in meeting you, if you are going to be free. Could you let me know at the New York address since my mail will be forwarded[?]

I am really looking forward to meeting you, and hope we can arrange it.

Very sincerely,

Amos Vogel
Executive Secretary

Typewritten on carbon copy paper; unsigned. Amos Vogel Papers, Rare Book and Manuscript Library, Columbia University (Subseries I.2: Correspondence, 1947-1996; Box 5, Folder 13)

*

Cinema 16
175 Lexington Avenue
New York 16, New York
20 June 1960

Mr. Luis Buñuel
Cerrada Félix Cuevas #27

Mexico DF 12

Dear Mr. Buñuel,

I wanted to let you know of the success of our *Nazarín* screening. While I was not in New York at the time—I lectured in Western Europe and served as a judge at two film festivals—I was told by my associates here that the audience followed the film with the closest attention—much more so than is usual even for this critical and vocal audience—and then accorded the film a large round of applause. What is even more significant is the fact that the ending of the film—as intended by you—made it impossible for them to “put the film out of their minds” but instead compelled them to keep on thinking about it and your intentions. This was further fostered by the program notes we presented, a copy of which is enclosed.

I understand that there were even more critics and film specialists at this screening than usual, as might have been expected given the very special nature and reputation of the film. People like Herman Weinberg, Arthur Knight, Kenneth Tynan (the theatre critic of *The New Yorker*), Dr. Siegfried Kracauer, Marc Blitzstein, William Everson, Lionel Rogosin, Shirley Clarke, Ed Harrison (the well known distributor), Archer Winsten, attended this screening. I understand there were many others, but since I myself was not present, I cannot give you any further information.

I am very pleased with the success of this presentation, and also very happy to have once again been able to introduce a previously unknown film by you to America.

So far I have not been contacted by any commercial distributor regarding the film. It is of course possible that they have contacted Barbachano directly, but I have a feeling that there is a great deal of resistance to the film by the distributors and exhibitors here due to their essential conservative and commercial attitude. To put it differently, there is neither sex nor sadism in *Nazarín*, while there is possibly more intellectual content than they consider suitable for their peacefully sleeping movie audiences. Perhaps you don't agree with me on this, but in any case this is my opinion.

I have just had a phone call from Richard Griffith at the Museum of Modern Art asking whether he can borrow our print of *Nazarín* for his forthcoming series of your film in December. I informed him that of course I had no objections, but that the permission would have to come either from you or Mr. Barbachano. I am holding the print until I hear from either you or him.

As to *Archibaldo*, I wanted to let you know that we have not yet received the subtitled print, and I am wondering how it is progressing. This is now becoming a more serious matter, since my programming deadlines for next season (October 1960 till May 1961) occur on July 20th. It is imperative that the subtitled print be in my hands before July 20th, since otherwise I would be

taking too much of a risk in announcing a film for our new schedule which is not yet in my hands.

On the other hand, if you were to personally assure me that the subtitled print would reach us no later than, say, August, I would be willing to take the risk.

My plan is to show the film on one of our first programs of the new season. I am sure that it will be a very successful and significant presentation.

While I have written to the producer about the film, I have received no reply. I would therefore appreciate your checking into this matter and advising me as to the present status of the film.

There is an additional reason for bringing this matters to a successful conclusion: Dick Griffith informed me of his interest in including *Archibaldo* in the cycle to be presented at the Museum, and he was very happy to hear that a subtitled version would be available, since he realizes that this particular film cannot be shown without subtitles.

If at all possible, please try to write me at your earliest convenience as regards *Archibaldo*.

I also would like to continue discussing with you the possibility of showing *L'Âge d'Or* and also the possibility of a personal appearance by you at Cinema 16 in the fall or winter. Do you have any plans to come to New York at that time?

With best personal regards.

Very sincerely yours,

Amos Vogel
Executive Secretary

Typewritten on white paper with printed letterhead of the Cinema 16; handwritten signature. Archivo Buñuel, Filmoteca Española (AB/2013)

*

[New York]
9 October 1963

Mr. Luis Buñuel
Calz. de Félix Cuevas 27
Mexico DF

Dear Mr. Buñuel,

Richard Roud joins me in expressing gratitude and appreciation to you for having made your film available to the First New York Film Festival.

The Festival was a resounding and splendid success, in no small measure due to such excellent works as yours. We felt honored to have been able to bring it to the attention of American audiences, critics and the film trade, and you will be pleased to know that it was received with unusual interest.

The print of your film was returned to Union Films immediately following the conclusion of the Festival.

With every good wish,

Yours sincerely,

Amos Vogel
Festival Coordinator

P.S. The enclosures are for your information, and a New York Film Festival Certificate will be forwarded to you in the near future.

Typewritten on white paper with printed letterhead of the New York Film Festival; handwritten signature.
Archivo Buñuel, Filmoteca Española (AB/1426.108)

*

[New York]
[October 1972]

Dear Luis Bunuel,

Welcome to New York!

Your new film is a masterpiece.

More! More!

I have a favor to ask: your permission to use stills of *Un Chien andalou* and *L'Âge d'Or* in my book—*Film as a Subversive Art*—you must be part of this subversive book!

I already have the stills—but I need your permission: I enclose an envelope addressed to me—please have the hotel mail it—also please send me your Paris address!

My love and best wishes

Amos Vogel
"Cinema 16"

Handwritten on white paper with letterhead of The Pierre hotel; handwritten signature. Archivo Buñuel, Filmoteca Española (AB/1543)

*

Amos Vogel
15 Washington Place
New York, NY 10003
[October 1974]

Dear Luis,

Two years ago you kindly gave me permission to use stills from your early films in this book—here it is—and perhaps it is the kind of book you might agree is necessary in our day and age...

If so, if you agree it is, would you perhaps be willing to give me a brief *quote*—a sentence or so—that we could use in our advertising? Random House is my American publisher. You could send it to the above address. Of course, if you have a "policy" of not doing this kind of thing, I shall completely understand.

Amos

Handwritten on white paper; handwritten signature. Archivo Buñuel, Filmoteca Española (AB/1402.6)

*

[New York]
15 October 1974

Cher ami,

Merci de votre livre en apparence tellement intéressant. Je pars pour le Mexique ou j'aurai le temps de le lire. Malgré que je suis un très mauvais correspondant je tacherai de vous envoyer un mot après lecture.

Je regrette de ne pas vous avoir rencontré mais j'ai vraiment été 'débordé'.

Cordialement votre,

Buñuel

Original in French; handwritten on white paper with letterhead of The Pierre Hotel; signed. Amos Vogel Papers, Rare Book and Manuscript Library, Columbia University (Subseries II.5: Subject Files, 1947-2001; Box 92, Folder 3)

*

15 Washington Place
New York City
11 November 1975

Luis Buñuel
Cerrada Félix Cuevas 27
Mexico DF

Dear friend

YOU HAVE A COPY OF MY BOOK *FILM AS A SUBVERSIVE ART* SINCE PAPERBOOK NOW IN IMMEDIATE PREPARATION I WONDER IF YOU WOULD BE WILLING TO CABLE BRIEF ONE OR TWO SENTENCE STATEMENT FOR PUBLICITY PURPOSES THIS WOULD BE MOST HELPFUL AND MOST APPRECIATED GRATEFULLY AND IN FRIENDSHIP

AMOS VOGEL

Telegram with printed letterhead of Servicio Internacional – Secretaría de Comunicaciones y Transportes.
Archivo Buñuel, Filmoteca Española (AB/2005)

*

Luis Buñuel
Cerrada Félix Cuevas 27
México 12, DF

Mexico,
13 November 1975

Cher Amos Vogel,

Je viens de rentrer de la campagne et je trouve votre télégramme. C'est difficile d'exprimer quelques lignes mon opinion totale sur votre livre et surtout en anglais. Tout de même en pensant en espagnol et puis en traduisant littéralement voici en misérable anglais ce que vous me demandez. Je vous prie en cas où vous feriez usage des lignes qui vont suivre de les transformer en anglais correct.

'I have gone through the intense garden of your book with the inducement of a fruit longtime forbidden. To my judgement it takes an outstanding place if not unique in the already extense cinematographical bibliography. Its pictorial enlightenment accompanied by your commentary makes this work an invaluable album for the cineaste'.

Très affectueusement votre,

Luis Buñuel

Original in French and English; typewritten on white paper; handwritten signature. Amos Vogel Papers, Rare Book and Manuscript Library, Columbia University (Subseries III.1: Manuscripts, 1896-1979; Box 106, Folder 6)

*

[New York]
6 January 1976

Luis Buñuel
Cerrada Félix Cuevas 27
México 12 DF

Dear Luis Buñuel,

I am extremely grateful to you for your quote. It will appear as the most important quote on the back cover of the paperback edition of my book, scheduled to appear here in January. I only wish I could see you and talk to you at leisure at some time—perhaps during your next stay in New York. It is one of my many regrets that we—who have such similar loves and hates—are not in closer and continued contact and I hope this can be corrected in the future. You have my best wishes for your new film as well as for the new year.

With all my love,

[Amos Vogel]

Typewritten on carbon copy paper; unsigned. Amos Vogel Papers, Rare Book and Manuscript Library, Columbia University (Subseries II.5: Subject Files, 1947-2001; Box 92, Folder 6)