

INTERLUDE



Music video still from AUNQUE ES DE NOCHE, Rosalía, 00:03:29,
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=6s-MQzPZ6IE>



Paths of Destiny

Rosalía's Spiritual Car Ride in AUNQUE ES DE NOCHE

Keywords

Rosalía, Religious Amalgam, Spirituality, Female Strength, Music Video, Aunque es de noche

Biography

Eva Meienberg worked as a teacher at elementary school and earned a Bachelor of Arts degree in modern history and in the study of religions from the University of Zurich. She now works as a journalist at the Catholic Media Centre in Zurich.

Rosalía Vila Tobella is a Spanish pop star. Her international breakthrough came with the 2017 album *Los Angeles*.¹ Rosalía studied flamenco, where she absorbed the complex codes of Spanish cultural heritage, but she breaks the rules by creating an amalgam of traditional flamenco and contemporary popular music.

The symbols with which Rosalía grew up in the suburbs of Barcelona are also amalgamated. Thus she has said, “I [use] the Spanish cultural imaginary: My town is very industrial, so truck drivers are part of my imaginary. My grandmother took me to mass on weekends – I have memories of all that. I use all those cultural elements that are so present in my society.”²

“Aunque es de noche” (Even Though It Is Night) is a particularly fine example of these processes in action. The single was released in November 2017.

In the video clip AUNQUE ES DE NOCHE, we – as viewers of the clip – are waiting in the back seat of a car when suddenly a man wearing a hoodie gets in, starts the engine and turns on the radio. The journey through the night streets begins. The dashboard resembles an altar and is packed with

1 *Los Angeles* (Rosalía, ES 2017, Universal Music Spain).

2 Exposito 2018.



Fig. 1: Music video still from *AUNQUE ES DE NOCHE*, Rosalía, 00:01:11.



Fig. 2: Music video still from *AUNQUE ES DE NOCHE*, Rosalía, 00:00:55.

statuettes of saints, rosaries and a disco ball, shining brightly in the dark night. “The Dark Night of the Soul” is a poem by the mystic John of the Cross to which the lyrics of Rosalía’s song refer. The Carmelite friar lived in Spain in the 16th century and was a representative of the Counter Reformation. Locked up in a tiny cell almost without light, he wrote the poem that



Fig. 3: Music video still from AUNQUE ES DE NOCHE, Rosalía, 00:03:02.



Fig. 4: Music video still from AUNQUE ES DE NOCHE, Rosalía, 00:03:34.

describes the union of his soul with God. The darkness of the night represents the terrors of life on earth, but night is also the necessary condition for reaching God.

After the radio is tuned to the right frequency, Rosalía's voice accompanies us on our ride. Again and again there is static noise while symbols appear,



Fig. 5: Music video still from *AUNQUE ES DE NOCHE*, Rosalía, 00:03:47.

overlaid on the film. They are commentary, but they also refer to another level of reality. Rosalía is not only heard; she also appears to us. The vision is of a woman in front of an altar, looking into the camera and addressing us with her chant.

The driver makes a turn and enters the driveway to a graveyard through a stone gate. At the end of a long white wall the headlights catch Rosalía. Sitting on a throne-like chair in a golden robe with scattered flowers and her long hair entwining her body, she seems to be a representation of the Virgin Mary and a Renaissance painting of a classical goddess.

The camera leaves the car and approaches Rosalía. Her singing becomes more urgent; she gets up and starts towards an emotional crescendo. With her eyes closed, her gaze is directed inwards, from where the energy originates that is visualised as symbols. Flames and lightning escape her body. Tears spurt out of her eyes and shackles wrap themselves around her, which she immediately breaks again. Skulls, flaming daggers, coffins and the eye of providence appear. The sequence forms a *memento mori* combined with symbols of the all-seeing eye.

In the poem *The Dark Night of the Soul* John of the Cross describes the path through the dark night that leads to God. The motif of the tormented night also appears in the lyrics of Rosalía's "Aunque es de noche". But she defies the darkness. She knows the source of life, light, desire and knowledge. She her-

self is connected to the source – probably she *is* the source, as the symbols of death and God emanating from her body strongly indicate. She also appears as the enthroned Madonna, while the ambient light, which oscillates from red to blue, is reminiscent of the robes in countless depictions of the Virgin Mary. So, is there no God in Rosalía’s universe? Maybe there is – the word *Redentor* (saviour) appears on the car, whose driver remains hidden. Rosalía believes in destiny, a path laid out for each person. The unknown driver showed us the way, drove us through the night and brought us safely to our destination – to Rosalía, to the singer, to the music.

“I always pray, in my way, before taking the stage. I feel we all have a task in life – a path, a destiny. Before I perform, I try to connect with my body. I give thanks for the possibility of performing and sharing with others. I always try to reconnect with that intention: to be at the service of the music.”³

The mystical experience of Saint John of the Cross becomes the spiritual experience of the Madonna-like singer Rosalía, who connects with her body to draw energy from her own source so that she can walk her path towards destiny. The driver in the cool car is waiting.

Bibliography

- Cobo, Leila, 2019, Why Everybody’s Betting Big on Rosalía, the Flamenco Star No One Saw Coming, *billboard*, 10 October, <https://www.billboard.com/articles/columns/latin/8532527/rosalia-billboard-cover-story-interview-2019> [accessed 5 July 2020].
- Exposito, Suzy, 2018, Artist You Need to Know: Rosalía. Rising Spanish Star and Latin Grammy Winner Rosalía Talks Her New Album “El Mal Querer”, *Rolling Stone*, 20 November, <https://www.rollingstone.com/music/music-latin/rosalia-artist-you-need-to-know-interview-758452/> [accessed 5 July 2020].

Filmography

- AUNQUE ES DE NOCHE (Ignasi Monreal, IT 2017), <https://youtu.be/6s-MQzPZ6IE>, [accessed 6 July 2020].

Discography

- Los Angeles* (Rosalía, ES 2017, Universal Music Spain).

3 Cobo 2019.