

Spain Made Flesh:
Reflections and Projections of the National in
Contemporary Spanish Stardom, 1992-2007

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ABSTRACT

This thesis uses Higson's (2000) approach to national cinemas (that they look inward and outward to define their boundaries) to investigate how Spanish stardom interacted with the national between 1992 and 2007. The thesis examines four specific stars as case studies, and finds that there is a correlation between the cinema produced and the stars created, and that stars are as reflective of their national cinema as they are of current cultural perceptions and conceptions of nationness. The thesis therefore provides a detailed investigation of contemporary Spanish stardom within the framework of the interrelations between Spanish cinema and the four chosen stars in their reflections and projections of the national. Perriam (2003), Babington (2001), and Vincendeau (2000) show that the relationship between stars and the national informs the shape and content of their stardom, but this thesis argues that stars negotiate industrial imperatives as well as the cultural contexts of their nation; the national, cultural, and industrial converge in the star image. In investigating the stardom of Javier Bardem, Penélope Cruz, Eduardo Noriega, and Paz Vega –who emerged at different points during the period– this thesis finds that the manner in which Spanish stars interacted with the national onscreen gradually changed owing to factors specific to the Spanish film industry in this era. Textual analysis of star images and performances and cultural contextualisation are employed to argue that as the influences within Spanish cinema have become more culturally diverse, and the boundaries of 'Spanish cinema' have expanded, newer Spanish stars are less obviously ingrained with Spanishness and their reflections and projections of the national become less overt. Although this is suggestive of a gradual dilution of national characteristics within Spanish cinema and stardom, this thesis finds that the newer stars nonetheless still reveal something of their changing Spanish culture and society.

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'A nation is nothing without the stories it tells itself about itself.'

(Triana-Toribio 2003: 6)

'Stars [...] cannot be separated from the industrial contexts of their production'

(Willis 2004: 3)

'Siempre que tengo que hacer algo muy español pienso en ella. Para mí ha pasado de ser aquella Niña Jamón a la Gran Maja Española, hermosísima, España hecha carne.'

Director Bigas Luna on Penélope Cruz (Trashorras 1999: 132)

Introduction:

This thesis examines the ways in which contemporary Spanish stardom interacted with ‘the national’ between 1992 and 2007, taking four specific stars as case studies, and argues that there is a correlation between the cinema produced and the stars created in parallel in terms of how the national is reflected and projected onscreen, and that stars are as specific to the contemporaneous industrial contexts of their national cinema as they are to current perceptions and conceptions of nationness. The intention is not to define Spanishness but to examine how Spanish cinema can be said to mould its stars according to national, industrial, and / or cultural specificities. My purpose is therefore to provide a detailed investigation of contemporary Spanish stardom within the framework of the interrelations between Spanish cinema and the four chosen stars in their projections and reflections of the national. Attention will be paid to the specifics of Spanish cinema in this period, and the thesis initially examines the industrial contexts of Spanish cinema after 1992 and outlines how the chosen stars fit within this industry in terms of their individual box office track records (an indication of their standing, industrially speaking) and the status of the filmmakers with whom they have collaborated. The case study chapters investigate the stardom of Javier Bardem, Penélope Cruz, Eduardo Noriega, and Paz Vega, and the manner in which they have interacted with an evolving sense of Spanishness onscreen, through a combination of textual analysis of specific star images and / or performances, and cultural contextualisation. These interactions with the national can take various forms, for example: participation in national narratives; a pronounced sense of geographical (regional) belonging and identity; the portrayal of specific social types; and / or the embodiment of so-called national characteristics. The concluding chapter brings together the findings from the various chapters, and in considering the stars as a group highlights the gradual changes undergone by Spanish stardom between 1992 and 2007; this thesis concludes that the industrial imperatives of the period have been increasingly influential in shaping the star image as overtly national characteristics have gradually fallen out of favour.

There are a number of key texts in the field of star studies (Dyer ([1979] 1998), Dyer (1986), McDonald (2000), Morin ([1961] 2005)) and national stardom (Babington (2001), Perriam (2003), Vincendeau (2000)). Obviously Dyer’s work is seminal and has shaped much of what has followed in terms of stars being approached

as semiotic and socio-cultural signs, and those writing about *national* stardom have taken his approach out of its Hollywood-centric context to include the cultural specificities inherent to other cinemas: ‘the institutions of film stardom exhibit major constants running across different film cultures, but each national cinema produces different inflections of them’ (Babington 2001: 4). The work on national stardom has highlighted the importance of cultural specificity to stardom and observed that the relationship between stars and the national informs both the shape and content of their stardom. This thesis builds on that work by emphasising the importance of cultural specificities and by largely taking a text-based approach to the analysis of the chosen stars and their images, but departs from what has already been done by addressing the industrial dimensions or contexts of stardom through an emphasis on the importance of the national film industry and the cinema that the star is part of and circulates within.

Several authors touch on the issue of industrial contexts (often in their opening chapters) but do not incorporate it into their consideration of the star texts.¹ For example: Babington highlights ‘the chronic economic weakness and unstable production base of the local industry, and [...] the dominance of American films and stars in British film culture’ (2001: 10) as factors that undermined the production of British stardom (factors also at play in Spanish cinema), but the subsequent articles in the book do not address stardom from that angle; Vincendeau discusses box office popularity in her opening chapter, and the contradiction within mainstream film history of the attention paid to stars from ‘quality’ (auteur) cinema at the expense of those who are consistently box office draws (2000: 26-28), but this issue is not subsequently returned to in her analyses of specific stars; and Perriam (following McDonald (2000)) highlights an imbalance in star studies in that ‘stars have tended to be looked at from the point of view of their reception and consumption more than from that of the film industry’, but says that he does not set out to redress that imbalance in the Spanish context (2003: 5). This thesis outlines the circumstances of, and changes undergone by, the Spanish film industry in the 1992-2007 period and looks at whether these elements can be said to have directly influenced the form and content of contemporary Spanish stardom. This thesis also considers the box office track records of the individual stars and how they fit within the box office trends of

¹ An exception is Small (2009) who explicitly places the development of Sophia Loren’s star image within the context of the industrial specificities of Italian cinema in the 1950s and after.

the period, and analyses how that positions them within the panorama of contemporary Spanish stardom and the Spanish film industry, but does not consider the star as capital or the economics of stardom in terms of salaries and production costs; Vincendeau says of French stars that it is 'extremely difficult to establish how much a star is "worth" financially' as the evidence is unreliable (2000: 12), and likewise in Spain the financial side of stardom is not openly discussed. Aside from the issue of box office popularity, this thesis takes 'industrial contexts' to mean factors (discussed in the Industrial Contexts chapter) specific to the Spanish film industry in this era (for example, the influx of new filmmakers) that shaped the cinema produced (in which the star circulates), and 'industrial imperatives' to refer to what the industry *required* of its stars (for example, an ability to operate across a range of genres). The industrial factors and imperatives are key because this thesis argues that they are an integral part of how the national comes to be reflected and projected onscreen through the star; the film industry both responds to (reflects), and propels (projects), certain national circumstances through film and this in turn is refracted through the star and their image.

A number of studies of individual Spanish stars emphasise that a specific film can impact on the star images of those who appear in the film (for example, Evans (2004), Perriam (2005)). But the focus is usually on a given star in an individual film, a specific genre, or style of filmmaking; they do not tend to locate the star within the broader landscape of Spanish cinema, and generally consider the stars individually rather than as a group. This thesis considers the increasingly nebulous boundaries of 'Spanish cinema' between 1992 and 2007 and, in looking at a group of stars who emerged at different points in that period, also tracks how the industrial changes in turn gradually changed Spanish stardom: the stars are examined individually and collectively within the specifics of 'Spanish cinema' in this era. Perriam (2003) looks at the careers of a number of specific stars, meaning that he examines their images over a period of time and (depending on the path taken by the star) in the context of different genres and styles of filmmaking, but 'Spanish cinema' is not examined as a direct influence over the star images discussed, and as already stated he does not set out to address the industrial contexts of Spanish stardom. While Perriam (like Babington and Vincendeau) examines a collection of stars, they are treated individually and are not collectively contrasted with each other; the chosen stars in this thesis are contrasted to each other and other contemporary Spanish stars in terms

of their box office standing in the Industrial Contexts chapter, and then examined in depth individually, with the findings drawn together in the concluding chapter. The final chapter will show the correlation between the cinema produced and the stars that were created in tandem, and how the weight of importance given to national and / or industrial factors in shaping the form and content of those new star images gradually shifted; the thesis will show that the industrial factors are integral to the star image and their reflections and projections of the national, but also that these factors became increasingly important to newer star images between 1992 and 2007 with greater emphasis being placed on the generic aspects of stardom rather than the nationally-specific. Nonetheless these stars and their images still originate from (and circulate within) a Spanish context and therefore still reveal something about changing perceptions and conceptions of nationness, as well as indicating the growing influence of industrial imperatives in the formation of Spanish stars.

Perriam's investigation is clearly the work with which this thesis has the most in common but there are a number of ways (in addition to those mentioned above) in which this investigation is distinct, such as the different time periods (1982-2001 versus 1992-2007) and some different stars (and although Bardem and to a lesser degree Noriega are among the stars in his study, my analysis of their star images includes a substantial period of their careers that postdates Perriam's book). But the most obvious difference is that he specifically looks at the construction of masculinities in the images of Spanish male stars, whereas I am looking at interactions with the national and nationness in Spanish stars (of both sexes); although the masculinities he examines are specifically Spanish, they are not interchangeable with Spanishness. Overall, the contribution I am hoping to make to star studies and Spanish film studies is to show that between 1992 and 2007 in Spanish cinema there was a direct relation between the cinema produced and the stars created in terms of their reflections and projections of the national, and that Spanish stars are as specific to the industrial contexts of their national cinema as they are to current cultural perceptions and conceptions of nationness.

As already stated, the choice of four stars who started out at different times between 1992 and 2007 also makes it possible to track gradual changes in the form and content of star images in relation to the national. The industrial and the national are by no means mutually exclusive given that any film industry makes films primarily for its native audience, and arguably one reason that the industrial factors

and imperatives are important in a national stardom context is that the majority of stars first ‘break out’, or achieve stardom, within their home market. In terms of the national specifics of Spanish stardom and the central thesis question of how stars interact with the national onscreen and how their star images manifest ‘the national’ as a result, these issues are addressed via a detailed textual analysis of specific films and performances from different stages of the careers of the four chosen stars. The analysis includes close readings of specific film sequences and an examination of the ways in which the star image interacts (and possibly interferes) with particular roles, as well as a consideration of how the stars and their films fit within the industrial environment of the time (for example, how their box office records tally with concurrent trends) and the impact of specific industrial factors on the development of their star images (for example, the directors they have worked with, and styles of cinema they have appeared in).

Within this framework special consideration is given to those roles and films wherein the star image is in an explicit negotiation with ideas or representations of the nation or the national, while at the same time accepting that in the case of certain iconic roles their iconicity may have little to do with ‘the national’. These iconic roles that lack overt national characteristics nonetheless need to be examined, as if they are important to the star image they can impact on the star’s later interactions with the national. There are significant commonalities as to how stardom is presented and manifested generally but the distinctions between the four chosen stars are substantial enough to illustrate differing star images within Spanish cinema between 1992 and 2007. The chosen stars are effectively the ‘post-Banderas’ generation. Antonio Banderas, Spain’s biggest star at the start of the 1990s, has yet to return to Spain to act in another film since making his US debut in *The Mambo Kings* (Glimcher, 1992).² The Spanish stars under discussion emerged in the vacuum that Banderas left behind: Javier Bardem and Penélope Cruz shot to stardom with the release of *Jamón jamón* (Bigas Luna, 1992); Eduardo Noriega arrived with the combination of *Tesis* (Amenábar, 1996) and *Abre los ojos* (Amenábar, 1997); and Paz Vega emerged with *Lucía y el sexo* (Medem, 2001).

Admittedly a certain degree of luck was involved when choosing the stars at the beginning of the investigation in 2003, as although Bardem and Cruz were clearly

² Banderas has directed a Spanish film, *El camino de los ingleses* (2006).

consecrated stars by that point, Noriega's career has been less clear cut and Vega had not yet proven longevity. But as the following chapters demonstrate, the careers of Bardem and Cruz have gone from strength to strength and those of Noriega and Vega have endured and solidified; the four of them are at the vanguard of contemporary Spanish stardom. When Spanish film magazine *Fotogramas* turned sixty in 2006, they published a special issue looking back over the trends and stars of the past sixty years: the only Spanish stars mentioned for the 1996-2006 period were Penélope Cruz, Leonor Watling, Natalia Verbeke, Elena Anaya, Paz Vega, Eduardo Noriega, and Javier Bardem (2006: 130-136).³ Furthermore, the following year *Fotogramas* published a special issue focused purely on Spanish cinema of the past sixty years and in the section on stars, of the twenty-five profiled, the only four to have emerged post-1992 were Bardem, Cruz, Noriega, and Vega (2007b: 24-35). The Industrial Contexts chapter further emphasises the importance of these specific stars to the Spanish film industry through an assessment of their box office records that not only reveals them to occupy elevated positions in the hierarchy of contemporary Spanish stars, but also contradicts the notion that Spanish stars do not 'sell' films and shows them to be reliable generators of audience numbers (although usually in conjunction with other factors).

The centrality that their films have to their star images (and their position within their film industry, at least in commercial terms) highlights why, in the context of this thesis, our examination of stars starts by considering the national cinema(s) that they belong to. As the following chapters will demonstrate, 'nation' and 'the national' are contentious terms open to a variety of interpretations, and 'the national' (or 'nationness') is an unstable quality subject to changes over periods of time (discussed in greater detail in the main body of the thesis). When applied to cinema there appears to be even less consensus as to the definitions and boundaries of the discussion.

However Higson writes:

On the one hand, a national cinema seems to look inward, reflecting on the nation itself, on its past, present and future, its cultural heritage, its indigenous traditions, its sense of common identity and continuity. On the other hand, a national cinema seems to look out across its borders, asserting its difference from other national cinemas, proclaiming its sense of otherness. (2000: 67)

³ *Screen International*, in its annual Spanish cinema special, also singles out the two female stars, saying that 'after Penélope Cruz and Paz Vega, every pretty young actress in Spain with acting talent and sex appeal gets hailed as the next big breakout star' (Green 2005: 8); Cruz and Vega have become emblematic of Spanish female stardom in this era.

The idea that cinema effectively projects as well as reflects (making it part of the *process* of defining nations) is an integral part of considering how these stars interact with and / or manifest the national onscreen: are they participating in a reflection or a projection of the national? Higson's approach to national cinemas is being used as the framework of categorisation for contemporary Spanish stars and their respective manifestations of the national because this thesis argues that there is an interrelation between how national cinemas and their stars reflect and / or project the national. However there are a number of problems with Higson's framework.⁴

The main problem in relation to this thesis is that the inward-reflection / outward-projection dichotomy seemingly forms an either / or framework whereas films and stars can reflect and project simultaneously (for example, see the case study discussions of *Jamón jamón*).⁵ It also posits that projections only go outwards (directed at outside audiences) which would mean the inward-looking elements (directed at the home audience) would only offer a reflective mirror image of the nation. But cultural constructs are 'orchestrated and contended over by each of the forces at play in a given geographical territory' (Vitali and Willemen 2006: 7): they can be produced and utilised by non-dominant forces to challenge dominant perceptions and conceptions, a hegemonic power struggle that is in constant operation and points to an element of negotiation in all representations of the national. That is why Hayward says that stars 'function as reflectors of the time and as *signs to be reflected into society*' (2006: 380, my emphasis): stars can *project inward* (directed at the home audience), as well as reflect, as part of the hegemonic negotiation of conceptions of nationness, hence Babington observes that stars have 'meaning in regard to dominant and subdominant ideologies, reinforce ruling values, [and] sometimes articulate oppositional meanings' (2001: 19). This underlines the importance of the contemporaneous industrial circumstances, as the types and styles of cinema being made (with the perspectives of different generations of filmmakers) clearly impact on how the national is represented onscreen (does it challenge or support the current dominant discourses?), and how the stars participate in that

⁴ Higson acknowledges problems with the framework (which dates back to an earlier (1989) article of his), namely that it assumes that borders are effective when in fact they are notoriously leaky (2000: 67). That issue is not a problem for this thesis given that I am not attempting to place boundaries around Spanish stardom or Spanish cinema, or considering them as 'pure' entities.

⁵ Higson seems to suggest that these two forms can co-exist simultaneously within a national *cinema* but he does not address whether an individual *film* can do both (ibid).

representation. This thesis uses Higson's framework as the basis for categorising how stars interact with and / or manifest the national, but expands that framework in order to acknowledge that stars are involved in a *negotiation* with 'the national' rather than a simplistic either / or binary. Higson's framework also does not take into account the impact of the industrial contexts of filmmaking (another level of the negotiation between films (or stars) and the national), or that filmmakers within a given national space can take influences from outside of that space. For example, the new generation of Spanish filmmakers who emerged in the 1990s (and after) freely combine cinematic influences from inside and outside Spain, producing films that do not fit within the traditional boundaries of 'Spanish cinema': this has an impact on how the stars formed by those films interact with the national onscreen, and by extension how and what they reflect and / or project of the national as well.⁶

An awareness of the full spectrum of Spanish cinema and the issues that it addresses (or avoids) can be problematic if one is outside of that national context. Pohl and Türschmann highlight the problem with investigating Spanish cinema from outside of Spain:

Ya que parece existir en el extranjero una visión necesariamente selectiva, que enfoca sobre el cine 'de autor' y de distribución transnacional, y que considera mucho menos, por ejemplo, las películas de éxito masivo en España. Tal complejo de preguntas incluía una reflexión sobre la accesibilidad de producciones españolas para expertos internacionales, ya que ésta influye directamente en el discurso científico internacional de una cinematografía nacional. (2007: 21)

It is true that relying solely on Spanish films that have been distributed in the United Kingdom would substantially curtail your view of Spanish cinema, and it is also true that the selected stars have attained a certain level of international recognition due to specific Spanish films that have successfully attracted audiences in other territories. The distribution of Spanish cinema in the United Kingdom is rather dismal (although it has improved in the time this thesis has been underway) but it is possible to order DVDs and books from Spain: any Spanish film relating to the chosen stars that is currently available in Spain has been viewed in the course of this investigation, and a range of Spanish texts (by Spanish authors) on Spanish cinema have also been read in an attempt to make sure that the thesis incorporates views on Spanish stars and cinema from inside (as well as outside) Spain.

⁶ Globalisation is discussed in the next chapter.

Whether viewed from within or outside of Spain, commentators such as Eleftheriotis (2001) and Higson ((2000) and ([1989] 2002)) argue that the problem with discussions of national cinemas is that they often revert to classifying films in a falsely coherent and unified fashion, as if the nation in question were easily definable and its films neatly regimented: 'or rather, the focus is on films that seem amenable to such an interpretation' (Higson 2000: 66). Eleftheriotis writes that in the worst cases this:

involves the drawing of a strict and exclusive high art boundary around the texts worth considering under the rubric of national cinema. In the best cases it dictates the consideration only of films which, in one way or another, are seen as expressions of the assumed characteristics (aesthetics, cultural, economic, historical) of a national cinema (2001: 32).

As already stated, we shall see that a new generation of filmmakers in Spain have challenged the boundaries of 'Spanish cinema' by incorporating popular genres and commercial styles that would not traditionally be seen as part of 'national cinema'; contemporary Spanish cinema does not conform to the 'belief that a national cinema can be defined on the basis of a fundamental unity [...] a unity that the critic can derive from the form or the content of the films in relation to their national context' (Eleftheriotis 2001: 35). At the same time, in focussing on *stars* this thesis sidesteps the problematic question of how, or indeed whether, an individual film can be deemed representative of a 'national cinema', but still includes a consideration of how the industrial contexts impact on how (and what of) the national is shown onscreen. An individual film could be taken as a snapshot of part of a nation at a given time, but an investigation of a star offers the opportunity to examine the kaleidoscopic nature of both the national and national cinemas, with a specific performer as the thread to be followed. The advantage of the star is that they are not the sole authors of the images they present and they interact with the work of a variety of individuals, often both within and outside of their national film industry, which places their image and meanings in a range of (national) contexts and narratives that they do not have full control over; they can offer diverse and possibly contradictory reflections and projections of the national while negotiating a range of cinematic styles and genres. On the other hand, if one were to focus on the work of an individual director, ultimately the films are the work of one individual who may, or may not, engage with

national issues: the work of one person cannot be taken as representative of an entire nation or national cinema.⁷

Each of the stars in this thesis was born and raised in Spain; their status as ‘Spanish’ is clear-cut, although the way in which each of them represents their nation is distinct.⁸ A star perhaps has a more tangible connection to the nation than a film, although this does not mean that a star has an uncomplicated relationship with the national, or that he or she represents the national in a straightforward way. One star can embody a variety of roles, social types, attitudes and values, but Dyer argues that the fact that ‘one flesh and blood person is embodying them all [...] is sufficient to suggest that there is a coherence behind them all’ (1986: 9). It would also be unexpected if the four chosen stars were to interact with the national in a uniform manner given that they have worked with different combinations of filmmakers and the nation itself is polysemic. There is also an historical dimension to stardom insofar as stars can change over time (they are ‘shifting signifiers’ (Hayward 2006: 380)) and, as stated above, the choice of four stars who emerged at different points during the period under discussion highlights that Spanish stardom has undergone gradual changes in terms of how the stars relate to and interact with the national. This thesis will show that although the interactions between newer Spanish stars and the national have become less overt than those of some of their forebears (such as Bardem and Cruz), they still nonetheless reveal something about Spain and contemporary conceptions of Spanishness, whether it is an underlying anxiety about the loss of cultural roots or a heightened sense of the regional in place of the national (as will be made clear in the relevant case studies).

In relation to the historical specificity of Spanish stardom, 1992 was not chosen as the starting point for the thesis simply because of the changeover of stars that occurred, but also because the year has significance to Spanish national identity. Graham and Sánchez outline the combination of events that led to Spain stepping onto the world stage in 1992:

In 1992 Spain celebrated its new international status with a series of public events: the Olympic Games in Barcelona, the quincentennial commemoration of Columbus’s voyage to the Americas, the World Fair in Seville, and Madrid’s designation as ‘European City of Culture’. The function of these events was perceived in Spain and abroad as both cultural and symbolic. They

⁷ It is nonetheless a common occurrence, e.g. Almodóvar standing for ‘Spanish Cinema’.

⁸ None of them come from regions seeking greater independence from the Spanish state; if they did, referring to them as ‘Spanish’ would be problematic.

were explicitly intended to celebrate Spain's coming of age as a modern, democratic European nation-state, marking the end of a period of political transition (and uncertainty) and the completion of an economic, political, and social process initiated in the 1970s. (1995: 406)

Hooper demonstrates that the year came together in a rather haphazard fashion with different authorities being responsible for the different events, and a series of mishaps surrounding both the World Fair (also known as Expo '92) and the Quincentenary (2006: 61-62).⁹ Although he admits that the year did allow Spain to make 'a spectacular re-entry after the isolation of the Franco years' (61), Hooper argues that it was Barcelona's success at hosting the Olympics that allowed the extravaganza to be remembered as a success, and maintains that 'Spain's success the year before in hosting the Middle East peace conference at short notice did far more to convince the world of the Spaniards' abilities as organizers' (62).

Be that as it may, 1992 has come to be seen as symbolic of the changes that Spain had undergone and it is also an example of a government seizing the initiative.¹⁰ There was a concerted effort to focus on the present and what Graham and Sánchez refer to as an 'official attempt':

To represent Spain's new, "modern", democratic national identity as if it were built on a *tabula rasa*, thus avoiding confrontation with the cultural, social, regional, and political tensions that have plagued Spain since its emergence as a nation-state. (1995: 406)

Moreiras Menor argues that the celebration and glorification of the present was something that characterized the Spain of the 1980s and was produced by the need to forget a past that was considered obsolete and an obstacle to the construction of a new modern Spain (2002: 64). We will see in relation to the new generation of filmmakers who emerged in the 1990s and later, that a similar desire to primarily (although not exclusively) focus on the present has been characteristic of their work as well. Moreiras Menor argues that 1992 was the culmination of a process that started in 1975, when Franco's death left a void in Spain's self image that they sought to fill through a 'national project' (which in the 1980s was 'Europa, y con ella la internacionalización de España y su entrada en la economía global del mercado' (2002: 186)), and which was paralleled in how cultural texts articulated this changing

⁹ This division of responsibility can be seen as representative of the increased regional diversification that Spain has undergone during the period covered by this thesis.

¹⁰ 1992 was also the year that the Socialist government was celebrating ten years in power; it was intended that the events of that year were seen as a crowning glory for them.

national identity (ibid). She goes on to argue that 1992 was built up (in terms of the national ‘project’) into having a significance that it could not ultimately deliver; by the end of the year, Spain could say that they were once again a world player, but it did not solve the problems of Spain’s burgeoning democracy (such as high unemployment) and they also found themselves plunged into a recession (2002: 187).¹¹ But, although Moreiras Menor suggests that Spain’s quest for reinvention was achieved in 1992, at the same time 1992 can also be seen as the *beginning* of a new stage in Spanish identity, as the new image of democratic Spain now needed to be maintained and / or adjusted as Spanish society continued to evolve.

To summarise:

This thesis argues that the new generation of Spanish stars can be seen to have interacted with an evolving sense of Spanishness onscreen, and that the contemporaneous national and industrial circumstances surrounding their early films are integral to how they reflect and project the national. Although there are problems with Higson’s reflection-projection framework (as outlined above) there is still validity to it if it is utilised alongside a conception of nationness as a cultural construct that inevitably changes over time, and an acceptance that industrial factors and imperatives are key to why and how those changes are manifested onscreen. Through an investigation of contemporary Spanish stardom within the framework of the interrelations between Spanish cinema and its stars in their reflections and projections of the national, this thesis argues that there is a correlation between the cinema produced and the stars created in parallel. Starting with an exploration of nation and the national, and the implications for culture, cinema, and star theory, the thesis pays close attention to factors specific to the Spanish film industry between 1992 and 2007, and through the chosen stars weighs up the relationship between industrial and national factors in Spanish cinema and stardom in this era, finding them both to be integral to Spanish star images. Overall, this thesis stresses the importance of the industrial factors and imperatives to the stars’ onscreen interactions with, and manifestations of, nationness, and finds that as the influences within Spanish cinema have become more culturally diverse, and the boundaries of ‘Spanish cinema’ have expanded, newer Spanish stars are less obviously ingrained with Spanishness and

¹¹ Such social issues will be addressed within the individual case studies as and when the discussion turns to specific films that relate to them.

their reflections and projections of the national become less overt (although no less revealing of the ideals and values circulating in Spanish culture and society).

Stars, Cinemas, and the National

While the Industrial Contexts chapter will explore the specifics of the Spanish film industry between 1992 and 2007, and the manner in which the four chosen stars fit within that industry, this chapter sets out the existing theory relating to stars and the ways in which it can be reinterpreted or adjusted to fit stars of film industries other than Hollywood. Most of the time the use of the word ‘star’ implicitly refers to a *Hollywood* star and there had been little textual analysis of indigenous stars until the recent increased interest in national cinemas. Vincendeau observes that even Morin overwhelmingly concentrated on Hollywood stars (2000: vii), and although he notes that the evolution of stardom has been ‘various according to the countries in which it has occurred’ ([1960] 2005: 25) Morin does not overtly distinguish between the Hollywood and French stars he mentions. Babington too asserts in the context of British stars that ‘dominant star theory, even when British in origin, [has been] almost wholly Hollywood-oriented’ (2001: 3) and is in agreement with Vincendeau (2000: x) and Perriam (2003: 6) in noting that significant textual analysis of indigenous (or Hollywood) stars (i.e. work that goes beyond the biographical) is almost non-existent (2001: 23).

This thesis looks specifically at Spanish stardom. The chosen stars all define themselves as Spanish, and where more specific regionalisms are invoked those are taken into consideration in the case studies. However, this investigation does not attempt to define ‘Spanishness’ (‘an astonishingly slippery signifier’ (Triana-Toribio 2003: 7)) or what it is to be Spanish, especially since (as this chapter highlights) there would be a multitude of ‘definitions’, but rather to examine how the chosen stars are moulded according to national and cultural specificities. As it investigates the construction of a cultural text (a star) within a specific national culture (Spain), ‘culture’ and ‘nation’ are integral components in this study. Anderson states that:

nationality, or, as one might prefer to put it in view of that word’s multiple significations, nation-ness, as well as nationalism, are cultural artefacts of a particular kind. ([1983] 1991: 4)

It is clear that with its entwinement with culture, a nation is something more than boundaries on a map; it is a people and all that goes toward creating their cultural

identities.¹² Multiplicity quickly becomes apparent, not least due to Spain's many regional identities causing a strong sense of the kaleidoscopic and pluralistic: the heterogeneity of Spanish culture(s) will be a key aspect of what follows.

At the outset it is not in the interests of this thesis to set a definition of stardom that is too precise, as individual stars rarely fit rigid structures and models; they may follow a vague template, but it is usually individuated to fit the specific star. For that reason this chapter starts by investigating the general components that go towards creating a star, before considering the interaction between nation and culture and what that means in terms of national cinemas, and then how stars fit and circulate within this framework.

Production – content – circulation:

These three spheres are key to star images but most star studies include only one or two in their analysis; this thesis departs from that format to incorporate all three aspects into the consideration of the chosen stars. These three spheres are integral to each other, and there are a number of points within star theory that encompass more than one of them. Within this thesis, 'production' is effectively the industrial background of the star image, the set of industrial circumstances in which the star was created. 'Content' is taken to refer to the star text itself, the elements that a star consists of: a collection of signs, performances and images. This is the textual level of stardom and in the main body of the thesis the content of the star is predominantly analysed in relation to their films. However, what follows below is a discussion of the components that make up a star and how they can be taken apart and read.

'Circulation' is in essence the cultural context of the star image: the culture which produces a given star, and in which said star is intended to circulate, is integral to the form and content of the star text. Circulation can also be taken to refer to all that is in the public arena about a star: films; interviews; gossip; reviews; images. It is the manner in which the star itself becomes part of the culture; a star is a cultural text.

In what follows star theory is approached through these three prisms because all three aspects are important to the thesis. It is difficult to say which should be approached first since they are part of a cycle and obviously cultural distinctions inform all three; a culture's attitudes towards stardom and stars contributes to shaping

¹² Cultures can exist independently of nations, for example working class culture.

the form that stardom takes. Production is explored first as the star has to originate from somewhere, then the star image in terms of the elements of its construction and content, and then the circulation of these star images is addressed within the context of the nation and national cinemas.

Production and Industry:

McDonald's book opens with an overview of star theory to date, arguing that in the 1980s and 1990s academic work in Britain and North America concentrated on viewing stars in a semiotic framework as signs or images, at the expense of looking at the industry producing those images (2000: 2).¹³ Indeed, Willis argues that stars 'cannot be separated from the industrial contexts of their production and their films distribution and exhibition' (2004: 3) and yet (as McDonald argues) very little has been written on the place of the star within a film *industry*. This thesis addresses this gap by including the industrial dimension of contemporary Spanish stardom within its analysis of Spanish stars, because stars are drawn from the cinema that is being made and cinemas are shaped by a combination of cultural and industrial imperatives; changes within a film industry can result in changes in the type of star and stardom produced. Willis writes that there is an assumption that the star is 'absolutely essential to mainstream film production, be that in Hollywood or the popular national cinemas across the globe' (2004: 1), but that is questionable in relation to these 'popular national cinemas' because, as is discussed below, the star is not necessarily constructed as the central element or main selling point of a film in other (non-Hollywood) film industries. What has been written about stars as being part of an industry tends to concentrate on Hollywood in the studio era when stars were more obviously 'produced'.¹⁴

It is worth noting that even during the studio era the manufacture of stars and the content of their images was by no means uniform or straightforward:

Images have to be made. [...] If the drift of the image emanates from Hollywood, and with some consistency within Hollywood, still the whole image-making process within and without Hollywood allows for variation, inflection, and contradiction. (Dyer 1986: 4)

¹³ He does not consider work outside of the Anglo-American context, although little seems to have been written on the industrial contexts of stardom elsewhere either.

¹⁴ This is true of Gledhill (1991), which despite the title *Stardom: Industry of Desire* does not really look at the industrial side of stardom. Morin ([1960] 2005), Dyer ([1979] 1998) and McDonald (2000) all discuss the studio era in depth, and the latter brings the discussion of the star system up to date in the form of the talent agencies and the Internet.

Stars are not the sole authors of their own image, which is important in this thesis as it signifies that Spanish stars are potentially shaped by a broad spectrum of factors and influences operating within Spanish cinema; Spanish stars are a subsidiary of the heterogeneity represented by contemporary Spanish cinema and therefore their interactions with the national are similarly varied and multiple depending on the specifics of their individual careers and the combination of filmmakers with whom they work.

Important though the complexity of Hollywood-produced images are, the concentration on Hollywood and its performers has ‘sometimes overshadowed the operation of stardom’ within other markets (Willis 2004: 3-4). For example, Vincendeau points out that French stars were never tied to a studio or production company in the manner of their Hollywood counterparts, with the result that production companies had no vested interests in transforming actors into stars because the star was not their property and therefore their ‘value’ would not necessarily translate into profits for that particular company (2000: 12): French stars have had to attain stardom via a different route to that of the traditional Hollywood star. Spain had a series of national studios or companies (such as CIFESA and Suevia Films), which in the aftermath of the Civil War did create a Spanish star system (detailed by Comas (2004)), but only CIFESA seems to have taken a form close to that of the American studios (Comas 2004: 37). Today, in the post-studio era internationally, actors of all nationalities have to find alternative routes to stardom. In contemporary Spanish cinema, for example, stars are increasingly being produced through television (television channels and production companies have a vested interest in promoting actors who have long-term contracts for specific series) before attempting to transfer to stardom on the big screen (where production companies do not have long-term contracts with actors and arguably directors are more likely to act as ‘star makers’).¹⁵

As Vincendeau’s observations attest, the format of stardom outside of Hollywood does not necessarily follow the Hollywood model:

There are many French stars, but is there a French star system? No, if by this is meant the highly organised *management* of stars developed by the American studios in the classical period or the Rank stable of British stars and starlets of

¹⁵ The television route has become more pronounced recently (Belinchón and Gosálvez (2005: 51)), but television has long been important to establishing (or maintaining) an acting career in Spain: for example, Jorge Sanz has had dual careers in television and cinema (Perriam 2003: 147), which suggests that the television careers of more recent stars are not a radically new form of stardom.

the 1950s. But yes, in the sense that stars are crucial to the economy of French cinema: most mainstream films feature stars who in turn organise its narrative hierarchy and publicity. (Vincendeau 2000: 1)

Similarly, within Spanish cinema it is difficult to identify an organised system or management of stars, but the Industrial Contexts chapter shows that Spanish stars can be a factor in the commercial success of a given film. If stardom has different national inflections then it follows that what a 'star' *is*, or what it is understood to be, may also differ a great deal from one culture to another. Within Spanish cinema it has been debated whether stars as they are traditionally known even exist: Perriam opens his book by acknowledging that 'the question of how far we can apply such a term as "star" to actors in a relatively small and only intermittently global market such as that of Spanish cinema must be considered an open one' (2003: 1).¹⁶ Furthermore, Jordan and Allinson state that Spanish critics and film writers place 'the term firmly in inverted commas, rather doubtful of its validity, let alone its reality' (2005: 122) and it is common for Spanish actors / actresses to strongly resist being labelled a 'star'.

Javier Bardem suggests that the lack of 'real stars' in contemporary European cinemas is 'a cultural thing' (Edelmann 2007: 249), and argues that European actors do not want to put themselves in that place or to present themselves as stars: '[In the States] It's about always trying to be number one. Being number two is not enough. And here you can maybe be number ten –and that's fine!' (ibid). The dubious status of Spanish stardom within Spain may stem from the use of Hollywood as the point of reference, and when the Spanish individual does not conform to the idea of a Hollywood star, stardom is judged to be absent. It needs to be acknowledged that stardom takes different forms in different contexts. After all, the candidates for Spanish stardom may not mirror their Hollywood counterparts exactly, but they are still the elevated few: they must have some distinguishable 'special' quality. It is significant that Bardem also observes that 'in order to be a well-known actor in Europe, you have to go to the American market' (Edelmann 2007: 249), as it is noticeable that the very few Spanish stars who are acknowledged to be stars by even the most sceptical Spanish critics are those who have managed to find success in the US: Antonio Banderas, Penélope Cruz, and increasingly Javier Bardem.

To return to the star in an industrial sense, it becomes clear that there is a major distinction to be made between Hollywood stars, who Dyer bluntly states 'are made

¹⁶ Although the title of his book partially answers that question, as he observes (2003: 1).

for profit' (1986: 5), and the Europeans whom Finney describes equally bluntly as 'struggling to win vague recognition from neighbouring countries, let alone international fame' (1994: 23) and therefore presumably not reliable profit generators. Arguably European stardom has evolved since the time of Finney's scathing remarks, although Macnab suggests that the financial viability of European stars is still shaky (2007: 16); a range of European stars have achieved differing degrees of international recognition, as the likes of Kate Winslet, Daniel Craig, Juliette Binoche, Audrey Tautou, Monica Bellucci, Daniel Brühl, as well as the four chosen Spanish stars, have participated in cinemas outside of their respective national cinemas. It would also be reductive to see the financial distinctions as a matter of commerce vs. art, the way that the Hollywood / Europe contrast is often set up, because European producers would not complain if they had stars who could reliably generate finance and profits. Considering the supposed lack of European box office reliability in conjunction with Drake's opinion that stars are 'a means by which Hollywood has been able to present itself as a global rather than national film industry' (2004: 76) raises some questions: in cultures that preclude the consideration of actors as 'merchandise' (as Vincendeau observes of France (2000: 12) and is arguably also true of Spain), how is stardom to be measured if profitability is not the primary definition (or motive)? With any industry it is a question of what 'sells', the difference being that in separate markets the major selling point can vary: Jordan and Allinson describe Spanish films in Spain as traditionally being sold via 'genre, directors and actors' (2005: 122) (in that order), as will be discussed further in the Industrial Contexts chapter, whereas Willis (in arguably a more Hollywood-centric context) states that 'most filmgoers' choices about what to watch revolve around stars, their image and their reputation' (2004: 2).

McDonald argues that:

To speak of stardom in Hollywood as a system is to draw attention to how the American film business has employed, and continues to employ, regular strategies for exploiting star performers in the production and consumption of films. (2000: 1)

These 'regular strategies' include the production of 'star vehicles' whereby a film is tailored to the star's existing image to maximise audience expectation and consumption, effectively using the star as the premise for a film. Star vehicles exist outside of Hollywood, and in the Spanish context are found predominantly (but not

exclusively) within the comedy genres, but the machinery of promotion and publicity (other 'regular strategies') in Spain is not as visibly efficient as that of Hollywood.

Although Perriam argues that 'a culturally very widespread machinery of promotion of "the new stars of Spanish cinema" has developed' (2003: 4), the stars are not always willing to participate in the traditional modes of promotion: Jordan and Allinson note that you will find 'few serious Spanish actors baring their souls or showing their homes' (2005: 124) in the celebrity press, which is supported by Bardem's cited unwillingness to present himself as a 'star' (Edelmann 2007: 249). However, while they may evade some avenues of promotion they have less choice in the matter of publicity, which Dyer argues is distinct from promotion because 'it does not appear to be, *deliberate* image-making' ([1979] 1998: 61, emphasis in original) (i.e. it is not staged) and therefore it seems more authentic (ibid) whilst possibly revealing tensions in the star image (if the real person contradicts the reel image). From that perspective one could agree with Perriam's view that 'there is a massive attention paid to films and actors at all levels of the press [...] and in casual conversation' (2003: 2) in Spain because their circulation within this sphere is not dependent on their active or willing participation.

As stated above, many readings of stardom do not bring together the cultural *and* the economic: Dyer touches on the financial purposes of stars, but generally focuses on the semiotic and sociological contexts of stardom rather than the economic; and, although Morin considers the 'commercial utility' ([1960] 2005: 113) of the star, he does so without considering the cultural context, which limits the use of what he says. McDonald partially brings together the sociological and the economic when he discusses 'product differentiation':

At one level, various individual stars appear to share common characteristics, and the system of stardom differentiates stardom according to type. For example, the young male rebel type is a category which would include stars of the 1950s, like Marlon Brando or James Dean, but also stars of later decades, such as Sean Penn or Christian Slater. At a further level however, the star system seems to resist the classification of stars as types. The identities or images of stars are of value to the film industry for they appear as individuals. (2000: 12)

The reference to 'resist[ing] the classification of stars as types' appears to contradict Dyer who argues that typicality is an important aspect of stars, saying 'stars, in other words, relate to the social types of a society' ([1979] 1998: 47). The audience needs to be able to relate to a star, hence the framework of social types. However, Dyer also

argues that a star's individuality lies in how they 'individuate' type, how they make a given social type their own: 'stars embody social types, but star images are always more complex and specific than types. Types are, as it were, the ground on which a particular star's image is constructed' ([1979] 1998: 60). The economic requirements of a star's image are that they must be familiar to an audience at the same time that they are different to each other so that an audience can distinguish between them: McDonald states that 'star monopolies are based on a *belief* in unique individuality' (2000: 12, emphasis added), although unique individuality does not actually exist otherwise we would be unable to relate to each other.

The creation of this 'star monopoly' requires consistency, or at least *apparent* consistency ('since on investigation most images can be seen to condense conflicting values' (Dyer [1979] 1998: 98)), which is most often generated through repetition:

Every performance therefore retains traces of earlier roles, histories that are re-mobilised in new textual and cultural contexts. In fact this is actually an economic condition of stardom, which relies on the continuing circulation and accretion of the star image. (Drake 2004: 77)

King argues that this development of a consistent persona has a number of advantages including the fact that it leads to the possibility of effectively becoming a 'branded image' (2002: 151-2). The creation of the star-as-brand most clearly illustrates the industrial nature of stardom and how repetition builds up an audience expectation of a given star and their films. This can lead to disappointment if a star decides to 'diversify', as Willis notes: 'if they appear in something radically different their stardom may not be enough to ensure success' (2004: 3). However the size of the national industry and market also has an effect on whether a star is able to build up a 'brand image'. It is not necessarily economically feasible to focus exclusively on a particular genre in the way that is usually required to build up such image-related expectations, and the idea of star-as-brand is not necessarily replicated outside of Hollywood cinema; this again underlines the importance of taking the industrial contexts into consideration.

The production process of stardom is difficult to monitor or discuss in terms of an obvious pre-determined or planned strategy, and one begins to understand why contemporary stars are commonly deconstructed through textual analysis of their films and their coverage in the media rather than from the point of view of industrial production, but this thesis does nonetheless endeavour to give an industrial context to

the star images under discussion. I will be arguing (following Willis) that stars cannot be separated from the industrial contexts behind their production, and that these industrial contexts are also indicative of cultural specificities in the creation of stars. Dyer's point that even images that emanate from the same place are still subject to variation, inflection, and contradiction is also important; Spanish stars are not identical. The topic of this thesis clearly assumes the existence of Spanish stars despite the doubts of some Spanish commentators, and although there is an absence of an obvious star *system* Vincendeau argues that there does not need to be an organised system for stars to exist and have an impact on the cinema produced. Likewise, although European stars are generally considered box office duds, the Spanish box office records from the 1992-2007 period (see the Appendix -discussed in the Industrial Contexts chapter) show that certain Spanish stars *are* reliable within the Spanish market; just because Spanish stars are not made for profit, does not mean that they cannot be profitable.

With that in mind, it is worth considering how the Spanish film industry *does* utilise strategies to exploit Spanish stars in the production and consumption of films, in the manner outlined by McDonald, despite the view that stars do not sell films in Spain. For example, although none of the chosen stars have been constructed as a brand, it is clear that *apparent* consistency (highlighted by Dyer) is used as a commercial strategy in certain cases (discussed in the Industrial Contexts chapter); there are image-related expectations which become a marketable aspect of the star, and therefore the star image contributes to a film's commercial success (and industrial standing). In looking at the relationship between stars and their national cinema it is not enough to only consider the semiotic and the sociological (as Dyer does), even alongside McDonald's use of the economic in his concept of product differentiation, because these approaches do not locate the star within the broader cinematic context (that is, the national film industry and cinema); the industrial dimension will be integrated into the consideration of the national and cultural in stardom in this thesis. It is to the content of star images and the star construct that we now turn.

Star Content:

Both Morin and Dyer argue that there was a shift in the content of star images, meaning that stars moved from being gods to being mortals, from being 'embodiments of *ideal* ways of behaving [...] [to] embodiments of *typical* ways of

behaving' (Dyer [1979] 1998: 22).¹⁷ Arguably the ostentatious displays and public consumption of wealth that Morin associates with the gods has returned in relation to the contemporary Hollywood star, although they still have many of the qualities of typicality as well. Stars of other national cinemas (or at least most European cinemas) have been warier of the display of wealth (returned to further below). The movement towards the typical is how stars relate to social types, in the manner that Dyer posits, and leads to the central contradiction of stardom: they encapsulate ordinariness and specialness simultaneously; they are 'like us' but not 'like us'. Dyer argues that (Hollywood) stars are an actualisation of the American Dream, that great democratic process for success, 'organised around the themes of consumption, success and ordinariness' ([1979] 1998: 35), which allows the viewer to relate to the star via the incorporation in the success myth of both hard work and luck, and offers the hope that stardom is attainable by all.

Although Gledhill states that 'Hollywood has established the dominant paradigm of both mainstream cinema and stardom' (1991: xiii), and stars everywhere act out this dichotomy of the ordinary and the special, these characteristics are bound up in cultural specificity. As Perriam writes of the Spanish male stars in his study: 'The Spanishness of these men, in fact, makes their ordinariness shade over into charismatic specialness' (2003: 7). Babington argues that indigenous stars:

give things to home audiences that Hollywood luminaries cannot – reflections on the known and close at hand, typologies of the contingent, intimate dramatisations of local myths and realities – which, when they fit into Hollywood's categories, make the performers who embody them world stars, while others remain local stars – but no less meaningful for that. (2001: 10)

The typicalities and social types embodied by Hollywood stars are not the typicalities of other nations who produce their own stars to identify with: 'stars represent typical ways of behaving, feeling and thinking in contemporary society, ways that have been socially, culturally, historically constructed' (Dyer 1986: 15-16). The ways in which the star is representative in different national, social, cultural and historical contexts are discussed below, but we now turn our attention to the specific components that are used to construct a star image.

¹⁷ For Dyer this seems to be the same thing as stars embodying 'types': he links the star as identification figure to the idea of the typical (*ibid*). He also says that this is 'part of the process whereby the type, the average, has become the ideal' ([1979] 1998: 23).

Dyer considers the star phenomenon to consist of ‘everything that is publicly available about stars’ (1986: 2), making star images ‘extensive, multimedia, intertextual’ (3) and ‘different elements predominate in different star images’ (ibid). There is also an historical element to the image of any given star as these elements predominate ‘at different periods in the star’s career’ (ibid). This is something that can be considered in relation to stars of all nationalities. Gledhill breaks down these intertextual components as consisting of the following: the ‘real person’, the ‘roles’ (reel person) played by the star in films, and the star’s ‘persona’ which exists independently of the first two but combines elements of each in a public ‘presence’ (1991: 214). Morin also discusses this process of creating a public presence / star image and the blurring that results between the reel and the real:

The star is not only an actress. The characters she plays are not only characters. The characters of her films infect the star. Reciprocally, the star infects these characters. [...] Once the film is over, the actor becomes an actor again, the character remains a character, but *from their union is born a composite creature who participates in both, envelopes them both: the star.* ([1960]: 2005: 27 & 29, emphasis in the original)

The latter part of the quotation refers to the way in which the role that ‘creates’ a star, transforming them from a mere actor, usually becomes the foundation for their star image: while later roles may inflect their image, this original one is often still present in some form, and this is apparent in the cases of each of the four stars discussed in this thesis. Morin views the attainment of stardom as an exchange or interaction between component parts which ultimately collude in raising the actor / star to a mythical status, and one can see this in the roles played by Javier Bardem and Penélope Cruz in *Jamón jamón* (Bigas Luna, 1992), something which is discussed further in the case studies. As King argues, ‘stars, almost by definition, exceed the boundaries of the fictional characters they play. To be a star is to be recognised within and beyond any specific role’ (2002: 150). This returns us to the industrial imperative of consistency as noted by Dyer. For a star to sustain their image (the fact that their image changes over time in accordance with social and cultural developments is part of the reason why Dyer states that there is only the *appearance* of consistency ([1979] 1998: 98)), they need to attempt to maintain a consistency or compatibility between their image and the characters they choose to play. The desire to maintain consistency leads to the so-called ‘star vehicles’, which are tailored to and maximise the star’s existing image.

As they are *film* stars and participate in a visual form, this consistency is often at its most obvious at a visual level, creating what Dyer terms ‘the continuities of iconography’:

As with genres proper, one can discern across a star’s vehicles continuities of iconography (e.g. how they are dressed, made-up and coiffed, performance mannerisms, the settings with which they are associated), visual style (e.g. how they are lit, photographed, placed within the frame) and structure (e.g. their role in the plot, their function in the film’s symbolic pattern). ([1979] 1998: 62)

Dyer states that of course ‘not all films made by a star are vehicles’ but that ‘looking at their films in terms of vehicles draws attention to those films that do not “fit”’ (ibid). Other films make selective use of a star’s existing image, emphasising certain elements and glossing over others, but Dyer argues that this is a risky strategy since it cannot be guaranteed that the audience will be interested in solely the emphasised elements ([1979] 1998: 127) and this could disrupt the narrative and / or damage the film’s commercial success (see the Industrial Contexts chapter for examples of this in relation to Eduardo Noriega and Paz Vega). Dyer likens the star vehicle to a type of genre, but McDonald, while acknowledging the similarities between the conventions set up by star vehicles and generic categories, cautions against viewing the star vehicle or the genre film as closed entities. He argues that it is possible to find examples of star identities ‘straddl[ing] potentially opposing generic impulses’ (2000: 96)¹⁸ and there are stars, such as Penélope Cruz and Paz Vega, who manage to cross genre boundaries with regularity and little disruption to their images.

Significantly within this context, Vincendeau notes that with French stars there is a ‘co-existence of mainstream and auteur cinema in a single star’s image’ (2000: 2) without this causing fractures in their image:

The New Wave for a time forced a polarization between ‘mainstream stars’ and ‘auteur stars’, but with a few exceptions [...] major French stars are distinguished by dual-track stardom in both mainstream and auteur film. Why is that? First, because the generic structure is itself fluid. Second, because of economic necessity: given the size of the French market since the 1970s, it is not possible for a French star to sustain a career in only one genre. (2000: 24)

In a smaller market, industrial imperatives call for a greater degree of flexibility in a star’s image.

¹⁸ His example is the emergence of the comic action hero in the 1980s.

In considering the content of the star image, and the star as a construct, the relationship between industrial imperatives and cultural specificities comes to the fore; national film industries make their films primarily for their home audience and the majority of stars initially achieve stardom within their home market. It is evident looking at the work of Perriam, Babington, Vincendeau, and Dyer, that a star's connection with their native audience is based in and upon the manner in which they relate to the specifics of the local culture; it is through their performance of recognisable (local) social types (as well as behaviour, gesture, expression, and patterns of speech) that they enact the 'like us, but not like us' dichotomy for home audiences. Similarly the participation of the Spanish stars in 'national narratives' further embeds them within the cultural imagination as specifically pertaining to Spain. Both of these forms of interaction with the national are examined in the case studies, as are Dyer's 'continuities of iconography', because whether a film 'fits' or not could be indicative of the star trying to change their image, or possibly the relationship between star image and the national necessarily changing as Spanish society continues to evolve.

The significance of the industrial resurfaces in Morin's view of the star being a composite of actor and role (highlighting the importance of the cinema and directors interacted with early on –something that is addressed in the case studies), and Vincendeau's observation that different commercial styles of cinema can co-exist in the images of stars from smaller industries also places an emphasis on the industrial as it suggests that industrial imperatives can shape the *content* of the star image as well as the *form* that stardom takes. Stars are a useful means through which to view a national cinema (an approach that does not seem to have been taken by others to date) precisely because their images can encompass a broad spectrum of styles and tones of cinema; they are at least as specific to their national cinema as they are to current cultural perceptions and conceptions of the national, and the star image is a point of convergence for the national, cultural, and industrial.

Having considered the construction of the star image from an industrial and textual point of view we now move on to examine the specificities of national culture and then the circulation of star images within this sphere.

Nation and Culture:

What is a nation? Anderson states that ‘Nation, nationality, nationalism – all have proved notoriously difficult to define, let alone analyse’ ([1983] 1991: 3), but comes to offer a definition of the nation as ‘an imagined political community –and imagined as both inherently limited and sovereign’ (6). Smith comes to the conclusion that a nation can be defined as:

a named human population sharing an historic territory, common myths and historical memories, a mass, public culture, a common economy and common legal rights and duties for all members. (1991: 14)

Although state and nation can be separate entities, with the former usually being defined as the official geographical boundaries of a country, this definition suggests that there is a degree of overlap.¹⁹ Smith speaks of a shared ‘historic territory’ and his inclusion of ‘common legal rights’ and a ‘common economy’ (part of the state apparatus) as defining parts of a nation, suggests that it would be difficult to sustain one without the other, although Spain is an example of several ‘nations’ existing within what is ostensibly one (contentious) state.

Intrinsic to Anderson’s view of nation as ‘imagined’ is the belief that within a set group of people there are characteristics of both commonality and common difference (an ‘*us versus them*’ mentality):

[The nation] is *imagined* because the members of even the smallest nation will never know most of their fellow-members, meet them, or even hear of them, yet in the minds of each lives the image of their communion. ([1983] 1991: 6)

This is reinforced by Hobsbawm talking about tradition as being invented (i.e. certain concepts become ingrained in a culture because of their utility at a given time, and not because they occur ‘naturally’), sometimes with the aim of ‘establishing or symbolizing social cohesion or the membership of groups, real or artificial communities’ (1983: 9), which is illustrated by Balfour and Quiroga stating that ‘the contemporary Spanish nation has been largely reinvented in the new democracy, though it has roots in older traditions, cultures, and memories’ (2007: 196).²⁰ Hayward points to the socially cohesive aspect of nation when she argues that nationhood is a reaction against universality: ‘nation is based *in* an assumption of difference (because its different-ness is its starting point) and based *upon* the

¹⁹ There are also nation-states, which are recognised as sovereign states by other nations, and there are also nations that are not states, for example Catalonia.

²⁰ Balfour and Quiroga also observe that ‘different claims to nationhood embrace different interpretations of the past’ (2007: 202).

assumption of difference' ([1993] 2005: 3). Hobsbawm also stresses 'the element of artefact, invention and social engineering which enters into the making of nations' (1992: 10), and Triana-Toribio summarises the work of Gellner, Hobsbawm and Anderson to conclude that nations are 'not natural; they are mythical; they do not awaken; they are created' (2003: 3) and reiterates their collective point that 'national identity is no less powerful for being imagined rather than real' (ibid).

Indeed, people have an emotional attachment to their nation that they do not necessarily have to the state. Self-definition is an integral part of how a nation comes to view itself and Anderson makes a connection between this and emotional attachment when he says that:

To understand [nation-ness and nationalism] properly we need to consider carefully how they have come into historical being, in what ways their meanings have changed over time, and why, today, they command such profound emotional legitimacy. ([1983] 1991: 4)

This also positions 'nationness' as 'profoundly *historical*' (Williams 2002: 2, emphasis in original), not only in the sense of Smith's 'common historical memories' (1991: 14), which Hayward suggests can turn to collective amnesia if history is not palatable (2000: 90), but also in terms of Anderson's reference to meanings that have changed over time.²¹ As Williams argues, 'nationhood, in other words, is not merely established, it must be *maintained*; its definition, therefore, will inevitably shift over time' (2002: 3, emphasis in original), which fits with Hobsbawm's proposal that traditions are invented as an attempt to establish a sense of continuity (1983: 1). This also chimes with Higson's position on the importance of historical shifts in relation to national cinemas insofar as 'nationhood is always an image constructed under particular conditions' ([1989] 2002: 139).

However, part of the complexity of 'nationness' is that as well as having fluctuating meanings over time, it can also be interpreted in a multitude of ways at any given time: for example, Boyd writes that 'radically different conceptions of the meaning of Spanish history produced equally divergent definitions of national identity and purpose' (1997: 303), and Balfour and Quiroga look at the different ways the Left and Right have interpreted nation and identity since Spain achieved democracy (2007:

²¹ The cultural amnesia issue is pertinent to Spain: the movement for the recuperation of historical memory in Spain gathered pace in the period under discussion (Balfour and Quiroga 2007: 86-88) and is discussed in the Eduardo Noriega case study.

72-126). Jordan and Morgan-Tamosunas also highlight the problems encountered when trying to discuss Spain as ‘a’ nation:

What do we mean by ‘nation’ in relation to Spanish cinema when the nation is in fact made up of four different linguistic identities (Castilian, Catalan, Basque, Galician), three ‘historic’ nationalisms (Catalonia, the Basque Country, Galicia) and seventeen autonomous communities? (1998: 9)

As people try to place boundaries around ‘nation’ and to define both its reach and its limits, it is apparent that in the context of this thesis it is difficult to separate ‘nation’ from ‘culture’, especially since Anderson partly defines nation as a ‘cultural artefact’ ([1983] 1991: 4).

As is the case with ‘nation’, ‘culture’ is a term that means different things to different people, and alters over time. At the broad end of the scale there is Eagleton’s definition of culture as being able to be ‘loosely summarised as the complex of values, customs, beliefs and practices which constitute the way of life of a specific group’ (2000: 34), while Frow defines culture as ‘always a matter both of what binds together and of what keeps apart’ (1995: 2), which fits with Hayward’s view of the *nation* as revolving around difference ([1993] 2005: 3). Matthew Arnold took a rather elitist standpoint (although one that many people would still agree with), asserting that culture is ‘the best that has been thought and said in the world’ (cited in Storey (2003: 16)), while in the field of anthropology others would define culture as a form of behaviour, and certain branches of ‘cultural studies’ (including ‘the founders’, such as Raymond Williams) have dealt with culture in terms of social structures. There is an argument to be made for defining culture as the stories or myths (folklore) that we tell ourselves in order to explain the complexities or banish the contradictions of our individual societies (Campbell and Kean 1997: 9), which finds an echo in Triana-Toribio’s book on Spanish national cinemas wherein she says that ‘a nation is nothing without the stories it tells itself about itself’ (2003: 6).

Because this thesis examines images that usually stem from narrative texts, the view of ‘culture’ being the stories we tell to define ourselves holds an appeal, although I also subscribe to the more general views of Eagleton and Frow because they underline that a film (or a star) does not need to be *explicitly* national to reveal something of the culture from which they originate; this is something that becomes apparent in the images of newer Spanish stars who are not as obviously ingrained with Spanishness and who do not necessarily interact with the national in an overt

manner. It also suggests that the texts examined (stars and films alike) could be contradictory without that being problematic: the chosen stars as a group do not present a homogenous vision of the nation. The idea of nationness as profoundly historical, and as something that needs to be maintained, finds illustration in the main body of the thesis where the gradual shift undergone in terms of *how* Spanish stars project and reflect the national (and *what* it is that they project and reflect *of* the national) is revealed via the examination of four stars who emerged at different points during the 1992-2007 period. Likewise both Anderson's and Hobsbawm's conceptions of nationness as imagined (and tradition as invented) will have relevance not just through the films of the era that have sought to reimagine the past in light of the present (for example, *Belle époque* (Trueba, 1992) and *El espinazo del diablo* (del Toro, 2001)) but also via the parallel of both nationness and the star being cultural constructs that are shaped by their specific times.

National Cultures:

As stated above, 'culture' and 'nation' are highly complex terms, and neither can be considered in the singular. Balfour and Quiroga examine the problems that regionalisms and the definition of Spain as a 'nation of nations' (2007: 76) entail for Spain as a state, and Berthier and Seguin argue that 'en España, el problema de la nacionalidad se plantea de manera bastante más compleja que en otros muchos países' (2007: xvii); it is not simply a matter of centre and periphery, but also involves regional and autonomous 'nationalities', each with their own fissures and fragilities (ibid). As is the case with the kaleidoscopic 'nation', cultures do not exist in the singular: they are always plural, and Labanyi stresses that we should think of 'cultures in Spain' rather than 'Spanish culture' (2002a: 9). This plurality needs to be borne in mind when considering the films produced in this era and their differing relationships with the national and nationness.

Jordan and Morgan-Tamosunas define culture as 'a site where different groups struggle to establish their presence' (2000: 2) and this hegemonic struggle points to how much power culture is imbued with. Dyer writes that:

The prestige of high culture, the centralization of mass cultural production, the literal poverty of marginal cultural production: these are aspects of the power relations of representation that put the weight of control over representation on the side of the rich, the white, the male, the heterosexual. ([1993] 2002: 2)

Hallam and Street argue that often the ideological purpose of representation is to translate ‘cultural heterogeneity into homogenous unity...thus certain conceptions, values and visions are prioritised in the cultural processes of representation, reproducing patterns of inequality and power’ (2000: 6-7), and likewise Hayward states that ‘national culture does not represent what is there but asserts what is imagined to be there: a homogenised fixed common culture’ (2000: 99). However, Spanish cinema between 1992 and 2007 arguably challenges those views and instead exemplifies the heterogeneity and diversity inherent to contemporary cultural forms (discussed below). In this context an absence is as telling as an overt presence, as the above quotation from Dyer makes clear. While it is beyond the scope of this thesis to consider all of the categories of representation that Dyer mentions, by examining the four case studies I will ascertain whether contemporary Spanish cinema (diverse or not) presents ‘a homogenised fixed common culture’ through its stars.

Hayward writes that:

By definition culture is a term that refers both to material production (artefacts) and to symbolic production (the aesthetic). In both instances, culture functions as the record and reflection of social history and the social process. Concepts of nation and national identity are also bound up in this socio-cultural functioning. ([1993] 2005: ix)

This becomes obvious in terms of film as culture, as Jordan and Allinson underline when they say that film ‘can *project* as well as *reflect* national cultures’ (2005: 137, emphasis in original), while Williams insists that ‘rather than simply being *related* to the nation, the cinema would be an essential part of a *process* of defining nations’ (2002: 4, emphasis in original). What is at stake in national cultural production (of any form) is the nation’s self-definition, the significance of which is highlighted by Nichols, who states that the questions of who has control of representation and what they choose to represent, is what ‘allows issues of visibility and cinematic representation to tie into issues of social and political consequence’ (2000: 45).

Although for simplicity’s sake I often refer to ‘Spanish cinema’ in the singular, contemporary Spanish cinema is pluralistic and kaleidoscopic, partly as a result of Spain’s cultural diversity but also because contemporary Spanish cinema follows a heterogeneous model of national cinema (discussed in the Industrial Contexts chapter). There is a contradiction in Hayward saying that culture acts as the reflection and record of social history and process ([1993] 2005: ix), but also arguing that in a national context cultural heterogeneity is translated or reimagined into a

‘homogenised fixed common culture’ (2000: 99). Contemporary Spanish cinema roundly rejects any attempt to corral it into a coherent homogeneity (which is in fact why some Spanish cultural commentators despair –see the Industrial Contexts chapter) and this thesis reads Spanish cinema as multiple records and reflections of kaleidoscopic Spain: for example, the figure who is (problematically) often said to *be* Spanish cinema, Pedro Almodóvar, tends to focus on the peripheral and the marginal rather than the centre or the homogenous. It is beyond the scope of this thesis to look for the absences, for what is *not* represented in Spanish cinema, but in terms of what the chosen stars *do* represent, the social and national significance (or lack thereof) of issues raised by their films and performances is considered in the case studies.

National Cinemas:

Although Hayward views cinema as ‘a cultural articulation of a nation (even if it subverts it, it still addresses / reflects it, albeit negatively or oppositionally)’ ([1993] 2005: x), Marsh and Nair point to a fundamental contradiction at the heart of ‘national cinemas’: ‘one of the central paradoxes of the idea of cinema as agent of exclusive national identity lies in the fact that since its very origins it has been a multinational product’ (2004: 3). This is an important point because contemporary Spanish cinema has been criticised for straying from supposed national characteristics through the use of styles and genres that are not seen as traditionally Spanish (discussed below); Marsh and Nair posit that cinema has never been ‘pure’ in a national sense. So how and why does cinema come to be categorised in national terms? Vitali and Willemsen address the situation thus:

Cinema can be thought of as pertaining to a national configuration because films, far from offering cinematic accounts of ‘the nation’ as seen by the coalition that sustains the forces of capital within any given nation, are clusters of historically specific cultural forms the semantic modulations of which are orchestrated and contended over by each of the forces at play in a given geographical territory. (2006: 7)

In other words, as stated in the Introduction, films (and stars) do not solely, or automatically, reflect the dominant ideological positions of a given nation at a given moment because cinema itself reflects the hegemonic power struggle constantly in operation and is therefore able to be utilised and produced by other, non-dominant, forces that are present. Although Hallam and Street suggest that patterns of inequality and power are reproduced in cultural representations (2000: 7), it is not that certain

values and views are *prioritised* (ibid) but rather that the weight given to particular cultural visions is a *reflection* of that vision's position in the cultural power struggles of that given nation; national cinemas should therefore reflect the multiplicity of their nations rather than present the homogenised cultural vision that Hallam and Street (and Hayward (2000)) suggest occurs.

This draws attention to a flaw in Anderson's view of the 'imagined community', which in his descriptions seems to be a fairly homogenous entity (and also singular).

Higson says:

The problem is that, when describing a national cinema, there is a tendency to focus only on those films that narrate the nation as just this finite, limited space, inhabited by a tightly coherent and unified community, closed off to other identities besides national identity. Or rather, the focus is on films that seem amenable to such an interpretation. The 'imagined community' argument thus sometimes seems unable to acknowledge the cultural difference and diversity that invariably marks both the inhabitants of a particular nation-state and the members of more geographically dispersed 'national' communities (2000: 66).

As stated above, Spain does not lend itself to being addressed as a singular, homogenous entity, and therefore neither should its cinema(s), and yet Heredero comments that critics are too ready to reduce the panorama of Spanish cinema to being only 'la obra de Almodóvar y Amenábar' (2007: 13). Triana-Toribio highlights the slippery relationship between nation and cinema when she asks whether, 'if we accept that ideas of the nation are flexible and change, and that they are never uniform but are contested at different points in time, does it follow that cinema will also present overlapping and contradictory accounts of the nation?' (2003: 6).

Vitali and Willemsen answer this question to an extent when they argue that a film being in some way different to what is *expected* of a film from a given national cinema (i.e. its dominant form) does not mean that the film is, for example, less Spanish or that it falls outside of Spanish cinema (2006: 8); if 'Spanishness' cannot be defined in the singular it should follow that neither can cultural artefacts that purport to represent Spanishness. Nations, cultures, national cultures and national cinemas all exist in the plural at any given moment in time, which would suggest that it is quite difficult to *exclude* any given artefact from the national 'collection(s)' if it has any kind of tangential connection to the nation(s) in question.²² Yet as we shall see in

²² The national cinema 'label' is more commonly associated with art and auteur cinema than popular cinema, which is either due to Hollywood's links with popular cinema (suggesting that popular cinema

relation to the films examined in the case studies, some have drawn critical responses that seem to be shaped by what individual commentators believe Spanish cinema *is* (or should be), i.e. the commentators have definite perceptions as to where the boundaries should be drawn and films that fall outside are viewed negatively.²³ Street points out that films can be classified as belonging to a particular nation in different ways: through economic or labour criteria (who paid for it and who worked on it), or the cultural conception of a film conveying a specific nationness (through themes or preoccupations, or sense of community) (2009: 1). It is because of these different levels of classification that Street argues (in relation to British cinema) that ‘it is essential to examine production as a whole, a wide-ranging spectrum of representation which might at different times support, contest or ignore the dominant articulation of the imagined British community’ (2009: 2), and the Industrial Contexts chapter shows that the Spanish film industry itself has elastic and inclusive definitions of what constitutes ‘Spanish cinema’.²⁴

Kinder questions whether ‘the cinema of any nation carries distinguishing traces of its own unique history, culture, race or blood’ (1993: 1) and Street argues that ideas about national cinemas have now developed to the point that for many we are dealing with a ‘post-national’ period, which means that cinema needs to be examined ‘from perspectives that celebrate pluralities and the blurring of boundaries instead of seeking to locate an essentialised notion of national identity’ (2009: 2); contemporary Spanish cinema would benefit from such an approach. Hannerz suggests that ‘as people move with their meanings, and as meanings find ways of travelling even when people stay put, territories cannot really contain cultures’ (1996: 8), which is further emphasised in relation to cinema if one considers cinematic genres as ‘the meeting place between a variety of diverse forces that necessarily operate within but also across territorial spaces’ (Beck and Rodríguez Ortega 2008: 1). Jordan illustrates this when talking about a new generation of filmmakers who emerged in Spanish cinema of the 1990s: he says that while a number of their films engage with ‘national concerns’, ‘they do so within an aesthetic framework and set of styles heavily influenced by the transnational visual media [...] and by a general assimilation of

anywhere is in allegiance with Hollywood ideals and is therefore not ‘national’) or is itself responsible for Hollywood films not being labelled ‘national cinema’.

²³ For example, see the articles in Alonso García (2003); half of the contributors do not believe that ‘Spanish cinema’ exists, and the other half accept that it exists but despair at its populist forms.

²⁴ Croft emphasises the range of what could be included, by outlining a possible seven varieties of ‘national cinema’ that could operate within a given nation-state ([1993] 2002: 27).

American genre cinema and its conventions' (2000: 75-76). This is a growing phenomenon that needs wider acknowledgement: what Marsh and Nair say about cinema having always been a 'multinational product' (2004: 3), and Street's point about the 'post-national' (2009: 2), is increasingly true in the era of globalisation and the transnational traffic of cultural artefacts / texts.

The term 'globalisation' is described contradictorily by Featherstone as 'the extension outwards of a particular culture to its limit, the globe' and also as 'the compression of culture' (1995: 6). The argument being that if there was *one* global culture (which would clearly be problematic given the plurality of culture) then an explanation would be that a particular culture expanded outwards to the point of world dominance, and national specificity would be lost as culture was homogenised around the globe (which would also signify a 'compression' of culture). However, that would assume that cultural texts are 'consumed' or read in a uniform way, which is patently not the case, as Hall (1973) has outlined. The positions outlined in Hall's framework also apply to cultures interpreting incoming cultural signs from other cultures: they can accept the cultural signs in the form they arrive in; adapt them into their own culture; or reject them altogether. Jordan argues that 'globally available cultural styles are subject to local inflection and re-signification' (2000: 69); the way that different societies react and interact with the growing 'global culture' is still based within a 'local' culture. Featherstone argues that 'the process of globalisation, then, does not seem to be producing cultural uniformity; rather it makes us aware of new levels of diversity' (1995: 13-14). At the same time, however, American culture is the form primarily associated with globalisation and world dominance, which in terms of cinema is manifested in the dominance of Hollywood product in the international marketplace: 'most national cinemas do not dominate their domestic markets' (O'Regan [1996] 2002: 91). It is contradictory that although 'American culture' is said to be spreading the globe, the United States is rarely spoken of as having a 'national cinema'.

Nonetheless, Hollywood is used as a point of reference in debates about national cinemas: 'virtually all treatments of the questions of national cinemas' begin by addressing the dominance of Hollywood and 'if not everyone is afraid of it, all act in relation to it' (Williams 2002: 12). This is also true of the 'by-products' of national cinemas; the star systems of specific national cinemas are always going to be judged and measured against the Hollywood star system because it is the dominant definition

and form of stardom and it is exported around the world. However there are several problems with the traditional ‘US versus Europe’ binary that that juxtaposition usually sets up, most fundamental is that it ‘tends to establish European identity in a negative way, as a negation of America’ (Eleftheriotis 2001: 10) and it also blurs different European identities into one.²⁵ But some degree of juxtaposition, to find out what we are *not* as much as to find out what we *are*, appears to be useful although the restrictions of the format mean that such a juxtaposition is beyond the scope of this thesis.²⁶

Although traditional definitions of ‘national cinema’ usually concentrate on art-house and / or auteur cinema, mainstream and popular cinemas are always revealing of the cultures that produce and consume them (as Street argues, that is one reason it is a good idea to examine production across an industry as a whole (2009: 2)). An advantage of looking at a national cinema through its stars is that by definition they have a relationship with the popular but, as Vincendeau observes, they can also interact with art-house and auteurist cinema; this thesis encompasses the mainstream, as well as the art-house and / or auteur, forms of Spanish cinema. In this thesis the nationality ascribed to a film follows the classifications (seemingly based on financial and / or labour criteria) listed with the Spanish Ministry of Culture (and where these classifications are contentious or unexpected it will be noted), but there are many different ways of classifying films as belonging to a given national cinema, which is why taking a broader view of what can be included seems advisable (and again highlights the usefulness of viewing a cinema through its stars). If concepts of the national (or Spanishness) are pluralistic, flexible, and ever changing, it should surely follow that cultural texts should have pluralistic and possibly contradictory relationships with the national.

As outlined in the Introduction to the thesis, Higson’s approach to national cinemas is being used as the framework for categorising the ways in which contemporary Spanish stars interact with the national because this thesis argues that there is an interrelation between how national cinemas and their stars reflect and project the national, and that stars are also specific to the cinemas that create them.

²⁵ Bardem argues that it is difficult to talk about ‘European cinema’ (in the singular) because he sees the European film communities as being divided by their individual languages (Edelmann 2007: 247). But there *is* a movement of actors around Europe and not just in dubbed ‘euro-puddings’: Cruz alone is evidence of that as she is fluent in Italian and French and has worked in both film industries.

²⁶ Sieglöhr (2000), Eleftheriotis (2001), and Vitali and Willemsen (2006) highlight the problems that arise when a national cinema is studied in isolation.

As was also stated in the Introduction, it is apparent that, in an era of globalisation and the transnational and transcultural, Higson's notion of a national cinema that looks inward and outward, needs to be expanded to incorporate the idea that outside influences (genres, styles, cultural codes) are involved in the creation of what are still *national* cultural texts (the outside influences are still reinterpreted at a local level); this is apparent in the cinema discussed in the main body of the thesis. This thesis does not set out to define 'Spanish cinema' but the star images examined suggest that contemporary 'Spanish cinema' is a nebulous and hybrid entity (that has become more so as the years have progressed) that demonstrates cinema's multinational status, but also represents a nation and society that are pluralistic and continuing to evolve in terms of how they seek to define and represent themselves onscreen.

Having discussed the components of star images and the nature of national cinemas, the following section brings these two aspects together to consider star images in the cultural context in which they circulate.

Cultural Circulation:

Although there are certain constants to the formation of stardom (the combination of the ordinary and the special, for example), they are interpreted through different film cultures, and these 'inflections' (Babington 2001: 4) and the specificities of these national cinemas and their star systems need to be acknowledged and explored. As the investigations of national stardom demonstrate (Vincendeau 2000; Babington 2001; Perriam 2003), the typicalities that stars are said to embody differ from culture to culture, and the importance of cultural specificity is underlined by Hayward's interpretation of the star as cultural sign: 'stars are shifting signifiers, they function as reflectors of the time and as signs to be reflected into society' (2006: 380). The idea of 'shifting signifiers' can be seen in star images that manage to remain relevant over substantial periods of time; they usually undergo subtle changes in order to continue to fit within their changing cultures.²⁷ This illustrates the constant state of flux inherent to cultural products, as their meanings and forms shift over time in accordance with the prevailing ideological discourses, and highlights the parallel with concepts of nationness (which also evolve over time).

²⁷ Dyer (1986) and McDonald (2000) both use the image of Marilyn Monroe to illustrate this point: the Monroe of the 1950s is not the same Monroe seen by viewers in the new millennium.

Stars are said to ‘intervene and function on every level of life’ (Morin [1960] 2005: 147) leading Gledhill to argue that ‘stars are implicated in the critique of individualism, consumerism, and social stereotyping; they become an object of cultural politics’ (1991: xiv). It is useful to consider the ways in which those who have written on indigenous stars have approached this reading of the star both as a cultural sign and as being implicated in the circulation of cultural conceptions.

Babington writes (following Dyer) that indigenous stars:

exhibit a ‘structured polysemy’, have meaning in regard to dominant and subdominant ideologies, reinforce ruling values, sometimes articulate oppositional meanings, as they play out the culture’s conceptions of individuality, masculinity and femininity. They also articulate, through the intersection of screen roles and (public) private lives, narratives of success, sex, love, marriage, leisure, consumerism, work, desirable lifestyles and what the culture prizes as national characteristics, hence the ‘Britishness’ [...] or whatever of national stars. (2001: 19)

The cultural specificities of Spanish male stars are key to Perriam’s investigations as they ‘embed themselves in the imaginary and real social construct that is Spain and the world’s view of Spain’ (2003: 10); the case studies examine whether contemporary Spanish stars continue to operate in that way. Likewise Vincendeau argues that ‘while American stars tend toward the universal by virtue of the world exposure and designs of Hollywood, French stars are *de facto* more “national”, because they operate within a smaller domestic market’ (2000: 31) and this is also true of Spanish stars: for example, descriptions of Spanish stars in film magazines are often couched in specifically national terms both at home (Noriega as ‘el nuevo galán del cine español’ (Díaz-Cano 1998: 16)) and abroad (Noriega’s body is described as ‘son irréprochable plastique ibère’ in a French profile (Lamome 2002: 28)). While stars often find their nationality is heightened when they cross borders and work in other film industries (Vincendeau argues that French stars are constantly defined by their Frenchness in this context (2000: 31)), arguably indigenous stars are not only defined by their nationality outside of their national cinema but within as well. The multiplicity of images of Hollywood stars available to European audiences means that the national characteristics of indigenous stars are heightened even within their domestic markets.²⁸

²⁸ Regional identities are also important within the Spanish domestic market: Bardem’s ties to Gran Canaria (where he was born) and Madrid (where he grew up) are repeatedly mentioned in articles,

It is through the star's intervention in 'every level of life' (Morin [1960] 2005: 147) and the 'reflections of the known and close at hand' (Babington 2001: 10) that they connect with their local audience. Morin sees this intervention as existing on a practical and imaginary level ([1960] 2005: 147) and it is arguably the latter which allows the audience the strongest identification with the star as it pertains to the almost subconscious level of culture: myth. In 'articulat[ing] what it is to be a human being in contemporary society' (Dyer 1986: 7), the star and their 'myth' (i.e. the way their image corresponds to certain cultural constructs at a given moment) 'helps reconcile contradictions that exist in the social roles expected of men and women at key historical moments, and "naturalizes", thereby validating, historical constructions' (Vincendeau 2000: 35). In the context of stars and national identity, Vincendeau observes that while French male stars 'elicit an identification with public figures and actual historical events' (2000: 36), French female stars 'symbolise the nation in ways which refer not to historical figures but to allegory on the one hand and the body on the other' (ibid).²⁹

The relation between star and myth is part of what Gledhill is referring to when she says that textual analysis can show 'how star images reconcile, mask, or expose ideological contradictions' (1991: xiv), and states that 'the premise that such images are intertextual and contradictory opens up the possibility of divergent or oppositional readings by different audiences' (ibid). The heterogeneity of the nation can result in overlapping and contradictory accounts of the nation within cinema and this finds an equivalence within national stardom; just as the diverse range of films in the national cinema have differing relationships with the national, so too do stars. Dyer talks of 'the structured polysemy' of the star, that is:

The finite multiplicity of meanings and affects they embody and the attempt so to structure them that some meanings and affects are foregrounded and others are masked or displaced. ([1979] 1998: 3)

The number of possible readings are finite and a star cannot be made to mean anything that the audience desires, but 'they can select from the complexity of the image the meanings and feelings, the variations, inflections and contradictions, that work for them' (Dyer 1986: 4). This ideological reading of the star as embodying or

while Cruz, Noriega, and Vega are repeatedly referred to as being *madrileña*, *santanderino* (or *cántabro*), and *sevillana* respectively.

²⁹ See Warner ([1985] 1996) for further discussion of the representation of women in visual images, and the use of the female body in allegory and metaphor.

representing hegemonic struggles within a given culture (as Vitali and Willemsen argue in relation to national *cinemas* (2006: 7)) is important within all star systems (Hollywood represents ‘the dominant ideology of Western society’ (Dyer [1979] 1998: 2)), but has implications within the more specifically ‘national’ cinemas and their stars as it suggests that certain stars may gain prominence in their national industries because of their closeness to certain ideals prevalent at a given time; ‘home-grown stars provide a fascinating insight into the industry’s self-perception in particular periods and reflect cultural assumptions about [nationness]’ (Street 2009: 157).

That is not to say that actors only attain stardom with the help of their film industry. Dyer sets out the way in which the audience participates in the selection of star images that they deem to be representative (in a specific time and place) thus:

Stars matter because they act out aspects of life that matter to us; and performers get to be stars when what they act out matters to enough people. Though there is a sense in which stars must touch on things that are deep and constant features of human existence, such features never exist outside a culturally and historically specific context. (1986: 17)

This underlines that, whatever the intentions of the producer, there is no guarantee that an audience will respond as desired because who will matter to them cannot be predicted; the audience responds at the level of a personal and individual connection or recognition.³⁰ Perriam writes that the Spanish specificities of his male case studies cause the viewer to feel that they are ‘responding to a sense of gender identity that is bound up with a sense of localised self (Spanish, Basque, Andalusian, rural, urban, and so on)’ (2003: 13) and Babington argues that what makes an indigenous star so fascinating to a domestic viewer is how the star ‘relates intimately to a specific national, class, political and cultural environment’ (2001: 22).

This intimacy also connects star and viewer, especially within a European context where the stars seem ‘closer’ (geographically as well as culturally) than their Hollywood counterparts whose lifestyles still echo those of the gods as outlined by Morin ([1960] 2005: 8-9). The national differences in the form that stardom takes, as well as the content, are connected to the fabric of the country’s cultural life, as Babington says of British stars: ‘the education, the middleclassness of British stars

³⁰ That said, audiences are not viewing in a vacuum; underlying ideologies will also inform their viewing choices and their tastes in stars. It also, of course, depends on what is offered: some choices do not include much choice.

[...] all inclined British stars towards an anti-star inflection of stardom [...]’ (2001: 20-21).³¹ Similarly, given the political backgrounds of many Spanish stars and the value that they place on authenticity and being true to their roots, it is culturally and ideologically difficult for them to ‘accept and display the trappings and visible excess of the star lifestyle and to work according to a highly individualistic and competitive “star system”’ (Jordan and Allinson 2005: 124), again reinforcing that national stars are shaped by prevailing national and / or cultural tastes. Those writing about national stars also suggest that the valorisation of the ‘authentic’ extends to the matter of physical appearances, as Perriam writes of his male stars that the ‘Hollywood buffed ideal is set aside in favour of sharper stabs at looking and acting like a Spanish –or perhaps a European– man’ (2003: 12). The star body also acts as the nexus for the ‘cultural and commercial imperatives’ (Perriam 2003: 9): the national and the cultural converge with the industrial in the star image.

The culture from which a star originates, and in which they circulate, is integral to the form and content of the star image. The work of Dyer, Perriam, Babington, and Vincendeau demonstrates that star images are culturally and historically specific and this thesis builds on that work, but adds the industrial dimension to the analysis. The manner in which stars relate to the national and cultural context impacts on their position within their national film industry and the national cultural imaginary; stars intersect with different ideals and conceptions of the national depending on the combination of filmmakers with whom they collaborate. The chosen four stars illustrate the historical specificity of what it is to be a human being in contemporary Spanish society between 1992 and 2007.

This chapter has outlined the importance of national, cultural, and industrial specificities to star images; even in Hollywood stars, commonly supposed to be circulating in a globalised form of cinema devoid of national specifics, these cultural specificities are at play. In the cases of the chosen Spanish stars and the investigation of their interactions with ‘the national’, a consideration of the plurality of national identities and what ‘the national’ entails within the contexts of Spanish cultures will also need to be borne in mind. Stars are not only involved in the projecting and

³¹ Babington also suggests that strong cultural attitudes towards the vulgarity of self-display have played a part in the reticence of certain stars towards publicity (2001: 13). See also Street (2009: 183-184).

reflecting of the nation but are also indicative of concerns (national, cultural, and industrial) within the broader culture and society in which they circulate, and they need not be explicitly national to be revealing of the culture from which they originate; national stars connect with their home audiences through their relationship with the specificities of the local culture.

The idea of ‘nationness’ having an historical element to its foundation, and as something that needs to either evolve or be maintained is also of importance to this thesis. It underlines that the image of a given star, and their interaction with the national, may change over time but do so subtly and with the appearance of consistency, and also that stars who emerge at different times may have different relationships with the national. This historical dimension highlights that both ‘nationness’ and the star are cultural constructs that reflect their specific time. Given that both star images and concepts of the national are polysemic, the images under investigation may lend themselves to multiple readings at a given time and across the multiplicity of the star images (i.e. across the films they have made during their careers) there may be both overlapping and possibly contradictory readings available of the relation between star and nation. As different commercial styles of cinema can exist within a single star’s image, and the chosen stars have worked with different combinations of directors, the status and commercial success (or otherwise) of the different films and filmmakers also needs to be considered as these industrial factors have an impact on the shape that the star takes (especially earlier in their careers) and how the star is perceived within their film industry and beyond.

Despite stardom’s industrial dimension being routinely ignored outside of some analyses of Hollywood stars from the studio era, the industrial context of stardom in a given national culture is integral to both the form and content of stardom and the star image (in conjunction with the national and / or cultural factors). While an examination of the actual production of a star is beyond the capabilities of this author (owing to the lack of access to the decisions taken behind the scenes), the next chapter chronicles the evolution of the Spanish film industry and ‘Spanish cinema’ between 1992 and 2007, in order to give the industrial background of the four stars investigated in this thesis. The chapter positions the four stars within their national film industry through an examination of changes within the Spanish film industry in this era, as well as box office trends and the box office track records of the chosen stars (an indication of their standing commercially speaking – a comparison with

other contemporary Spanish stars is included). The thesis will then move on to the case studies, which investigate the stars and the specifics of their stardom in greater depth.

The Industrial Contexts of Spanish Stardom, 1992-2007:

¿Recuerdan aquellos años en los que todos los protagonistas jóvenes estaban interpretados por Maribel Verdú, Victoria Abril y Jorge Sanz? Hoy el panorama ha cambiado totalmente. (Corisco 1998: 12)

This thesis investigates Spanish stardom between 1992 and 2007. This chapter examines what ‘Spanish cinema’ was in 1992 in terms of a film industry and its presentation of a ‘national cinema’, outlines some of the changes it underwent during the subsequent fifteen years, and looks at whether these changes can be said to have directly influenced the stardom of certain stars who emerged during this era.³² Triana-Toribio states that ‘a change in generation is often accompanied by a rearrangement of the terms in which national identity is articulated’ (2003: 141), and this period saw an influx of new filmmakers who pushed the boundaries of ‘Spanish cinema’ and by extension shaped the interactions between new stars and the national. Film stars are a point of convergence for the cultural and the economic within a film industry but most star studies fail to bring both of the elements together in their analysis of the star image. The intention in this chapter therefore is to show a correlation between the cinema being produced and the stars being created, supporting Willis’ contention that stars ‘cannot be separated from the industrial contexts of their production’ (2004: 3).

The individual case studies examine in detail how the cinema that Javier Bardem, Penélope Cruz, Eduardo Noriega, and Paz Vega have respectively participated in has shaped their images, and how they and their films have reflected and / or projected the national or ideas of Spanishness in the post-1992 period, but this chapter gives the industrial contexts behind their emergence. This is to determine the importance of industrial factors and / or imperatives (as opposed to cultural or national factors) in their formation as stars in contemporary Spanish cinema, and also to ascertain their standing (commercially speaking) within their national film industry and whether they are representative of contemporary Spanish stardom. An in-depth investigation of Spanish cinema prior to 1992 is beyond the scope of this thesis, but we start with a brief discussion of Spanish cinema of the 1980s so as to be able to draw distinctions and / or parallels with what was created between 1992 and 2007.

³² The events that made 1992 a key year for national identity in Spain are outlined in the Introduction.

Spanish Cinema in the 1980s:

The problems of self-definition and the legacies of the past that preoccupied Spain in the period after the Transition were simultaneously played out in Spanish cinema, and by 1992 the Spanish film industry found itself in a similarly precarious position to the country as a whole; undergoing an economic downturn at the same time as trying to redefine itself and struggling to deal with the implications of ‘the national’.³³ The early 1980s were experienced as *años de cambio* and there was a general feeling within the Government and the film industry during this period that ‘a new cinema in a new national style was needed to properly represent newly democratic Spain’ (Triana-Toribio 2003: 110), illustrating that images of nationhood are always constructed under conditions particular to a given time (Higson [1989] 2002: 139).³⁴ There were three main positions (with areas of overlap) taken on the issue:

The first position [...] [argued that] cinema should preserve and promote the literary and cultural heritage not only of the Spanish population, but of the Basque and Catalan ones as well, with the added requirement that films from Catalonia should also be in the Catalan language. Furthermore, this cinema was to be as widely diffused as possible. It was aimed at cinema-going audiences in Spain, but its transnational projection was imperative [...] The second vision of the national cinema [...] wanted to make the most of local colour (*costumbrismo*) recognizable to audiences within Spain, which would yield authentic Spanishness of a less ‘exportable’ kind. [...] Finally, there was a line that advocated heterogeneity, emerging from the belief of the 1970s that ‘the true Spanish cinema was simply identified with freedom and independence’ (Camporesi 1994: 65). (Triana-Toribio 2003: 110)

In these strategies attempting to make Spanish cinema a coherent national cinema, there is a clear process of consciously creating an image of nation in line with what Anderson ([1983] 1991) and Hobsbawm (1983) have posited about ‘imagined community’ and ‘invented tradition’ respectively, with the aim of ‘establishing or symbolizing social cohesion’ (Hobsbawm 1983: 9). Higson’s belief that there are two ‘conceptual means of identifying the imaginary coherence or specificity of a national cinema’ (2000: 67) (the reflection-projection framework that this thesis is adapting to categorise how stars interact with the national) is illustrated via the first two possible

³³ Moreiras Menor (2002) and Graham and Sánchez (1995) look at these issues across the 1980s and 1990s (specifically 1992). Overviews of Spanish cinema since the Transition include: Caparrós Lera (1992) and (2005); Evans (1999); Jordan and Allinson (2005); Jordan and Morgan-Tamosunas (1998); Monterde (1993); Stone (2001); Triana-Toribio (2003).

³⁴ The Partido Socialista Obrero Español (PSOE), which won the 1982 election by a landslide, had campaigned under the slogan of ‘El cambio’ (‘The change’). They had not explained what they intended to change but ‘the PSOE did not need to promise to change anything because its voters were already convinced that they were going to change everything’ (Hooper 2006: 46).

avenues for film production: the first, in its aiming for transnational projection, is a form of looking outward, in Higson's words 'proclaiming its sense of otherness' (ibid); and the second vision is a form of reflecting the nation, 'to look inward' (ibid). Higson suggests that these two forms can co-exist simultaneously as part of the same national cinema (the case studies show that they can co-exist in a single film). From that perspective, the third vision (of heterogeneity) is the more accurate in terms of what usually makes up national cinemas (see Vitali and Willemsen (2006: 7) on the heterogeneity of national cinemas), despite political efforts to the contrary during Spain's burgeoning democracy (the Socialist Government supported the first position).

These three possible scenarios also have implications in terms of the nature of the films that would be required to further such aims, and the resulting 'visions' would have produced different representations of Spanishness and the nation, as well as different types of stars: concentrating on literary and cultural heritage (which in this instance was usually intended to be 'high culture') would place an emphasis on a certain type of actor, perhaps in the vein of theatrical performers who become markers of cultural prestige and 'quality', and would create a rarefied representation of Spain outside of its borders ('algo academicista y culturalista' (Monterde 2007: 31)); the second would lean more towards embodiments of cultural stereotypes (or recognisable social types) but would nonetheless be aimed at Spanish audiences (Spanish cinema made for Spanish people) without considering the transnational reception³⁵; the third would allow both of the above to co-exist along with other possible incarnations. That these different strategies could produce such distinct types of stars is illustrative of Street's argument that indigenous stars give an insight into how the film industry perceives itself in particular periods as well as reflecting cultural assumptions about nationness (2009: 157); they also support the argument of this thesis, that stars are specific to both the cinema and national culture they are part of, and that there is a correlation between the cinema being made and the stars created in parallel. In the early 1980s only the first position, 'which understood cinema first and foremost in terms of its political function, [...] found economic support and was translated into law' (Triana-Toribio 2003: 111). The State apparatus having a vision of what it wanted Spanish cinema to be (and to project of Spain) highlights one of the

³⁵ The rise of Santiago Segura and the *cine vulgar* in the 1990s is indicative of a cinema that reaffirms local identities (Pohl and Türschmann 2007: 19).

ways in which the matter of who has control of representation and what they choose to represent ties ‘issues of visibility and cinematic representation’ to ‘issues of social and political consequence’ (Nichols 2000: 45).

The Government’s economic support came in the form of the 1984 *ley Miró* (named after the film director, and Directora General de Cinematografía in the first Socialist Government, Pilar Miró), which concentrated funds on a small number of productions with the emphasis on ‘quality’. What this meant was that Miró had to:

focus official subsidies on supporting a ‘quality’ cinema of far greater filmic and cultural value, but one which was also attractive to foreign distributors and spectators. In other words, a ‘European’ art cinema which could travel and confidently represent the country and the government’s new enlightened cultural policies abroad. (Jordan and Allinson 2005: 27)

In the end Miró’s funding system was too costly as the subsidized films made little money at the box office (see Tusell (1992: 215-216) and Monterde (2007: 31)), although the subsidies for directorial debuts that the *ley Miró* started would be partly responsible for the massive influx of (commercially-savvy) talent in the 1990s (discussed below). When a new Minister of Culture, Jorge Semprún, was appointed in 1988, he set about closing down the weaknesses of the Miró system, leading to a new film law in 1994 that restructured the subsidy system so as to be based on commercial success and box office receipts (Jordan and Allinson 2005: 28), although this coincided with a production slump and the Spanish film industry continued to be a commercially precarious entity throughout the period examined in this thesis.³⁶ Although the multiplicity of regional and national identities within Spain would suggest that an attempt to portray a singular and unified cinematic vision of nation would be unrepresentative (not to mention unrealistic), Spanish cultural commentators despaired at the diversity of films released during the Miró era and felt that ‘streamlining production into a more coherent cinema would help audiences to identify a particular kind of film as Spanish *and* European’ (Triana-Toribio 2003: 114). This desire supports Hayward’s view that national culture represents a ‘homogenised fixed common culture’ (2000: 99) irrespective of the reality, but in Spain’s case although it was attempted it was not successful.

As stated above, the Government expressed a preference (via the Instituto del Cine y las Artes Audiovisuales (ICAA)) for auteurist films with an emphasis on Spanish

³⁶ Congress approved a new *ley del cine* in November 2007. See García (2007b).

literary heritage and by extension a prejudice against popular forms of cinema, which were seen as not being part of ‘culture’.³⁷ The dismissal of certain (popular) genres as ‘un-Spanish’ may seem absurd but at the same time as those types of discourses were taking place, there was a new generation of filmmakers who were happy to ignore them and follow popular forms of cinema: they either attempted to update specifically Spanish subgenres, building on popular styles and characters from comedies of the 1950s, or they took a more eclectic approach and mixed these specifically Spanish influences and styles with those of classical Hollywood cinema (Triana-Toribio 2003: 110-111).³⁸ This illustrates that national cinemas cannot exist in the singular and will always reflect the hegemonic power struggle being played out on a wider scale in society generally (Vitali and Willemen 2006: 7), and also that cinema ‘functions as the record and reflection of social history and the social process’ (Hayward [1993] 2005: ix); staid literary adaptations alone could not represent what was going on in Spanish culture and society in the 1980s, and although traditional definitions of ‘national cinema’ usually focus on art-house and / or auteur cinema, mainstream and popular cinema is no less revealing of the culture that produces and consumes it. The post-Franco, *movida* generation of directors who strayed from what the Government wanted Spanish cinema to represent included names such as Pedro Almodóvar, Fernando Trueba, Bigas Luna, and Fernando Colomo, and these alternatives to the official ‘quality’ cinema of the 1980s today constitute the senior core of the Spanish film industry (Jordan and Allinson 2005: 30).³⁹

With hindsight, the two alternative views of national cinema (i.e. the local colour and heterogeneous models) ‘seem more relevant now because they came into prominence in the 1990s’ (Triana-Toribio 2003: 121). But Triana-Toribio also argues that the filmmakers who operated outside of the *ley Miró*-supported *cine de calidad* in the 1980s were ultimately responsible for changing the shape of Spanish cinema:

They renewed Spanish cinema, ethically and aesthetically, its genres, its star system, its locations and its soundtrack (both in terms of music and language).

³⁷ The President of the Association of Film Distributors said in 1982 that ‘80 percent of this country’s film output is not culture’ (Triana-Toribio 2003: 114). This denigration of the popular was partly because of an association with the forms that Francoist cinema took, and also because of the view that a ‘good film had to [...] [be a nation-building narrative] that would paper over the cracks and debunk the myths of Francoism’ (115).

³⁸ Prejudices against popular genre cinema (and the perception that it is not ‘Spanish cinema’) nonetheless persist amongst certain Spanish cultural commentators (see Beck and Rodríguez Ortega 2008: 5-14).

³⁹ ‘Movida’ in this context is a reference to a social scene that was responsible for a boom in artistic creativity in the 1980s.

They succeeded as a consequence in changing the meaning of the words 'Spanish cinema' and what was perceived as Spanishness for future audiences, nationally and transnationally. (2003: 134)

The films made by these directors were generally commercially successful and they attracted wide audiences, which suggests that they dealt with themes and issues important to their contemporaneous audiences. A film does not need to be *explicitly* national to reveal something of the culture from which it originates: for example, Almodóvar's general refusal to make reference to Franco or the dictatorship in his films of this period is illustrative of a collective Spanish desire to 'rupture' (Moreiras Menor 2002: 60) with the past. That this group can be said to have changed the Spanish star system at the same time as changing 'Spanish cinema' is indicative of stars being an intrinsic part of national cinemas; stars are drawn from the cinema that is actually being made and new faces were needed to represent what a new generation wanted to put onscreen.

Thus, the 1980s saw the triumph of popular cinema via the local colour and heterogeneous interpretations of 'Spanish cinema', despite the Government support for the *cine de calidad*. The popular group of 1980s directors and their films are returned to below in relation to their work in the 1990s and their use of the new stars, but at this point we turn to the creation of stars within Spanish cinema in the 1980s and 1990s, before examining the directors who emerged in the 1990s and who once again changed the shape of Spanish cinema.

New Stars:

The existence and / or 'validity' of Spanish stars has been doubted by Spanish critics and film writers (Jordan and Allinson 2005: 122), but Perriam states that:

it is possible to argue that the Spanish State in the mid-1980s stood in as a kind of studio system, supporting certain genres and favouring certain actors [...] By focussing on a very small pool of actors in prestige projects, indeed, there were explicit attempts at creating a Spanish star system [...] Only in the second half of the 1990s had it become clear that there was a consistency, range, and density of performers, opportunities, and performances sufficient retrospectively to justify the use of the terminology of stardom –although Evans (1995: 329) and Jordan and Morgan-Tamosunas (1998: 126) both set the start of the new Spanish star system earlier, in the mid-1980s, when a limited number of big reputations were being made. (2003: 3)

Spanish stardom shares certain traits with Spanish cinema: 'tan rico en talentos como pobre en estructuras' (Rodríguez Merchán and Fernández-Hoya 2008: 33). Arguably

Spanish cinema does not have a star *system*, but Vincendeau posits that there does not need to be a highly organised management of stars for stars to be important to film production in a given country (2000: 1); there is not an obvious organisation of stars in Spain at the industrial level, but this thesis argues that Spanish stars do exist and they are important to the Spanish film industry and Spanish cinema. As stated above, in the 1980s the State apparatus favoured prestige literary adaptations (the ‘certain genres’ Perriam refers to), which in turn suited (and promoted) particular actors. However, the *cine de calidad* was generally not commercially successful and instead the era saw the triumph of the cinema ‘that wanted to make the most of local colour’ (Triana-Toribio 2003: 110); the ‘big reputations’ that Perriam mentions are actors such as Carmen Maura, Antonio Banderas, Victoria Abril, Maribel Verdú, and Jorge Sanz, who became stars through their performances in films by directors such as Almodóvar, Colomo, and Trueba, among others, who did not produce the State-sanctioned ‘prestige products’.⁴⁰

These stars of the 1980s illustrate the manner in which stars are a product of the cinema they circulate within, and in their reflections and projections of the 1980s underline that stars represent behaviours and attitudes that are always socially, culturally, and historically-specific (Dyer 1986: 15-16); stars are shaped by both industrial and (national) cultural factors. Their images are specific to the type of cinema they make, which highlights the influence that directors have over star images, and by extension the significance of industrial contexts to the production of stars. The star images of Maura and Abril are linked to the figure of the liberated woman found in the social commentary and satire of the *comedias madrileñas* (by directors such as Colomo, Trueba, and Almodóvar) and the perpetuation of the figure of the suffering woman (in films by Aranda) respectively (Stone 2004: 167). At the same time, Evans highlights that the films of this era were produced in a period of massive social change in Spain and that this was also filtered through the stars onscreen, saying that ‘in many ways Maura’s career charted the changed circumstances of women’s lives in post-dictatorship Spain’ (1999: 273) and arguing that Abril’s image (‘formed partly by residual processes of objectification and partly by the new assertiveness’ (2002: 130)) is also specific to the time of her emergence onscreen. Similarly, Perriam is able to position Banderas (for whom Almodóvar is the

⁴⁰ Sanz, Verdú, and especially Abril, have strong links to Vicente Aranda as well.

key director to his star image) and Sanz (who has Aranda and Trueba as his key directors) as pertaining to specific elements of the cinema being made and by extension the culture at large, saying of Sanz that ‘he takes a full role in the marked tendency in Spanish cinema of the period [...] to undermine through comedy traditional masculine values, attributes, and behaviours’ (2003: 159), and of Banderas that he ‘became part of the bricolage and radical camp aesthetic of the *movida* [...] [and] an icon of a moment of social and cultural change’ (2003: 49). Aside from emphasising that stars are specific to the cinema being made, these are also examples of what Babington means when he says that indigenous stars give things to their home audiences that Hollywood stars cannot, such as ‘reflections on the known and close at hand’ (2001: 10); stars connect with their native audience through their relations with the specifics of the local (national) culture (see the case studies).

The same process took place in the 1990s: the new collection of directors that emerged in Spanish cinema (discussed below), made up of a generation that had not lived through the dictatorship, and that looked beyond Spain’s borders for cinematic inspiration, in turn created new Spanish stars. The differences between generations of stars are indicative of the economic imperative of ‘product differentiation’ (McDonald 2000: 12) within stardom, but also the position of stars as ‘shifting signifiers’ and ‘reflectors of the time’ (Hayward 2006: 380) as successive generations reinterpret social types; several of Paz Vega’s performances (in films such as *Lucía y el sexo* (Medem, 2001) and *Sólo mía* (Balaguer, 2001)) perpetuate the figure of the suffering woman, but in a distinct manner to what was performed by Victoria Abril in the 1980s. There are also parallels between the star as shifting signifier and nationness as a cultural construct insofar as they are specific to a given time, and it is worth considering whether certain stars gain prominence because of their closeness to particular cultural ideals prevalent at a specific time; the early careers of Javier Bardem and Penélope Cruz are examples of how an almost mythical star persona can arise out of a serendipitous combination of actor, role, and current cultural circumstance (see case studies for further details). The cultural influences of the new directors, and the circumstances of the film industry they were working in, shaped the images of the new stars and how those stars interact with the national (again illustrating Street’s point about stars reflecting both their industry and current cultural assumptions (2009: 157)).

That is not to say that earlier generations of stars stopped working (their relationship with the national evolves as society continues to change and their careers develop), or that the earlier generations of directors did not have a hand in elevating certain emerging talents of the 1990s to stardom; those stars and directors still work (for example, Verdú has been described as living a second golden age in terms of her recent prominence onscreen (Sánchez-Mellada 2007: 50)) and their working alongside the next generation in turn validates the stardom of the newcomers. An example of this is Penélope Cruz's status as the only new face in *Belle époque* (Trueba, 1992), which positioned her alongside not only big names from the previous generation (Sanz and Verdú) but also one of the colossal figures of Spanish cinema (Fernando Fernán Gómez), thereby initiating Cruz into elevated company by association. Five years later Cruz herself would later act as a validation of both a director and an actor, by appearing in Alejandro Amenábar's second film (*Abre los ojos* (1997)) opposite Eduardo Noriega. Javier Bardem and Paz Vega did not receive the benediction of previous generations in their early films: Bardem did not need it because his name marks him out as the youngest member of a theatrical and cinematic dynasty; and Vega did not have any early roles opposite significant figures from other generations, perhaps indicating a shift in the formation of Spanish stardom.

Dyer argues that even when star images emanate from the same place, there is still room for variation, inflection, and contradiction (1986: 4): the stars in this thesis are effectively the post-Banderas generation of Spanish stars, and just as the 1980s stars were shaped on an individual basis by the combination of directors with whom they crossed paths, each of the chosen stars examined in this thesis is connected to a different set of directors and therefore they interact with Spanish cinema (and the national) in distinct ways. For example, Noriega has worked almost exclusively with directors from the new generation and with a large number of first-time directors; both factors on the surface would position his star image as being a product of the increasing cultural hybridity inherent to Spanish cinema of the period in terms of genre and style (as is the case with the films he has made with Amenábar), but we shall see in his case study that he has also actively sought out projects that examine Spain's past. Cruz offers a sharp contrast with Noriega, as although she has worked with newer directors, arguably the seven films that she has made with the triumvirate of Bigas Luna, Trueba, and Almodóvar during the period covered by this thesis (*Jamón, jamón* (Bigas Luna, 1992), *Belle époque* (Trueba, 1992), *Carne trémula*

(Almodóvar, 1997), *La niña de tus ojos* (Trueba, 1998), *Todo sobre mi madre* (Almodóvar, 1999), *Volavérunt* (Bigas Luna, 1999), and *Volver* (Almodóvar, 2006)) are the keystones of her image within Spanish cinema; the influence of this earlier generation of directors is the foundation on which her stardom is built and which shapes her interaction with the national. The combination of directors that a star works with (and by extension the type of films they make) clearly has an impact on the shape that the star's image takes and how that star in turn fits within the national cultural landscape: this again underlines that there is a correlation between the cinema produced and the stars created.

Nationhood and concepts of 'nationness' are not static and their definitions therefore 'will inevitably shift over time' (Williams 2002: 3), and the cultural and economic imperatives that ensure distinctions between generations also suggest that those who attain stardom together (in Spanish cinema stars who 'emerge' at the same time tend to work together often) may have commonalities in terms of how their star image interacts with the national; the similarities in terms of their relationships with the national between Bardem and Cruz, who attained stardom not just at the same time but in the same film, would appear to support this. But this does not preclude repeated interaction with stars from outside of their particular grouping too; excitement is sometimes generated by the cross-generational casting of films such as *Sin noticias de Dios* (Díaz Yanes, 2001), with Victoria Abril and Penélope Cruz, or *Volver*, with Cruz and Carmen Maura. But the stars who arrived in the 1990s (and later) do appear to have worked together a lot. For example, Eduardo Noriega, Fele Martínez and Najwa Nimri are linked to Cruz through *Abre los ojos* and to each other more than once through films such as *Tesis* (Amenábar, 1996), *Los amantes del círculo polar* (Medem, 1998), and *El Método* (Piñeyro, 2005), and they have also appeared in a series of films that contain stars from a later group (who are centred on the film *El otro lado de la cama* (Martínez-Lázaro, 2002)) that can be said to include Paz Vega on the periphery.⁴¹ As well as being an indication of how smaller national industries operate in relation to their stars this is also an example of how central 'the ensemble' is to recent Spanish cinema.

⁴¹ For example: *Carretera y manta* (Arandia, 1999 –Noriega and Natalia Verbeke); *Nadie conoce a nadie* (Gil, 1999 –Noriega, Verbeke and Vega); *El arte de morir* (Fernández Almero, 2000 –Martínez and Maria Esteve); *Lucía y el sexo* (Medem, 2001 – Nimri and Vega); *Novo* (Limosin, 2002 –Noriega and Vega); *El otro lado de la cama* (Ernesto Alterio, Vega, Verbeke, and Esteve); and Noriega, Nimri, Alterio and Verbeke appear in *El Método*.

Both industrial and cultural factors shape national stars, with the combination of directors involved being of particular importance to the form that the star takes and how they interact with the national onscreen (discussed in the case studies). We have also seen that stars are specific to the time that they first appear, in both cultural and industrial terms: there is an interrelation between the cinema produced by a national film industry at a given time and the stars that it creates in parallel. Further below, we examine how the combinations of genre, director and star have translated into commercial success (or otherwise) in recent years and investigate how their box office records position the chosen stars within the Spanish film industry commercially speaking. But first we turn our attention to the new generation of *directors* who started to emerge in the 1990s and who once again changed the form of Spanish cinema (and its stars).

Spanish Cinema in the 1990s and Beyond: Renewal

As stated above, the financial problems with the *ley Miró* meant that by 1994 the subsidies became linked to box office track records. In the same year the advance production subsidy for directorial debuts was reinstated, having disappeared between 1990 and 1994 under the direction of Semprún (Rodríguez Merchan and Fernández-Hoya 2008: 24), and Caparrós Lera argues that these subsidies (which continued under the Partido Popular when they came to power in 1996) contributed to the massive influx of talent that occurred in the 1990s (2005: 54). This is supported by Heredero, who states that between 1990 and 1998, 25 percent of films produced were by first-time directors (1999: 12), and by 2001 225 *ópera primas* had been created in the space of twelve years (Heredero 2003: 32).⁴² Although the new directors are sometimes grouped together under the title of ‘Joven Cine Español’ (see Caparrós Lera (2005: 51) for the background behind the name), there was no official school for them to have collectively studied at and they are a ‘generation’ only by coincidence of the timing of their debuts, as they cannot be said to form a group or movement in the

⁴² The proportion of *ópera primas* to total films produced increased to more than 30 percent between 2000 and 2007 (Yáñez 2009: 51). The boost in production caused by the influx of talent has negative aspects: the Spanish marketplace cannot support the volume of Spanish films being made. Between 2000 and 2006 the percentage of Spanish productions (or co-productions) that were made but never screened in Spanish cinemas rose from 3% to 11%, a figure reflected in the increase of Spanish productions registered with the Ministry of Culture in the same period (from 98 in 2000 to 150 in 2006) (Yáñez 2008: 52).

manner of former collections of directors because their work encompasses a disparate range of styles and genres (Heredero 1999: 15).⁴³

The arrival of so many new voices and points of view firmly established the triumph of the ‘discourse that locates the Spanishness of Spanish cinema in its diversity’ (Triana-Toribio 2003: 144), i.e. the third vision (advocating heterogeneity) of the proposed forms of Spanish cinema from the 1980s. It arguably challenges Hallam and Street’s assertion that representation often translates ‘cultural heterogeneity into homogenous unity’ (2000: 6) and also Hayward’s argument that national culture asserts a fixed and homogenised common culture (2000: 99); the influx and variety of talent operating in Spanish cinema in this era cannot be subsumed into a singular vision of the nation (and this is also reflected in the stars who emerged in parallel). Heredero goes so far as to suggest that their participation in Spanish cinema has ‘led to a visible and manifest transformation of the cultural imaginary’ (2003: 32), although he does not say what it was transformed from (or into). Both he and Caparrós Lera argue that a major distinction in the point of view of these new directors is that their age means that they did not experience the dictatorship in the same way as previous generations, with the majority of them coming of age either during the Transition or once democracy had been achieved ((1999: 17) and (2005: 55) respectively): ‘[they] do not feel the weight of political history –unlike the cineastes who worked during the political transition and reform periods’ (Heredero 2003: 33). It is this lack of political baggage that Corisco argues allowed the new generation to bring ‘un soplo de alegría y aire fresco’ (1998: 8) to Spanish cinema. Amenábar is quoted in Corisco’s article as saying of the new filmmakers that:

Nos estamos moviendo en muchos registros diferentes. Al haber tantas propuestas distintas no hay el encasillamiento de antes. Eso es bueno para los actores y para los directores. La gente estaba harta de ver tantas películas de la posguerra. Ahora se producen películas variadas, personales y a la vez comerciales (Corisco 1998: 12)

This statement ignores the films made by the *movida* generation (for example) that managed to be varied, personal and commercially successful: the 1990s generation

⁴³ During the Franco era there were official film schools (see Triana-Toribio 2003: 72-74). The 1990s filmmakers received their cinematic education either at private schools or by making short films on their own (Caparrós Lera 2005: 55).

may have brought stylistic and genre changes to Spanish cinema but they were not a complete break from what had gone before.

One of the ways in which Spanish cinema underwent change in the 1990s is that this new generation overtly and explicitly took inspiration from Hollywood films and formats. Although Almodóvar has taken references from classic Hollywood cinema of the 1950s as well as Spanish traditions, the latest generation of filmmakers are as likely to take inspiration from the films of Lucas or Spielberg as they are those of Berlanga or Garci; critic Jordi Costa argues that ‘los resultantes más estimulantes ofrecidos [...] habían surgido cuando los nuevos cineastas asimilaron los moldes codificados por el cine americano, para utilizarlos al servicio de un discurso personal y transformar así la cara visible y el modelo hasta ahora tradicional del cine de autor’ (cited in Caparrós Lera (2005: 57)).⁴⁴ Just as the films of the *movida* generation reflected the freedoms of a transitional and then newly democratic Spain, the films created by this new set of directors make reference to Spanish culture as it continues to evolve; Moreiras Menor sees Spain as finding its place on the world stage in the early 1990s, and this new generation offers a cinematic acknowledgement that outside influences were increasingly circulating within Spanish culture (2002: 189).

In the era of globalisation and transnationalism, cultural styles blend to the extent that it is difficult to assign nationalities to cultural forms; ‘indigenous cultures respond to hegemonic imported cultural models by creating new hybrid forms that are neither local nor foreign but both’ (Labanyi 1995: 397). Many of the new directors were within the same age range as their intended audiences (‘es la primera generación española que ha crecido con televisores en sus hogares, de manera que comparten un bagaje cultural sobre lenguajes audiovisuales con los espectadores más jóvenes’ (Rodríguez Merchán and Fernández-Hoya 2008: 31)) and seem to have had an interest in the traditions of Spanish cinema only insofar as they wanted to avoid them and create something new.⁴⁵ Fecé says that:

Esa conexión del cine español con las tradiciones culturales que definirían su especificidad, su “españolidad”, se rompe, o se reformula, especialmente en los años 90, en películas destinadas principalmente a espectadores menores de treinta y cinco años, cuyas expectativas y gustos no coinciden con las de aquel “pueblo” que, supuestamente, se veía representado en zarzuelas, sainetes, etc. (2005: 87)

⁴⁴ Amenábar is a prime example of this.

⁴⁵ Álex de la Iglesia infamously said that his debut would avoid the Civil War and the post-war era, avoid adapting a culturally prestigious novel, or recreating childhood traumas (Buse et al 2007: 35).

In common with their cinema-going peers, the new directors wanted to watch films that were entertaining; their capacity to see cinema as a commercial venture meant that many of them embraced genres that had previously been looked down on, and made their films financially successful at the same time as redefining the boundaries of 'Spanish cinema'. Jordan and Allinson argue that these directors have succeeded in balancing the commercial and the artistic, with the influx of talent leading to 'the emergence of a broadly commercial, entertainment-driven, Spanish cinema, involving new sets of narrative, generic, thematic, stylistic, technical, and casting concerns and choices' (2005: 30).

The repeated emphasis that commentators put on the commercial instincts of the new generation (see Corisco (1998), for example) underlines the existence of industrial imperatives within national cinemas; the script for Amenábar's debut, *Tesis*, makes the case that Spanish cinema had been commercially unsuccessful because it had failed to give audiences what they wanted (i.e. entertainment).⁴⁶ A film *industry* is not solely about cultural texts but also commercial 'products' that consumers will want to buy. In relation to the argument that the incorporation of outside (commercial) influences means that Spanish cinema is no longer specifically Spanish, Fecé makes an important point when he asks '¿no estamos construyendo un discurso sobre el cine nacional sin tener en cuenta esa realidad nacional (con su televisión y su prensa de corazón)?' (2005: 89); the cultural hybridity of recent Spanish cinema is reflective of what is going on in Spanish culture at a more general level. Cinema has always been a 'multinational product' (Marsh and Nair 2004: 3), and it also depends how the films are having nationality attributed to them (economic or labour criteria, or cultural conceptions in terms of themes or sense of community (Street 2009: 1)). Arguably to understand national cinemas one needs to look at the overall spectrum of output by the given film industry (Street 2009: 2), which is why stars are a useful means through which to view a national cinema because they participate in a wide range of types and styles of cinema. In the case studies we see that the increasingly globalised form of contemporary Spanish cinema has an impact on the star images circulating within that cinema and the ways in which those stars interact with the national.

⁴⁶ Spanish cinema had come to be associated with moralising social messages and therefore avoided by native audiences (Corisco 1998: 11); before the rejuvenation of Spanish cinema by these new directors, 'era habitual elogiar un largometraje español diciendo, precisamente, *que no parece español*' (ibid).

Likewise, the enhanced ability of the Spanish star to cross national boundaries is indicative of this increased cultural hybridity; arguably their transnational abilities are connected to the fact that since the 1990s Spanish stars have been circulating in a national cinema that has increasingly acknowledged and utilised the codes and conventions of a more international form (i.e. Hollywood, but also elements of a general European art-house style) of cinema production. It is only since the early 1990s (when Antonio Banderas embarked on a Hollywood career) that it has appeared feasible that Spanish stars can operate within other film industries and be marketable in other cultures; the new generation of Spanish stars are indicative of Spanish stardom having moved on from the time of Finney's scathing comments about European stars 'struggling to win vague recognition from neighbouring countries, let alone international fame' (1994: 23). Although this thesis focuses on the Spanish films of the chosen stars, and all four of them have qualities that link them specifically to concepts of Spanishness, they have all (successfully) worked abroad and it is apparent that Spanish stardom has undergone a shift in the time between the emergences of Penélope Cruz and Paz Vega in terms of how Spanish stars relate to the national. The former has been coded as Spanish in a very specific way from the outset of her career, and although she is undeniably now an *international* star, she is still claimed by the Spanish industry as 'nuestra Penélope' and those Spanish codes are still present in one form or another, whereas Vega consciously (and openly) strived for an international career from very early on and Spanishness is seemingly not so ingrained in her image and she has not been possessively claimed in quite the same way. Their transnational careers are simultaneously symptomatic of both the success and crisis of Spanish cinema in this era, as on the one hand the increasing marketability of Spanish stars abroad is indicative of their having been involved in commercially successful cinema produced within Spain (and other markets usually become aware of them via Spanish films that have successfully crossed over into other territories), but on the other there is the sense that working abroad is the only way for them to achieve international recognition and operate at the highest level of their profession (see Bardem in Edelman (2007: 249)).⁴⁷

At the same time as the cinematic hybridity, Caparrós Lera argues that the new directors are still concerned to offer 'un reflejo de las inquietudes y los problemas de

⁴⁷ In an overview of the state of Spanish cinema at the start of 2009, a range of Spanish actors were said to be learning languages with the view to working abroad (Abril 2009: 49).

la sociedad de nuestros días' (2005: 59), and while in contrast Heredero argues that the filmmakers of this 'generation' generally avoid 'confrontation with the cultural or political context' (2003: 34), he does also somewhat contradictorily say that '[many of these films] imply a moral view of significant issues within contemporary Spanish society' (2003: 34). Despite the prevalence of outside influences in recent Spanish cinema, the inward-looking strains of Spanish cinema that more obviously convey cinema as reflecting and recording social history and process (Hayward [1993] 2005: ix) also persist. For example, the resurgence of the *cine social* genre suggests that there is still a market for 'traditional' Spanish cinema (a lot of *cine social* films have been box office hits in this period), and is therefore another example of continuity across generations of filmmakers. It also suggests that traditions in terms of styles of Spanish performers and performances may well be perpetuated via the use of 'traditional' genres.⁴⁸ The substantial rewarding of *cine social* films by official awards bodies such as the Goyas perhaps indicates an underlying concern within certain quarters of the Spanish film industry that, in straying from what is 'expected' of Spanish cinema with the increased prevalence of the hybridity mentioned above, 'Spanish cinema' is losing some of its specific national identity.⁴⁹ Triana-Toribio posits that there is 'the belief that social realism is the most *legitimate* Spanish cinema [...] among film critics, the specialised press and institutions such as the AACC [the Academia de las Artes y las Ciencias Cinematográficas de España]' (2003: 155-156, emphasis in original). She argues that this can be traced back to the Salamanca Conference of 1955 (when director Juan Antonio Bardem accused Spanish cinema of being 'socially false'), since which time 'a certain sector of Spanish film professionals and critics [...] has been obsessed with the "social relevance" of Spanish cinema' (2003: 156).

As stated above, national cinemas cannot exist in the singular and will always be multi-faceted, but the worry about the dilution of Spanish cultural identities is highlighted in both Fecé (2005) and the collection of articles in Alonso García (2003) (where the question of whether 'Spanish cinema' actually exists is raised, with a range of answers). Arguably this concern is unfounded because, aside from cinema always having been a multinational product (Marsh and Nair 2004: 3), even if the newer directors were creating new styles of cinema (and why should a new style be

⁴⁸ See Quintana (2005: 20-21) on the type of actor that the *cine social* promotes.

⁴⁹ Jordan and Allinson list the Goya awards won by some of the *cine social* films (2005: 30).

considered any less ‘Spanish’ anyway? (Fecé 2005: 89)), it does not mean that more traditional styles have disappeared, as the resurgence of the *cine social* demonstrates, and incoming cultural signs and styles are still ‘subject to local inflection and resignification’ (Jordan 2000: 69). Also, this massive renewal of personnel in the Spanish film industry by no means precluded the continued work practices and success of both the post-Franco *movida* generation as well as the earlier ‘nuevo cine español’ generation (including directors such as Carlos Saura and Vicente Aranda), each maintaining their particular styles and interests (Jordan and Allinson 2005: 30). Indeed, D’Lugo writes that ‘the nineties have been an especially rich and exciting period for Spanish films both at home and abroad largely because filmmakers of various generations have been able to flourish simultaneously within the market’ (2002: 5), and looking at the Appendix one can see that the end of year top ten charts between 1992 and 2007 are usually a mixture of established and new filmmakers.

This section has outlined the impact of the influx of new filmmakers on ‘Spanish cinema’. The emergence of a commercially adept and cine-literate ‘generation’ of filmmakers again redefined the boundaries of ‘Spanish cinema’ in terms of narrative, genres, and visuals. Their working alongside previous generations of filmmakers has allowed the models of heterogeneity and local colour to continue their success in Spanish cinema (despite the persistence of the notion that some forms of national cinema are more ‘legitimate’ than others). The case studies will examine in greater detail the influence that these directors have had over the stardom of the chosen stars and the manner in which their cultural hybridity has shaped how these stars interact with the national. However at this point we reach a central paradox of Spanish cinema of this period, that at the same time as mass renewal and the significant commercial success of a range of Spanish films, the Spanish film industry was also sporadically said to be in crisis.

Spanish Cinema in the 1990s and Beyond: Crisis

Although Spanish cinema seemingly survives a constantly announced ‘crisis’ (Harguindey 2004: 31), this ‘crisis’ came into specific focus in the years of 1994 and 2002 (and arguably also 2007). Jordan and Morgan-Tamosunas describe 1994, also the year of the new film law with its new financing structures, as ‘the nadir of film production in Spain’ (1998: 3); audience figures for Spanish films were the lowest

they had been for years, ‘representing only seven percent of market share’ (1998: 2).⁵⁰ After that year the industry experienced an upturn (see the Appendix) and it was not until 2002 (which nonetheless maintained the pattern of four Spanish films achieving more than a million spectators) that another major slump was perceived (see Ansola González (2003: 43)). But the way the statistics have been read is misleading: the ‘slump’ of 2002 is due to the extraordinary figures of two films (*The Others* (Amenábar, 2001) and *Torrente 2* (Segura, 2001)) released the previous year (Rausell, cited in Arocena (2003: 76)), a contrast that can also be made in relation to other ‘slumps’ during the period covered by this thesis.⁵¹ It is also worth pointing out that in 2002 the downturn did not just involve Spanish films: the film in overall pole position (*Spiderman* (Raimi, 2002)) also took less than *The Others* had in 2001. In most of the other instances, the ‘slumps’ are arguably a case of figures being taken out of context (i.e. the year viewed in isolation rather than within a wider pattern), or a matter of perception, rather than evidence of a serious decline in audience figures for Spanish films; the Appendix shows that audience figures in most of the ‘slump’ years (1996, 2000, 2002) were not drastically lower, although the contrast between 2006 and 2007 does show a more distinct drop.⁵²

Nevertheless, Benavent points out that while more spectators are watching Spanish films overall, they watch a smaller range of films, with the top ten Spanish films each year accounting for 70 percent of all takings generated by Spanish films (2000: 12): an increasingly small number of films are responsible for the buoyancy of the Spanish film industry.⁵³ This is emphasised by Torreiro, who observes that of the 18.7 million spectators who watched a Spanish film in 2006 (a good year for Spanish cinema), 7 million of them (38 percent) are attributable to the four films that also won the majority of the awards that year: *Alatriste* (Díaz Yanes, 2006), *Volver*, *El laberinto*

⁵⁰ Rodríguez Merchán and Fernández-Hoya link the culmination of problems in 1994 in part to the lack of specific support for new directors between 1990 and 1994 (when there were no subsidies for directorial debuts); they argue that the reinstatement of that specific subsidy was a decisive factor in the upturn and *cambio generacional* that Spanish cinema then experienced (2008: 28-29).

⁵¹ So-called slumps have occurred three times in the period (1996, 2000, 2002) but all three occasions followed years that had witnessed a substantial increase in takings (1995, 1999, 2001) (Ansola González 2003: 49). The same pattern can be seen between 2006 and 2007.

⁵² Piracy is also a particular issue in Spain in relation to falling cinema attendance.

⁵³ This again highlights a problem with having so many new directors emerge at the same time: the domestic market cannot support the number of films made.

del Fauno (del Toro, 2006)⁵⁴, and *SALVADOR Puig Antich* (Huerga, 2006) (2007: 9). Torreiro also contrasts the figures for 2006 and 2007 to highlight that although films by directors such as Icíar Bollaín and Julio Medem were due in the second half of 2007, as of July 2007 not a single Spanish film had managed to bring in even half a million spectators (ibid), again representing another ‘slump’ or ‘crisis’.⁵⁵ This reliance on a handful of films means that certain directors are expected to single-handedly revive the Spanish box office, as in 2004 when Almodóvar and Amenábar both had films due out: ‘Dos pesos pesados, pues, de la cinematografía española en los que están puestas buena parte de las esperanzas recaudatorias de la taquilla nacional y de la correspondiente cuota de mercado’ (Harguindey 2004: 32).

A report by the ICAA on the Spanish film industry between 1996 and 2003 also illustrates Spain’s reliance on ‘name’ directors, and asserts the traditional view that European cinemas are predominantly auteur-led by concluding that the films typically achieving more than 1.5 million spectators tend to be by a select group of directors: ‘Pedro Almodóvar, Juanma Bajo-Ulloa, Fernando Trueba, Alejandro Amenábar, Vicente Aranda, Álex de la Iglesia, Santiago Segura, Emilio Martínez-Lázaro, Fernando León de Aranoa [...] and David Serrano’ (2004: 14-15).⁵⁶ However, the reliance on a select number of directors and the resulting instability and generally precarious nature of the film industry in Spain is arguably a factor in the increasing number of Spanish stars working abroad: all four stars examined in this thesis have said that too few quality projects are produced by the Spanish film industry and therefore they need to look elsewhere in order to develop their careers. Discussions of national cinemas rarely consider the industrial imperatives at the heart of mainstream film industries but the case of Spain clearly shows that the traditional binary of European cinema equalling art and American cinema equalling commerce is reductive and simplistic: most film industries need profits in order to operate and maintain equilibrium.

⁵⁴ The Spanish Ministry of Culture classifies del Toro’s film as Spanish, but 22 percent of the financing came from Mexico (Ministry of Culture website, accessed 20.03.08) and the film represented Mexico at the Oscars in 2007.

⁵⁵ By the end of 2007, only two Spanish films had reached 1 million spectators: *El Orfanato* (Bayona) and *[REC]* (Plaza & Balaguero). *El Orfanato* reached more than 4 million spectators, beating all US productions as well, making it the saviour of the Spanish film industry for 2007.

⁵⁶ Serrano’s *Días de cine* (2007) was one of those films that failed to reach half a million spectators in 2007 (it received only 108,244 spectators (Ministry of Culture website, accessed 11.03.08)): the attraction of ‘name’ directors is not infallible.

Despite the mass renewal of talent and commercial success of a range of Spanish films between 1992 and 2007, the Spanish film industry is still perceived as an unstable entity that is overly reliant on a handful of key directors to keep it buoyant. Although some readings of the audience figures for Spanish films are questionable, there is nonetheless a widespread belief (for example, see the articles in Alonso García (2003)) that ‘Spanish cinema’ is sporadically (if not permanently) in ‘crisis’, and this has arguably contributed to the decision taken by a range of Spanish stars to work abroad. This in turn contributes to the shape of their career and star image, as well as how they are perceived in Spain (not always to their advantage, as we shall see in the Penélope Cruz chapter). In terms of what makes a commercially successful film in Spain, Jordan and Allinson look beyond the auteur-led view of Spanish cinema to argue that ‘what has tended to sell Spanish films in Spain, historically, is genres, directors and actors [...] and the expectations and viewing pleasures built up by audiences around these’ (2005: 122). We therefore now turn our attention to the intersections between genre, the directors discussed above, and the new generation of Spanish stars who emerged after 1992, in an examination of box office trends in this era.

Box Office Stars:

Given that stars generally make more films than directors, they have more opportunities to maintain a steady track record, and the four stars examined in this thesis are represented in every end of year Spanish box office top ten between 1992 and 2006.⁵⁷ One wonders if the reason that Spanish stars are not generally seen as selling points for a film in Spain (for example, see Green (2004b: 21)) is in part because their stardom is viewed as questionable, and Spanish stars do not traditionally participate in the ‘publicity machine’ associated with marketable (Hollywood) stars. That said, Dyer makes a distinction between promotion and publicity (the latter is not staged and the star is not necessarily a willing participant) ([1979] 1998: 61) and while Penélope Cruz may take the principled stand of never discussing personal relationships in interviews (which are given to *promote* specific films), she cannot avoid the *publicity* those relationships generate in the *prensa rosa* (the same is true of other Spanish stars but Cruz is at the extreme end of the scale of media interest).

⁵⁷ The figures for 2007 are not included here because they were not finalised at the time of compiling the statistics for this chapter, but they are included in the Appendix.

Although all four stars have had films fail to make the end of year top ten, out of a possible 150 places in the top tens over the course of the fifteen years (1992-2006), Bardem, Cruz, Noriega, and Vega collectively have roles in films occupying 39 of the places: 26 percent of the top ten places are occupied by films starring one or more of the chosen four stars. It is significant that these four feature so heavily because while 74 percent of the films star other people, this figure represents a diffuse and vast range of actors: these films are not concentrated around only a few names. To put the 26 percent statistic into context, the table below compares the individual track records of Spanish actors who occupied multiple chart places between 1992 and 2006 so as to underline the value of these four specific stars.

No.	Name	Number of top ten places occupied, 1992-2006	Percentage of top ten places occupied, 1992-2006
1	Penélope Cruz	16	10.7%
2	Santiago Segura	13	8.6%
3	Javier Bardem	12	8%
4	Jordi Mollà	11	7.3%
=	Antonio Resines	11	7.3%
6	Ariadna Gil	9	6%
=	Eduardo Noriega	9	6%
=	Jorge Sanz	9	6%
9	Fele Martínez	8	5.3%
=	Paz Vega	8	5.3%
11	Maribel Verdú	7	4.6%
12	Victoria Abril	6	4%
=	Carmelo Gómez	6	4%
=	Guillermo Toledo	6	4%
15	Ernesto Alterio	5	3.3%
=	Imanol Arias	5	3.3%
=	Juan Diego Botto	5	3.3%
=	Fernando Fernán Gómez	5	3.3%
=	Alberto San Juan	5	3.3%
=	Emma Suárez	5	3.3%
=	Natalia Verbeke	5	3.3%

Table 1: Track records of the twenty-one actors with the most top ten places (1992-2006)⁵⁸

The consistency with which their films turn up in the end of year top tens suggests that the success (or otherwise) of their output can be seen as reflective of the successes (or otherwise) of Spanish cinema in Spain. Arguably the findings in Table 1

⁵⁸ Actors with 4 places (2.6%) include José Coronado, Veronica Forqué, Carmen Maura, Najwa Nimri, and Leonor Watling, and those with 3 places (2%) include Elena Anaya and Juan José Ballesta. Filmography information taken from the Ministry of Culture's website database in March 2008.

support the choice of Bardem, Cruz, Noriega, and Vega as being representative of contemporary Spanish stardom in the 1992-2007 period, and although the findings show that stars whose careers started prior to 1992 remained popular in the period under discussion (eight of the twenty-one had attained recognition before 1992, and note the continued presence of some of the ‘big reputations’ of the 1980s), they also demonstrate that the chosen four were at the vanguard of the new generation of stars who emerged in this era. All four of them are positioned within the first half (Cruz in pole position, Bardem at number three, Noriega in joint sixth, and Vega joint ninth), and other factors discount the other six top actors from being appropriate choices: the work of Santiago Segura probably merits a thesis of its own, and his multi-hyphenate status (writer-director-actor) marks him out as a singular figure in this generation of stars and thus difficult to place within a study that focuses purely on actors; Antonio Resines, Ariadna Gil, and Jorge Sanz started their careers prior to 1992 and therefore do not fit the remit; Jordi Mollà and Fele Martínez are possible alternatives for Bardem and Noriega respectively given that they also made their debuts in *Jamón jamón* and *Tesis*, but arguably Mollà and Martínez have kept lower profiles and have not been taken as emblematic of their eras in the same way as their former co-stars. There are fewer women overall (seven out of the twenty-one) and, given the post-1992 criteria, in terms of these records Paz Vega is shown to be the closest post-1992 female star to Penélope Cruz; the only other post-1992 woman in the table is Natalia Verbeke, one of seven actors in joint fifteenth position.

While these track records suggest the ability of certain stars to generate audience figures, it is also important to acknowledge that the films appearing in the top tens do not rely on star power alone, but on a combination of the three elements that Jordan and Allinson mention: genre, director, and star (2005: 122). As stated above, a lot of the films that make the top tens do have big name directors (from several generations) but, aside from Almodóvar, Amenábar, and de la Iglesia, a big name director does not seem to be a *guarantee* of box office success, even with a big name cast. The Appendix also underlines the importance of genre and how directors can build up associations with certain genres. An example of the importance of genre (and arguably also the instability of stars as selling points) is the film *El embrujo de Shanghai* (Trueba, 2002), which gave Fernando Trueba his worst audience figures for twenty years despite performances by Ariadna Gil, Fernando Fernán Gómez, Antonio Resines and Jorge Sanz, all of whom had appeared in several of Trueba’s previous big

successes such as *Opera prima* (1980), *Sé infiel y no mires con quién* (1985), *Belle époque*, or *La niña de tus ojos*: the difference is that those films are all (dramatic) comedies and *El embrujo de Shanghai* is a non-comedic drama.⁵⁹

Nonetheless, the generation of Spanish stars who emerged in the 1990s were partly responsible for the successes of that era: ‘nadie duda de que la irrupción en nuestras pantallas de una serie de actores que “conectan” con el público de un modo especial es una de las causas de lo que se viene denominado “resurgimiento del cine español”’ (Clemente 1998: 5). Films connect with their audiences through the actors onscreen, and the four chosen stars recur so frequently in the lists of successful Spanish films in this period because they relate to a ‘specific national, class, political and cultural environment’ (Babington 2001: 22) and in their interaction with particular directors they have managed to tap into particular resonances and ‘act out aspects of life that matter’ (Dyer 1986: 17) for Spanish audiences. Given that our four stars have managed to get films by first-time directors into the top ten, it would seem that there generally needs to be an audience expectation based around the combination of at least two of the three selling points (genre, director, star); either star and genre, director and genre, or star and director, or all three together. However there are individuals who have sufficient pulling power that they apparently do not need to act in combination with other factors (Almodóvar, Amenábar, de la Iglesia, and arguably Penélope Cruz (see below)).

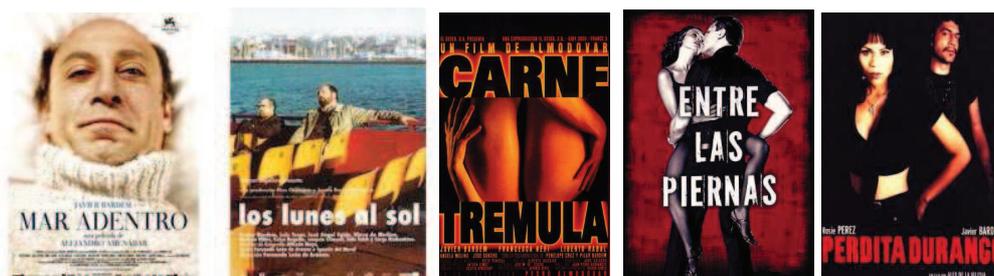
In terms of how the expectations of genre, director, and star have combined in the cases of the four chosen stars, the Appendix shows that the four stars are represented in every top ten between 1992 and 2006, and they have worked with a variety of directors in a range of genres (dramas, comedies, thrillers, literary adaptations, historical epics, and musicals are among those included, which illustrates that in smaller markets it is not necessarily economically feasible for stars to ‘specialise’ in a narrow range of genres).⁶⁰ Although individual films contain the ‘traces of earlier roles’ that Drake argues are an ‘economic condition of stardom’ (2004: 77), their collective filmographies are indicative of the heterogeneity of Spanish cinema in this era, as a variety of genres and styles are represented by a range of new and established

⁵⁹ The 1940s setting was probably not a factor (his last three films had been set in different eras without it presenting a problem), but it is a Miró-style literary adaptation (which are generally less popular).

⁶⁰ The Ministry of Culture’s film database has been used to assign genres to the films listed in the Appendix. Some of the classifications are simplistic: for example, *Jamón jamón* is more than just a comedy.

directors; they offer a Spanish illustration of Vincendeau’s observation that in smaller film industries there is a ‘co-existence of mainstream and auteur cinema in a single star’s image’ (2000: 2). Simultaneously they also reveal the flexibility that a cinema as heterogeneous as Spain’s requires of its stars and demonstrate that industrial imperatives (i.e. what the film industry requires of a star) shape the form and content of the star image; this again underlines the importance of the industrial circumstances behind a star’s production. The variety inherent to their careers also supports McDonald’s caution at viewing ‘star vehicles’ or genre films as closed entities (2000: 95); although some of the stars do have associations with specific genres (discussed below), the women in particular cross genre boundaries with ease. As we shall see in the case studies, these films also offer differing accounts of ‘the nation’, or at least their approach to the national or Spanishness and their use of stars is varied (often according to differing genre conventions): for example, both *La niña de tus ojos* and *El espinazo del diablo* (del Toro, 2001) are set in the late-1930s but their approaches to the political and social ramifications of the Civil War are clearly distinct, as is their use of the stars (Cruz and Noriega respectively) and their images.

An individual breakdown of each star’s box office track record in Spain is included in the Appendix, but there are a number of general observations that can be made as to how these stars fit within the Spanish film industry of 1992-2007. As stated above, stars alone do not seem to guarantee audience figures, but Penélope Cruz may well be an exception to that rule because she is by far the most commercially successful of the four stars and has had seven films attain more than one million spectators (giving her an average audience of more than one million spectators across the fifteen Spanish-language films she made in this period). Javier Bardem and Paz Vega also have average audience figures above one million spectators when their Spanish-language films are considered (across thirteen and ten films respectively) but Noriega lags behind, something that is returned to below in relation to the directors they have worked with.



Figures 1-5: Javier Bardem's top five films in terms of audience figures, with films by Amenábar, León de Aranoa, Almodóvar, Gómez Pereira, and de la Iglesia.

In terms of the instability of the industry, it was only during the so-called crisis of 2002 that all four of them had attained stardom (Bardem, Cruz, and Noriega had been around during the 'renaissance' in the late-90s, but Vega had not) and they fit within what occurred that year in very different ways: it was the beginning of Cruz's five year absence from Spanish cinema (her return in 2006 marks another peak year for the industry) but her absence cannot be put forward as one of the causes of the instability at this point, rather her absence could be seen as another indicator of instability in the industry; Noriega was in a period of working on smaller, art-house-style films and did not appear in the end of year top ten; and Bardem and Vega belie the 'crisis' by each starring in one of their most successful films (*Los lunes al sol* (León de Aranoa, 2002) (Bardem's return to Spanish cinema after an absence of three years) and *El otro lado de la cama* respectively). Overall, their statistics would appear to contradict the picture of industrial instability as all four of them can be seen to have increased their average audience numbers between 1992 and 2006, if that fifteen year period is broken down into blocks of five years (see the Appendix for details). This suggests that rather than looking at Spanish cinema as reliant on a handful of directors, Spanish stars could have greater importance as contributors to, and markers of, a film's possible success than is currently acknowledged.

That said, the periods of absence that are increasingly prevalent (for example, Bardem last released a Spanish-language film in 2004) are also an outward sign that all is not well within Spanish cinema. They can be taken as an indication that there is not enough quality work being generated by the Spanish film industry for these stars to further their careers at the level they would like in Spain: that in itself should be a crisis for the film industry. Arguably it also leads to a vicious circle wherein industrial instability leads the stars to work abroad, which in turn leads to further instability (if we are taking stars as contributors to a film's commercial success). Although Noriega shows the increase in audience numbers, his track record overall is still erratic. Given that he is the only one of the four who has consistently worked in Spanish cinema without any extended periods of absence to date (he released at least one film every year between 1996 and 2007), Noriega could be taken as a more accurate indicator of

the ups and downs of the industry, although he has actively pursued projects that are not overtly ‘commercial’ (which impacts on his box office record).



Figures 6-10: Penélope Cruz’s top five films in terms of audience figures, with films by Almodóvar, Trueba, Almodóvar, Trueba, and Amenábar.

What all four of them have in common is that their audience figures drop dramatically for those films that are made in languages other than Spanish (English, French, and Italian). The Ministry of Culture’s website does not indicate the number of distribution copies for each film nor whether the films were dubbed or subtitled, but while one could suppose that the French and Italian films were less widely distributed (on the assumption that they will have a smaller market share than Spanish cinema) it is surprising that their English-language films do comparatively badly given Hollywood’s dominance of Spanish cinema screens. To take the example of Cruz (who has had the most extensive career in the US (so far)), only one of her English-language films has reached one million spectators and her average across her eleven non-Spanish-language films is less than half a million spectators, including films starring big US (and international) names such as Tom Cruise and Johnny Depp; Spanish audiences apparently prefer to see their own stars speaking in Spanish.⁶¹

With regards to the directors they have worked with and the expectations that those combinations generate, all of these stars have worked with several of the directors that were stated to be a box office draw by the afore-mentioned ICAA report into the Spanish film industry between 1996 and 2003: Cruz, Bardem, and Vega have worked with Almodóvar; Cruz with Trueba; Noriega, Cruz, and Bardem with Amenábar; Noriega and Vega with Aranda; Vega with Martínez-Lázaro; and Bardem has also worked with both de la Iglesia and León de Aranoa. The combinations in which the stars have worked with established and new directors has had an impact on their box office, but not necessarily in the manner expected. Cruz and Vega follow

⁶¹ The Tom Cruise film (*Vanilla Sky* (Crowe, 2001)) was a remake of *Abre los ojos*, which may have put Spanish audiences off.

what is perhaps the expected pattern in that those films by established directors have on average reached a bigger audience than those films by directors from the new generation; the established directors already had a reputation and attached audience expectations prior to working with these stars.⁶² However, the reverse is true for the two men: Bardem and Noriega have bigger averages across those films made with new directors. This is partly because the two men proportionally have made more films with new directors, but they do not have significantly more of these films than the women (the four have each made between 6-10 films with directors who emerged in the 1990s or after). This suggests that genre is also coming into play.



Figures 11-15: Eduardo Noriega's top five films in terms of audience figures, with films by Díaz Yanes, Amenábar, Courtois, Gil, and del Real.

As stated above, Noriega's overall average is significantly lower than those of the other three stars, which could be because he has worked almost exclusively with newer directors, but we have just seen that the films made with these directors overall give him a higher average than those made with directors of previous generations. In fact the figures are misleading when broken down in that way because the success of his four films that reached more than one million spectators, all of which were by newer directors and two of which (*El Lobo* (Courtois, 2004) and *Nadie conoce a nadie* (Gil, 1999)) were debuts, obscure some of the dire figures attained by the other directorial debuts in his filmography (three failed to reach even 100,000 spectators). This is where genre comes in because the apparent distinction between the success and failure of the directorial debuts is that the successful ones were thrillers.⁶³ Those of Noriega's films that engage with the conventions of the thriller genre (the genre in which he made his name) are generally more successful than those that do not. They

⁶² By the time Bardem and Vega worked with Amenábar and Medem respectively, the directors had established their reputations but they are still part of the newer generation.

⁶³ Of his four films that passed 1 million spectators, *Abre los ojos* is also a thriller, and the success of the fourth film, *Alatriste*, is attributable to both the source material (the books of Arturo Pérez-Reverte) and the luxuriousness of the cast (a panorama of Spanish character actors).

are an example of what McDonald describes as ‘strategies for exploiting star performers in the production and consumption of films’ (2000: 1); his thrillers build on audience expectations (using those ‘traces of earlier roles’) generated by previous films, highlighting the importance of industrial imperatives (here in relation to genre) to the development of his star image.

The other three stars are not so strongly identified with a specific genre; Cruz and Vega in particular have demonstrated that they are able to cross between comedic and dramatic registers with apparent ease, and Bardem’s association with the *cine social* owes more to his style of acting than to the actual number of films from that genre that he has appeared in. However in Vega’s case it is also true that her most successful films have an emphasis on sexuality and carnal desire (a key aspect of her star image) and it is noticeable that (much like Noriega and his non-thriller films) those of her Spanish-language films that lack this emphasis do less well at the box office; one can see these carnal associations being emphasised in the advertising for films such as *El otro lado de la cama*, *Carmen* (Aranda, 2003), and *Lucía y el sexo* (see below), and also (controversially) *Teresa, el cuerpo de Cristo* (Loriga, 2007) (the implications of which are discussed in the case study). That the Spanish film industry clearly utilises certain aspects of a given star image in marketing a film (as can clearly be seen with Noriega and Vega), contradicts the view that stars do not ‘sell’ in Spain; if an emphasis is placed on the star in promotional materials (and all four stars routinely appear on film posters, as can be seen in the images above and below) that is surely an acknowledgement that Spanish stars are a draw for Spanish audiences.



Figures 16-20: Paz Vega’s top five films in terms of audience figures, with films by Martínez-Lázaro, Aranda, Gil, Almodóvar, and Medem.

None of the four have created a ‘branded image’ in the sense of a commercial formula that is repeated again and again (although Noriega has the thriller associations, his career is also the most diverse of the four); none of them appear to be interested in that ‘type’ of stardom, and even if they were it would be difficult to

sustain in a market the size of Spain's. Arguably the audience figures support the argument that the success (or otherwise) of Spanish films is rarely attributable purely to the presence of a given star, instead relying on a combination of either star and genre, or star and director (or all three), although Penélope Cruz's record does present her as a possible exception to this rule and overall the star factor cannot be ignored. Cruz and Bardem's Spanish-language films have had steadily increasing figures and they reliably reach audience numbers of six-figures (and above), which is also true of Vega (although her six-figure numbers are lower than the other two) but not Noriega. However Noriega has had more films pass the 'one million spectators' boundary than Bardem has, and he has also occupied more places in the end of year top tens than Vega has, which perhaps answers the question of why he is seen as a bankable name by Spanish producers (de la Torriente 2007: 84) when his actual track record is all over the place: he is extremely consistent in conjunction with the thriller genre. Cruz's statistics (in both audience figures and top ten places) are all the more impressive when one considers that she did not release any Spanish-language films between *Sin noticias de Dios* (in 2001) and *Volver* (in 2006); the five year gap merely suggests that her figures would be even higher if she had made Spanish films in that time. Their records also present a stark warning to the Spanish industry: while a film's success is not purely attributable to their presence, these stars are undeniably a contributing factor to possible success, and the fact that all four of them are currently looking for work outside of Spain because they are not being offered challenging Spanish projects should be cause for concern.

This chapter has investigated the following issues: the developments or changes that occurred within the Spanish film industry in the period 1992-2007; the impact that these developments have had on 'Spanish cinema' and in turn Spanish stardom; the standing of the selected stars within that changing Spanish film industry; and whether they are representative of contemporary Spanish stardom. A correlation between the industrial issues of Spanish cinema and the production of Spanish stardom in the 1992-2007 period has also been outlined. The correlation between cinema and star (specifically the relationship between stars and directors) will be explored further in other chapters, as will the issue of how much weight the industrial issues have in shaping the star in comparison to other (national) cultural imperatives. This chapter has also ascertained, through an analysis of box office records and a

comparison with other stars working in the 1992 to 2007 period, that Javier Bardem, Penélope Cruz, Eduardo Noriega, and Paz Vega can be taken as representative of contemporary Spanish stardom and that they have status within the Spanish film industry due to their commercial reliability in the Spanish market (although with differing levels of reliability depending on a range of factors).

The generations of filmmakers who emerged in the 1960s, 70s and 80s continued to work in the period under discussion, alongside a new collection of filmmakers who emerged in the 1990s. While this newer group of filmmakers have few elements in common other than the coincidence of the timing of their arrival in the industry, the sheer number of them profoundly changed the make up of the Spanish industry and cinema in terms of both style and content. The new 'generation' that started to emerge in the early 1990s have been more open to outside influences (specifically Hollywood / US influences) in their filmmaking, and although there are precedents for the use of these outside influences (for example, in the work of Almodóvar) the newer filmmakers are also unafraid to consider cinema as a commercial venture; some of them have embraced genres that had previously been looked down on, and managed to make them financially successful at the same time as redefining what the boundaries of 'Spanish cinema' can be said to contain. This is integral to the creation of Spanish stars in this period; the Spanish stars who emerged between 1992 and 2007 reflect the cultural hybridity that is increasingly inherent to Spanish cinemas, as evidenced by their own increased ability to operate transnationally. The choice of four stars who emerged at different stages between 1992 and 2007 should mean that across the case studies it is possible to discern gradual changes undergone by Spanish stardom (as a result of this increasing cultural hybridity) in terms of the form and content of the star images and their relation to the national.

While new directors and new stars do sometimes manage to attain success together (as is the case with Eduardo Noriega and his interactions with Alejandro Amenábar and Mateo Gil), the influence of an older generation of filmmakers is still evident in the creation of new stars (as is the case with Penélope Cruz and her interactions with Bigas Luna, Fernando Trueba, and Pedro Almodóvar). Stars and directors can also have a reciprocal relationship: older directors cast new faces in their films and that validates the young performers as being part of 'Spanish cinema'; or established stars appear in the films of new directors and in turn validate the new filmmakers. Rather than relying purely on one component of filmmaking, the Spanish box office relies on

particular combinations of directors, stars, and genres to generate audience interest and numbers, and the analysis in this chapter suggests that Spanish stars should be given greater acknowledgement for their ability to generate audience figures. At the same time as the renewal and commercial success that Spanish cinema has undergone in this period, the industry has also sporadically been said to be in crisis; the perceived instability of the Spanish film industry is another reason that Spanish stars are increasingly developing transnational careers.

With these elements in mind, we now turn to a closer examination of the interactions that Javier Bardem, Penélope Cruz, Eduardo Noriega, and Paz Vega have with ‘the national’ in contemporary Spanish cinema.

Javier Bardem

In 1992 Javier Bardem was at the vanguard of a new generation of Spanish stars and he steadily ascended to the peak of the Spanish film industry; by the new millennium Bardem was firmly positioned as *the* Spanish leading man and ‘uno de los actores españoles con más tirón en la taquilla (y con una excelente evolución de cara a la crítica)’ (*Cinemanía* 2001: 114). A number of his films engage with ‘the national’: *Jamón, jamón* (Bigas Luna, 1992) and *Huevos de oro* (Bigas Luna, 1993) use national stereotypes; the narrative of *Éxtasis* (Barroso, 1996) entwines with that of Calderón de la Barca’s *La vida es sueño*; *Carne trémula* (Almodóvar, 1997) negotiates Spanish masculinities through the cityscape of Madrid; *Los lunes al sol* (León de Aranoa, 2002) looks at the long-term effects of unemployment among a group of former shipyard workers in Northern Spain; and *Mar adentro* (Amenábar, 2004) deals with a universal issue (euthanasia) in a Spanish setting. These films reveal a movement within Bardem’s star image from the explicit to the implicit in its reflections and projections of the national, something that is itself reflective of changes within the Spanish film industry as the influences of Spanish filmmakers have become more culturally diverse and the boundaries of ‘Spanish cinema’ have expanded. Nonetheless, ‘the national’ is still intrinsically a part of Bardem’s films either through their narratives, styles pertaining to traditions of Spanish cinema, and / or simply the national ‘significance’ that Bardem’s star image has accrued.

But while Bardem says that ‘he tenido la suerte de haber estado en proyectos significativos del cine español’ (García 1996), such was the perceived instability of the Spanish film industry during the 1990s that he openly wondered if he would have to work abroad to make the type of films he wanted:

Tengo la sensación no de que se me haya quedado pequeño el mercado español, porque hay campos que desconozco como el teatro o la televisión, sino de que en el cine español he quemado una etapa.[...] Me apetece trabajar fuera porque me gusta mucho el cine que viene de fuera. (García 1999a: 7)

Although Bardem has continued to work in Spain and only made occasional forays into other film industries, he has had extended periods of absence from Spanish-language films; the periodic instability of the Spanish film industry has contributed to his career path heading abroad. In the eight years after Bardem made the above

comments, only two of the eight films he made were in Spanish.⁶⁴ Unlike Penélope Cruz, whose US excursions have been detrimental to her star image in Spain (see the next chapter), Bardem's increased foreign workload has not had a negative effect on his image at home (much of it has been in keeping with his established image); this chapter concentrates solely on Bardem's Spanish films as his work abroad has not impinged on his interactions with the national within Spanish cinema.

This chapter examines the manner in which the national is manifested in Javier Bardem's star image, and the ways in which he interacts with 'the national' in his films. His interactions with the national and relationship with Spanishness go beyond his film roles to include his family background, political beliefs, and his association with Madrid. We will begin by looking at the significations of his name, before investigating the start of his career and the development of his star image.

What's in a name?:

Javier Bardem's name alone positions him within traditions of Spanish cinema, conjuring up as it does, a theatrical and cinematic dynasty that is without equal in Spain. Writing when Bardem won his Oscar in 2008 for *No Country for Old Men* (Coen Brothers, 2007), Lindo admitted to feeling envious of US audiences who will discover:

Bardem sin detalles biográficos, sólo como un actor que a fuerza de talento natural y trabajo concienzudo se ha colocado en una posición que le está permitiendo y le permitirá hacer esos papeles con los que sueñan todos. Porque Bardem, el pequeño de los Bardem, es para nosotros, por apellido y por méritos propios, un rostro unido a ese cine español del que de vez en cuando conviene recordar momentos gloriosos (2008).

For Spanish audiences Javier Bardem is inseparable from his family and the connotations that his name evokes. While there are other acting families in Spain, the sheer scale and breadth of the Bardem dynasty sets it apart: his mother (Pilar), siblings (Carlos and Mónica), and grandparents (Rafael Bardem and Matilde Muñoz Sampedro) are / were actors, he is the nephew of the renowned director Juan Antonio

⁶⁴ Bardem's recent participation in the Spanish film industry is greater than it appears: English-language films *The Dancer Upstairs* (Malkovich, 2002), *Goya's Ghosts* (Forman, 2006), and *Vicky Cristina Barcelona* (Allen, 2008) are classified as Spanish productions or co-productions because some (or all) the finance came from Spain.

Bardem, and a number of his extended family have also been involved in the Spanish stage and screen.⁶⁵

In Spain the Bardem name ‘conjures up ideas of impeccable liberal political credentials’ and is ‘synonymous with left-wing politics’ (Green 2004a: 18). Javier can be seen in generational terms as a continuation of an already illustrious line; he did not need to be ‘introduced’ to the Spanish public at the start of his career, as he already had name recognition. It is significant that Javier (and both of his siblings) chose to take his mother’s name rather than his father’s (his full name is Javier Ángel Encinas Bardem); this is partly an indication of the troubled relationship that he had with his father (who was absent for most of his childhood and disapproved of acting as a profession) but the Bardem name was also already a known quantity within the film industry.⁶⁶ Bardem’s political beliefs are one of the ways in which he is linked to cinematic (and in his case familial) traditions in Spain, as there is a long tradition of left-leaning political protest within the Spanish acting community; his politics are an example of how his star image is reflective of (sections of) the industry that he is part of but, as he points out, his views are usually also in keeping with the vast majority of his countrymen (Figueras 2004: 78), which highlights that his star image also relates to a specific national, political and cultural environment (Babington 2001: 22). He is taken as representative of the political leanings of the Spanish film industry and Spanish liberals in general; Pilar Bardem states in her autobiography that she and Javier have been singled out within the artistic community for the vitriol of the right-wing press since the anti-war protests in 2003 (2005: 605).



Figures 1-2: Javier and Pilar Bardem at the Oscars in 2001, and Javier at an anti-war demonstration in Madrid, 5th February 2003.

⁶⁵ See Pilar Bardem’s autobiography (2005). Bardem’s Oscar acceptance speech paid tribute to the tradition of ‘cómicos’ within his family.

⁶⁶ His siblings originally used both surnames (Rodríguez 1998), but Javier has only ever been referred to as a Bardem.

Bardem's 'liberal credentials' are manifested in his concern with the socially repressed or marginalised in films such as *Before Night Falls* (Schnabel, 2000) and *Los lunes al sol*, and the documentary that he produced, *Invisibles* (2007), a collection of five stories (directed by León de Aranoa, Corcuera, Coixet, Wenders, and Barroso) chronicling 'forgotten' humanitarian crises. Significantly, while promotion (which the star willingly participates in) and publicity (in which they do not necessarily willingly participate) are two strands of star production where contradictions or fissures can appear in a star image (Dyer [1979] 1998: 61), in Bardem's case his politics straddle both of these aspects; his political views are manifested in many of the films he chooses to make (and which he promotes), and the publicity surrounding his involvement in political causes (for example, protesting against the Iraq war) simultaneously feeds into his star image in a way that his love life, for example, does not.⁶⁷ Bardem's political beliefs and the way they are played out onscreen could be considered his 'star monopoly' whereby a star becomes familiar to an audience because of an apparent consistency in their roles at the same time as they are distinguished from other stars due to a 'belief in [their] unique individuality' (McDonald 2000: 12): in the film *Los abajos firmantes* (Oristrell, 2004), which explicitly explores the links between Spanish actors and political protest, the young firebrand character (Juan Diego Botto) invokes Bardem's name in a moment of despair, crying 'No soy Javier Bardem' (in terms of both political protest and his abilities as an actor), to which another character replies 'Javier Bardem -sólo hay uno'.⁶⁸

When asked how he chooses his projects, Bardem replied:

Dentro de mi profesión, en casos muy concretos, uno tiene la oportunidad de hacer algo para ayudar a que el mundo funcione un poco mejor. Ocurre en películas como *Los lunes al sol*, [*Before Night Falls*] o *Mar adentro*. Son filmes que aportan al público una reflexión, una experiencia o el testamento de alguien que hizo algo por nosotros. Y cuando las películas hablan de eso, a mí me llenan. Porque el cine, aparte de entretener, también puede hacer reflexionar. (Guimón 2003)⁶⁹

⁶⁷ The Spanish tabloids have only recently developed an interest in Bardem's love life.

⁶⁸ *No Country for Old Men* shows that Bardem generates particular expectations by confounding those expectations; Bardem acknowledges the mismatch between an ardent pacifist playing an almost literal embodiment of violence (see Hernández (2008: 47) and Lamome (2008: 36)).

⁶⁹ Bardem's career choices also show his mother's influence (Evans 2004: 78), and his uncle is another influence: Bardem dedicated his Goya for *Los lunes al sol* to Juan Antonio, saying that he thought his uncle would be proud of his involvement in such a film.

This echoes Babington's argument that indigenous stars give domestic audiences things that their Hollywood equivalents cannot, such as 'reflections on the known and close at hand' and 'dramatisations of local myths and realities' (2001: 10). Bardem's familial and political background mean that the dramatisations of local realities in which he participates frequently address social injustice; many of Javier Bardem's performances give reflections on the social underdog, and by privileging the working / lower classes in his representations, his star image challenges the 'reprod[uction of] patterns of inequality and power' (Hallam and Street 2000: 7).

Bardem's characters often 'lose' in some sense or other (Evans 2004: 79) and Labanyi discusses the 'trend' of 'heroic losers' within Spanish culture:

[Latin cultures] tend to choose as their national heroes and heroines not those who triumphed but those who lost spectacularly because of their refusal to compromise: that is, using the modern language of the market, those who refused to 'sell out' to history's (foreign, capitalist) winners. This glorification of heroic losers can be read not just as a 'making a virtue of necessity' in the absence of a gallery of victors, but, more positively, as a strategy for ensuring the ghostly return in the future of history's victims; that is, ensuring that those who were not allowed to leave a trace on the historical stage do leave their trace in the cultural arena. (2002a: 6)

Bardem's choices as an actor are a further embellishment on the trend. He has played a series of characters with strong moral compasses who are ultimately let down either by 'the system' or by those closest to them, or who find that there is no place for them in their society: examples include Santa, who rues that the men did not stand together for long enough against the company management in *Los lunes al sol*, and Ramón Sampedro, who had to devise a way around the law in order to 'die with dignity' in *Mar adentro*. This theme goes beyond Bardem's Spanish films to include those of his 'foreign' films that engage with his existing image: for example, the persecuted poet Reinaldo Arenas in *Before Night Falls*, and Detective Rejas in *The Dancer Upstairs*, who battles criminals on both sides of the justice system. Although the championing of the heroic loser, or underdog, is not exclusive to Spain (British culture has the same tendency, for example), the recurrence of the noble but tragic in his roles, as well as his interaction with the *macho* (discussed below), means that Bardem's star image fits within a matrix of archetypes and / or representations that is recognisable and understood within Spain.

Having explored the connotations of Javier Bardem's name in Spain, and how those connotations are reinforced by his choice of roles, we move now to look at

those films that became the basis of Bardem's initial star image and his early onscreen manifestations of Spanishness.

Beginnings:

The films that Javier Bardem made with Bigas Luna, *Jamón, jamón* and *Huevos de oro* (henceforth referred to as *Jamón* and *Huevos*), indelibly connected the stereotype of the 'macho ibérico' to Bardem's early image. The *macho ibérico* is essentially an embodiment of machismo and traditional masculine qualities; Bigas Luna states (in relation to Benito in *Huevos*) that while machismo exists everywhere, there is an 'awful guy I feel that Spain has the copyright on',⁷⁰ although he does not explain how the Spanish macho differs from machos elsewhere. While the term 'macho ibérico' appears to pertain to the whole Iberian Peninsula by definition, in fact it has:

specifically Spanish (rather than Spanish and Portuguese) connotations of a red-neck world-view, land-locked isolationism, immemorial tradition, and, not least, the indigenous pig –*cerdo ibérico*– known for its superior meat (ham, cured and eaten raw) (Perriam 2003: 97).

Bardem's character in *Jamón*, Raúl, fits this description not only through the explicit parallels with the pigs in the film (the ham he sells, a series of links to the pigs owned by Silvia's (Penélope Cruz) family, and Silvia repeatedly calling him 'un cerdo') but also in how he is connected to a series of Spanish traditions and symbols (discussed below) as well as being overtly masculine, to the extent almost of parody. Bardem's performance of excessive masculinity (Raúl is a crude, grunting, ball-scratching paean to the *macho*) ultimately serves to question the validity of the image being presented.



Figures 3-4: A series of visual parallels are set up between Raúl and pigs: e.g. the scene where he runs over Pablito and they fly through the air, landing spreadeagled in the road

⁷⁰ Stated in an interview on the *Huevos* DVD.

In terms of the Spanish specificity of the film, Evans argues that *Jamón* marked a change in emphasis in the work of Bigas Luna, ‘sobre todo en el enfoque temático sobre lo español, es decir, los símbolos, ritos y señas de identidad del país’ (2004: 14). *Jamón* ‘addresses its European spectatorship through a series of familiar cultural stereotypes while engaging its Spanish audience in often playful self-referential reflections on the process through which their identity as Spaniards has been reshaped’ (D’Lugo 1995: 67); the film looks both outward (through stereotypes) and inward (at the same stereotypes and also more complex social structures) as it wears its symbols of Spanishness in an overt manner and consciously addresses audiences inside and outside of Spain. Bigas Luna argues that *Huevos* is also intrinsically Spanish:

[Benito’s] story is an ethnic drama, a great comedy, an ironic portrait of the 80s. Rolex, toothpicks, Porsches, Dalís, gold plated shoes, cement, lobsters, Sevillanas, clams and that absurd fascination with all that glitters, above all gold. (Director’s notes, *Huevos* DVD)

However it is difficult to read *Huevos*’ central theme of consumerism as being uniquely Spanish despite Bigas Luna’s positioning of it as an ‘ethnic drama’; he uses Benito’s accumulation of luxury goods to satirise and ridicule the ostentatious display of wealth associated with the new rich in the Spain of the 1980s, but many of its targets exist outside Spain as well.⁷¹ Arguably *Jamón* places a greater emphasis on Spanishness (and treats the theme with greater complexity, see below) than *Huevos*, which plays with icons of stereotypical Spanishness (via Benito’s obsession with Salvador Dalí and Julio Iglesias) in a deliberately superficial manner.

That said, Fouz-Hernández and Martínez-Expósito posit that both Bigas Luna-Bardem collaborations are ‘iconic in their portrayal of stereotypical Spanishness’ (2007: 16) and argue that the way in which the two films end, with the ‘destruction’ of Bardem’s characters (returned to below), could ‘be interpreted as a nostalgic farewell to the *macho ibérico*, a figure unable to survive in a newly globalized and at the same time de-centralized Spain’ (27): the *macho ibérico* is an anomaly in a Spain that increasingly emphasises its regional differences. However, it is possible to read a subtle negotiation of regional identities taking place via the casting of *Jamón*. The

⁷¹ Hooper discusses the financial excesses of 1980s Spain (2006: 53-55).

three younger cast members were unknown at the time⁷² but Bigas Luna chose them for how they resembled the characters he had written:

En efecto, Javier Bardem tenía bastante del chulo de Raúl: un físico rotundo, con la nariz rota por el *rugby* y el boxeo; estaba cachas y era algo canalla y macarra de natural. Por el contrario, Jordi Mollà era un actor barcelonés tímido, refinado y podía pasar por un poco pijo, como José Luis. (Angulo Barturen 2007: 68)

Although the director refers only to Mollà's regional identity, Bardem's was also on display, as Mollà states that 'éramos muy distintos: él era un "made in Madrid" total; pensé que era un chulazo sin educación [...]' (Angulo Barturen 2007: 63-64).

Morin argues that the character and the star 'infect' each other ([1960] 2005: 27); the way in which the actors' regional identities contributed to shaping the characters is an example of that. Bardem was not a star when he made the film but his name meant that certain class-related regional associations could be made, and the political associations of his name are present obliquely via the film's questioning of the validity of this (right wing) Spanish archetype: 'The [Bigas Luna-Bardem] films could be regarded as a cultural effort to exaggerate the *macho ibérico* stereotype and thus demonstrate its falsehood [...]' (Fouz-Hernández and Martínez-Expósito 2007: 16). Morin also talks of the star as being a composite of an actor and a specific role: Raúl was that role for Javier Bardem. The mythical status and resonance of what Raúl represents (essentially 'Old Spain', discussed below) is perhaps why Bardem found the image so hard to shake off; Javier Bardem initially came to be positioned within the imagined social constructs of Spain, and the world's view of Spain (Perriam 2003: 10), through *Jamón* and its representations.

If Mollà's background emphasises the very specific class concerns and associations of José Luis's family (the industrial upper-middle class family common to Catalonia), the Madrid connections of Bardem (and also Cruz) are used to denote lower / working class (an association that still persists in their images). D'Lugo suggests that Bigas Luna uses the class and economic status of the two male characters to problematise Spanish identity and that therefore the choice that Silvia has to make is effectively the 'future direction of a society caught between its past and its future' (1995: 71): Raúl represents traditional Spain and José Luis represents a new economic commercialism. Bardem presents a heightened 'Spanishness' of a

⁷² *Jamón* launched the three actors and a connection has been maintained: they have worked on a further eight films in different paired combinations.

traditional variety through his performance of Raúl's red-blooded and passionate behaviour, as well as via specific characteristics of the role. For example, Perriam argues that the character is 'shot through with Southern Mediterranean "masculinity ideals"' associated with Andalusia (2003: 97), a region with connections to the more traditional (and stereotypical) aspects of Spanish culture such as flamenco and bullfighting. The different regional significations with which Raúl interacts (Madrid, Aragon, Andalusia) would usually highlight the fissures and fragilities that regional identities cause within the national in Spain (Berthier and Seguin 2007: xvii), but here they collectively suggest that the character in fact pertains to a nationally prevalent Spanishness (the regional references almost cancel each other out) and points to 'Spanishness' being a fluid identity (with different aspects coming to the fore at different moments); the character's fluidity in relation to the national (and the way he mixes different regional elements) arguably contradicts Fouz-Hernández and Martínez-Expósito's reading the figure of the *macho* as unable to survive in a de-centralised Spain (2007: 27), although Raúl does nonetheless fail in his endeavours. It is significant that Raúl wants to be a *torero* when bullfighting does not have much of a following in the part of the country where the film is ostensibly set (Aragon), although D'Lugo points out that bullfighting has long represented a possible route to access to rapid social and economic success for the marginalized southern male in Spain (1995: 75). This emphasises the mixture of regional references and also brings us back to class; his bullfighting dreams present Raúl as the aspiring working class who desire access to the consumer world embodied by José Luis.

The alignment with bulls reinforces the heightened Spanishness as 'the bull itself as an animal is intrinsically related to Spanish culture' (Fouz-Hernández and Martínez-Expósito 2007: 22) and the Osborne Bull billboard with which Raúl is associated (his body forms the only other billboard we see (for Samson underwear) and thus the two bodies, man and bull, are linked through the film's discourse on consumerism) has 'transcended its original commercial connotations to become an integral part of Spain's cultural landscape' (2007: 23). Raúl also has other significations that operate at a national level: for example, the company he works for selling ham and chorizo is 'Hernán Cortés y Hermanos, Los Conquistadores'. One critic said at the time of the film's release in 1992 that this was 'un merecido homenaje al Quinto Centenario' (Torreiro 1992) but, while the name could symbolise 'nostalgia for the Old Empire' (Fouz-Hernández and Martínez-Expósito 2007: 21),

given the vein of humour in the film it is also possible that Bigas Luna is laughing at one of the most famous names of Spain's Golden Age being reduced to advertising a local ham company on an over-sized cardboard hambone; it undercuts some of the pomp and circumstance of Spain in 1992 by highlighting the country's fall from grace in those five hundred years that were being celebrated.⁷³ 'Los Conquistadores' is also suggestive of certain brutish aspects of Raúl's personality (for example, storming into the women's toilets in the club to confront Silvia, and his general uncouthness) and further suggests that not all aspects of Spain's past should be subject to celebration.

The film ostensibly celebrates Spanishness but it is also a celebration of 'otherness' (the stereotypical perceptions of Spanishness from *outside* of Spain), and Bardem's resulting star image shows the fractures beneath the surface of this identity. This is not simply because of his politics but rather because the excess embodied in his performance calls this identity into question; the excess is a way in which the film's inward projection of the stereotype challenges Spanish audiences to consider whether this image of Spanishness has any basis in the reality of contemporary Spain. In its revelry in overt symbols of Spanishness, the film illustrates that nations are mythical *creations* rather than naturally-occurring (Triana-Toribio 2003: 3), and that even when subverting dominant perceptions of the national, cinema is still articulating something about it (Hayward [1993] 2005: x). *Jamón* was released in 1992, at a time when Spain was examining its identity very publicly, and the film clearly questions and plays with mythical aspects of Spanishness, which is perhaps why it has endured and is now seen as emblematic of that era of Spanish cinema; it manages to be both of its time and also timeless.

In contrast *Huevos* has arguably dated and is a much more bitter film. Set across fifteen years, following Benito between the ages of seventeen and thirty-two (Torres 1993) (the time span is not clearly conveyed), *Huevos* positions the *macho ibérico* within a critique of the consumerism and excess of the new rich by focussing on the Spanish construction industry just as it became mired in scandal and controversy in the late-1980s.⁷⁴ *Huevos* is perhaps the first sign of Bardem's films moving from the

⁷³ The company name also 'reinforces the notion of commodifying historical culture as product' (D'Lugo 1995: 76).

⁷⁴ The fifteen-year period can be marked out using Julio Iglesias's *Por el amor de una mujer* (Benito's theme song), which was released in 1974: the film ends in 1989 (or later). After the original construction boom in the 1960s and 1970s, there were a series of smaller booms, including one between 1987-1989 in the Alicante region (Illán 1989) (the film is set in Benidorm). It was between 1989-1990 that the authorities cracked down on projects that did not have permits or meet the required

explicit to the implicit in relation to the national, as although Bardem again parodies the *macho ibérico* there are few of the broad stereotypes of Spanishness that would be recognisable abroad (other than references to stereotypically Spanish cultural icons (i.e. Salvador Dalí and Julio Iglesias)). In its focus on the tourism-led building boom of the Spanish coast (and the connected corruption and scandal) *Huevos* reflects on specifically Spanish socio-political issues that are not necessarily readable to outside audiences; *Huevos* does not play to an international audience in the same way as *Jamón*. In comparison to the earlier film *Huevos* is also less a celebration (Bigas Luna says ‘the film is a tapestry of all the things I hate about Spain’⁷⁵) and more of a warning. *Huevos* chronicles Benito’s rise and fall as what starts as an admirable ambition to ‘make something of himself’ becomes entangled in corruption (including money laundering and offering the sexual favours of his mistress (Maribel Verdú) as a form of bribery), malpractice, and the deaths of two of the few people who genuinely love him (Verdú’s character dies in a car crash that Benito causes and his best friend dies as a result of poor safety procedures at his building site). The bitter misogyny at the heart of the film arguably evaporates any sympathy generated by Benito’s trajectory of punished masculinity, but despite the surface vulgarity of the film’s exploration of Spanish masculinity, *Huevos* (like *Jamón*) does ‘point, albeit coarsely, towards psychological meanings of some complexity’ (Perriam 2003: 98). The presentation of Bardem’s body is key to the meanings beneath the surface, not least because his physicality is integral to the brutish / beast aspect of his characters in both films.

The dichotomy between Bardem’s powerful physique and the sensitivity he conveys with his eyes (there are ‘puntos de vulnerabilidad en Javier Bardem [...] posee una cierta fragilidad y, sobre todo, un sentido del humor que suaviza el físico muscular y taurino’ (Evans 2004: 77) –returned to in relation to later films), is more skilfully utilised in the first film and arguably Benito’s lack of humour or self-awareness (he has no idea how ridiculous he is) undermines attempts to engender sympathy for him later in the narrative. For example, in the scene in *Jamón* where Raúl kisses the windowpane and makes Silvia laugh, he is aware of the silliness of his behaviour (he also laughs) but his comment to his friend beforehand (‘me gusta un

standard (see Otero Cerezo (1989), Rodríguez (1990)): this fits with the authorities closing Benito’s business and freezing his accounts towards the end of the film.

⁷⁵ Stated in an interview on the *Huevos* DVD.

huevo esta tía’) comes across as genuine (not least because of the contemplative way Bardem says it), and this combination of humour and genuine emotion makes him likeable despite some of his other behaviour. In contrast Benito shows very little genuine emotion (the closest he gets is when putting his gold Rolex on the dead Claudia’s wrist, and his anger after Mosca’s death) and the humour that *is* present is achieved through the editing (such as when Claudia asks what she will be expected to do as Benito’s secretary and it cuts to a sex scene) or the presentation of the character (including Bardem’s straight-faced performance) rather than a personality trait of the character, and so the emphasis is more squarely on Bardem’s physicality rather than his vulnerability; a difference between the two characters is that one is sometimes childlike and the other seems permanently childish. Together the two Bigas Luna films cemented the image of the *macho* to Javier Bardem and initiated the emphasis on his physicality being an intrinsic part of his star image. This highlights how the role(s) that form the foundation of a star image often endure in some form even as the image matures and accrues new meanings; the focus on Bardem’s physicality remains part of his image to this day (for example, Amenábar spoke of needing to ‘anular lo físico en Bardem’ (Ponga 2004a: 81) for his role in *Mar adentro*), even as his reputation for nuanced, psychologically realistic performances has grown and been recognised by various national awards bodies.⁷⁶

Bigas Luna placed an emphasis on Bardem’s physicality partly because he was cultivating a certain appearance for the roles (he characterises such men as belonging to a specific physical type -‘Physically [Bardem] is very much Benito’⁷⁷) and shot him in such a way that his body cannot be ignored: for example, in *Jamón* his body is eroticised and presented as a ‘sight’ on more than one occasion (such as the audition videotape and the resulting billboard –also part of the commodification of his body); and Fouz-Hernández (1999) details the process of infantilisation and commodification of Bardem’s body in *Huevos*. In *Huevos* a series of parallels are made between Benito’s body and the tower he is intent on building (in order to literally ‘make something of himself’). He sees the tower in a bodily form and as an extension of himself, saying at the start of the film that he will build a tower ‘como una polla’ and that it will be called the Torre González; this explicitly underlines that the tower

⁷⁶ The body association is also reinforced by the titles of several of his films: *Huevos de oro*; *Boca a boca*; *Carne trémula*; *Entre las piernas* (Gómez Pereira, 1999); and *Segunda piel* (Vera, 1999).

⁷⁷ Stated in an interview on the *Huevos* DVD.

stands for Benito and is a manifestation of his masculinity. Just as images of his wedding are intercut with shots of the work finally starting on the tower (Benito marries a bank manager's daughter in order to access capital), in the aftermath of his accident (which leaves him partially paralysed and inhibits his sexual potency) no further work is seen being undertaken and we learn that the building has been declared unsafe and will be demolished: 'despite Benito's efforts to insist on images of erections and phalluses, we are presented with more images of collapse and impotence' (Fouz-Hernández 1999: 58). Owing to the Spanish specificity of the construction boom and attendant practices depicted in the film (detailed in the footnote above), and the parallels set up between Benito's rise and fall in the Spanish construction industry and the rise and fall of his masculine potency, arguably Benito acts as a metonym for Spain as the failings of the country are reflected in the failings of this specific male; Bardem again stands for the Spanish male (arguably again overriding regional specificities) but this time in less overtly stereotypical circumstances. Masculinity is therefore presented as fragile and in danger of collapse, which is at odds with the *macho* image that Benito presents on the surface; like Raúl, Benito ends the film a broken man, in tears and ruing the decisions he has taken (in the pursuit of consumer goods and women) that have led him to this place. Fragile masculinity is a theme that Bardem has returned to in many later films.

After *Jamón* and *Huevos*, Bardem struggled against typecasting but proved his range with his performances in *Días contados* (Uribe, 1994), *El detective y el muerte* (Suárez, 1994), and *Boca a boca* (Gómez Pereira, 1995); the variety of registers and styles he was able to perform across those three films (two thrillers, one imbued with gritty realism and the other with shades of a fairytale, and a comedy respectively) led to a number of acknowledgments of his talent.⁷⁸ This was a serious attempt to prove himself as an actor as he had come to believe that he had a responsibility:

Je n'ai pas décidé d'être acteur, je ne voulais faire ça qu'une fois ou deux. Maintenant, j'ai une responsabilité envers mon nom, envers le public, et envers moi-même. Je fais donc ce métier sérieusement. (Niogret and Valens 2003: 101)

This again reinforces the importance of the Bardem name within Spanish cinema; it is a name which 'sólo el trabajo ha aristocratizado' (Lindo 2008) and therefore the work he chooses is important. Bardem challenged the preconceptions that had formed as a

⁷⁸ See the Appendix.

result of the Bigas Luna films (i.e. that he was a macho brute in the manner of Raúl or Benito) by utilising them to enrich other characterisations.

Boca a boca (henceforth referred to as *Boca*) also engages with stereotypical Spanishness, or rather an outside perception of Spanishness (all passion and brooding temperament), but in a way that suggests that the stereotype is outdated and is no longer part of how younger generations view their national identity. It is significant that the film was directed by one of the influx of new directors in Spanish cinema in the 1990s who collectively brought new perspectives and styles; *Boca* addresses Spanishness and national identity from a different perspective to that of the Bigas Luna films, although it does not completely dispense with the archetypes from those films. To be cast in a Hollywood production that is looking for a 'Latin lover' type, Víctor (Bardem) has to knowingly perform, and 'pass' as, the 'caricature Spaniard' (Perriam 2003: 112). This 'caricature Spaniard' is manifested not only through aspects of appearance (discussed below) but also an aggressive flirtatiousness towards women (as shown in his meeting with the female casting director) and plain aggression towards other men (for example, in the scene where he meets the film's director). But Víctor is uncomfortable (signalled via his stiff body language and frozen facial expressions) performing this Hollywood perception of Spanishness. In fact this Hollywood perception is the image Bardem had performed in collaboration with Bigas Luna.

Boca is an example of every performance containing echoes of earlier roles, 'histories that are re-mobilised in new textual and cultural contexts' (Drake 2004: 77). As D'Lugo states, *Jamón* plays with outside perceptions of Spanishness and its exploitation of 'the static, atemporal iconography of Spanishness [is what] makes it so easily legible to foreigners' (1995: 75) and likewise *Boca* knowingly plays with the idea of Spain as the world imagines it (Perriam 2003: 10). A difference between the two films is that (on the surface) *Jamón* projects perceived Spanish otherness outward via the recognisable stereotypes of Spanishness (although it is also projecting this stereotype inwards for the contemplation of Spanish audiences), whereas *Boca* does that but also looks inward more overtly to reflect more contemporaneous views of Spanish identities within Spain (for example, via Víctor's rejection of the *macho* stereotype); *Boca* gave Bardem the chance to refute the stereotypical image and expose its datedness.



Figures 5-7: the brash *macho ibérico* Benito in *Huevos*; Víctor in *Boca* as his true self; Víctor's knowing performance of the 'caricature Spaniard', which mirrors Benito.

When Víctor arrives at an audition dressed in his normal clothes his agent (Maria Barranco) despairs, saying 'lo que busque esta gente es un español pura duro, un autentico macho' and on being told by Víctor to look around and see that everyone is dressed as he is, she replies that 'el ideal es lo que tienen los Americanos de un español y punto'; this challenges the perception that the *macho* is representative of the contemporary Spanish male, and arguably is an inward projection that highlights the discrepancy between perception and reality (his agent does not disagree that the image is unreflective of the reality around them). As she sets about transforming his appearance using a waiter's shirt, jacket and cummerbund, she admonishes him to slick back his hair with olive oil because with his floppy fringe 'pareces prácticamente inglés': what she transforms him into is a mirror image of Benito from *Huevos*, suggesting that the film is knowingly exposing the traces of earlier roles. The humour in the sequence partly comes from the discomfort and stiltedness Bardem has Víctor convey (again signalled via body language and a hesitant quality due to Víctor having to think about his performance of the *macho* (his eyes dart from side to side gauging his audience's reaction and he adjusts his performance accordingly)) when he has to perform the caricature Spaniard; within Bardem's performance he separates himself from the popular image that audiences had of him at this point and communicates that there is more to him than the *macho ibérico*. This separation is achieved via the little tics that underline that Víctor is knowingly performing the *macho* (the discomfort shown in his body language, the darting eyes that reveal uncertainty), and because Bardem's performance of the *macho* is one of broad brushstrokes in comparison to the subtleties that he enacts in the other strand of the film when Víctor works at the chat line.

At the same time as representing a shift in Bardem's image, in its differences in relation to *Jamón* and *Huevos*, *Boca* also highlights a parallel between the star as shifting signifier and nationhood as a construct that needs to be maintained and the meaning of which will inevitably shift over time (Williams 2002: 3): the (subtle) changes in Bardem's image follow a shift in Spanish identities, and in turn demonstrate that star images only have the *appearance* of consistency as they change over time in accordance with social and cultural developments (Dyer [1979] 1998: 98). *Boca* arguably also hints at the changes that were starting to unfold in Spanish cinema where, as the cultural influences have become more diverse, and the boundaries of 'Spanish cinema' have expanded, newer Spanish stars are less overt in their reflections and projections of the national; although Bardem's star image *is* explicitly ingrained with Spanishness, his later films have engaged with the national in a distinctly different manner to the Bigas Luna films and instead lean towards the universal rather than the specifically national (returned to below). The subtle changes that Bardem's image has undergone also support the ideological reading of star images as representing or embodying the hegemonic struggles within a given culture (Dyer [1979] 1998: 2) (for example, the challenges to the stereotypical perceptions of Spanishness in *Boca* acknowledge the need to negotiate the continuing circulation of those images) and raise the possibility that stars can gain prominence within their national industries because of their closeness to certain ideals prevalent at a given time; *Jamón* in particular tapped into an atmosphere in Spain in 1992 that sought to explore the meaning of Spanishness and Spanish identities in contemporary Spain, and arguably the prominence of Bardem and Penélope Cruz (and the manner in which their respective star images are ingrained with Spanishness) is (in part) because of how their first key roles connected with the Spanish zeitgeist.

Although *Jamón* and *Huevos* on the surface humorously revel in the (stereotypical) icons of Spanishness, there is considerable depth, nuance and complexity in their manifestations of that Spanishness via the characters played by Javier Bardem (for example, via the use of regional and class associations). Both Raúl and Benito end their respective films as broken men, with Benito effectively expelled from Spain (in Miami), both of them sobbing as their life's opportunities are severely curtailed due to their own actions. The images with which they leave us are the antithesis of the powerful *macho* image they project for the majority of their respective narratives; Bardem's early roles showcase, therefore, not only the failings of the *macho ibérico*

but also that traditional notions of Spanish masculinity cannot be taken for granted. While *Jamón* and *Huevos* suggest that the *macho ibérico* is a walking dinosaur who cannot survive in the modern Spain, *Boca* reveals that that image still has currency in the outside world; Víctor's performance of the *macho* wins him the coveted role in the American movie and at the end of the film he is preparing to leave for L.A. However it is significant that in *Boca* we are under no illusions that the *macho* is anything other than a performance, a projection that the sensitive and open-minded Víctor can switch on or off at will, and importantly it is also an image that he does not see as being a natural part of his actual identity as a contemporary Spanish male.

Having charted the beginnings of Javier Bardem's career, the following sections explore the development of Bardem's image and his relationship with the national. Although Bardem sees *Boca* as heralding the end of his association with the *macho ibérico* (Bardem 2005: 74), arguably the association persisted until, and was utilised by, *Carne trémula* (henceforth referred to as *Carne*). What follows is an examination of how *Carne* uses Bardem's connections to a certain type of Spanish masculinity, and to Madrid, in its exploration and illustration of the shifting perceptions of Spanish masculinities.

Machos in Madrid:

Carne cannot be separated from the fact that it is 'an Almodóvar film'. While it is beyond the scope of this thesis to discuss Almodóvar in detail, it is worth placing *Carne* in the context of his *oeuvre* and exploring what 'Almodóvar' means in terms of the representation of masculinity, and Bardem's position within that representation. Smith says that, along with Almodóvar's previous film (*La flor de mi secreto* (1995)), *Carne* signals the start of a more mature phase of the director's career (2003: 150), although it maintains several of his predominant interests, including the subversion of gender stereotypes (Smith 1998: 8). Allinson writes of Almodóvar's films that:

they problematise questions of masculinity and often subvert gender through ambiguity and sexual role-playing. That this film phenomenon should arise in a country not especially regarded as a cinema-producing nation and, moreover, a country with a long tradition of machismo and repression of women, is surprising indeed. (2001: 73)

Carne is a treatise on machismo and the damage that it inflicts on both men and women, articulated through the generic guise of a thriller. It was the first of Almodóvar's films to focus exclusively on masculinity and its incarnations (although

women are the cause of much that goes on in the film), and Morgan-Tamosunas argues that this focus on male characters ‘exposes some of the contradictions inherent in traditional notions of masculinity’ (2002: 190). Bardem was also the first male star used by Almodóvar in a leading role after Antonio Banderas left Spain.⁷⁹

Marsh posits that *Carne* is also the first of Almodóvar’s films to use men as something more than ciphers and that not only are they imbued with history, but they are also constructed by it (2004: 54):

While this is indisputably Almodóvar’s male movie, its exploration of heterosexual masculinity is intimately linked to the political configurations of the time and space of the city of Madrid. (58)

Almodóvar is part of Madrid’s cultural heritage, having been a major figure in *la movida* in the 1980s, and all of his films (including *Carne*) had been set in Madrid. However, Almodóvar had always been a chronicler of the here and now, refusing to focus on the past, and his films were famous for avoiding direct references to Franco or the dictatorship; what marks out *Carne* is that it is the last of his films (to date) to be set exclusively in Madrid and the first in which Spain’s past reverberates through the narrative.⁸⁰ History, masculinity, the city of Madrid, and Spain itself, become encapsulated in the lives of the three male characters (Sancho (José Sancho), David (Bardem), and Víctor (Liberto Rabal)) and the film records and reflects almost thirty years of Spanish social history and social processes (Hayward [1993] 2005: ix).⁸¹

Carne starts with a prologue in January 1970 before jumping to 1990, next it briefly stops in 1992 and then jumps again to 1996, where the main part of the narrative takes place. The narrative is rooted in Madrid, as the film critic for *El País* pointed out ‘el filme representa nada menos que la mutación histórica, a lo largo de casi tres décadas, de la vida de una ciudad, Madrid’ (Fernández-Santos 1997), and as evidenced by the insert shots of famous monuments and landmarks (detailed by Marsh (2004) and Ugarte (2001)) during the sequences set in the past, and the use of the KIO Towers and the housing estate of La Ventilla as a backdrop to key parts of

⁷⁹ The last Banderas-Almodóvar film was *¡Átame!* (1991). The films between *¡Átame!* and *Carne* have male actors but not in leading roles and / or they were not stars of the order of Banderas or Bardem.

⁸⁰ Almodóvar’s next film, *Todo sobre mi madre* (1999), was his first to be set outside of Madrid (it mainly takes place in Barcelona) and his subsequent films have been made in a variety of locations.

⁸¹ Marsh draws attention to the generational patterns in the film (2004: 66), which include a series of intertextual references to the past and present of Spanish cinema: for example, there are several Buñuel references, and the names Bardem and Rabal conjure up past generations of actors (especially as Pilar Bardem is in the 1970 segment and Paco Rabal had previously worked with Almodóvar on *¡Átame!*).

the main narrative in 1996. Resina writes of Madrid's prominence within the Spanish State that:

If the myth states that Madrid has the highest "national" significance, then a critique of the "nation" as the myth conceives it becomes possible through a critical reading of Madrid. (2001: 69)

In focussing on the lives of a series of *madrileños*, Almodóvar uses his home city to offer a broader critique of Spanish masculinities. Javier Bardem (and his star image) is also inextricably linked with Madrid (Perriam 2003: 95-96; Angulo Barturen 2007: 63) both in terms of it being his home city and it being the locale from which images (circulating in the tabloid and popular press) of his real life originate; he is part of this exposé of (specifically *madrileño*) Spanish masculinities, through the manner in which he and his star image are used in the construction of David. *Carne* is therefore an example of a star infecting the character (Morin [1960] 2005: 27), but also of a director consciously utilising a star's prior interactions or associations with the national to add another layer to the narrative (in the manner of the strategies employed by Hollywood to exploit stars for the production and consumption of films (McDonald 2000: 1)), and by extension further embedding that star image within the national cultural imaginary as pertaining to national specificities.

Carne charts a shift in Spanish masculinities via the three male characters, with each of them representing a different incarnation of Spanish masculinity and tied to a different time (dictatorship, Transition, democracy). Although Marsh suggests Víctor 'is in-between David and Sancho and forms a kind of a bridge' (2004: 60), arguably Bardem's star image makes David the more appropriate bridge between generations. Marsh argues that the two policemen are differentiated by what they consume (2004: 58), and viewed from that perspective one can see Spanish masculinity moving from anger to calmness (via their choice of artificial stimulant –whisky versus hashish) and by extension it is significant that Víctor abstains from artificial stimulants of any kind (he stresses several times, to both his mother and Clara, that he avoided drugs whilst in prison). But it is their relationships with the women in the film that most clearly delineates their differences and the progression that film charts towards new Spanish masculinities, or to put it more crudely: Sancho is 'Old Spain', David represents the Transition, and Víctor is 'New Spain'.⁸²

⁸² It is surely significant that David's surname is 'de Paz'.

Aside from Bardem being older than Rabal, what makes him appropriate for the role bridging the transition from old to new is precisely the aspect of his image that he had tried to escape from: his association with the *macho ibérico*. Almodóvar's film is another example of prior associations or significations being remobilised in different textual and cultural contexts (Drake 2004: 77) in its use of Bardem's star image. Sancho embodies the *macho ibérico* type perfectly with his beating of his wife (Clara) and his chauvinistic view that she is his possession. The complexity of David's character further nuances Bardem's associations with Spanish masculinity as he is not a straightforward 'new man' and the echoes of the *macho* are to be found in the darker elements of his personality: for example, that he had an affair with Clara, which sets the whole narrative in motion, and takes to spying on Víctor (handing the photographs revealing the younger man's affair with Clara to Sancho) means that it is difficult to categorise him as a 'good guy'. David tries to move beyond the *macho* views held by Sancho but, while he would never physically harm his wife (Elena), he finds that he is similarly possessive when another man (Víctor) moves in on her affections. The difference is that David attempts to get rid of Víctor rather than Elena, and ultimately moves on and allows his wife to start a new life; Bardem's role in *Carne* therefore shows that it is possible to reconfigure the Spanish male for the new Spanish society, although this transformation occurs off camera and we do not actually see David make the decision to move on or his actual departure. Víctor differs from the two older men by never setting in motion his plan of revenge (he had planned to avenge himself against Elena, who he held responsible for the events of 1990, but finds himself unable to go through with it because he loves her). At the end of the film, 'Old Spain' has had to be killed (at the hands of his battered wife, no less) so that the lives of the others can move forward, while the figure representing the Transition is left crippled (significantly his injuries are inflicted by the macho 'Old Spain' rather than the supposed threat represented by the changes of 'New Spain'), and 'New Spain' is alive and well and about to become a father (this re-generation assuring the future of 'New Spain').

Arguably it was after this film that Bardem was able to put the *macho ibérico* permanently to rest as if its vestiges had finally been exorcised by the trauma that his character undergoes. Within the film Bardem's associations with physicality inform the portrait of disability, and notions of disability are re-inscribed so that his confinement in a wheelchair does not stop David from being constructed as a physical

ideal. The audience not seeing the immediate aftermath of the shooting that paralysed David aids the positive view of disability in the film in no small way; in the absence of images of ambulances and hospitals, disability is distanced from ideas of illness or infirmity. In contrast, our introduction to David's new life is through television footage of the 1992 Paralympics where he is representing Spain in the basketball team: Bardem is still embodying the nation (although the Catalan flags in the background of the sequences at the Paralympics suggests that the 'nation' is not straightforward) and attesting to an ideal of physicality.⁸³ That David's paralysis is a result of some of his more *macho* behaviour (he is shot by Sancho after the older man finds out about his affair with Clara) also reaffirms the fragility of that type of masculinity, and David's response to his disability (he manages to adjust to new circumstances) also foreshadows his eventual reconfiguration of Spanish masculinity. At the same time, it could also be said that the choice of Bardem, someone associated with a particularly physical style of masculinity, to play David is also a contributory factor in the positive representation of disability; the film takes advantage of Bardem's physical prowess in the sequences where David is on the basketball court and also in his adept use of the wheelchair.



Figures 8-9: Representing his country at an international level and used as an example of admirable achievement, Bardem / David re-inscribes the disabled body.

So far we have seen that Javier Bardem's initial image was tied to the *macho ibérico*, but while on the surface some of these early images of Spanishness seem fun and humorous, in fact a greater complexity lurked beneath and exposed the fissures in the traditional (and stereotypical) image of Spanish masculinity. This complexity is not solely due to Bardem's performances but also the perspectives and styles of the

⁸³ Rabalska argues that *Carne* 'breaks the Spanish tradition' of 'parading illness and deformity [...] as a twisted freak show' (2000: 26); David is never viewed as a 'freak' and his disability is the result of heroism, not illness.

directors with whom he has worked (industrial factors and imperatives have informed the image of the national that Bardem presents). When one considers *Carne* as a reflection (that is, looking inward at Spain) the layers of complexity become apparent (via its chronicling the shifts in Spanish masculinities), and Javier Bardem is at the centre of its multifaceted negotiation with the national (literally given that his star image acts as the bridge between the men). Star images can expose, mask, or reconcile ideological contradictions (Gledhill 1991: xiv); the development of Bardem's star image exposes contradictions in the construction of Spanish masculinity at a time of ongoing social change in Spain (most obviously in *Jamón* and *Huevos*, but we shall see that Bardem continues to expose fissures in the image of the Spanish male), but also manages to reconcile these contradictions through specific films (such as *Boca* and *Carne*) and through the sense of coherence within his image even while he represents all of these disparate elements (generated by the fact that one flesh and blood person is embodying these apparently contradictory values (Dyer 1986: 9)).

When Bardem appears in a Spanish film, the meanings and national specificities (how he acts out Spain's current conceptions of individuality and masculinity and other constructs that are esteemed as national characteristics within Spain (Babington 2001: 19)) that his star image has accrued (in the manner described by Drake (2004: 77)) are always present even when they are consciously elided (for example, we shall see that in his more recent films Bardem hides his *madrileño* accent but the absence is commented on in reviews). *Carne* is a good example of this because its exploration of shifts in Spanish masculinities is not explicit in the script, rather it is implicit in its characterisation, use of location, and casting; arguably the associations (i.e. the *macho*, his status as a representative of Spanish masculinity, and the Madrid connections) evoked by Bardem's presence are as important as his actual performance. Although Bardem has seemingly achieved the demise of the *macho* within his star image, his characters are still apparently problematic for Spain, hence the exile of David in *Carne* (in Miami, like Benito in *Huevos*). In the next section we examine where Bardem went next in his representation of the nation, and we shall see that fragile and fractured Spanish masculinities continue to resurface in his work.

Local Perspectives:

The year of *Carne*'s release, 1997, marked the start of a period of intense productivity for Bardem, and it was noted that 'vive un momento profesional que lo convierte en la gran figura del cine español de los 90' (Mora 1997). But two years later Bardem had begun to feel that his work was suffering from his schedule ('tres rodajes seguidos [en seis meses] es demasiado; ya nunca lo repetiré' (Fernández-Santos 1999b)); as Perriam observes, the films made in this period (and Bardem's performances in them) are of mixed quality (2003: 104, 115). But Bardem exceeded expectations with his first English-language film, *Before Night Falls*, the film that launched him internationally; when he returned to Spanish cinema in 2002 (after a three-year absence from Spanish-language films) it was as an internationally renowned (and Oscar-nominated) talent, but one who was still very much interested in portraying the national. Bardem's two most recent Spanish films, *Los lunes al sol* and *Mar adentro* (henceforth referred to as *Lunes* and *Mar*), have managed to instigate debate beyond the merits of the films themselves and into matters of Spanish society.

Bardem's return to the national screen, in *Lunes*, is an example of a star enacting 'local [...] realities' (Babington 2001: 10): the narrative follows the fallout two years after mass redundancies caused by the closure of Spanish shipyards.⁸⁴ *Lunes* is part of the resurgence (in the late 90s / early 00s) of *cine social* at the hands of a new 'generation' of Spanish directors (see the Industrial Contexts chapter), although this resurgence of social realism was not unique to Spain: for example, British cinema in the 1990s also used the post-industrial economic situation of the working classes to examine issues of masculinity in crisis and the bonds between men who work together (e.g. the films of Ken Loach).⁸⁵ Bardem specifically wanted to work with Fernando León de Aranoa because 'es capaz de reflejar una parte de la historia de España que está sucediendo en estos momentos' (Intxausti 2001). The resulting film harks back to earlier traditions within Spanish cinema, not only because León de Aranoa's cinema 'aparece como una continuación, en contextos históricos y sociales diferentes, de las preocupaciones sociales del Nuevo Cine Español, y más aún de buena parte del mejor cine de la Transición democrática' (Ponga et al 2002: 7-8), but also because Juan Antonio Bardem was an advocate of the genre: Javier Bardem's participation is a continuation of the Bardem family's cinematic legacy.

⁸⁴ The opening news footage shows protests against the 'letting go' of 89 workers at Naval Gijón in March 2000.

⁸⁵ Cornut-Gentile D'Arcy (2005) compares *Lunes* and *The Full Monty* (Cattaneo, 1997) in terms of the representation of mass unemployment and the re-empowerment gained via homosocial bonding.

Within *Lunes*, Bardem's skill at 'registering psychological and dramatic fullness through non-verbal representation' (Perriam 2003: 102), effectively representing a character's interiority externally through glances, posture, movement, and his sheer physical presence, again becomes an intrinsic part of his performance as Santa. For example, in the court scene his posture (sitting down and moving first one arm and then the other at an angle either side of his body, with his elbows sticking out (fig.11)) physically represents the character's need to bolster himself psychologically as his case falls on deaf ears; he is stopping himself from sinking any further. Bardem put on weight for the role as he felt that Santa needed to be more physically imposing than the other men because he functions as a pillar for the group⁸⁶, and this is accentuated by his body language: arching his spine slightly to emphasise his paunch; his slow shuffling walk; tilting his head as Santa regards other characters, as if judging whether any slight is intended. Marsé describes Santa as 'un parado que sobrevive entre la rebeldía interna y la desilusión, como un gorila entre las rajas del deprimente zoológico' (2004: 35), which makes an allusion to the 'beast' side of Bardem's star image (stemming from the re-imagining of 'Beauty and the Beast' in *Jamón* and sustained via his Segismundo-like character in *Éxtasis*), or at least the animalistic quality or threat that he can bring to a performance, and also picks up on the sadness that emanates from Bardem in this role. Writing of Bardem in the context of *Jamón*, Evans says that:

El físico de minotauro picassiano de Bardem es el de un hombre poderoso, duro, de una sexualidad potente [...] Pero hay fisuras en esta representación del estereotipo español de fin de siglo. Siempre ha habido, al lado de la animalidad, de lo taurino, puntos de vulnerabilidad en Javier Bardem [...] (2004: 77)

This combination of qualities is also on display in *Lunes*. A bear of a man, Santa holds the group together and despite outward appearances reveals himself to be highly attuned to the dangers that they face as unemployment damages their self esteem: witness his concerned sideways glance as José (Luis Tosar) orders another drink before heading home to his wife.

⁸⁶ Stated in an interview on the DVD.



Figures 10-11: Bardem representing an older man (note receding hairline and paunch) who is physically imposing but still needs to bolster his confidence (conveyed via body language).

Stars embody social types, and although star images always contain greater complexity than simply being ‘types’, those ‘types’ are nonetheless the foundation from which the more complex cultural specificities of the star construct stem (Dyer [1979] 1998: 60). Many of Bardem’s roles take the Spanish lower classes as their base, and although he calibrates his performances to fit the regionalities of characters within this social type (e.g. the *madrileño* performing a northern accent as Santa⁸⁷), his stardom arguably stems from a more general ability to play ‘normal’ people, as he says ‘j’ai un aspect de personne pauvre’ (Niogret and Valens 2003: 100). This aspect of his image, that he is associated with those who must work for a living, can be traced back to the start of his career in *Jamón*, again pointing to histories being remobilised in different contexts throughout a star’s career (Drake 2004: 77). Class is an example of how Bardem is embedded in ‘the imaginary and real social construct that is Spain’ (Perriam 2003: 10), but also how his star image takes in identities that can operate beyond the national because class is at once both universal and also specific to Spain in how it is enacted in Bardem’s image. Higson suggests that the tendency to see national cinemas as limited to finite national identities is short-sighted and argues for the need to recognise diversity within the national (2000: 66); in terms of class identities within the national this is illustrated by the star images of Bardem, Cruz, and Noriega who, while they all represent Spanishness in some form, simultaneously interact with class in different ways. Arguably the class thread within Bardem’s image is at its most potent in *Lunes*, where he plays one of a group of men for whom, in León de Aranoa’s words, ‘el trabajo es su capital, su única posesión, su bien máspreciado; si se lo quitan, les quitan todo’ (Ponga, et al 2002: 158).

⁸⁷ The Spanish press paid a lot of attention to Bardem’s accent and *Lunes* is notable for being the first film (other than *Before Night Falls*) in which he performs an accent markedly different to his own (see E. Fernández-Santos (2002b: 41)).

Lunes is another example of cinema reflecting ‘social history and the social process’ (Hayward [1993] 2005: ix) through an account of a general collapse of masculinity as a result of unemployment, and the struggle men face as they try to redefine what a man is. Santa demonstrates caring characteristics traditionally associated with women (significantly all of the women in the film have jobs), as shown via his interactions with various children (those of two of the women we see him flirting with and also the child he babysits), the sequence where he attempts to tidy up Amador’s (Celso Bugallo) flat, and through his being the only one of the men who consistently shows emotion, and not just anger in the scenes of confrontation in the bar (where he actually tries to hide his emotions by repeatedly turning away from the man he is arguing with). In the sequence where Santa discovers Amador’s body (he has committed suicide) the camera stays still but Bardem moves silently within the frame, taking a step backwards as Santa attempts to distance himself from the horror, and the focus is on his face (with a look of dread turning to shock, to disbelief, and then to grief) as any sense of macho posturing is stripped away and Santa’s belligerent façade crumbles; the sequence fades out with him sitting on the ground, audibly sobbing.⁸⁸

Santa can be seen as a continuation of several aspects of Bardem’s star image, not only in terms of his portraying the working class but also in his complex representation of Spanish masculinities in crisis (playing out Spanish conceptions of masculinity (Babington 2001: 19)); that the film ends without a proper resolution is indicative of it having represented a problematic masculinity that Spain does not know how to ‘solve’. While other problematic Bardem men (such as Benito in *Huevos* or David in *Carne*) have ended their films in exile due to Spain’s inability to deal with them, Santa does not accomplish his dreams of going to Australia but he significantly ends the film adrift in the boat (the *Lady España*, no less), which suggests both the precariousness of his situation and also his lack of roots (he is the only one of the central three men who does not have a family).

The complexity of the film’s portrayal of Spanish masculinities and the open-endedness of the story is perhaps partly responsible for the variety of responses it provoked, although the universality of the story also caused problems for some commentators. While the film’s reception in the critical arena was generally positive

⁸⁸ The image recalls *Jamón* and *Huevos*.

(especially when Bardem is the focus, for example Fernández-Santos (2002: 41)), some Spanish academics view the film in less glowing terms: Fecé and Pujol describe the film as ‘bienintencionada [...] aunque conviertan el paro y la lucha de clases en una hipotética canción de Eurovisión cantada en esperanto: *Si todos los parados del mundo caminasen cogidos de la mano*’ (2003: 161-162).⁸⁹ Their comments suggest that *Lunes* is politically naïve and that it falls short of what they see as the remit of Spanish cinema. In addressing a universal issue (hence the Esperanto reference) León de Aranoa has done something ‘wrong’ in their eyes, as they say (speaking of contemporary Spanish cinema in general) that ‘para que, efectivamente, *ese cine fuese percibido como nuestro*, quizás deberíamos sentirnos interpelados por él’ (2003: 161, emphasis in original), which they clearly feel *Lunes* fails to do (despite being well-intentioned). But a film being different to what is *expected* (or wanted) of Spanish cinema does not mean that it is less Spanish or that it falls outside of Spanish cinema (Vitali and Willemsen 2006: 8).

However Fecé and Pujol’s contention that they do not feel ‘addressed’ by *Lunes* ignores the sections of the (potential) audience that the film does speak to. Since the 1970s ‘the outstanding characteristic of the [Spanish] economy has been an inordinately high unemployment rate’ (Hooper 2006: 298), and arguably the film addresses the marginalised unemployed and the emasculation that their joblessness causes. Specifically it addresses this audience through Bardem / Santa. As stated above, Bardem has a long track record of representing the marginalised and disenfranchised, and through the combination of his position as a ‘normal’ person and his associations with the national he comes to stand as a Spanish everyman; the film attempts to represent and address the average Spaniard. Although the film is presented as an ensemble piece, Santa is unquestionably the central figure and acts as a pillar for the group (as stated above, his physical size is one of the ways in which he is deliberately made to stand out); he is the figure who draws us into the film, connecting the various characters and acting as the pivot around which arguments are played out (for example, Government policy is not explicitly addressed within the film but the economic reasoning behind the job losses is returned to repeatedly via Santa’s barroom philosophising). Bardem’s political background and associations also

⁸⁹ Those who judge the film as formalists (the position taken by many film critics) see the film more positively than those cultural commentators (such as Quintana (2005) and Fecé and Pujol (2003)) who think that the film does not go far enough in its social commentary and who seem to judge the film by different criteria (i.e. their prescriptive ideas of what ‘Spanish cinema’ *should* be).

reinforce Cornut-Gentile D'Arcy's suggestion that the 'contemporariness' of the film serves to associate the characters' plight with Aznar and the PP, rather than Felipe González (and the Socialist Government) who were in power when massive industrial rationalization programmes began (2005: 128), which is supported by Caparrós Lera's description of the film as 'un testimonio de la crisis laboral en esta "España va bien" del PP' (2005: 194).

Bardem's next Spanish film, *Mar*, also engaged in a universal social issue (euthanasia) through a Spanish example (Ramón Sampedro's struggle to be allowed to die), and again took Bardem to a specific regional location (Galicia). While *Lunes* attempted to challenge the perception of the unemployed as layabouts who make no effort to find work (and arguably, despite the critical views of writers such as Quintana (2005), succeeded in putting a face to Spain's high unemployment statistics), the release of *Mar* reopened a public and political debate on euthanasia in Spain. Arguably the film's impact in Spain was due to the combination of who made it (Bardem and Amenábar are high profile names) and because it was based on a well-known (Spanish) true story; Ramón Sampedro's battles with the Spanish courts over his right to die had been extensively covered by the media at the time, as had his death and the resulting investigation into his assisted suicide, and this is reflected in several of the reviews.⁹⁰

The true story aspect caused problems for Amenábar and co-writer Mateo Gil (the official investigation had failed to find enough proof to charge anyone and they did not want the film to implicate anyone): they seriously considered moving the story to Ireland (presumably because the presence that the Catholic Church has there would mean a similar debate to that which occurred in Spain) and changing all of the names.⁹¹ But in the end they kept the story in Spain. Amenábar notes that while he has been influenced by Hollywood, on this occasion he wanted to make a film that was closer to home:

A veces [Hollywood] te ciega y no abarcas bien de lo propia realidad que tienes en casa. La historia de Ramón Sampedro es una historia de aquí, y por otro lado me parece que es una historia universal. Entonces me apetecía explorar eso. (Stated in the documentary *Un viaje mar adentro*).

⁹⁰ For example, a third of Galán's review (2004: 35) recounts what actually happened rather than addressing the film.

⁹¹ They avoided implicating Sampedro's friends and relatives by taking artistic license with several of the characters (Stated in the director's commentary on the DVD).

In representing a national story that can also be read as a universal one, *Mar* further supports the notion that Bardem's filmography has moved from the explicit to the implicit in terms of his films' negotiations with the national, which is also indicative of shifts within Spanish cinema more generally.⁹² The incoming generations of filmmakers since the 1990s have been less concerned with *national* cinema and Amenábar is a prime exponent of the capabilities of new Spanish filmmakers who usually combine Spanish settings with Hollywood styles and genre conventions.⁹³

Because of the storyline and the stance taken in relation to the Church, *Mar* and Amenábar were presented / attacked in the conservative Spanish press as being aligned with the PSOE (Castro de Paz 2008: 269). *Mar* is not explicitly 'political', but Bardem's presence could have contributed to the perception that politics are implicitly present. The film's treatment of the Church looks inward at contemporary Spain and reflects a generally secularized society; the film questions the Church's right to wield influence over the life of the average Spaniard in a democratic and secularized Spain (for example, in the courtroom scene Ramón's lawyer asks why a supposedly secular government enforces a law based on a religious belief). Spanish society 'has dramatically secularized its habits in the past thirty years' (Balfour and Quiroga 2007: 119), although this was a shift that Hooper argues had gone largely unnoticed until the Socialists returned to power (in 2004, coincidentally the same year as *Mar*'s release) and the new Prime Minister, José Luis Rodríguez Zapatero, started to push through a number of 'liberal' policies that outraged the Church (2006: 93). This is not directly addressed in the film, but the behaviour and attitudes of the characters implicitly reflect changes in the beliefs held by sections of Spanish society.

There are aspects of *Mar* that are more explicitly 'national', or at least regional. Whereas Amenábar's earlier films (*Tesis* and *Abre los ojos*) deliberately avoid any overt references to their Spanish origins (see the Eduardo Noriega chapter for details), *Mar* is very much 'de aquí'. Unlike *Lunes*, which takes place in a nameless 'northern' location (although it was filmed in Vigo and the events of the film relate to Gijón), *Mar* is very specifically located in Galicia, as evidenced by the distinctive lush landscapes, characteristics associated with the people of the region (commented on by

⁹² That *Million Dollar Baby* (Eastwood, 2004) was released in the same year highlights the universality of the subject matter (even if the specifics and treatment differ) (Iglar 2008: 241).

⁹³ Amenábar utilises the universal cinematic 'language' of various genres: for example, the shots of the motorised ramp for the arrival of the wheelchair-bound Padre Francisco suggest an incoming spaceship from a sci-fi film, and the sequence where Ramón is dressed to go to court recalls countless 'suing up' montages as heroes prepare to go into battle.

Julia (Belén Rueda), the outsider), the use of the *gaita* (bagpipes) on the soundtrack, and the accents performed by all of the actors involved.⁹⁴ The use of the regional arguably causes a disjuncture between star and narrative as despite Bardem's performance of the *regional* (again, a lot of attention was drawn to his accent and emphasis was placed on the authenticity of the actors' collective evocations of the regional in promotional materials and press interviews) his star image continues to represent Spain *as a whole*; Bardem's associations with the national (dating back to *Jamón* and the collection of regionalisms that collectively pointed to a national whole) elide the regional, something that is reinforced by the national 'notoriety' of the true story (the reporting of actual events was not restricted to Galicia and therefore it is a national story, as well as a regional one). Nonetheless, the emphasis on the regional location in *Mar* recalls the similar emphasis on a specific locality in *Carne*, especially since the film again finds Bardem negotiating disabled physicalities. But *Mar* is not a history of the locality in the way that *Carne* is and arguably the location is a backdrop rather than an integral or defining aspect of the narrative, not least because Galicia does not have the personal connections to Bardem and his star image that Madrid has.

Although *Mar* contains traces of earlier roles, it is a very different representation of disability to Almodóvar's film; while *Carne*'s David creates a new life for himself in the aftermath of his accident, a life that revolves around his disability in a positive way, Ramón Sampedro wished only for death in the aftermath of his accident and he campaigned for almost three decades to try and achieve that aim. It is a difference of movement versus confinement.⁹⁵ Most of the film takes place in Ramón's bedroom (with Ramón confined to his bed), which gives a sense of confinement and emphasises Ramón's position (physically and emotionally); the closed limits of the *mise-en-scène* produce a claustrophobic atmosphere that is only relieved by the brief scenes that take place elsewhere (especially the sequence where Ramón dreams of flying over the Galician countryside). In contrast David is very mobile and operates in a variety of terrains and locales. There is also a class distinction between the two characters as David is one of the few non-working class Bardem characters; David does not have economic worries after his accident because he marries into a society

⁹⁴ Certain sequences could be used by the local tourism board such is their emphasis on 'local colour'.

⁹⁵ *Mar* also fits within Amenábar's preoccupations: all of his films feature the transition between living and dying. For further information about Sampedro's battle see the various documentaries on the DVD.

family and lives in a specially adapted apartment, whereas Ramón is clearly from a working class family and he worries about the (economic and social) burden his condition places on them.

Confinement is also emphasised via restriction of movement, as Bardem's return to disabled physicalities this time dealt with quadriplegia meaning an even more extreme restriction of movement than in *Carne* although, in something of a contradiction, *Mar* can also be seen as his most physical performance to date. The documentary *Un viaje mar adentro* (on the DVD) shows how Bardem's physical position and restricted movement had an impact on other aspects of his performance, specifically the way in which he speaks; performing the paralysis meant that Bardem had to keep his breathing slow and he only had one round of air to work with when speaking, which means that he speaks rapidly (and relatively flatly) as he exhales. Bardem barely moves for most of the film (most of his performance is in his face and voice) and Amenábar uses the camera in conjunction with Bardem's stillness to limit the physicality of the character by never showing the whole of his body in any one shot. Instead the camera either pans down or along his body, and his body is frequently fragmented by the separating of different body parts into different shots; this visually represents the way in which Ramón's mind is a separate entity to his body. Even in the flashback sequence where we witness his accident, his body is fragmented (particularly in the aftermath of the dive) and the only shot where he is fully onscreen (his dive) is shot from such a high angle that the body is considerably foreshortened and distorted.



Figures 12-13: the still images of Ramón's former active life

Like Almodóvar, Amenábar employs the image of his leading man to extend the audience's understanding the character by correlating certain elements particular to Bardem's image. This film conjures up (by association) past images of Bardem's youth through a series of photographs showing Ramón's 'lost life'; the use of an actor

with such strong associations with the physical to play a quadriplegic heightens Ramón's stillness, and the photographs further enforce Bardem's lack of movement in the film. The tension between the international locations in the background and the fact that it is a *still* image reinforce how much movement and travel were important to Ramón at the same time as they reinforce his current situation (the location may change but Ramón remains captured in a still pose).⁹⁶ The use of the photographs also allows the film to utilise Bardem's star image (by showing Ramón as a young man) at the same time as emphasising his acting virtuosity (by showing the same actor perform Ramón as an old man), and arguably once again offer a manifestation of the fragility of Spanish masculinities as performed by Bardem (past prowess undercut by the present).

Lunes and *Mar* reaffirm several key elements in Javier Bardem's star image: the political and cinematic connotations of his name to Spanish audiences; his representations of the Spanish working classes; explorations of contemporary Spanish masculinities; and performances that harness the physical and the emotional. The two films indicate a continuation of the shift noted between Bardem's Bigas Luna films and *Carne*: the movement from the explicit to the implicit in terms of their dealings with national identities and symbols. *Lunes* and *Mar* continue that movement as while they are still Spanish in their specifics (looking inward in terms of location, language, actors, and the factual basis of the stories) they are also aiming for the universal (looking outward not to assert difference, but in search of commonalities); the fact that Amenábar could seriously consider shooting his film in Ireland is evidence of this, as is León de Aranoa's deliberate vagueness in terms of the northern location of his film, and the themes they operate within (unemployment and the euthanasia debate) are not exclusive to Spain. This is illustrative of Spanish cinema in this period becoming more culturally diverse and the manner in which the newer generation of directors (which includes Amenábar and León de Aranoa) have looked outward beyond Spain's borders for cinematic inspiration (for example, in their (different) uses of universal genre tropes). The universality of *Lunes* and *Mar* translated into success abroad (*Mar* won the Oscar for Best Foreign Film) but the two films also indicate the box office cachet of Bardem in Spain: both were big hits despite not conforming to the traditional blockbuster prototypes (unemployment and euthanasia

⁹⁶ Fouz-Hernández and Martínez-Expósito draw attention to the decision to use still photographs rather than flashback footage (2007: 100).

not being ‘box office friendly’ topics under normal circumstances). The two films also highlight Javier Bardem’s status as a ‘Spanish everyman’ and symbol of Spanish masculinity; in both films Bardem performs the regional but nonetheless still represents the national in its most inclusive sense.

This chapter has investigated Javier Bardem’s onscreen interactions with ‘the national’ and how the national is manifested within his star image as a result. We have seen that he has been utilised in a series of complex reflections and inward and outward-looking projections in relation to the national, and that there has been a shift from the explicit to the implicit in how his films deal with the national; *Carne* and *Boca* are examples of that transition through their use of Bardem’s explicitly national *macho iberico* associations to make subtler reflections on contemporary Spanish masculinities.

Morin points to the importance of early roles to the form that the star image takes ([1960] 2005: 27)) and the emphasis placed on the national in Bardem’s early films ingrained his star image with Spanishness; in *Jamón* both impulses of Higson’s inward-reflection / outward-projection framework are at play (as well as inward-projection), as the film consciously emphasises Spanish idiosyncrasies and addresses audiences inside and outside of Spain. *Jamón*’s questioning of Spanish identities taps into the Spanish zeitgeist of 1992 as the nation sought to redefine themselves and considered how they were viewed by the world as a series of international events were staged in the country, and Bardem’s being placed within that exploration of Spanish self-definition could not help but shape his nascent stardom; Bardem’s early image therefore both projects stereotypical Spanishness but also contains complex reflections on what Spanishness *is* for Spaniards in the early 1990s, most notably in how he stands for the working class Spanish male, the ‘social type’ from which his star image is constructed (Dyer [1979] 1998: 60) and through which he reflects and projects ‘typical ways of behaving’ (22). That the national is so central to the foundation of Bardem’s star image is also indicative of the importance that overtly national characteristics had to the images that the Spanish film industry wished to present at this time; the emphasis on Bardem’s Spanishness is an example of industrial imperatives interacting with contemporaneous national discourses. As outlined in the Literature Review, Perriam, Dyer, Vincendeau, and Babington show that a star’s connection with their native audience is based upon the manner in which

they relate to the specificities of the local culture(s): the Bigas Luna films put that front and centre in Bardem's ensuing star image.

This negotiation of the national continued in *Boca*, which challenged stereotypical perceptions of Spanishness by projecting a 'normal' Spanish male (highlighting the new perspectives that were emerging in Spanish cinema) but also acknowledged that the stereotypes were still present and needed to be negotiated in outside perceptions. As detailed above, *Carne* then clearly moved Bardem from the explicit to the implicit in terms of how films utilise him in their treatment of national discourses. Nonetheless, despite this movement from the explicit to the implicit in how Bardem's *films* treat the national, the national meanings that his *star image* has accrued are always present, even when they are consciously hidden (in which case their absence is commented upon, as can be seen in the attention given to Bardem's accents in *Lunes* and *Mar*)⁹⁷; the star image is not necessarily a straightforward reflection of the content of the films. Hayward describes stars as 'reflectors of the time and as signs to be reflected into society' (2006: 380), which has obvious parallels with nationhood as a cultural construct that must be maintained (and suggests an active process of shaping the construct –hence the signs to be *reflected into* (i.e. projected) society) and that will change over time (Williams 2002: 3). This can be seen in how Bardem's star image initially resonates with themes and concerns that were prevalent in 1992, but also in his performances and the development of his star image questioning and / or challenging the validity of certain perceptions of nationness (e.g. the exaggerated *macho ibérico* in the Bigas Luna films and the overt 'performance' of that same stereotype by Víctor in *Boca*), and suggesting (by way of both reflection and projection) possible alternatives (e.g. Víctor's real personality, or the reconfiguration of Spanish masculinities in *Carne*).

The movement from the nationally explicit to the implicit is also indicative of an increasingly internationalised form of cinema being produced in Spain; we saw that *Lunes* and *Mar* looked beyond the national cinematically even when telling a specifically Spanish story (and aimed for the universal rather than allowing the narrative to be limited to the national). The shift from the national to the regional in Bardem's later films is also illustrative of the increasing emphasis placed on regional diversity within Spanish identities in this period, but also of Spanishness being a

⁹⁷ [This also gives his image a sense of continuity or consistency despite his image subtly changing in accordance with social and cultural developments \(Dyer \[1979\] 1998: 98\).](#)

‘continuously shifting concept embracing both plurality and contradiction’ (Balfour and Quiroga 2007: 11). However both the industrial imperatives (i.e. the requirements of a cinema that has moved away from overt national specifics) and the regional are overwhelmed by the national in Javier Bardem’s star image; Bardem’s associations with the national (in its most inclusive, encompassing sense) and his status as a representative of ‘the Spanish male’ reconcile what could have been divisive regional differences in *Lunes* and *Mar*, and also implicitly mark those films as being part of a ‘national’ cinema. That one star can reflect and project different versions of a, sometimes contradictory, Spanishness underlines that ‘Spanishness’ is a pluralistic construct, and one that continued to evolve in the years covered by this thesis. Put simply, Javier Bardem represents the Spanish everyman, and this is the prism through which Spanish audiences view his performances and films.

We now move to consider these issues in relation to the next case study: Penélope Cruz.

Penélope Cruz

Penélope Cruz's stardom, like that of Javier Bardem, began with *Jamón jamón* (Bigas Luna, 1992), and the success of *Belle époque* (Trueba, 1992) later the same year cemented her ascension. One year later it was noted in *Fotogramas* that 'hacía tiempo que no veíamos en nuestro panorama cinematográfico una ascensión tan precoz y tan vertiginosa como la de esta madrileña de 19 años' (Ponga 1993: 80); from the beginning, Cruz was marked as having one of the most promising careers in contemporary Spanish cinema. Not only that but, from the outset of her career, she has also been constructed as a star who specifically 'belongs' to Spain: a number of Spanish female stars have emerged in the last decade but none are so possessively claimed as Cruz is. Cruz is commonly referred to in the Spanish press as 'nuestra Penélope' and her star image is presented as signifying innate aspects of Spanish womanhood, and she is seen as embodying Spain, or 'España hecha carne' in the words of director Bigas Luna (Trashorras 1999: 132).

Evans notes how many daughters she has played onscreen and describes her as 'la "niña", es decir, la de todos los espectadores, la de toda España, a la que se refieren a menudo como "nuestra Penélope"' (2004: 54-55). This is further emphasised by the roles that are located within a specifically Spanish context: the arrival of the Second Republic in *Belle époque*; incarcerated during the last years of the dictatorship in *Entre rojas* (Rodríguez, 1995); a 'gran estrella' recalling Imperio Argentina in *La niña de tus ojos* (Trueba, 1998); Goya's model for 'La maja vestida' and 'La maja desnuda' in *Volavérunt* (Bigas Luna, 1999); as well as her short role in the prologue (set during the 'state of exception' in 1970) of *Carne trémula* (Almodóvar, 1997). These films position Cruz and her star image within narratives that have cultural and historical significance to Spain and therefore embed her within the cultural imaginary: 'a nation is nothing without the stories it tells itself about itself' (Triana-Toribio 2003: 6). In contrast to Bardem and his star image (see the Bardem chapter), Cruz has not moved from the explicit to the implicit in terms of reflections and projections of the national, arguably because of the number of her films that position her within a specifically Spanish past, and also her continuing work with an older generation of directors from the 1980s who have shaped her stardom; these directors (Bigas Luna, Trueba, Almodóvar) continue to return to themes that in various ways relate to the

national (discussed below) and therefore reaffirm and / or develop Cruz's associations with those same national themes when she works with them again.

This chapter examines the ways in which Penélope Cruz interacts with 'the national' onscreen and how the national is manifested in her star image as a result. We begin by examining the two films that launched her career and that shaped her star image into such an enduring form that, more than fifteen years on, certain elements are still visible.

Lolitas and Virgins:

Jamón jamón was Cruz's first leading role in a film although she had appeared in a Tele5 programme aimed at a teenage audience, *La quinta marcha* (Angulo Barturen 2007: 33). It was seen as a risk to cast three cinematic unknowns as the younger leads, and the producers particularly had a problem with Penélope Cruz and Jordi Mollà. They thought that Cruz looked 'too Spanish', as Bigas Luna explains:

Ella no sabía que teníamos a otra candidata, rubia, que también nos gustaba mucho, en especial a Pepo Sol, coproductor de la película, que ponía problemas a Penélope, a la que veía excesivamente "racial". Decía: "Esta chica puede acabar resultando demasiado folklórica...!" (Angulo Barturen 2007: 56-7).

In fact it was these 'racial' qualities linking Cruz to a specific type of Spanishness (one that is physically connoted by Cruz's dark hair and eyes –hence Bigas Luna mentioning that the possible alternative was blonde) that drew the director to the young actress and that he still sees as her principal virtues; in an article written at the time of her Oscar nomination for Almodóvar's *Volver*, Bigas Luna said that her best work came in films that recognised certain innate qualities in the actress ('Es una persona muy ibérica, muy española y una luchadora nata' (Bigas Luna 2007: 48)). *Jamón* highlights these qualities and made them a fundamental part of the image of the emerging young star.

Cruz made her debut in a film that not only overflows with the themes of personal and cultural identity (Evans 2004: 54) but also deals ironically with the ideological structures of Spanish society (*machismo*, the family, work, and the conflict between tradition and modernity) (21); in her first film Cruz was positioned within a series of discourses on what Spanishness 'is' for contemporary Spain. The conflict between tradition and modernity presented by the film is embodied by Silvia (Cruz) and is essential to her 'allegorical identity as the Spanish woman of the next generation'

(D'Lugo 1995: 71). The conflict plays out via the choice she has to make between Raúl (representing traditional Spain) and José Luis (representing a new economic commercialism); as stated in the previous chapter, Silvia's choice represents 'the future direction of a society caught between its past and its future' (D'Lugo 1995: 71). The discourse between the traditional and the contemporary incorporates Spanish cinema, as Deleyto argues that the film 'is speaking to the "folkloric" tradition of Spanish cinema and calling the knowing spectator's attention to its own, radically different, representation of Spanish culture' (1999: 273), which supports the perception that Cruz was cast precisely because her appearance related to specific (traditional) images of Spanishness. At the same time, the idea that this film is a *different* representation of Spanish culture (i.e. one that contests the stereotypes that it presents) also fits with Evans' observation that the desires of the various characters are taken from the socio-cultural context of the Spain of the 1990s (2004: 14): nationness (in this case Spanishness) is historically based and changes over time, as writers such as Anderson ([1983] 1991: 4) and Williams (2002: 2) make clear. As the Bardem chapter outlined, *Jamón* wears its symbols of Spanishness overtly but that openness (in the displaying of stereotypes that are recognisable outside of Spain) often obscures a more complex negotiation of representations (what these stereotypes mean inside Spain). This dual projection-reflection in *Jamón*, then, is an example of how Spanish stars come to be embedded in both the imaginary and real constructs of 'Spain' and how the world views Spain (Perriam 2003: 10).

The cultural and historical specificity of the national is a possible foundation for certain star images: although there appear to be elements within stars that 'touch on things that are deep and constant features of human existence' nonetheless such elements always exist within a culturally and historically specific context (Dyer 1986: 17). Dyer also argues that stars effectively embody the hegemonic struggles within a given culture ([1979] 1998: 2), which means that certain stars could gain prominence because of their closeness to certain ideals prevalent at a given time. This is particularly relevant to Cruz and Bardem because their stardom started in 1992 (a key year for Spanish identities, as is outlined in the previous chapters) with a film that consciously deconstructs 'the national' in relation to Spain; as stated in the Bardem chapter, their prominence in the firmament of Spanish stardom could in part be because their roles in *Jamón* (when they first entered the public consciousness) coincided with the questioning of Spanish identities that was occurring at a national

level. This combination of content and timing perhaps explains why ‘the national’ has come to have a key place in their respective images; Bigas Luna indelibly connected the two of them to his discourse on the nation and placed them at the vanguard of a generational shift in Spanish cinema.

Attributing nationality to the images of femininity displayed in *Jamón* is problematic for a number of reasons, as while the film overtly heightens Cruz’s Spanishness it also utilises gender tropes that are universal rather than specifically Spanish: the problematic mother / whore dichotomy that the film places on all three female characters is not a specifically Spanish construction. This is a Spanish illustration of Vincendeau’s observation in relation to French stars that ‘the identification of stars with national identity follows a familiar gendered pattern’ (2000: 36); in contrast to male figures being rooted in a specifically national identity (as can be seen with Bardem and the *macho ibérico*), female stars represent the nation in a more ephemeral manner (as demonstrated by gender being privileged over nation in the case of the women) often either through reference to their bodies or allegory (Vincendeau 2000: 36). So it is through an emphasis on Cruz’s body (in relation to her physical appearance and also what the men say about Silvia’s body –returned to below) that links are made to the nation, rather than her representing a specifically Spanish female ‘type’.⁹⁸ The casting of the other female roles also emphasises Cruz’s Spanishness. Cruz is the only Spanish actress in the film and Bigas Luna does not hide the ‘foreignness’ of Anna Galiena (Carmen, who speaks Spanish with an Italian accent) or Stefania Sandrelli (Conchita, who was dubbed); the ‘foreignness’ of the other two actresses reinforces Cruz’s identity within the film as ‘the youthful cipher of a promising new Spanish future’ (D’Lugo 1995: 72). Deleyto argues that Galiena’s ‘Europeanness’ works to position her character as an outsider (1999: 275-6), which fits within the narrative theme of class prejudice, but also serves to distance her from her offspring and in turn heightens the Spanishness of Cruz / Silvia.

⁹⁸ The Lolita ‘type’ that Silvia relates to is not specifically Spanish, although she is presented as a Spanish incarnation of the type (see below).



Figures 1-2: Cruz's Spanishness is emphasised via differences in physical appearance (for example, skin tone) with Galiena, and Silvia's mini-dresses draw attention to her body.

While the film's treatment of femininity is not nation-specific, it is nonetheless through aspects of Cruz / Silvia's femininity that Bigas Luna highlights her Spanishness. As already stated, Galiena speaks Spanish with a discernable foreign accent but difference is also shown through her skin, hair and eyes being noticeably lighter than Cruz's. Cruz's skin is darker in *Jamón* than in other films (she has a relatively pale complexion in reality), which again suggests that Bigas Luna was purposely fostering a particular image of Spanishness via Cruz's appearance. As stated above, the producer was concerned that Cruz was excessively 'racial' (Angulo Barturen 2007: 56) but the film colludes with readings of the film that present Cruz / Silvia as a 'Lolita racial' (Amiguet 1997: 98) both in its representation of Silvia as embodying an innocent sexuality (through behaviour and costume) and through an emphasis on Spanishness via Cruz's physical appearance. Although readings of the film make Silvia out to be a highly sexualised Lolita-type character, she shows very little interest in the sexual acts performed on her, with the exception of the sex scene with Raúl in the café. This is the only occasion on which Silvia initiates the action: in all of the other scenes of a sexual nature (with José Luis, Raúl, or when Manuel kisses her) Silvia is passive and seemingly disinterested in what is happening (she is either eating or dreamily staring into space and talking about her much-desired shoe closet). The sex scenes also link Silvia to the nation, again through her body; both Raúl and José Luis say that Silvia's breasts taste of either *tortilla de patatas con cebolla* or *jamón* and therefore 'sexual desire is literally given a Spanish "flavour"' (D'Lugo 1995: 70).

It is not just through her actions that Silvia is made out to be a Lolita, but also through her clothing. Like Raúl, Silvia's cheap label-less clothing marks her as working class, but the colours and styles are also indicative of other characteristics. She wears a series of short and revealing dresses, which are usually either red

(symbolising passion and blood) or white (innocence), and the innocent connotations of the white are usually undermined either by the revealing cut of the dress or by it becoming sheer (as in the rainstorm scene). The dresses again emphasise Cruz's body and explicitly sexualise her, and the colours also heighten her dark hair and eyes. These two physical aspects, her hair and eyes (and the way in which they are used within the film), became the foundation of Cruz's 'continuities of iconography' (Dyer [1979] 1998: 62), repeated visual elements that feed into the appearance of consistency in a star's image; Cruz's later films also draw attention to these physical attributes, and she currently advertises shampoo, hairspray and mascara for L'Oreal. These aspects of Cruz's physical appearance, and the emphasis that the film places on them through framing and close-ups, in turn emphasise her Spanishness in terms of appearance by harking back to stereotypical images of dark Mediterranean beauties.



Figures 3-4: The emphasis on Cruz's eyes and hair also occurs outside of cinema, for example in her advertisements for L'Oreal shampoo and mascara.

The explicit sexuality in the film overwhelmed Cruz's image in the aftermath of *Jamón*'s release, and the fallout from her initial reactions to the intense public attention remains a problematic part of her image: in 1998, when asked what she thought was the most distorted aspect of her image in the (Spanish) media, Cruz replied 'todo el tema de mi primera película, *Jamón jamón*, de todo lo que pasó con mi rechazo al personaje. Y es que nunca sucedió' (Díaz Prieto 1998: 63), and as late as 2004 she was still saying that she had been misrepresented (de la Torriente 2004: 38). While it is often repeated that she had a breakdown after the film (for example, Deleyto (1999: 278)), Cruz insists that this is also a misrepresentation (de la Torriente 2004: 38): she says that her avoidance of sex scenes in the immediate aftermath was the result of her (still young) age and the leering attention she received after *Jamón*'s release, rather than something connected to the making of the film (Angulo Barturen

2007: 183).⁹⁹ She fought being typecast as a ‘sex kitten’ and turned down a lot of roles because ‘los papeles tenían sólo la parte erótica de Silvia, no la parte humana, que era la más interesante’ (ibid), which along with her avoidance of sex scenes over the next few years led to accusations (within Spain) of Puritanism (Angulo 2000: 48)! As it happened, Cruz was able to secure a role that was distinct from her impending image as ‘mito erótico nacional’ (de la Torriente 2004: 38) and instead led to the establishment of a dichotomy at the heart of her star image, that she simultaneously represents a ‘national erotic myth’¹⁰⁰ as embodied by Silvia in *Jamón* and also the pure and virginal ideal embodied by Luz in *Belle époque* (henceforth referred to as *Belle*).

The qualities that led Bigas Luna to give Cruz the role of Silvia (‘era una chulita de barrio, de familia trabajadora, llena de frescura y muy sexy’ (Angulo Barturen 2007: 68)) initially prevented Fernando Trueba giving her the role in *Belle* as he thought that these elements (as well as her image from *La quinta marcha* and her age (now eighteen)) were inappropriate for the young and virginal Luz.¹⁰¹ He acknowledges that he did not even want her to audition because she was so different from how he saw the character, but when she filmed herself performing a scene from the film and sent it to him, he barely recognised her and ‘I thought “I am an idiot, I am full of prejudice...she is perfect”. She is 14 or 15 years old in the film’ (director’s DVD commentary). Stone sees *Belle* as countering Cruz’s performance as Silvia, describing Luz as ‘the meek, compliant virgin’ (2001: 199), but that seems an oversimplification of a character who is often overshadowed by her sisters (unsurprisingly given that they are played by Ariadna Gil, Maribel Verdú and Miriam Díaz Aroca) but no less strong-willed; strong-willed women have also become something of a Cruz trademark.

Belle takes place in 1931 in a nameless part of the Spanish countryside (the opening titles tell us that we are ‘en algún lugar de España...’) shortly before the creation of the Second Republic and the first democratic elections held in Spain. The title thus does not refer to the historical period of the Belle Époque but instead to a ‘beautiful period’ in the lives of the protagonists when the possibility of personal

⁹⁹ There are contradictions in what she is reported to have said about the film: for example, compare García (2003a) and de la Torriente (2004: 38).

¹⁰⁰ De la Torriente does not explain what she means by ‘mito erótico nacional’ but perhaps D’Lugo’s observation about sexual desire being given a Spanish ‘flavour’ (1995: 70) is the intersection of the national and erotic myth.

¹⁰¹ Director’s DVD commentary.

freedom was ahead of them (Mira 2005: 201).¹⁰² However, that is not to say that the film has nothing to say about Spain's history, or indeed about Spain as it was in 1992, the year the film was made and released. Mira argues that the film can be explicitly linked to the wider context of what was going on in Spain in 1992 (the year of the Olympic Games in Barcelona, Madrid as European city of culture, and the International Expo in Seville):

If one regards the Spanish Transition as a process of outgrowing the cultural structures of Francoism and building up a new image of the country, it is only at this point that the process is fully completed. In terms of popularity and critical reception, *Belle époque* is one of the key Spanish films of the 1990s and can be studied as the cinematic counterpart of the year's celebrations [...] Not only was the film a healthy box-office hit [...] it also suggested a new attitude to the past that definitely left behind memories of the Civil War (2005: 199).

Jordan agrees that 1992 can in part be seen as a 'conscious refiguring of the past' (1999a: 140) and that *Belle* is a 'culminating form of a certain post-Franco, quality cinema [...] legitimized by its appealing refiguration of the nation's past' (146). But he also sees the film as engaging in a complex negotiation of 'a series of contemporary anxieties and fantasies concerning national identity, sexuality, class and power, relevant to Spain in the 1980s and 1990s' (154) but transferred to 'an invented 1930s context' (ibid).

Penélope Cruz's Luz is incorporated into this deconstruction of contemporary anxieties via the film's transposition of modern gender politics into the 1930s setting; this mixture of the historical and the contemporary again highlights how the conflict between tradition and modernity came to be embedded in Cruz's star image. One could see this transposition of the contemporary into the past as exemplifying Hobsbawm's concept of 'invented traditions' (1983); the film attempts to tie modern Spain to its past by inserting contemporary attitudes into an historical setting, suggesting consistency between 'then' and 'now' (thereby eliding the historical specificity of nationhood). The Spain depicted in the film is 'arguably a mixture of 1960s hippy culture, the cult of "make love not war", plus generous helpings of 1970s and 1980s feminism, as well as gender bending and a postmodern taste for blurring political, moral and sexual boundaries' (Jordan 1999a: 155-6); Fernando (Jorge Sanz) finds Manolo's (Fernando Fernán Gómez) house to be a sexual utopia as each of the

¹⁰² Trueba says on the DVD commentary that the historical period was not overly important to him.

old man's four daughters initiate sexual relations with the rather stunned young man.¹⁰³ As Evans points out, Luz is originally marginalised by her older sisters (2004: 56), each of them representing a different type of femininity: 'la imagen voluptuosamente erotizada de Maribel Verdú, o la feminidad varonil de Ariadna Gil, o la exageradamente convencional de Miriam Díaz Aroca' (ibid). In contrast, Luz is constructed as a much younger adolescent figure, Cruz's hair tied back in plaits and bows, dressed in white with floral motifs, and possessing a childish enthusiasm and friendliness that occasionally lapses into temper tantrums when Luz does not get her own way (e.g. the instances when she accuses her sisters of ganging up on her). She is largely absent during the sexual exploits that occupy the main part of the narrative, being constantly sent out of the room by her sisters when they want to discuss Fernando, and yet she comes centre stage at the end of the film having been 'chosen' (whether Fernando makes any active choices is debatable) as the ideal partner.



Figures 5-6: The girlish Luz is contrasted with her sisters via costume and hairstyle

In fact one wonders if there is not a more conservative undercurrent beneath the film's trumpeted libertarianism as Fernando ends up with the only virgin in the family, and the one sister who does not make any sexual advances to him (or at least not until the eve of their wedding).¹⁰⁴ Luz's mother says of their pairing "El primer amor; tan puro, tan casto, tan espiritual", words that the narrative intends both ironically (Fernando has been 'in love' with each of the sisters) but also sincerely (in relation to Luz). Evans argues that although the words refer to Luz, they also 'van más allá de los límites de la narrativa para colaborar en el proceso de creación de Penélope Cruz como un ser definido por estas cualidades' (2004: 56). *Jamón's* Silvia is also innocent in so far as she seems unaware of the havoc that her sexuality is

¹⁰³ There is class privilege in their bohemian lifestyle and freedoms, and some hypocrisy in the way that their own sexual exploits are exempt from the disapproval they show towards the village brothel.

¹⁰⁴ Although the exchange of gazes at the film's end suggests 'neither Fernando nor the three elder sisters are able to purge their underlying desire for difference and unregulated desire' (Jordan 1999b: 305).

unleashing, but ultimately she is defined by sexual and melodramatic passion, in contrast to Luz who acts out a romantic narrative of idealised love. The romantic narrative of the film again highlights the traditional and the modern within Cruz's character and by extension her star image; Luz is traditional in her virginal state but as the youngest of the family she is also (like Silvia) explicitly marked as 'the next generation' and her modernity (or at least her rejection of the traditional) is also shown in her insistence on sleeping with Fernando before their wedding (which does not 'officially' take place due to the priest's suicide).

Both *Jamón* and *Belle* play to outside perceptions of Spain and Spanish cinema through the use of their characters' sexual exploits in the projection of Spain and contemporary Spanish identities (*Belle* may be set in 1931 but it arguably has more to do with Spain in 1992). As stated in the previous chapter, if one looks beneath the surface of *Jamón* there is a greater complexity in operation in its reflections of the Spain of 1992 (i.e. via the treatment of class and regional identities, and Silvia's choice) than is outwardly suggested by the story of ham and passion. In relation to Cruz / Silvia and the representation of Spanishness, the film is often contradictory (gender appears to be privileged over nation in relation to the women but Cruz / Silvia's Spanishness is emphasised through her femininity) and ephemeral (her Spanishness is tangible onscreen but it is difficult to pin down exactly how the film conveys it). The representation of Cruz / Silvia's Spanishness is also one of the aspects of the film that simultaneously reflects and projects in relation to Spain: it outwardly projects Silvia's difference by contrasting Cruz's physical appearance with the other (foreign) women, and links her to Spanishness through stereotypically Spanish characteristics such as Silvia's passionate behaviour and the association with Spanish foods; those same stereotypes are also projected inwards for the consideration of Spanish audiences and the subtler reflections of Spanishness are done through the casting process (e.g. the subtle reinforcement of class differences through the regional identities of the three younger members of the cast) and Silvia's choice between the two men paralleling Spain's choice in its future direction. Likewise *Belle* also creates a multi-layered (and arguably somewhat muddled) vision of Spain that places Cruz's character at the centre of its negotiation of tradition and modernity and its discourse on the nation without being overly explicit.

Moreiras Menor argues that 1992 represented closure for Spain in terms of a long-gestating project to reinvent themselves in the aftermath of the dictatorship (2002:

186), and of the two films it is *Belle* that most clearly represents that effort; the film tries to overlay the periods from either side of the dictatorship (the early 1930s and the 1980s/90s), thereby eliding the notion that nationhood is ‘profoundly historical’ (Williams 2002: 2), to create a utopian (and non-existent) Spain that only hints at what happened in between (in the scenes that bookend the film: the murderous scene between the two Civil Guards at the start and the priest’s suicide at the end). *Jamón* and *Belle* both contradict Moreiras Menor’s assertion that 1992 was the end of something in terms of Spanish identity because both films clearly show that Spain’s quest for self-definition was still in progress, and indeed national identities are never ‘fixed’ as they are always under negotiation: the definition of nationhood inevitably shifts over time (Williams 2002: 3). Although both films play to outside perceptions of Spain in the projection of Spanish stereotypes (i.e. the *macho ibérico* in *Jamón* and the sexual shenanigans in both films), they are different in how they reflect (i.e. look inward at) Spain and Spanishness. For example, the conflict between tradition and modernity was evidently a topical theme in the Spain of 1992 as the country attempted to redefine itself on the world stage, but the two films differ in their treatment of the issue: *Belle* addresses contemporary anxieties by attempting to create continuity between past and present by inserting contemporary attitudes into the past (thereby eliding the historical specificity of nationhood and also negating differences between tradition and modernity); whereas *Jamón* presents the conflict as a choice that the next generation needs to make (reinforcing the historical specificity of nationhood and highlighting that Spain had arguably reached a juncture in 1992 when the decision needed to be made). But in both films Cruz’s character is at the centre of the question of how Spain will manage to resolve its past with its present (in *Jamón* the choice is specifically hers to make) and crucially she is an adolescent in both films; contemporary Spain is being seen through the eyes of a new generation and both films project the new star (inward and outward) as representing this younger, newer Spain.

The role that ‘creates’ a star, that transforms them from a mere actor, often becomes the foundation of their star image (Morin [1960] 2005: 29); although later roles may inflect this original image, it is usually still present in some form. When placed alongside each other, *Jamón* and *Belle* encapsulate key components within Cruz’s star image, ‘el conflicto entre tradición y modernidad’ (Evans 2004: 59) and ‘the alluring tensions between connotations of innocence and submissiveness on the

one hand and pronounced sexual beauty on the other' (Perriam 2005: 38). *Jamón* and *Belle* marked Penélope Cruz as a bright young hope of Spanish cinema. *Belle* in many ways consecrated her nascent stardom by putting her onscreen not only with the legendary Fernando Fernán Gómez but also alongside Sanz and Verdú, who were two of the big stars of the previous generation. We shall see in the following sections that Cruz returned to work with the two directors who 'discovered' her and who, along with Almodóvar, are arguably responsible for the films that form the foundation of her star image within the Spanish context.

'La niña' gets political:

Jordan argues that the 'new' generation of directors that emerged in the 1990s Spanish cinema appeared 'not to be burdened by the weight of the past or the need to settle any political or ideological scores' (2000: 75) and similarly Stone says of Penélope Cruz that 'born in Madrid in 1974 and therefore wholly lacking in experience of the dictatorship, Cruz is typical of a generation that grew up in a Spain which placed no limits on their aspirations' (2001: 199). This 'typicality' is key in terms of stardom, as the star is an amalgamation of representation and identification (Hayward 2006: 383), 'like us' but not 'like us', or as Mulvey posits 'they act out a complex process of likeness and difference (the glamorous impersonates the ordinary)' ([1975] 1989: 18). Cruz's films consistently position her as being 'of the people', as being a normal working woman, at the same time as they emphasise her specialness: she is held up as representative of Spanish women but in so doing she is also (contradictorily) being marked out as special, suggesting that her star image is not straightforwardly reflective of Spanish women but is also a projection of what Spanish women would like to be (or what someone thinks Spanish women *should* be like). Despite commentators such as Jordan and Stone distancing Cruz's generation from the political, and Penélope Cruz is by no means as political as Javier Bardem, her relative youth does not preclude her star image from being used in representations of Spain's historical and political past (as we have seen in relation to *Belle*), or being used to embody or act out discourses that relate to that past, and this section examines two films where she has been used in this way and which contend that one cannot remain apolitical in the face of injustice.¹⁰⁵

¹⁰⁵ Cruz protested against the Iraq war at the Goyas in 2003. See de la Torre (2004: 43).

Entre rojas (henceforth referred to as *Entre*) is set towards the end of the dictatorship and is based on the experiences of director Azucena Rodríguez, who was jailed on two occasions and only escaped the full term of a six-year sentence when an amnesty was given to political prisoners after Franco's death (Ponga 1994: 98-9). Lucía (Cruz) is the only character not to be based on a real person (i.e. she is not an alter ego of the director) (stated in the 'making of' documentary on the DVD), and her fictional status was conceived of as a way into the film for a younger audience:

Si la protagonista hubiera sido una militante, habría un montón de claves que la gente de 20 años de hoy le sonarían a chino, así que me planteé que el proceso de aprendizaje de la protagonista fuese el proceso de aprendizaje del espectador. Que todo le sorprenda que no sepa qué es el centralismo democrático, ni una célula, ni nada. (in Ponga 1994: 99).

Cruz's youth and the lack of overt politicisation within her star image allow her to become the proxy of a younger Spanish audience who have no memory of the dictatorship and possibly minimal knowledge of the politics of the era; as in *Jamón* and *Belle*, Cruz is projected as representing Spain's younger generation. The film initially places Lucía in passive position as she (a ballerina and the daughter of a lawyer) is jailed because of her boyfriend's political affiliations, not her own; this is an example of how Cruz's middle class characters are usually coded as being 'safe' in terms of any rebellion they offer.¹⁰⁶ However, during the course of the narrative she becomes 'politicised' on a personal level (her actions are inspired by people rather than political beliefs, which again creates a 'safe' form of resistance): for example, her first defiant act against the prison authorities comes when she sees a mother and child being separated.

It is Cruz's political neutrality that allows the film to use her in this way: if she had the strong political associations of Bardem, it would be difficult for her to portray a political innocent. Although *Entre* places her within a representation of Spain's problematic past, there is a distance between the audience being addressed (the current younger generation) and the period that is being engaged with; although the Franco era remains a complex and divisive issue in Spain, it is arguably distant to those who were either born after Franco's death or are too young to remember living

¹⁰⁶ The clash between tradition and modernity (or the contemporary) is inflected by class within Cruz's films, often through the presentation of Cruz as a sexual object: Cruz's middle class women often encapsulate the theme in a 'safe' manner (as in *Entre*) in comparison to the working class women (such as Silvia and later characters) who are usually more overtly sexual and / or sexy than their middle class counterparts and who carry a hint of danger (usually because their passions overtake them).

under the dictatorship, i.e. the generation Cruz is part of. The role is also effectively sanitised of politics both through Lucía's lack of interest in politics (she never joins 'the Party' and is shown in the company of the imprisoned prostitutes almost as frequently as she is with the political prisoners) and through the emphasis that the film places on Cruz's star persona. *Entre* builds on Cruz's star image, not only through the perception of her as 'la niña / hija' but also through Lucía's professional role as a ballerina. Dance plays its part in the construction of Penélope Cruz's star image through the oft-related fact that she trained as a dancer (of ballet) to a high level as a child, before switching her allegiance to acting in her early teens.¹⁰⁷ This emphasis on her physicality (through scenes of ballet exercises) is not entirely appropriate to the narrative in *Entre* (Evans 2004: 58-9) and, along with the wardrobe and hairstyle changes her character also undergoes in the film, there is arguably more emphasis on 'Cruz, the star' (she is at the centre of much that goes on in the film) than on the verisimilitude of the character (for example, other characters who are not in 'the Party' are snubbed by the majority of the political prisoners but Lucía quickly establishes herself within the family of (political) women). This is no doubt partly a necessity of the narrative (the character needs to draw the audience into the lives of the other characters) but it also reinforces that the character was written especially for Cruz (Ponga 1994: 99).

La niña de tus ojos (henceforth referred to as *Niña*) also initially places Cruz's character (Macarena) in a passive position (she has only agreed to make the film in Germany because the producer has promised to get her anarchist father out of jail), and she similarly becomes politicised on a personal level (she risks her life and career (and those of her fellow cast and crew) to save a Russian Jewish prisoner, who is being used as an extra on the film, from the concentration camp and execution). *Niña*'s background is that the outbreak of Civil War in Spain in 1936 seriously damaged the Spanish film industry, with the result that a number of directors and stars started to look outside of Spain for work. An opportunity presented itself in the Nazi desire for their cinema to penetrate the Latin American market; Joseph Goebbels had the idea of co-productions of *españoladas* (Spanish popular musicals) using the German UFA studios as the base and filming double versions of the films in Spanish

¹⁰⁷ For example: Ponga (1993), Sessums (2001), and Mottram (2005). Dance occurs frequently in her films and examples include her demonstration of flamenco in *Todo es mentira* (Fernández Almero, 1994), and dancing to 'Kung Fu Fighting' as she prepares to go out on the town in *Sin noticias de Dios* (Díaz Yanes, 2001).

and German. *Niña* takes place in 1938 and tells of a Spanish director and his cast going to Berlin to make a film, only to find that in fleeing the Civil War they have put themselves in the midst of Nazism. The team try to be apolitical, and each has different reasons for agreeing to participate (only one of them is openly Francoist): for example, as already stated, Macarena (Cruz) is there because of her father's problems, a narrative strand that, in the absence of an actual father onscreen, again positions Cruz as a daughter of Spain (although given the political views of her anarchist father, and the era that the film is set in, in this instance she cannot be construed as a daughter for *all* of Spain).

With the Spaniards being abroad, the film sets up a complex negotiation of projections and reflections of nationness from various perspectives. From the outset, the Spanish experience difficulties with the German studio's interpretation of what Spanishness *is* (the Spanish set designer (Santiago Segura) despairs when he sees the 'Spanish village' set, complete with mosque in the background¹⁰⁸), culminating in some very Aryan-looking extras who, on the orders of Goebbels, are replaced with 'prisoners of war' (who look more 'Spanish'). At the same time, the Spanish themselves are creating a heightened version of Spanishness to put before the camera, as demonstrated in the sequence where Macarena sings 'Los piconeros', a song that has associations with the female star of 1930s Spanish cinema, Imperio Argentina.

Niña recalls the films that Imperio Argentina made in Germany with director Florián Rey, specifically *Carmen, la de Triana* (1938) in which she sang 'Los piconeros'. The first 'gran estrella' of Spanish cinema (Vizcaíno Casas 2000: 170), in the 1930s Imperio Argentina 'was considered the most representative of Spanish (feminine) ideals' (Triana-Toribio 2003: 7). While Trueba has stressed that the film was inspired by, but not based on, Imperio Argentina's time in Berlin (Fernandez Rubio 1998), there are a number of undeniable similarities between the narratives depicted (such as the inclusion of 'Los piconeros'). However, there are also important differences because while Rey and Argentina were supporters of Franco, and their co-operation with the Nazis in the making of German productions remained a taint on their careers, Macarena starts the film as an apolitical figure and later works *against* the Nazis. Davies argues that Trueba's film effectively rewrites history and redeems the image of an earlier star so as to circumvent the problem of the protagonist being

¹⁰⁸ Spain's Moorish history is emphasised in the German designs (hence the Mosque and a proliferation of crescent moons).

constructed as an exotic Spanish other by the Nazis (2005).¹⁰⁹ This is another illustration of Hobsbawm’s ‘invented traditions’ (1983) as, like *Belle*, *Niña* attempts to insert contemporary attitudes into an historical setting, but it is also an example of what Gledhill means when she says that star images can reconcile, mask, or expose ideological contradictions (1991: xiv); here the star image of Penélope Cruz both masks and reconciles those aspects of Argentina’s image that are problematic in a contemporary context. As with *Belle*, the era in which the film has been made has shaped the vision of the past that is onscreen.



Figures 7-10: The ‘Los piconeros’ sequence

The ‘Los piconeros’ sequence is also a further illustration of the allegorical status of the bodies of female stars within national cinemas (Vincendeau 2000: 36); in this sequence Cruz / Macarena *is* Spain, dancing flamenco, dressed in shades of red, orange and gold with flowers in her glossy dark hair, and furthermore specifically invoking the spirit of the *folklórica*. Triana-Toribio defines the *folklórica* as ‘a woman singer, and sometimes dancer, who performs in a style inspired by Andalusian rural music’ (2003: 179). One of the most famous *folklóricas* was Imperio Argentina and the films in which these particular women / stars appeared were sometimes known as *españoladas* (the genre the Nazis wished to exploit). As stated above in relation to *Jamón*, Cruz’s looks had already been viewed as relating to the stars of the *folklórica* (and again attention is drawn to her hair and eyes) and her costume in this sequence also references the traditional *folklórica* attire, also known as Andalusian or ‘gypsy

¹⁰⁹ The construction of the star as an exotic Spanish other still occurs: the scene where Macarena performs ‘Los piconeros’ for a second time in the same costume and dance routine, but this time singing in German, makes her exotic to Spanish audiences.

dress': the flounced dress and tall hair comb, although here, instead of the usual Spanish shawl with fringes, there is simply fringing on the dress itself and the traditional fan is absent. The emphasis on symbols of Spanishness in this sequence is suggestive of masquerade, which is usually connected to excessive performances of femininity (Riviere [1929] 1986) whereby femininity is 'sustained by its accoutrements' (Doane 1991: 34), but which Davies ties to the national by suggesting that stereotypical images of Spain act as 'a sort of masquerade' (2004: 6) of nationness. That this is a 'production' of Spanishness that may not be genuine is signalled via Macarena's miming, and miming to music that she describes as being 'ni español ni nada'.

They are also filming in Germany and the non-Spanish extras have to be taught how to clap with the correct rhythm, and several scenes later we see Macarena do the routine again, with the same costumes and music, but miming to German. While the genuineness of the national identity put on display may be called in to question by certain aspects of the sequence, arguably authenticity is also indicated via the very specific type of Spanishness that is being performed. As her surname indicates, Macarena *Granada* is of the southern region of Spain where the film within the film is set and she possesses the appropriate Andalusian accent, which is not the natural accent of the *madrileña* Penélope Cruz.¹¹⁰ Trueba had again needed convincing of Cruz's suitability and says that:

buscaba a una actriz que tenía que ser como ella pero en andaluza, y Penélope insistía en que podía hacer el acento y que su abuela era andaluza, pero yo temía que no se viera al personaje, sino a una actriz imitando un acento. Hasta que me convenció (Casanova 2004b: 128).

Although Davies posits that the masquerade of nationness is 'a "pretence" of Spanishness that in many ways becomes indistinguishable from whatever the real thing might be' (2004: 6) (following Riviere's reading of 'genuine womanliness' and 'masquerade' ([1929] 1986: 38)), in Cruz's case the associations that she already has with the national (accumulated from the likes of *Jamón* and *Belle*) mean that when she participates in a performance of Spanishness (i.e. attention is drawn to Spanishness as a performance, as in the 'Los piconeros' sequence), the 'performance' does not detract from a belief that there is a 'genuine' Spanishness behind the

¹¹⁰ Her accent is praised in an article examining recent performances of Andalusian accents in Spanish cinema (A.R. Almodóvar 1999).

performance as well (because of how ingrained Spanishness is in Cruz’s star image); Trueba’s worry about casting a *madrileña* as an *andaluza* stems from a concern that the masquerade would be visible (we would just see an actress imitating an accent) but in the end he was convinced by Cruz, arguably because her Spanishness is taken as genuine irrespective of the regional inflection performed. At the same time, the casting of Cruz not only emphasises that a particular type of Spanishness is being *performed* within the film (because her own regional identity does not match that of Macarena) but also highlights her uniqueness (her ‘star monopoly’ (McDonald 2000: 12)) within the Spanish star system: Trueba may have looked for someone ‘like her’ (but Andalusian), but he was unable to find anyone else like Cruz.

Time and again the film positions Cruz / Macarena as embodying Spanish womanhood¹¹¹, and Stone also sees Cruz as representing a specifically Spanish brand of female stardom (2001: 200). As well as the references to Imperio Argentina, the film makes a number of observations on the lives of actors and the construction of stars, and Macarena’s positioning as the ‘Princesa del cine español’ of the late 1930s is reinforced by the fact that she is played by Penélope Cruz, the ‘Princess’ of contemporary Spanish cinema. For example, although *Niña* is an ensemble film, Trueba acknowledges that Cruz is the heart of the film (Mora 1998) and she is presented as ‘the Star’ of the cast in the way that her character stands out by wearing more vibrant colours and richer fabrics than the others. This doubling (a real contemporary star playing a fictionalised version of star of another era) and the rewriting of history, again place the relationship between tradition and contemporaneity on display in Cruz’s work.



Figures 11-12: standing out through dress and colour, and the circulation of star images.

While *Entre* arguably does not seek to project Spanishness, instead focussing its attentions inward at a specific period of Spain’s past (although that representation of the past is being specifically directed (or projected) at the younger Spanish audience),

¹¹¹ For example, when Goebbels meets her at the Embassy reception he whispers ‘España, España’.

Niña offers a complex and multi-layered representation of Spanishness from both the inward (reflection and projection) and outward (projection) perspectives. *Niña* is the film in which Cruz's body and performance are most obviously used to enact a visual projection of feminine Spanishness and because Trueba's film takes place abroad it consciously includes foreign perceptions of Spanishness (for example, via the set decoration done by the German set designer and the imperious attitudes that the German characters display towards the Spanish visitors) while simultaneously offering glimpses of how the Spanish perceive themselves ('somos feos, bajitos y renegridos, con pelo hasta en la lengua' in the words of director Blas (Antonio Resines)). In fact both the projections and reflections point to something of an inferiority complex on the part of the Spanish, or at least industrial levels of self-deprecation. For most of the film it is only in their performances in front of the camera (in the film within the film) that they manage to become better versions of themselves (which again points to the questionable status of the Spanishness being evoked in their film), whether it is a grouchy Macarena becoming radiant as the camera starts rolling or Julián (Jorge Sanz) playing the hero onscreen when in reality his famous war wound is non-existent.

What *Entre* and *Niña* have in common is that they are set in specific periods of Spain's past and our point of view is that of those who are subjugated by historical circumstances. Arguably it is this element that allows a continuation of the conflict between tradition and modernity within Cruz's image; the films simultaneously position her characters as modern women (i.e. as being of a younger generation of Spaniards) but also rooted in the past. If one considers the films examined in the previous chapter and the sense of contemporaneity that they generate within Javier Bardem's image, it is striking that so many of Penélope Cruz's films situate her in the past; although nationness is supposed to be profoundly historical, Cruz's Spanishness apparently has a timeless quality that allows her to embody Spanish women in different eras without her actual modernity / contemporaneity interfering with the representation of the past. Perhaps it is our awareness of Cruz's actual contemporaneity that overlays that aspect onto the onscreen representation and thus the dichotomy of the traditional and the modern is created in the eyes of the beholder rather than manifested within the text itself. Certainly in *Niña* the doubling of the old and the new only occurs if one has an awareness of Cruz's actual status within Spanish cinema (and indeed an awareness that Imperio Argentina is being

referenced). But in *Entre* Lucía is part of the generation who would see Spain undergo the Transition and who were young enough to have a future ahead of them in the Spanish democracy; the combination of tradition and modernity is coded within the character rather than being projected by the audience.

Niña was the beginning of a period of triumph for Cruz (she won her first Goya for best actress for the film), which was compounded by the worldwide success of *Todo sobre mi madre* (Almodóvar, 1999) the following year. That film launched her internationally, and although she had already made a number of films abroad it kick-started her career in Hollywood, something of a poisoned chalice given the reaction at home to her American excursions. While she is to date the only female Spanish star to have successfully sustained a career in the US (although Paz Vega is currently attempting to follow in her footsteps), the perception that she had ‘left’ Spain (there was a five year gap between Spanish films after the release of *Sin noticias de Dios* in 2001) led to a backlash in the popular Spanish press.

Majas and Remakes:

Cruz made her first move into the English-language market in the same year as *Niña* with *The Hi-Lo Country* (Frears, 1998) and *The Man with Rain in his Shoes* (Ripoll, 1998). Between 1999 and 2006 (the year of her ‘return’ to Spanish cinema, discussed below), she made eighteen films: four in Spanish (*Todo sobre mi madre*, *Volavérunt*, *Sin noticias de Dios* and *Volver* (Almodóvar, 2006)); one in French (*Fanfan la Tulipe* (Krawczyk, 2003)); one in Italian (*Non ti muovere* (Castellitto, 2004)); and twelve in English (*Woman on Top* (Torres, 2000), *All the Pretty Horses* (Thornton, 2000), *Blow* (Demme, 2001), *Captain Corelli’s Mandolin* (Madden, 2001), *Vanilla Sky* (Crowe, 2001), *Masked and Anonymous* (Charles, 2003), *Gothika* (Kassowitz, 2003), *Head in the Clouds* (Duigan, 2004), *Noel* (Palminteri, 2004), *Sahara* (Eisner, 2005), *Chromophobia* (Fiennes, 2005), and *Bandidas* (Roening & Sandberg, 2006)). A commonality between most of the non-Spanish films is that she usually plays the love interest and arguably that spills over into how she is written about by the media outside of Spain (discussed below).

Of the Spanish films, *Todo sobre mi madre* and *Volver* are discussed in the next section, *Sin noticias de Dios* saw Cruz acting alongside her idol (Angulo 2000: 48), Victoria Abril (who, as Evans notes, is the ‘otra estrella / niña del cine español’ (2004: 58)), and *Volavérunt* saw her reunited with Bigas Luna and Jordi Mollà.

Volavérunt is an historical drama that suggests (the narrative is supposition rather than documented fact –making it a projection rather than a reflection of Spain’s past) a version of the events surrounding the suspicious death of the Duchess of Alba (Aitana Sánchez-Gijón) in 1802. Among the real-life characters that inhabit the film are Francisco de Goya (Jorge Perugorria), the Prime Minister Manuel de Godoy (Mollà), and Pepita Tudó (Cruz), Godoy’s lover and the model for Goya’s paintings ‘La maja vestida’ and ‘La maja desnuda’. The film was one of the most expensive made in Spain at the time (E. Fernández-Santos 1999a) and was loosely based on Antonio Larreta’s book of the same title.



Figures 13-14: Goya’s *La maja desnuda* and Cruz as Pepita Tudó posing for Goya in *Volavérunt*

Bigas Luna admits to making departures from the novel’s narrative (modestly saying that he had come up with possibilities in the central mystery that were more credible and more attractive than those in the novel (Trashorras 1999: 130)), including ‘la inclusión del personaje de Pepita Tudó como eje de la historia’ (ibid), something that moves Cruz centre stage in a story that is not ostensibly about her character. The director again stresses the Spanishness of Cruz (‘siempre que tengo que hacer algo muy español pienso en ella’ (Trashorras 1999: 132)) and there are a number of parallels with *Jamón*: Cruz’s character being of a lower social class and being defined by her sexual relations with the men; the pairing with Mollà; and their relationship is once again thwarted by the weak nature of Mollà’s character and his reliance on a character played by Stefania Sandrelli (here playing the Queen). In relation to *Jamón*, one also wonders whether Cruz was attempting to draw a line under the apparent misinterpretations of her relationship with Bigas Luna (in connection with the nudity required of her in the earlier film) by once again appearing topless in a Bigas Luna film: she is seen in the famous poses depicted in Goya’s paintings (fig.s13-14).

Volavérunt was released in the same year as *Todo sobre mi madre* (henceforth referred to as *Todo*) and after that point it can be seen from Cruz’s filmography that

she has mainly worked outside Spain. This thesis concentrates on the chosen stars within their original national context but, given the volume of Cruz's work abroad, it would be difficult to discuss the development of her star image without making reference to her foreign films (especially since the Hollywood films are seen as being below her usual standard and as having damaged her standing in Spain). Therefore what follows is a discussion of one of her Hollywood films and some brief observations on how she is utilised outside of her national context.

If *Todo* raised Penélope Cruz's profile as an actress in an international context, *Vanilla Sky* put her into the international public consciousness in an altogether more tabloid manner via her relationship with her co-star in the film, Tom Cruise. This is illustrative (and possibly the culmination) of a trend in how Cruz is depicted outside of Spain; despite her refusal to discuss her romantic relationships with the press, there has always been considerable emphasis on her relationships (platonic or otherwise) with the leading men in her US films, and arguably her image in the US has been predominantly shaped by who she dates (for example, see S.M. Smith (2001)).¹¹² Herbert suggests that the tabloid discourse surrounding Cruz (specifically the notion that she was the cause of the breakdown of the Cruise-Kidman marriage) spilled over into readings of her performance in *Vanilla Sky* and caused a blurring of the real and the reel:

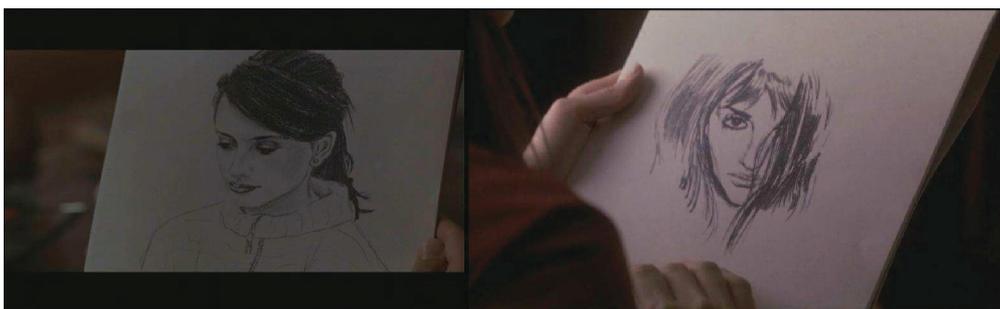
In other words, a reactionary, sexist, and derogatory discourse attended the transnational migration of actress Penélope Cruz –and one which contrasted strongly with her role as the “good girl” in *Abre los ojos* and *Vanilla Sky*. (2006: 35)

Vanilla Sky is a useful film to consider in the context of Cruz's Spanish star image because it is a remake of a Spanish film (*Abre los ojos* (Amenábar, 1997) –henceforth referred to as *Abre*) and Cruz plays the same role (Sofía / Sofia) in both films, offering a complex doubling of her star image in the American version and a perceptible shift in her representation onscreen.

In *Abre* Sofia is a feminine ideal, a girl-next-door type, but although Cruz sees her performance in *Vanilla Sky* as a ‘different version of the same girl’ (Palmer 2002: 66), even if the tabloid discourse of Cruz as ‘the other woman’ is ignored, the casting of the second female role in the American film repositions Cruz as the exotic woman. In

¹¹² That is not to say that the Spanish media have been uninterested in her romantic entanglements but they acknowledge that there is more to her than that.

Abre it is Najwa Nimri's *femme fatale*-like Nuria who is exoticized in her red Chinese dress and jet-black Louise Brooks-type hairstyle and by contrast Cruz's Sofia is presented as more of a 'normal' girl, but the casting of the blonde all-American girl Cameron Diaz as the third figure (Julie) in the American film's triangle cannot help but exoticize Cruz. Cruz is still used to represent an ideal of femininity in *Vanilla Sky*, but it is not the same ideal as that in *Abre*; she is idealised for her difference rather than her normalcy.



Figures 15-16: The two Sofias, in *Abre los ojos* and *Vanilla Sky*

Both films contain a scene where Sofia / Sofia and César / David draw one another's defects in the form of a caricature, and this scene probably best illustrates the differences between the two Sofias. Although the script is similar in both versions (there are added cultural references in the American one), there are visual signifiers that highlight the different ways in which Cruz is utilised by the respective films. Whereas on both occasions Sofia / Sofia lampoons what she sees to be the worst qualities of the men, the men instead draw her in a more realistic manner (this supposedly demonstrates the respective dawning realisations of their love for her). The difference is in what the two films take as a 'realistic' portrayal. César's drawing (fig.15) is a fairly accurate representation of how Sofia looks in the actual scene. It shows an idealised, demure femininity with Sofia's eyes lowered and her head slightly bowed, her hair swept back off of her face and a look of concentration, but this is taken from fact; Sofia is also drawing so she is looking down at her pad of paper and her hair is tied back off of her face. César's drawing shows her engaged in her current activity.

In contrast, David's drawing (fig.16) shows Sofia looking straight out of the picture, one eye hidden by a cascade of hair. Sofia's appearance differs between the two versions, for example in the original she is wearing a large comfortable sweater (which is seen in César's drawing) and in the remake she is wearing a fitted shirt (not

seen in David's drawing), but not enough to warrant such a diverse representation. In *Vanilla Sky*, Sofia's hair is loose but it is not across her face and it is something of a surprise that David can draw the lower half of her face since it is obscured during the scene by the pad of paper that she peeps over the top of. However it is not so much the realism of the depiction as the impression that the drawing leaves with the viewer; one dark eye staring intently out of a curtain of dark hair, Sofia is represented as something wild and exotic. Cruz herself may not change dramatically between the two films but the way in which the films work to construct her character and her star persona varies greatly.

White (2002), Smith (2004b), Perriam (2005), and Herbert (2006) look at the differences between the original and the remake in more detail, but that one scene is indicative not only of how *Vanilla Sky* utilises Penélope Cruz within its narrative, but also how the American films generally construct her as something 'other' and 'exotic' and in no way attempt to interact with her pre-existing star image and persona.¹¹³ One could be kind and say that the reason these films are not up to the standards of her Spanish work (and this is generally true of her performances as well as the films themselves) is in part due to the volume of work she undertook when starting out in Hollywood (e.g. four films in 2001 alone), but in comparison to Javier Bardem she has been poorly used by the American industry and she has made poor choices. For example, although both Cruz and Bardem are Hispanicized within the US context, Bardem has managed to work within the realm of auteur cinema and there is the sense that he is hired because of his acting abilities rather than to be positioned as a stereotypical Latin lover figure, whereas Cruz is time and again cast as an exotic and 'foreign' other and has worked with few recognisable US names (Crowe was probably the exception until Cruz worked with Woody Allen in 2008).¹¹⁴

This had a negative impact on her image at home as, unlike Bardem whose successes abroad have been a source of national pride, Cruz's forays into American cinema have been greeted less enthusiastically and have been detrimental to her image in Spain:

Aceptó el dinero hollywoodiense y se convirtió en diana predilecta de algunos. Pasó de Grace Kelly a Ava Gardner. De guapa y encantadora a atractiva y ambiciosa. (de la Torriente 2004: 38)

¹¹³ An exception is *Bandidas*, which was written for Cruz and Salma Hayek and accordingly their characters are tailored to their existing images.

¹¹⁴ Perriam (2005) looks at how Cruz is Hispanicized in her US films.

There seems to be an attitude that ambition is admirable in a man but unbecoming in a woman (as we shall also see in relation to Paz Vega) and there did not appear to be quite the sense of celebration in Spain the first time Cruz was nominated for an Oscar as there had been the first time Bardem was nominated, which is all the more surprising given that Cruz was nominated for a Spanish film and Bardem was not. Spanish interviewers are unafraid to tell Cruz to her face that some of her decisions have resulted in films that are beneath her, as García pointedly asked her at the time of her Oscar nomination for *Volver*, ‘¿Se pierde con facilidad la cabeza en Hollywood?’ (2007a: 48). De la Torriente observes that this was in sharp contrast to the acclaim that Cruz had faced after *Niña* and *Todo*, and points out that at the age of thirty, Cruz had forty films to her name, only a dozen of which were American productions: ‘tal vez haya llegado la hora de que España rescate a su novia’ (2004: 38).

Pedro Rescues Spain’s Sweetheart (With a Little Help From Italia):

Spain, or more accurately Pedro Almodóvar (who is (problematically) taken as *the* representative of Spain in cinematic circles), rescued their sweetheart with her casting in *Volver*, but Cruz had already started the recuperation of her image (at least in critical circles) with the Italian film *Non ti muovere* in 2004.¹¹⁵ The broken figure of Italia, the daughter of an Italian and an Albanian immigrant mother, took Cruz back to the scenes of explicit sexual content that she had avoided in the aftermath of her first film (de la Torriente 2004: 38); Italia embarks on an intensely passionate and self-destructive affair with a man (Timoteo, played by director Sergio Castellitto) who, on the occasion of their first encounter, rapes her. The film is considerably darker than anything else Cruz has done, and unlike other Cruz films that feature tragedy in some form (for example, *Jamón* or *Todo*), *Non ti muovere* lacks the humour that those films use to soften the blow and lighten the atmosphere; it is a deeply moving film, but one without a ray of light at the end of the tunnel.¹¹⁶ In terms of Cruz’s star image, the film took her back to the social milieu in which her onscreen appearances began (at the bottom of the social heap) and gave her the best reviews of her career to date (for

¹¹⁵ Almodovar’s problematic status as *the* representative of Spanish cinema is addressed in Smith (2008), an article that drew a heated response from Almodóvar (2008).

¹¹⁶ Although at the end of the film Timoteo is finally able to let go of Italia (fourteen years or so after her death resulting from a botched abortion) and commit himself to his wife and daughter.

example, Smith says that Cruz is the ‘true joy’ of the film and that her ‘unprecedented performance [...] is nothing short of a revelation’ (2005b: 54)).¹¹⁷ As stated above, those films where Cruz plays working class women often place an emphasis on sexuality and present her as a sexual object, but although *Non ti muovere* includes sexually explicit scenes and draws attention to Cruz’s body, it does not focus on her body in a sexual way. Instead Castellitto’s film places the emphasis on her fragility: the camera frequently focuses on the back of her exposed (and seemingly bruised) neck; she wears out-sized clothes that make her look smaller; she has an ungainly walk (caused by unstable high-heeled shoes); and again there is an emphasis on Cruz’s enormous dark eyes that here often shine with tears waiting to fall, and are heightened by smudged eye make-up giving them a bruised appearance.

The other aspect of the role that recalls Cruz’s beginnings is that, most obviously through her name, Italia is tied to her nation; her name is suggestive of a symbolic status, and a further illustration of the allegorical status of female stars within national contexts (Vincendeau 2000: 36). The challenge for Cruz was that she insisted (it was the condition for her accepting the role (Castellitto 2004: 97)) that the voice of the character was her own, i.e. that she would act in Italian (something that required months of intensive study) and she would also dub herself into Spanish when the film was released in Spain. She mastered the slight dialectical accent from the South of the country that pertains to someone of Italia’s background, something which can only really be appreciated by Italians (ibid), although Smith argues that Cruz is ‘astonishingly assured in Italian –more than she’s ever seemed in English’ (2005b: 54); Cruz / Italia is not marked as ‘foreign’ in terms of any trace of Spanishness (in contrast to the Italian actresses in *Jamón* and to Cruz in her US films).¹¹⁸ Although she was confident in Italian, two years later she proved that she is still most comfortable in her native language when she returned to Spanish cinema under the direction of the man who inspired her to become an actress.¹¹⁹

In the period covered by this thesis (1992-2007) Penélope Cruz appeared in three Almodóvar films (*Carne trémula* (1997), *Todo* (1999), *Volver* (2006)).¹²⁰ In 1992 Bigas Luna and Fernando Trueba publicly stated that this new actress was going to

¹¹⁷ She also won the David di Donatello award for Best Actress.

¹¹⁸ This possibly undermines Bigas Luna’s claims for Cruz’s innate Spanishness as it is absent here.

¹¹⁹ After seeing *¡Atame!* (1991), Cruz told her mother that she was going to be an actress and would someday work with Almodóvar.

¹²⁰ She has since appeared in a fourth, *Los abrazos rotos* (2009).

have a major career ahead of her (Angulo Barturen (2007) and Trueba (1992)), but Almodóvar (who had yet to meet her) also went on record to say that a major new talent in Spanish cinema had arrived: ‘Es la gran revelación femenina de este año [...] En tres o cuatro años podrá lucir en su hall tres o cuatro estatuillas de “Oscar”’ (quoted in Ponga 1993: 85). It would actually take her another fourteen years to get an Oscar nomination, but it was under the direction of this early advocate of her talent that she got there.¹²¹

As demonstrated by the roles he wrote for her in *Carne trémula* and *Volver*, Almodóvar prefers Cruz in the social milieu of her first role: ‘Sus mejores interpretaciones han sido las muy plebeyas y echadas *palante* de *Jamón jamón*, *La niña de tus ojos*, *Carne trémula*, *Blow* ([...]), [*Non ti muovere*], y *Volver*’ (Almodóvar 2006: 96).¹²² He omits *Todo* from the list because her role in that film was more delicate and related to another aspect of Cruz, her spirituality (ibid), which can be traced back to Luz in *Belle* (Evans 2004: 56). That said, although Sister Rosa comes from a more bourgeois background than Cruz’s other significant roles (apart from Luz), the first time we see her is when Manuela (Cecilia Roth) is trawling Barcelona’s red light district and her taxi passes Rosa handing out condoms to the assembled prostitutes; Rosa wears her class lightly and moves through the different social strata with ease and without judgement (the only place she seems uncomfortable is in her middle class family home). The other striking aspect of Cruz’s three Almodóvar characters is that they go against the grain of her image as the eternal ‘niña / hija de España’ and suggest a development and / or maturation of her star persona in so far as, while all three films put her in the daughter role in a mother-daughter relationship (with Pilar Bardem, Cecilia Roth (and Rosa María Sardá), and Carmen Maura respectively), in all three films she is also a mother. Cabrera Infante noted at the time of *Todo*’s release that ‘parecería que Penélope Cruz está en las películas de Almodóvar para dar la luz entre las sombras’ (1999), a play on words (‘dar la luz’ –to give birth, but taken literally ‘to give light’) that highlights the luminosity that is one of Cruz’s trademarks (Evans 2004: 59), the theme of motherhood or maternity that Almodóvar has woven into her image, and also the dark situations that Almodóvar

¹²¹ Cruz went on to win an Oscar in 2009 for *Vicky Cristina Barcelona* (Allen, 2008); she thanked Almodóvar, Bigas Luna, and Trueba in her acceptance speech.

¹²² Coincidentally Cruz says that the roles that have stayed with her are Raimunda, Italia, Macarena, and Silvia (Braun 2006: 12).

puts her into so that she can shine. All three of these aspects, as well as a heightened sense of Spanishness, were drawn together once more in *Volver*.¹²³

Fittingly for a film that allowed Cruz to draw a line under her girlish image and be considered as a woman, *Volver* had gestated so long that when Almodóvar originally conceived the idea (*Volver*'s narrative features as one of the plots of the Amanda Gris melodramatic novels in *La flor de mi secreto*) he thought that Cruz would play Raimunda's daughter, the role eventually taken by Yohana Cobo. The film is a 'return' on many different levels for both Almodóvar and Cruz. For Almodóvar it is a return to his roots, to La Mancha (where he was raised) and the customs of rural Spain:

De todos modos, soy manchego y es una de esas cosas que yo no me discuto a mí mismo. Pertenezco a aquella tierra. Además, en esta película se habla como sólo se habla allí, que es un modo de hablar muy distinto al del resto de Castilla. Es la película más puramente manchega que he hecho [...] Me he fijado en toda la cultura y las pequeñas cosas que existen en la sociedad manchega alrededor de la muerte [...] (Almodóvar in Costa 2006: 100)

He also returns to the world of women (having made two films, *Hable con ella* (2002) and *La mala educación* (2004), which focused on men) and, as stated in the Bardem chapter, Almodóvar's representations of gender go against the grain of what is expected from a country with Spain's history; thus Cruz takes her place in an impressive line up of strong female protagonists within Almodóvar's oeuvre. The film is also a return to his working with Carmen Maura, Penélope Cruz, Lola Dueñas, and Chus Lampreave (all of whom had worked with him before). For Cruz, aside from marking her return to Spanish cinema after a five-year absence, her performance in *Volver* stands as an encapsulation of her career to date.¹²⁴



¹²³ *Carne trémula* is not discussed here because of the brevity of Cruz's role (the film is discussed in the Bardem chapter), and although *Todo* launched Cruz internationally and is an important film in her career, the limits of space mean that not every film can be addressed fully: *Volver* is discussed in detail because it marks a culmination of the various strands of Cruz's star image to date.

¹²⁴ Cruz is adamant that *Volver* was not a return to *Spain* for her because she has remained a Spanish resident (for example: Braun (2006), Costa (2006), Garcia (2006a), Hattenstone (2006)).

Volver is a ‘star vehicle’ in the manner described by Dyer ([1979] 1998) and McDonald (2000), a film tailored to the star’s existing image to maximise audience expectation and consumption, effectively using the star as the premise for the film. While Almodóvar links Raimunda (Cruz) back to his own earlier creations (specifically Gloria (Carmen Maura) in *¿Qué he hecho yo para merecer esto?* (1984)) and to the women in his family (Costa 2006: 100), this character in a film described as ‘un bello canto a las raíces’ (Torreiro 2006: 63) can also be seen as a knowing homage to the origins of Cruz’s star image: Raimunda contains the same elements of sexuality, family relations, luminosity, and the struggle between tradition and modernity that were embodied by Cruz’s early roles. She could be the older sister of *Jamón*’s Silvia, or indeed the woman Silvia grew up to be (all naivety long since gone), complete with a daughter whose age corresponds to the baby that Silvia was carrying in Bigas Luna’s 1992 film.¹²⁵ She also evokes *Niña*’s Macarena through her heartfelt performance of the song ‘Volver’ but unlike the ‘princesa del cine español’, Raimunda shied away from and rejected the attention that her voice brought her as a child. She is clearly styled after several Italian actresses (another link to Cruz’s own image given her acclaim in *Non ti muovere*, although Almodóvar is referencing the high-glamour aspect of female Italian stars of the 1950s, such as Sophia Loren and Claudia Cardinale, through Raimunda’s hair, make-up, and the pencil skirts and fitted cardigans¹²⁶), something which undermines the supposed Spanishness of Cruz’s looks; the specificity of her appearance becomes broader, suggesting a representation of a Mediterranean or European femininity rather than a specifically Spanish one. But at the same time there are also certain visual iconographies (Dyer [1979] 1998: 62) that call to mind Silvia, in terms of dress and also an association with lower social classes, working women, and food.¹²⁷

Raimunda’s clothes, with their bright colours and fashionable styles, reveal her to no longer be part of the village community where she grew up, at the same time as her accent and mannerisms firmly tie her to her birthplace; her internal struggle between

¹²⁵ There are several visual references to *Jamón*, such as fig.18 and also a scene where Raimunda, half ready to go to work, sits on Paula’s bed to reassure her that everything will be alright: the latter is a mirror image of a scene in *Jamón* (see fig.1), but Cruz is now the mother rather than the daughter.

¹²⁶ The references to Italian cinema are detailed in Hattenstone (2006) and Ponga (2006).

¹²⁷ As with *Jamón*, in *Volver* our attention is drawn to food that is traditionally Spanish, with several characters bringing food back to Madrid from visits to their hometowns.

tradition and contemporaneity, between the past and a possible future, have placed her in limbo due to the secret she keeps hidden. This struggle between tradition and the contemporary is also suggestive of something similar taking place at a wider level in Spanish society: as stated above, Dyer offers an ideological reading of the star as embodying or representing hegemonic struggles within a given culture and that certainly seems to be present in the images of Penélope Cruz, and also Javier Bardem. As already stated, in 1992 Spain's grapple with its identity and the legacy of its past was played out on a grand scale as the country found itself on the world stage for the first time since it had gained democracy. Cruz and Bardem emerged at that precise moment and this battle over Spanish identity is ingrained in both their images; that certain elements are still present in Cruz's image fifteen years later suggests that Spain has yet to fully reconcile its past (tradition) with its present (contemporaneity).¹²⁸ In this context it is significant that *Volver* also emphasises Raimunda's *regional* identity because in Spain it is not simply *Spanish* identities that exist in the plural, but also *regional* identities that have their own fissures and fragilities (Berthier and Seguin 2007: xvii); these fissures occur twice over as the *manchega* Raimunda is transplanted to a different region (Madrid).

Raimunda is on the periphery both in terms of geography (her apartment in Madrid is in Vallecas, which on the DVD director's commentary Almodóvar describes as one of the poorest barrios in Madrid, and as being on the outskirts of the city) and family (she had no contact with her mother in the years preceding her 'death' and has been unable to confide in her family that she was abused as a child and that Paula is her sister as well as her daughter). Silvia also lived on the margins of society (Raimunda's family is admittedly more 'respectable') and like her we see Raimunda teetering in espadrille wedge shoes as she drags home heavy shopping bags; that they walk such distances even with heavy loads is a subtle illustration of their lack of money. Cruz has stated that the film is a tribute to working women, and to women who carry themselves with dignity when doing jobs that are looked down on (Ponga 2006: 90). Many interviews and profiles throughout Cruz's career have emphasised her own working-class roots by stressing that she has not forgotten where she came from, and this aspect of her image was highlighted at the time of *Volver*

¹²⁸ This 'conflict' is not exclusively Spanish; to some extent most national identities are in ongoing negotiations with the past.

through Cruz saying that many women in her family (particularly her mother) had inspired her performance (Ponga 2006: 90).¹²⁹

Both *Non ti muovere* and *Volver* return Cruz to the origins of her star image but in distinct ways and it is difficult to say whether the differences between *Non ti muovere* and her Spanish work as a whole (and *Volver* in particular) are due to national differences or are simply due to the nature of the story being told. But while Italia has elements in common with other Cruz roles (low social status, an abusive father, general hardship), she lacks both the quality that Bigas Luna identifies as originating in Cruz herself ('una luchadora nata' (2007: 48)) and also the familial structures and support networks of women that are a common feature in Cruz's Spanish films (although an emphasis on family is not unique to Spain, it is a theme that *Jamón, Belle, Entre, Niña* and *Todo* have in common) and that are exemplified by the women surrounding Raimunda in *Volver*. Like Italia, Raimunda had a sexually abusive father but she gives the impression that nothing can extinguish the spark inside her: she is one of Cruz's born fighters.

While *Volver* can be seen as a reflection of Spain in terms of the specificities of its focus on the women of La Mancha and the social underclass on the periphery of Madrid, the fact that it is 'an Almodóvar film' also needs to be considered. Almodóvar's focus on supposed 'minorities' (gays, transsexuals, strong women) means that 'his' Spain is not necessarily representative of Spain as a whole. However it is difficult to present *Volver* as being focussed on minorities, not least because women are not really a minority, and the rural background that initially appears to mark Raimunda's family as outsiders in the city is in fact shared by the majority of her neighbours; *Volver* is about community in an inclusive sense, whether familial, regional, or gender based. Nonetheless, this is an illustration of Nichols' point that the question of who has control over representation, and what they choose to represent, is precisely what ties 'issues of visibility and cinematic representation' to 'issues of social and political consequence' (2000: 45). Almodóvar's depictions of 'minorities' (or the underrepresented) within his version of Spain gives the power of representation to those who fall outside of Dyer's list of usual suspects ('the rich, the white, the male, the heterosexual' ([1993] 2002: 2)) but that does not make Almodóvar's Spain any less valid as a representation; all of the visions of Spain

¹²⁹ Other interviews that mention Cruz's working-class roots include Ponga (1993), Elola (1999), and de la Torre (2004).

discussed in this thesis are shaped by the people who created, wrote, and / or directed them, and given that Spanishness does not exist in the singular, one film is no more 'right' than another.

Although there is an outside perception that Almodóvar's films and characters are projections of Spanish difference, arguably they are actually a projection of difference *within* Spain (i.e. it is aimed inwards at Spanish audiences as much as it is aimed outwards); some of the people he depicts may be in the minority but Almodóvar makes (a heightened version of) their presence visible. In the case of *Volver* and Cruz's performance, although there are certain 'extreme' events within the film (such as Carmen Maura's plotline), the film also reflects a specific regional identity within Spain (a rare acknowledgement of the pluralities of national identity in Almodóvar's work (Allinson 2001: 44)) through its representation of rituals (in relation to death), beliefs, and behaviours (the accents, the manner of talking, and the kisses) specific to La Mancha. At the same time, it arguably also shows a weakening of regional communities (illustrating the fissures and fragilities Berthier and Seguin talk about (2007: xvii)) via the dispersal of people within the state (neither Raimunda or her neighbours are from Madrid), and the flow of younger generations from rural areas to the cities, although many of the characters return 'home' for visits like Raimunda and her sister Sole. This again positions Cruz and her star image within a conflict between tradition and the contemporary at the same time that it locates her within a specifically Spanish context.

This chapter has examined the ways in which 'the national' is manifested within Penélope Cruz's star image as a result of her onscreen interactions with the national. Her participation in *Jamón and Belle* meant that in 1992 she debuted on the national stage in two films that either consciously questioned and parodied Spanish identities or conflated contemporary Spain with Spain's past; Cruz's emergence at a time when Spanish identity was openly being discussed and Spain was actively (and publicly) trying to redefine itself has shaped the form and content of her stardom, the ways in which she interacts with the national, and the image of Spanishness that she represents as an end result. *Jamón and Belle* set the pattern for the combination of complex and subtle reflections and projections of the national (directed both inwards and outwards), that Cruz and her star image have negotiated over the course of her career to date.

The two films gave her star image a collection of national meanings and associations (e.g. the conflict between tradition and modernity in contemporary Spanish identities, an association with Spain's past, and the connotations of her physical appearance in terms of nationness) that follow her when she operates within Spanish cinema and mean that, like Javier Bardem, she stands for the nation in its broadest, most inclusive, sense even when performing specific regional identities (as in *Niña* and *Volver*). This illustrates and supports Morin's argument about the importance of early roles in inflecting what follows ([1960] 2005: 27) and also Hayward's description of stars as 'reflectors of the time and [...] signs to be reflected into society' (2006: 380); as with Bardem, the centrality of the national in Cruz's star image is indicative of the importance that issues of nationhood and / or nationness had in Spain in 1992, and also that the Spanish film industry at that point required its stars to engage with the national in an overt manner, but the negotiation of these issues is also something that she reflects and projects back into Spanish culture and society.

The way in which Cruz is involved in both reflections and projections of nationness is perhaps most clearly shown through the conflict between tradition and modernity (or the contemporary), which is a near constant theme across her Spanish work. Balfour and Quiroga assert that 'the contemporary Spanish nation has largely been reinvented in the new democracy, though it has its roots in older traditions, cultures and memories' (2007: 196) and Cruz's star image and films highlight that there is a negotiation between past and present in the presentation of Spanish identities (i.e. she does not simply mirror or reflect dominant conceptions and perceptions of nationness but can also challenge them by projecting alternative interpretations). This starts with Silvia's choice in *Jamón* but is perhaps more explicit in those films, such as *Belle* and *Niña*, that reimagine the past in light of contemporary perceptions and attitudes. Likewise, the positioning of Cruz as representing 'the new generation' in multiple eras has the effect of giving her a timeless quality in terms of her 'Spanishness', when in fact she and her accumulation of national meanings are being used to suggest (i.e. project) continuity in the manner of Hobsbawm's 'invented traditions' (1983), which elide the historical specificity of nationhood (as in *Belle* and *Niña*). Her positioning as a 'new generation' can also be seen as an attempt by the Spanish film industry to engage a younger Spanish audience (i.e. those of Cruz's generation or younger): for example, *Entre* projects Cruz as the

proxy of this younger audience in order to give them a way into the film and allow them to relate to Spain's past.

Unlike Bardem, Cruz's star image does not appear to have been inflected by the changing forms of Spanish cinema, perhaps partly because she did not make any Spanish films between 2001 and 2006 (in which period the industrial gained increasingly greater influence over the star images –as can be seen in the differences between Eduardo Noriega (who pre-dates that by a few years) and Paz Vega (who emerged in 2001)); her part in *Abre* (a film that epitomises the new forms of 'Spanish cinema') affirmed what are perhaps the more generic elements of her stardom (an idealised femininity, the girl next door) but did not disturb or undermine her more overtly national associations.¹³⁰ Cruz's later Spanish films continue to reiterate and reinforce the national meanings and associations that she and her star image have accrued (epitomised by *Volver*) and it is not by accident that this chapter has largely concentrated on films by Bigas Luna, Fernando Trueba, and Pedro Almodóvar; her work with these three filmmakers forms the foundation of her star image and they (a generation who pre-date the changes undergone by 'Spanish cinema' in the 1990s) have explicitly embedded Penélope Cruz within the cultural imaginary as specifically pertaining to Spain and as a star 'reflecting on the nation itself' (Higson 2000: 67) in a way that, as detailed above, includes inward projections.

At the same time as having these national specificities ingrained within her image, and being viewed as intrinsically Spanish within Spain, Penélope Cruz is also the most *international* Spanish star of her generation. The increasing numbers of Spanish stars forging careers abroad are indicative of the instabilities within the Spanish film industry in this era as well as being illustrative of the increased globalisation of contemporary cinema more generally (it has become easier for stars to cross national borders). As the analysis of *Vanilla Sky* and *Non ti muovere* shows, films made outside of Spain respond to Cruz in a variety of ways and do not necessarily engage with her star image in the same way as her Spanish films; her US films routinely present her as an 'exotic' other, while the Italian film co-opts her as Italian (so she is not marked as 'foreign'). Despite Cruz's Hollywood excursions putting a dent in her

¹³⁰ *Sin noticias de Dios* is possibly the only other one of Cruz's Spanish films (apart from *Abre*) that does not reiterate or reaffirm her national associations, and it is again directed by one of the influx of new directors (Díaz Yanes). The film instead points to the growing internationalisation of Spanish cinema (and Cruz's international fame – she operates in both the Spanish and English-speaking spaces within the film) by ignoring national borders and utilising an international cast with different languages and other national spaces.

image at home, no other Spanish actress from the last fifteen years has been quite so possessively claimed by the Spanish public as she has. Perhaps this is partly because of the timing of her arrival in the public consciousness, but arguably it is also because her stardom started so young that Spanish audiences feel that they have seen her grow up onscreen: Bigas Luna says that ‘para mí ha pasado de ser aquella Niña Jamón a la Gran Maja Española, hermosísima, España hecha carne’ (Trashorras 1999: 132). That is what certain stars are in a national stardom context –their country made flesh– and it is something that Penélope Cruz perceptibly embodies.

We now move to consider these issues in relation to those stars who emerged after 1992, starting with Eduardo Noriega.

Eduardo Noriega:

Eduardo Noriega emerged in the mid-1990s when the stardom of Javier Bardem and Penélope Cruz was still in ascension, and Paz Vega had yet to appear. He therefore overlaps two distinct ‘groups’ of contemporary Spanish stars from the period covered by this thesis: that of Bardem, Cruz and Jordi Mollà, and that of Vega and the *El otro lado de la cama* group, and arguably that is manifested in how his stardom and his interactions with the national share different traits with both groups. The Spanish press has constructed a star narrative for Noriega that aligns him with an illustrious predecessor, by seizing on the fact that he is from Santander and travelled to Madrid to study acting in 1992 (the key is that he is not *madrileño*); several profiles draw parallels between the *malagueño* Antonio Banderas going to Madrid and becoming a ‘chico Almodóvar’ in the 1980s and the *santanderino* Noriega going to Madrid and becoming a ‘chico Amenábar’ in the 1990s.¹³¹ The perception that Eduardo Noriega is an outsider in Madrid (the hub of the Spanish film industry) has persisted and his regional identity is highlighted through his being designated either *santanderino* or *cántabro* in most interviews and profiles, and although that specific identity is not something that he often manifests onscreen, the regional is a recurring element within his films.

Noriega consistently seeks out stories (*Fotogramas* describes him as ‘buscando historias cercanas’ (2000)) that pertain to aspects of Spanish history or culture (such as *El espinazo del diablo* (del Toro, 2001) or *El Lobo* (Courtois, 2004)) or that are regionally-based in terms of setting or narrative (such as *Nadie conoce a nadie* (Gil, 1999), *El invierno de las Anjanas* (Telechea, 2000), or *Las manos vacías* (Recha, 2003), the last of which includes dialogue in Catalan); the inclusion and repetition of the regional (and different regions) within his filmography is indicative of the importance of regional and autonomous identities within contemporary conceptions of the national in Spain. Perriam also observes that he has appeared in a number of films (*El invierno de las Anjanas*, *Visionarios* (Gutiérrez Aragón, 2001), and *Guerreros* (Calparsoro, 2002)) ‘that posit Noriega as the more-or-less heroic embodiment of national, historical meanings’ (2003: 179). Although Casanova posits that Noriega ‘no lucha por dejar de ser el joven guapo oficial del cine español, lo utiliza’ (1999:

¹³¹ ‘Su caso recuerda al de Antonio Banderas, pero en norteño’ (Díaz-Cano 1999:16).

85), the emphasis on his looks and his positioning as a sex symbol often detracts and / or distracts from the sense of his performing regional and / or national identities.

Like Banderas, Noriega was initially pigeonholed as ‘el guapo’ or ‘el galán’; his good looks are an undeniable part of his star quality and he is one of the few male Spanish stars who has persistently had his stardom viewed through the lens of ‘sex appeal’ (Perriam 2003: 7). However, he has worked against the perception of simply being a ‘galán’, which although it has had positive connotations of gallant gentlemen, elegance and good looks (Perriam 2003: 1-2) also seems to have developed a negative association of ‘looks over talent’, and as his career has progressed and he has taken on more mature roles, the view that he is just a pretty face has subsided (Perriam 2003: 179).¹³² Numerous profiles and interviews (such as those with Ruiz Mantilla (1999), Ponga (2001a), and de la Torre (2007)) comment on his intelligence and discernment in choosing his roles, and he has proven himself in a range of different roles and genres: as Ponga says, ‘su trayectoria no es la del niño bonito’ (2004b: 78). His propensity for working with first-time directors and art-house auteurs (such as Marc Recha (*Las manos vacías*) and Jean-Pierre Limosin (*Novo*)) has lent his image (and perceptions of his career) a seriousness that was perhaps lacking at the start, as well as setting him on a markedly different path to Bardem, Cruz, or Vega.¹³³

This chapter considers the ways in which the national is manifested in Noriega’s star image, and how he interacts with ‘the national’ onscreen. We begin by examining two films that do not interact with the national in an obvious way. These two films launched his career: more than ten years on, certain elements in his star image can still be traced back to them, and they have also been contributing factors in shaping his later interactions with the national.

Alienation and Fragmented Identities in a New Spain:

¹³² In 1999 the Spanish film industry selected Noriega (with Leonor Watling) to represent Spain in the EU MEDIA Shooting Stars programme (part of an effort to promote European cinema across the continent). Each national industry involved nominates a star (two stars in the beginning) who has at least one ‘successful’ film and who the industry believes has a promising career ahead of them. The selected stars are presented to the world’s press at the Berlin Film Festival each year. Since 1998, the programme has included Spanish stars such as Juan Diego Botto (1998), Fele Martínez (2000), and Elena Anaya (2004).

¹³³ For example, García describes Noriega as being interested in ‘proyectos experimentales y raros’ (2004b: 52); he has been involved in films that have had their funding fall through due to their experimental nature or that have not been released theatrically (including *Che Guevara* (Evans, 2005) and *Souli* (Abele, 2006)).

The creative partnership that Noriega formed with writer-directors Alejandro Amenábar and Mateo Gil began well before the success of *Tesis* (Amenábar, 1996). The association persists, with Noriega still referred to as a ‘chico Amenábar’ (Gosálvez 2004: 26), and Amenábar (and Noriega’s admiration of him) is still a stock section of Noriega’s interviews and profiles (for example, de la Torre (2007: 85)); the importance of this director-star relationship to the initial development of Noriega’s image is unique among the stars examined in this thesis.¹³⁴ They met while Noriega was studying at the Real Escuela Superior de Arte Dramático (Resad) (Ruiz Mantilla 1999: 62): he starred in several of Amenábar and Gil’s short films (*Soñé que te mataba* (Gil, 1994), *Luna* (Amenábar, 1994 and 1995), and *Allanamiento de morada* (Gil, 1998)), some of which are obvious precursors of *Tesis* and *Abre los ojos* (Amenábar, 1997).¹³⁵ Noriega’s roles in both feature films were written especially for him (as was the role of Simón in Gil’s *Nadie conoce a nadie*) and the actor remains grateful that his friends gave him opportunities when the producers would have preferred a ‘name’ in the roles: ‘se lo debo todo a *Tesis* y a Amenábar’ (Gomez Cascales 2002: 24).

Making his debut in Amenábar’s work positioned Eduardo Noriega within Spanish cinema’s 1990s generational shift in a different way to either Javier Bardem or Penélope Cruz; although those two were undeniably at the vanguard of a new generation of Spanish stars in the early 1990s, they started their ascendancy in collaboration with established directors whereas Noriega did so alongside a new directorial talent (and has continued to work with first-time directors throughout his career) and a different set of industrial imperatives. Amenábar is usually the example given (alongside Álex de la Iglesia) when commentators discuss the visual and narrative changes that this new ‘generation’ of filmmakers heralded for Spanish cinema. For example, Smith argues that Amenábar is the filmmaker who is ‘most representative of the trends in contemporary Spanish cinema’ (2004b: 94) and Heredero describes *Abre* as:

El ejemplo más representativo [...] del camino por el que circulan varios de los nuevos cineastas aparecidos en esta década, empeñados en volver su mirada hacia la gran tradición clásica de Hollywood para extraer de su arsenal genérico fórmulas operativas que les permitan conectar, eficazmente, con un

¹³⁴ Bardem made two Bigas Luna films at the start of his career but is not referred to as a ‘chico Bigas Luna’, and Cruz’s image was established prior to her strong ties with Almodóvar.

¹³⁵ For example, *Luna*’s car journey (with Noriega as the passenger) foreshadows the one César takes with Nuria in *Abre*.

público de amplio espectro y, al mismo tiempo, hacer un cine de discurso personal (1999: 41-42).

The new ‘generation’ of filmmakers were seen as breaking new ground in Spanish cinema (although, as outlined in the previous chapters, there are also continuities with earlier generations) not only through their visual aesthetic and use of genre but also through the aim of *entertaining* audiences: Amenábar wrote *Tesis* not because of any political, social, or generational preoccupations, but purely to write something that would entertain himself (Vera 2002: 19).

Tesis (in which two students, Angela (Ana Torrent) and Chema (Fele Martínez), discover snuff films being produced by a professor (Castro –Javier Elorriaga) and a fellow student (Bosco –Noriega)) contains an explicit critique of Spanish cinema via Castro’s lecture, wherein he decries Spanish cinema’s inability to see itself as an industry or communicate with its audience, and he admonishes the future generation of filmmakers to give the public what they want (which was Amenábar’s aim with the film itself).¹³⁶ But aside from this obvious engagement with an aspect of Spanish culture, both *Tesis* and *Abre* ostensibly avoid overt Spanish references and settings. Smith draws attention to this, saying that ‘Amenábar’s thrillers lack the *costumbrismo* and *casticismo* (attention to Spanish customs and “purity” of tradition) of an earlier era’ (2004b: 97), and Amenábar has suggested that the films could be set in different cities (and countries) without changing the narrative (Payán 2001: 45). For example, *Tesis* is set in the Universidad de Complutense in Madrid (where Amenábar studied), but Heredero argues that it could be set anywhere (1999: 37) because no reference is made to geographical location. That said, the film’s critique of Spanish cinema only makes sense if it is set in Spain. Although Lev attempts to connect the horror elements within *Tesis* to the ghosts of Spain’s past (2000: 35) and to position the film’s use of CCTV imagery as a reference to Francoist surveillance (2000: 37), the film refuses to be forced into being a ‘national’ film: while ‘*Tesis* in its form is a kind of statement about Spanish film [...] it has less to say about Spanish society or the “national” than critics might wish’ (Russell 2006: 82). Likewise *Abre* makes no explicit reference to Madrid (although the city onscreen is recognisably Madrid in certain sequences –returned to below) and despite the film’s obvious debt to Calderón

¹³⁶ The righteousness of the argument is somewhat muddled because it is delivered by the person behind the snuff films. There is a contradiction in the film being critical of violence as entertainment but containing that same violence itself.

de la Barca, its cinematic precedents have their roots in Hitchcock rather than Spanish cinema.¹³⁷ Amenábar's desire to make films that are not 'limited' to the Spanish market means that, in contrast to Bardem and Cruz, Noriega started his career in two films that were highly successful in Spain but that consciously avoided links to the national and traditions of Spanish cinema and took their cinematic styles and popular genre leanings from Hollywood and / or international cinema.

Despite this apparent avoidance of national specifics, the locations used feed into the theme of urban alienation, which is a common motif in contemporary Spanish cinema and a key aspect of both *Tesis* and *Abre* (Smith 2004b: 95-6); Smith notes that for the alienation effect that the opening sequence of *Abre* strives for to be fully experienced, one would have to recognise the location (the Gran Vía in Madrid) (2004b: 96).¹³⁸ *Abre* offers a treatise on the fragility of contemporary masculine identity through the destruction of the face of a young playboy (César –Noriega), who finds that his world crumbles when the world can no longer see him as he wishes to be seen. Smith argues that the two themes of dislocation (or alienation) and defacement are 'mutually reinforcing' (2004b: 97):

it also marks a defamiliarization of the male body, newly eroticized in the figure of the youthful Eduardo Noriega and as prone as the female to fragility, degradation and loss. The traditional Spanish male is thus doubly lost: alienated from a city that is emptied of its dense sociality; distanced from a self that can no longer rely on a female to prop up its fragile sense of self. (ibid)

Smith does not explain what he means by the 'traditional Spanish male', but the word 'traditional' is usually taken to suggest stability, continuity, and arguably a sense of solidity, although Hobsbawm's thesis that tradition is invented (1983: 1) suggests that such cohesion may be less solid than it appears. If we look at the example of Javier Bardem (whose image taps into traditional and stereotypical concepts of male Spanishness) we can see that the 'traditional' is also an unstable concept in this period of Spanish cinema; both Bardem and Noriega represent (in different ways) the struggle that Spanish males have in defining themselves in contemporary Spain. As Perriam points out, the dislocation (and the corresponding fragility of identity) in César is established in the opening sequence of *Abre* wherein a dream is replaced by a 'reality' that the voiceover then reveals to be a flashback (2004: 211); every time

¹³⁷ Robertson (2000) details the parallels with *La vida es sueño*.

¹³⁸ In *Tesis* it is the anonymity of the urban space that suggests alienation and rootlessness (reinforced through Bosco and Chema both seemingly living apart from their families).

César 'awakens he opens his eyes to some damaging new perspective on the loss not only of his film star looks but of the coherence of the narrative supposed to sustain his sense of self' (Perriam 2004: 212).

Abre ties a sense of self to appearances and both Noriega-Amenábar films feature a sense of dislocation that goes beyond the urban alienation (the sense of being a stranger in one's own land –pointed to by the lack of overt national specifics) to encompass the disjunction between appearances and reality (which also feeds back into the alienation between self and space / place). In both films (and later ones) Eduardo Noriega marries his seemingly innocent appearance to much darker undercurrents (a discrepancy between appearances and reality in terms of character); he has successfully mined the 'tension between extreme good looks and extreme bad conduct' (Perriam 2003: 178) and has positioned himself as a kind of 'galán oscuro' within the firmament of Spanish stardom. The role of the charismatic but psychopathic Bosco in *Tesis* was the beginning of the seductive menace within his star image, and in the 'making of' documentary (on the DVD) Amenábar notes that Bosco inspires both fear and desire in Angela; the film illustrates this by drawing a direct contrast between his physical appearance (Chema sarcastically refers to Bosco's 'carita de ángel' and 'ojos de miel') and his actual behaviour (Chema also describes him as 'un pijo de mierda' and as a 'psicópata'), and showing how the former often obscures the latter (Angela is taken in by him despite her misgivings). The emphasis on appearance rather than psychological depth in *Tesis* (Noriega had difficulty with his performance insofar as, while Chema and Angela exist in reality, Bosco is more of a prototype who only exists onscreen (Noriega, in Vera (2002: 113)) is enacted through Noriega having comparably less dialogue than Torrent or Martínez; he is watched, often at one remove (i.e. through the video camera), rather than interacted with, and his performance is grounded in his body language (oozing self confidence and privilege via the fact that he always appears to be relaxed and in control) and the way he *looks*.



Figure 1: Angela caressing the video image of Bosco (Noriega) in *Tesis*

The *mirada de Noriega* is a key element within his star image and is also indicative of an emphasis on the psychological (as opposed to the physical) in his films (starting with *Abre*), another way in which he differs from Bardem's 'traditional' Spanish male. Although his performances in *Tesis* and *Abre* are rooted in body language (something that Noriega emphasises in his discussions of the performances (Vera 2002: 113, 115)), the focus remains on his face and eyes (something that the masks and make-up in *Abre* reinforce). In *Abre*, faces are integral to the presentation of the fragility of identities and reality, whether it is César's scars disappearing and reappearing in the blink of an eye, or Sofía (Penélope Cruz) suddenly becoming Núria (Najwa Nimri) (and vice versa). The centrality of Noriega's seductive good looks to this enterprise is that there is 'a certain morbid pleasure to be taken in them precisely because the film is premised on their violent destruction' (Perriam 2004: 209-10); *El País* heralded the film's arrival with an article entitled 'Al guapo Noriega le rompen la cara' (M.A.V. 1997). The film desecrates the face of its leading man with glee, revelling in a particularly Spanish love of the grotesque and horrific that can be seen in the traditions of the *esperpento*. The specifically Spanish tone of *Abre* is all the more apparent when compared to the US remake, *Vanilla Sky*, which puts considerably less emphasis on the grotesquery and shies away from damaging the face of its star (Tom Cruise) to the same extent that Noriega suffers.¹³⁹ Rabalska states that Spanish cinema could be viewed as 'a twisted freak show disturbingly coupled to discourses of violence, horror and tragedy' (2000: 26) and those three elements coalesce in *Abre*, with Noriega (and his face) at the epicentre. However, the destruction of Noriega / César's face is connected to more than the

¹³⁹ Kinder (1993) examines the cultural specificity of violence in Spanish cinema.

traditions of the grotesque and the film's 'critique of cinema's marketing of good looks and society's consumption of this dream' (Perriam 2003: 175); his face is a metonym for his psychological state.

Noriega does not represent the form of *macho* masculinity that is regarded as stereotypically Spanish (and that we have seen deconstructed in Javier Bardem's star image) and this is another aspect of his image that stems from the Amenábar films; in contrast to the physicality associated with Bardem from the outset of his career, it is neuroticism and psychological instability that have become ingrained in Noriega's image and performances. Arguably some of Noriega's 'outsider' status also stems from these initial roles avoiding the overtly national and placing him within a cinematic landscape informed by genres uncommon to Spanish cinema. That Noriega avoids the stereotypically Spanish is not mere happenstance given that he emerged in a Spanish film industry that was becoming increasingly globalised (which Amenábar's films epitomise). At the same time, the alienation effect that occurs in the Madrid made foreign in *Abre* is not only indicative of Amenábar aiming for an international marketplace, but also representative of changes that Spain itself has undergone and the resulting uncertainty as to what Spanishness now 'is'; *Abre*'s treatment of the national space (that it becomes unknowable or unrecognisable) is possibly a projection of fears about what continuing changes could mean for Spain (will it still recognisably be Spain?). As Spain seeks to redefine itself, César represents someone who is correspondingly unsure of his place in the world. This alienation is integral to César's psychological instability and we shall see in Noriega's later films that there is a similar sense of instability and fragile identity when characters stray from their (national and geographical) roots.¹⁴⁰



Figures 2-3: images of physical disfigurement and psychological alienation in *Abre los ojos*

¹⁴⁰ The most extreme example of this is the French film, *Novo*, where Noriega's (Spanish) character suffers amnesia and is unable to create new memories; he is rootless and without a sense of self.

As has been observed in the two previous chapters, Morin argues that the film(s) that mark the metamorphosis of an actor's becoming a star form the foundation for their star image ([1960] 2005: 29), and in *Tesis* and *Abre* there are several elements that continuously resurface in Eduardo Noriega's later films and star image: psychological instabilities; a link between geographical dislocation and a fragile sense of identity; an emphasis on his beautiful face; dark intentions; the thriller genre; significant 'looks'; and collaborations with new directors. The two Amenábar films, then, do not actively seek to project or reflect Spanishness (the intention was for the films to fit within the style and commercial appeal of Hollywood cinema) but they are indicative of the circulation of outside influences within contemporary Spanish culture more generally (taking on cinematic genres, forms, and styles that originate outside of Spain but which are readable to Spanish audiences) and also project an uncertainty surrounding a changing Spanish society (as shown through the use of an unknowable national space and the fragile sense of masculine identity). This has a knock-on effect on the image of the star who emerged in combination with these two films; unlike Bardem and Cruz, Noriega did not come to public attention in films that openly negotiated questions of contemporary Spanish identities and accordingly the foundation of his star image is not as imbued with 'Spanishness'. However, the foundations of Noriega's star image (laid by Amenábar's films) are still an indication of stars functioning as reflectors and the reflected (Hayward 2006: 380): for example, the lack of overt Spanishness in his star image is symptomatic of the films that formed his image (and indicative of the commercial style and international leanings of the cinema being produced in Spain in this era – industrial imperatives are key to the formation of his star image), but the interrelation between lack of national geography and psychological instability within his star image projects fears surrounding ongoing change in Spain and the possible dilution of the national culture(s).

It is noticeable that after emerging in films that took their influences from cinema produced outside of Spain, in the years following *Abre* Eduardo Noriega made a number of films that openly seek to make connections to issues of Spanishness and in

terms of narratives, history, and setting.¹⁴¹ We start by looking at those films set in the present.

Spanish Stories:

Since *Tesis* and *Abre*, to avoid being typecast as the ‘chico pijo con un reverso algo sombrío’ (Bonet Mojica 1999: 67), Noriega has continuously switched genres and character types to stretch his abilities and to prove to the film industry that he can function in a variety of registers. He started with the comedy *Cha-cha-chá* (del Real, 1998), in a role that played to (then) popular perceptions of his image (he plays a male model), and then the controversial thriller *La fuente amarilla* (Santesmases, 1999) (henceforth referred to as *Fuente*) in which he took the opportunity ‘encarnar a un personaje introvertido, un tímido que se ha apartado voluntariamente del mundo’ (Corisco 1999: 84). The film was controversial because of its depiction of the Chinese community in Madrid.¹⁴² *Fuente* follows the half-Spanish half-Chinese Lola (Silvia Abascal) as she attempts to discover the truth behind her parents’ murder by returning to the community that her mother had earlier abandoned. The problems with the depictions of the Chinese characters are detailed elsewhere (see: Santaolalla (2005: 148-149); Fouz-Hernández and Martínez-Expósito (2007: 174-177)), but for the purposes of this thesis what is of interest is how Noriega is positioned within these representations. The role is ‘diametrically opposed to the kind of seductive masculinity with which [Noriega] had become associated’ (Fouz-Hernández and Martínez-Expósito 2007: 176) and the character also embodies Spanishness in a way that Noriega’s previous characters had not.

In his book on whiteness, Dyer argues that ‘other people are raced, we are just people’ (1997: 1); within Spanish cinema, Spanishness is the norm and therefore becomes invisible. Because *Fuente* unfolds in the midst of the Chinese community in Madrid, Spanishness is thrown into relief and highlighted against the backdrop of a foreign ‘other’; Sergio (Noriega) is the only Spanish male in *Fuente* (apart from Lola’s boyfriend, who kills himself in the opening scene) so it is Sergio who is ‘foreign’ (and also ineffective) within this community (even Lola is half-Chinese) and

¹⁴¹ His interviews in this period do not indicate why he pursued national narratives in the aftermath of the Amenábar films, other than a general desire to try different things, which is also why he likes working with first-time directors (see Bonet Mojica (1999: 67) and Casanova (1999: 85)).

¹⁴² Relations between the production and the local community deteriorated as filming progressed. See Fouz-Hernández and Martínez-Expósito for details (2007: 174-5).

by default he is an embodiment of Spanishness. Spain has undergone massive changes in terms of immigration since the mid-1980s, when despite being culturally highly diverse it had ‘almost no foreigners’ (Hooper 2006: 290): its immigrant population quadrupled in size between 2000 and 2006 (286). Correspondingly, ‘over the last few years, Spanish culture –particularly popular culture –has seen an escalation in the propagation of “ethnically loaded” images, rhythms, and stories’ (Santaolalla 2002: 56) and *Fuente* could be seen as an early example of this.

Fuente contradicts what Hayward says about national culture representing a homogenised and fixed common culture irrespective of what is actually there (2000: 9) because it shows several different ‘communities’ (with different cultural practices) within the same national space, illustrating Higson’s view that the ‘imagined community’ argument does not encompass the difference and diversity that is invariably present within a given nation-state (2000: 66). Santaolalla observes that *Fuente* ‘resists political correctness and the opportunity to offer a positive version of immigrant life in Spain’ (2002: 63), and the film could also be seen as an expression of fears of the dilution of Spanish identity and culture in an era when immigration was becoming more prominent (although it was made before the period when immigration sharply rose, making it more of a projection than reflection of possible fears). While in *Abre* Madrid became alien, in *Fuente* we see a Madrid made foreign in a more insidious sense with few outward signs of Spanishness on display (virtually the entire film takes place within the *barrio chino*). As in *Abre*, the alienation caused by a familiar space made unfamiliar has a knock-on effect on the psychological stability of the (Spanish) male protagonist; with glasses, a stutter, and an inability to look a woman in the eye, Noriega’s character Sergio is miles apart from Bosco or César, but he is nonetheless similarly psychologically fragile. His psychological fragility is signalled to us via his loner status and the way in which he has shut himself away from the world (in the aftermath of a false accusation of rape), or more specifically away from his own Spanish community, as well as his obsessive interest in aspects of the Chinese community (he has a scrapbook of pressing cuttings of Chinese death notices). Noriega does a good job of blending into the background as the young man who hates to be noticed, and Spanish masculinity within the film is represented as weak, self-effacing, fractured, and unstable (via Sergio’s insecurities and odd behaviour, and also through the suicide of Lola’s boyfriend), and by the end of the film all of the Spanish males are dead. The ‘displacement’ of male characters that we

saw in Bardem's films therefore finds an equivalent in Noriega's early films: Bosco is killed by Angela in self-defence; César ends the film plunging to his 'death' in order to leave the virtual world and re-enter the real one; and Sergio dies assisting Lola (who survives). However the type of masculinity represented by Noriega is more obviously fragile than that performed by Bardem; the three films discussed so far involve psychologically unstable masculinities. This theme continues into Noriega's next film, *Nadie conoce a nadie* (henceforth referred to as *Nadie*).

Nadie was Mateo Gil's (Amenábar's writing partner) directorial debut. The film takes place one year into the future with suitably apocalyptic events unfolding in Seville as the forces of good and (self-proclaimed) evil do battle during the Holy Week of 2000.¹⁴³ Noriega plays an aspiring writer (Simón) making a living creating crosswords for a local newspaper, who finds himself at the centre of a violent conspiracy that he begins to suspect is being instigated by his flatmate, Sapo (Jordi Mollà). The film could be seen as a Hollywood-style star vehicle because Noriega's role is tailored to his star image and the film exploits the associations of his star image (McDonald 2000: 1); the publicity materials (interviews and articles connected to the film within the national press) repeatedly highlight the Amenábar connection between Gil and Noriega and the sort of expectations that such a collaboration should generate. The role was written for Noriega because Gil says that 'Eduardo Noriega tiene una de esas escasas miradas capaces de sostener un personaje que se pasa toda la película viendo, preguntando y recibiendo información; una mirada que transmite el estado de ánimo sin necesidad de palabras' (Gil 1999: 206). As stated above in relation to *Tesis* and *Abre*, Noriega's 'mirada' is a recurrent element in discussions of his image and his performances. The majority of his films feature close-ups of his face (or just his eyes) whilst he 'looks' intensely to communicate thoughts or emotions without verbal expression: it has become one of his 'continuities of iconography' (Dyer [1979] 1998: 62). It is therefore appropriate that when Simón wants to disguise himself in *Nadie* he picks up a pair of sunglasses (despite it being night).

¹⁴³ A television news report within the film states that this is the last Holy Week of the millennium.



Figures 4-5: *la mirada de Noriega* and one of the shots of Seville's cityscape in *Nadie conoce a nadie*

Unlike the early Amenábar films on which he collaborated, Gil roots his own film in a very specific location saying that 'la película contiene una obsesión personal: que las cosas transcurran en sitios concretos' (Gil 1999: 206). Although stylistically a continuation of the work he had done with Amenábar, and continuing the theme of contrasting reality with the virtual (and the dislocation between appearances and reality), Gil's film puts the national in a more prominent position onscreen. This is evident through the multiple helicopter shots of the city as well as the titles that appear at key junctures giving the date, time and location of what is transpiring: Seville is an integral part of the film. Perriam notes that there is 'a range of nation- and region-specific reference' (2003: 176) within the film:

It is of obvious significance that the crucial moments of violence in Sapo's game of terror should be directed against time-honoured traditions and beliefs (the processions of Seville's Holy Week and their inescapable connections with the right wing, its past, and its money). Spanish audiences will also have been quick to see a critique of the more recent idolatries that were the Expo 92 celebrations and constructions at Seville (with their connections to the new 'socialists'; the 'new Spain'; and, eventually, corruption and the end of an era). (2003: 176)

Nadie contrasts tradition and modernity through the physical landmarks of the city (the *Giralda* being contrasted visually with the *Puente del Alamillo*) and the way that events unfold through a combination of the high-tech (the computer and the listening devices) and the old-fashioned (the foot chase through the backstreets and the elements of dressing-up and disguise that various characters engage in). The emphasis on Seville's architecture and the contrasts made between the traditional and the contemporary highlight the negotiation that Spain has to make between its past and future; *Nadie* records and reflects the social history (Hayward [1993] 2005: ix) of Seville through an emphasis on the city's architectural development. The prominence

of Seville's famous *Semana Santa* celebrations also offers an illustration of an inward-looking national cinema as outlined by Higson (2000: 67). That the film is so rooted in a specific geographic location (and one that is associated with traditional Spanish identities) is paralleled in the comparative (i.e. in comparison to Bosco, Cesar and Sergio) psychological stability of Simón.

Instead of the fragmented and unstable identities that we saw in Noriega's earlier films, in *Nadie* the fragility of identity is manifested via Simón's self-doubt and an absence of belief, illustrated near the start of the film when Simón is considering giving up his attempts to write a novel and his friend Padre Andrés warns him of the dangers of not believing in anything. García describes the film as one that 'habla de la crisis de valores, de la búsqueda de algo en lo que creer' (1999b: 8) and Gil supports this view by stating that it contains 'una pequeña reflexión sobre la generación a la que yo pertenezco, sobre la falta de creencias ideológicas, políticas o religiosas' (Gil 1999: 206). But beliefs can be renewed and doubts overcome, and it is significant that although Simón has a level of neuroticism he is still rational (seemingly irrational fears are grounded in reality) and he has an ordered mind (demonstrated via his creation of crosswords); although he gets lost (both philosophically and literally in the labyrinthine backstreets of Seville) he is able to put the situation into perspective and see a pattern in events (he has his moment of clarity in the tower overlooking the panorama of the city and then methodically plots the events onto a map). That he is able to understand events only when he has removed himself from the central location (the streets of Seville) underlines that understanding one's own culture is all the more difficult because one is part of it, and it is significant that, unlike Sapo, Simón is not native to Seville, so he has the distance to be objective about the city's culture and traditions. Simón has a sense of perspective and solidity of purpose that other early Noriega characters lack, and unlike those characters he is not displaced: at the end of the film he is still in Seville and he finishes his novel.

There is a shift in how Spanish masculinities are treated between *Fuente* and *Nadie*; *Fuente* follows the pattern of *Tesis* and *Abre* (although the Chinese backdrop heightens the *Spanishness* of the character in *Fuente* in comparison to the Amenábar films) with Noriega's character representing a fragile and unstable masculinity that does not survive the film, but *Nadie* is different. As stated, Noriega's character is not displaced: he remains alive and in the region that he chooses. In those of Noriega's films set in the present, there is a relationship between the specificity of geographical

location and the representation of masculinity and / or identity, if one considers that the identities and masculinities on display are more fragile in those films that avoid Spanish specificities (i.e. *Tesis*, *Abre*, and *Fuente* could arguably be included given its setting within the Chinese community), whereas in those films that locate the characters within a specifically Spanish framework and a concrete sense of geographical location (*Nadie* and also *El invierno de las anjanas* (examined in the next section), which is one of Noriega's historical films but fits this pattern) there is correspondingly a more stable sense of identity and masculinity. The correlation between national geography and mental stability is also seen in *Guerreros*, in which Noriega plays a Lieutenant (Alonso) in the Spanish Army on a humanitarian mission in Kosovo.

Like the Noriega-Amenábar collaborations, *Guerreros* is indicative of shifts within contemporary Spanish cinema in terms of the use of genres and styles that are not seen as traditionally Spanish; as a war film it 'abre brecha en unos terrenos vírgenes para el cine español' (Casanova 2002: 89). As director Daniel Calparsoro observes (on the DVD commentary), the war genre is indelibly connected to US cinema and the difficulty for the Spanish production was 'conseguir una plástica que fuera completamente bélica, que fuera a la vez nacional, que fuera, digamos, nuestra', but at the same time avoid the representations of the Spanish Army that were seen in films made during the Franco era: '*Guerreros* hace un retrato del Ejército español que no es ni elegiaco, ni paródico, ni esperpéntico, ni propagandístico' (Calparsoro in E. Fernández Santos 2002a). In general, Hollywood war films made in the late-90s / early-00s were a glorification of American heroism, whereas European films instead harked back to the confusion inherent to many of the Vietnam War films of the 1970s / 1980s (Davies 2009: 140). As *Guerreros* unfolds in a conflict in which Spain has no vested interest, the film need not justify or idealise the situation its characters find themselves in (Davies 2009: 143) and instead focuses on confusion. Calparsoro emphasises the psychological effects of the traumas undergone by the Spanish soldiers when their humanitarian mission goes horrifically wrong and they find themselves stranded in the Kosovan countryside evading local forces; the director stressed the importance of the psychological in a number of interviews (for example, Casanova (2002: 90) and E. Fernández Santos (2002a)) and Ponga stated that the film promised 'combinar la espectacularidad de la acción con la introspección psicológica'

(2001b: 185). The film therefore continues the trend of highlighting the psychological within Noriega's roles and performances.



Figures 6-7: the troubled look and psychological unravelling of Alonso after the minefield

Traditionally the Spanish military has stood for the unity of Spain but in Calparsoro's film the 'Spanish army represents Spanish disunity and fragmentation' (Davies 2009: 143) and therefore the unit embodies the fissures and fragilities inherent to contemporary 'Spanish' identities (Berthier and Seguin 2007: xvii). This is apparent before the unit get into difficulties upon leaving their base; the stress they are collectively put under exacerbates their disharmony but the fractures are already in place. Although he is not the main character (that is Eloy Azorín as Vidal), the film marks the first time that Noriega is positioned as the elder statesman of a cast (which underlines the youth of the unit as a whole and also indicates a maturation of Noriega's star image) and the emphasis on the psychological, in conjunction with their location on foreign soil, ties neatly into his existing star image. Alonso's position as the Spanish unit's leading officer marks him out as Spain's representative abroad but he fails to achieve the respect that such a role should be accorded: for example, in the scene at the roadblock when the international peacekeeping forces run into the local militia, Alonso's French counterpart is publicly dismissive and disparaging towards Alonso and his concerns.¹⁴⁴ Alonso's nationality seems to be part of the cause of the disrespect (we have already seen another French soldier casting aspersions as to the bravery of the Spanish troops). Nonetheless, despite these outside perceptions, Alonso initially appears to be a competent leader and his ability with languages (he is the only member of the unit, apart from the translator, who can speak a language other than Spanish) suggests that he would retain this competence on foreign soil. However as Davies points out, the babel of languages in the film alienates the Spanish soldiers (2009: 153) and collectively they 'do not understand the

¹⁴⁴ In fact Alonso reads the situation correctly and the French provocation of the militia is the point at which the Spanish mission starts to go drastically wrong.

landscape in which they are moving [...] it is alien as well as foreign [...] [and] at times the landscape overwhelms them' (2009: 152).

If one takes the military base as effectively being Spanish soil, the further the Spanish soldiers travel from 'home' (they refer to it as such several times), the more Alonso unravels; the moment at which they are at their furthest from 'Spain' (i.e. when they have left the road and crossed a minefield, meaning that they cannot go back and must go on into the depths of the countryside) is when Alonso goes into shock and is no longer able to command his unit. This sequence again highlights one of Noriega's continuities of iconography; we are given insight into Alonso's troubled soul via a sustained close-up of his uncomprehending gaze (fig.s6-7). He does not regain his composure until the aftermath of being taken prisoner, when he is suddenly allowed to carry out their original mission (restoring electrical power to a village). In the aftermath of the minefield incident he says that 'hay que seguir reglamento, si no, estamos perdidos', and with a semblance of order restored he regains his composure and his status as leader (reassuring Ballesteros (Jordi Vilches), who had previously been his most vociferous critic, and later persuading Vidal to put down his weapon). Alonso does not represent the stereotypical macho that one might expect to find in the military, but rather the fragile and sensitive masculinity that we have already seen in Noriega's earlier roles. It is Alonso's sensitivity towards his men that ultimately allows them to complete their mission: he puts his arm around the young Ballesteros to reassure him; and it is his gentleness, as well as an instruction to look him in the eye (earlier highlighted as the way to tell who you are speaking to), that finally gets through to a (by now) deeply disturbed Vidal. This suggests that although these new fractured male identities are problematic, they are a means through which to connect with the (even) younger generation, and returning to the traditional image of the Spanish male would not necessarily offer a solution.

The films discussed in this section show a continuation of elements that Amenábar's films had placed at the fore of Noriega's star image, as well as several new developments or changes in terms of masculinity and nation. In terms of similarities, *Fuente* and *Nadie* are a continuation of the thriller as a key genre in Noriega's career, and both position him as a potential love interest for the main female character (as *Tesis* and *Abre* also did), and *Nadie* and *Guerreros* are also a continuation of Noriega's engagement with the 'new' forms and styles of Spanish cinema. As stated above, *Fuente* also features the displacement of Noriega's

character. However, *Nadie* and *Guerreros* differ from his other early films in that they give a concrete sense of location and era (both films give specific dates) and the respective regions are integral to the stories that transpire; the two films underline the importance of geographical location to the psychological stability (or otherwise) of Noriega's characters. Importantly, although Alonso is initially displaced in *Guerreros*, it is a temporary displacement (they will return to their base, which they refer to as home) and, like Simón in *Nadie*, although neuroticism is present, he retains his rationality and regains his composure when order is restored (Simón has crosswords, Alonso has orders and procedures); in neither case are their fears irrational, and once those fears have been overcome their identities stabilise. *Guerreros* and *Fuente*, however, perhaps also suggest an underlying worry about Spanish identity surviving displacement or replacement (with incoming 'foreign' influences), or what will happen if Spain strays too far from its roots (a concern that is arguably a continuation of what was projected in Noriega's Amenábar roles).

With the exception of *Nadie*, the films in this section were not overly successful at the box office (although *Guerreros* did considerably better than *Fuente*, it still did less than a fifth of the business of *Nadie*). Noriega has been quite disparaging about 'blockbusters' (in his eyes that word appears not to include his work with Amenábar and Gil) and has made it clear in interviews that he is not interested in making 'el cine comercial' (Alonso 2002: 23) if there is nothing else to the project. He believes that 'el cine tiene que servir para algo, como reflexión sobre el comportamiento del ser humano...y si no, no merece la pena, de verdad, coges un micrófono por la radio y largas tu cuento, que es mucho más barato' (Asua 2002: 26). He stands as a Spanish example of the 'co-existence of mainstream and auteur cinema in a single star's image' in smaller film industries (Vincendeau 2000: 2) without this causing fractures in that image; the same themes occur across Noriega's work irrespective of the commercial status of individual films.¹⁴⁵ Arguably his interest in national narratives, and the emphasis placed on the psychological within his star image and performances, means that Eduardo Noriega's image specifically reflects and projects issues surrounding masculine identities in a contemporary Spanish society that some fear is moving too far from its cultural roots (hence the instability in those films that avoid the national), while simultaneously highlighting the international leanings of certain

¹⁴⁵ Balbona observes that professionally there are two Eduardo Noriegas, 'uno que aprovecha las oportunidades de la industria y otro que mira siempre al cine independiente' (2008).

quarters of the Spanish film industry. At the same time, *Nadie* has shown (as will *El espinazo del diablo* and *El Lobo*) that when Noriega combines his interest in national narratives with audience expectations (based on the industrial imperatives that shaped his star image –i.e. an association with specific genres), the audience figures go up: Noriega is a clear example of the industrial contexts of a star's production being integral to the star image and the consumption of that image (Willis 2004: 3).

The next section examines films that deal specifically with Spain's past, and finds that the combination of concrete time and place that up until now within Noriega's filmography has had a stabilising effect on the identities of his characters, is no longer necessarily as effective; these films all take place in eras of Spanish trauma when Spanish identities were under pressure and in flux.

Representing Spain's Past: Part One

A number of Eduardo Noriega's films are set in different periods of Spain's past and all in eras when Spanish identities and perceptions of nationhood were in a dramatic state of flux: *Alatriste* (1622-1643); *El invierno de las anjanas* (1898); *Visionarios* (1931-1936); *El espinazo del diablo* (during the Civil War (1936-1939)); and *El Lobo* (1973-1975). Many of his films tell the stories of those who, up until now, have not managed to leave a trace within (accepted) national narratives, or perhaps they are better viewed as forgotten stories; in a variation on Bardem's performances of 'heroic losers', in these films Noriega usually performs characters whose contributions are not necessarily unimportant but nonetheless are often overlooked. For example, director Pedro Telechea says of the epoch in which *El invierno de las anjanas* is set, that 'es una época sobre la que hay muchísimos silencios deliberados; no se ha levantado la voz para señalar crueldades como la muerte de toda una generación de hombres que combatieron en una guerra' (Martialay 2000: 177) and Manuel Gutiérrez Aragón (director of *Visionarios*) professes himself to be surprised at 'el desconocimiento de una realidad que tuvo un eco importantísimo en la época en la sociedad española y en la prensa nacional y europea' (García 2001). There is also the issue of repressed and unacknowledged stories from the Civil War and the Franco dictatorship, and Agustín Díaz Yanes (director of *Alatriste*) suggests that 'en España parece que tenemos un mal rollo con nuestra historia' (García 2006b: 38).

In terms of Noriega's characters, *Alatriste* is perhaps distinct from the other historical films insofar as the Conde de Guadalmedina, a relatively minor role within the film's epic panorama of 17th-century Spain, is part of the ruling elite and therefore is very secure in his sense of who he is: 'No soy como todos ... Soy un grande de España' he says to Alatriste (Viggo Mortenson) when the soldier has the temerity to suggest that on the battlefield all men are equal. There are precedents within Noriega's filmography for him to be positioned as part of the elite (namely the pijo playboys in *Tesis* and *Abre*), but while the Conde is shown to be physically weaker than the other soldiers (for example, in the opening 1622 sequence he is the only person who shivers as the infantry unit makes its way through deep water), which is in keeping with the lack of macho bluster within the actor's image, he lacks the fragility and psychological depth that underpin many of Noriega's performances. The Conde is arguably distanced from being an ideal embodiment of Spanishness precisely because of his position of power (and his 'betrayal' of Alatriste despite their earlier friendship), as the film suggests that it is the lower classes (the salt of the earth types) who actually made Spain great, whose honesty and loyalty is admirable, and whose blood made the Empire possible. The film therefore again positions Noriega at a point of fracture in Spanish identities as class clearly divides the characters, and despite the machinations of the aristocratic / political classes (of whom the Conde is a representative), who collectively betray those who became cannon fodder in the name of Spain, they nonetheless fail to secure the unity of the Spanish Empire. *Alatriste* takes place during the Spanish Golden Age, 'la única vez en la que España fue la gran potencia mundial' (García 2006b: 40), but the film also shows it to be an era of corruption and intrigue, and the beginning of losses in the colonies; problems in Flanders are a recurring element in the twenty years covered by the narrative, and the film ends in imminent defeat at the Battle of Rocroi in 1643.



Figures 8-9: Aristocracy (*Alatriste*) and the Cantabrian working man (*El invierno de las anjanas*)

The fortunes of the Spanish Empire reach their nadir in *El invierno de las Anjanas* (henceforth referred to as *Invierno*), made six years earlier. It is ostensibly a love story in the traditional period romance mould of love across the class divide, as social propriety threatens to separate the bourgeois Adelaida (Elena Anaya) and the working man (and anarchist) Eusebio (Noriega), but it is set against a backdrop of social and political upheaval in Spain in 1898, the year that Spain lost its remaining colonies.¹⁴⁶ In the aftermath of what became known as the Disaster of 1898, ‘Spain’s political system, its national character, and Spanish nationhood itself now began to be widely questioned’ (Balfour 1997: 50) as the ‘once-great imperial power was transformed overnight into a second-ranking nation state’ (Harrison 2000: 1). The film does not concentrate on the task of self-definition that Spain faced but rather attempts to draw parallels between class inequalities in terms of the (mainly working-class) soldiers who were sent to their deaths by their social betters and the romance that evolves across the social divide; the young lovers apparently represent a revolutionary element imbued with individual freedom who fight in the face of social pressure and the group mentality embodied by Adelaida’s family (I.O. 2000).

The film also connects to the regional in some very specific ways and taps into aspects of Noriega’s existing star image. The film’s title refers to a story from ‘la tradición oral cantábrica’ (I.O. 2000) wherein ‘dice la leyenda que cuando la desesperación ciega hay que ir al bosque y recitar la oración de las Anjanas, unas hadas que nos llevarán por el buen camino’ (Martialay 2000: 177). A film that ‘bebe de la mitología cántabra’ (ibid) obviously complements the image of a star from that same region and reinforces his own origins and regional cultural heritage; although the film did not gain much publicity, what there was stressed Noriega’s ties to the region (for example, the discussion of his childhood in Arconada (1999: 7)) and much was made of the fact that various Cantabrian institutions contributed to the funding of the film (Hoyos (1999: 40) and I.O. (2000)). Despite this emphasis in the publicity materials, in the actual narrative the Cantabrian influences are relatively minor aside from Cantabria being the geographical backdrop for the narrative (the story of the Anjanas only appears near the end of the film). The film swoons over Noriega’s good looks and is probably the closest he has got to straightforwardly playing a galán of the

¹⁴⁶ Eusebio leaves to fight in the Cuban War. When Adelaida reads of his execution for treason she refuses to believe that he is dead, and her family have her declared mentally unstable and committed to an asylum. Eusebio survives and takes on another man’s identity, which enables him to return to Spain and eventually be reunited with Adelaida.

old school; although Eusebio is displaced in a sense (first by being sent to Cuba and then taking on the identity of another man in order to return to Spain), he does nonetheless return to Adelaida and Cantabria, and there is no suggestion of the dark psychic disturbances of other Noriega characters.

Although the political aspects of the story serve as a backdrop to, and are subsumed by, the romance, the setting of the film in this specific year also serves to position the young couple as representing a possible future for Spain; there is the sense that things are about to change and that those in power are not as secure as they might wish. They are also positioned as being ‘the next generation’ via the casting of previous generations of actors such as Juan Diego as the community elders. That Eusebio must be declared dead and take on another identity in order to return to Spain also sets up a parallel between Noriega’s character and Spain needing to redefine itself in the aftermath of its loss (or death) of Empire; one can perhaps draw a line within the film between the construction of personal identity and the historical nature of nationhood, which is ‘always [...] constructed under particular conditions’ (Higson [1989] 2002: 139). What both *Alatriste* and *Invierno* have in common is that they unfold in eras when Spain’s identity and perceptions of nationhood were in dramatic flux, and specifically in periods of national crisis, but the interests of genre (adventure and romance respectively) outweigh those elements of the narrative that could be said to reflect and / or project the national. It is also notable that, like *Nadie*, these films are rooted in a concrete sense of time and space (17th-century Madrid and Cantabria in 1898 respectively) and we again see that this is mirrored in the psychological solidity of the characters. However, in the films set in Spain’s recent past in the 20th-century, the characters grow darker and more fragmented once again as they unfold in eras that Spain has yet to fully recover from.

Representing Spain’s Past: Part Two

The Spanish Civil War took place seventy years ago but, ‘even after the death of Franco, the problem of confronting the memory of the Civil War remained immensely difficult because the hatreds of the war had continued to fester for thirty-seven years after its formal conclusion’ (Preston 2006: 11); in the dictatorship years, the Republican dead could not be publicly mourned or commemorated, and ‘the silent knowledge of unquiet graves necessarily produced a devastating schism between public and private memory in Spain’ (Graham 2005: 137). Even when Franco died

and Spain went through the Transition period on its way to democracy, these memories could not be publicly acknowledged because it was felt that they would reopen old wounds and threaten the stability of a nation finding its feet: an unofficial ‘pacto de olvido’ came into effect. The implications of this collective amnesia for national identities are clear, as Smith defines a nation as ‘sharing common myths and historical memories’ (1991: 14): ‘confronting history is crucial because it is a means of leaving behind old narratives that reinforce a sense of separateness or a sense of undifferentiated unity’ (Balfour and Quiroga 2007: 202). During the 1980s historians started collating empirical data detailing the repression on a province-by-province basis, and by the 1990s ‘what began as historians’ empirical analysis ended up being a major political and cultural issue openly discussed in Spanish society’ (Balfour and Quiroga 2007: 86).

Although in the 1990s ‘various groups began to emerge from civil society demanding official recognition of those assassinated, tortured, and imprisoned by the Franco dictatorship’ (Balfour and Quiroga, *ibid*), this remains a controversial process. This is evident in its taking until 2007 for the proposed *Ley de Memoria Histórica* (which will enable families to request that specific mass graves are disinterred and their relatives officially identified) to be approved by the Congress of Deputies, and in the Socialist Government acting without the support of the Partido Popular (see Cué 2007), who variously declared that the law would ““dividir a los españoles” [...] “dinamitar la transición” y resucitar las “dos Españas”” (Díez 2007). Although Díaz Yanes argues that ‘en realidad se han hecho muy pocas películas que traten específicamente de la Guerra Civil’ (Rojo 2008: 5), Spanish cinema has produced a number of films surrounding the events of the Civil War (for example, *Libertarias* (Aranda, 1996), *Soldados de Salamina* (Trueba, 2002)), the aftermath (*Silencio Roto* (Armendáriz, 2000), *Las trece rosas* (Martínez-Lázaro, 2007), *Los girasoles ciegos* (Cuerda, 2008)), and the last years of the dictatorship (*El Lobo* (Courtois, 2004), *Salvador* (Hueriga, 2006)), and they have become more numerous in recent years (suggesting the increasing topicality of certain periods of Spanish history).¹⁴⁷ Noriega’s filmography includes two films that unfold within these historical parameters: *El espinazo del diablo* (set during the Civil War but not ostensibly about the Civil War) and *El Lobo* (which is set during the last years of the dictatorship and

¹⁴⁷ The films have also been successful at the Spanish box office –see the Appendix.

is specifically about the issue of Basque terrorism and the response of the Spanish State in this era).¹⁴⁸

While *Invierno* and *Visionarios* (see footnote below) arguably only utilise Noriega's good looks, *El espinazo del diablo* (henceforth referred to as *Espinazo*) knowingly uses his past associations and gives him a character with more psychological depth than the two afore-mentioned films. *Espinazo* returns Noriega to his screen origins of seductive menace within the horror-thriller genre, and sees him 'hardened into a convincingly repellent macho' (Smith 2001: 39).¹⁴⁹ Set during the tail end of the Spanish Civil War, *Espinazo* takes place in a Republican orphanage run by two 'rojos', Carmen (Marisa Paredes) and Dr. Casares (Federico Luppi), alongside a malevolent caretaker (Jacinto -Noriega). Although del Toro views the Civil War as merely being a backdrop for what goes on inside the orphanage¹⁵⁰, he also sees the characters as fitting within that outside battle: 'You have Fascism represented by Eduardo Noriega's character Jacinto, and you have the people, represented by the children, and you have the old Republicans represented by Marisa Paredes and Federico Luppi' (Wood 2006: 111). However, reading the characters as representing political or ideological factions in this way is misleading in terms of what actually transpired in the Civil War. For example, Hardcastle takes issue with the verisimilitude of the ending of the film that sees the boys walk out of the orphanage into the sunlight: 'there is no suggestion of the historical reality that these "children of reds being raised by reds" are walking into a world now controlled by fascists' (2005: 125).¹⁵¹

Hardcastle argues that the distortions of history within the film occur 'precisely where they reflect important changes in a popular perception in which certain past impediments to democratic stability have been discreetly forgotten' (2005: 127) and that one of the key junctures in the film where this happens is where 'instead of a divided, angry populace, the boys are united against a single oppressor, a dictator, rather than an ideology' (ibid). This latter observation ties in with Hobsbawm's view that tradition is invented, sometimes with the aim of 'establishing or symbolizing

¹⁴⁸ A third film, *Visionarios*, starts in 1931 and ends in 1936 a few months after the Civil War begins. Because of issues of space, and *Espinazo* being the more important film in relation to Noriega's image, *Visionarios* is not examined here.

¹⁴⁹ His seductive menace was also seen the year before in *Plata quemada* (Piñeyro, 2000).

¹⁵⁰ Stated in the 'making of' documentary on the DVD. See also Wood (2006: 110-111).

¹⁵¹ Del Toro 'rewrites' history in a similar manner in *El laberinto del fauno* (2006), which also ends with the fascist forces being 'defeated'.

social cohesion' (1983: 9) or as an attempt to establish a sense of continuity (1983: 1); the film 'rewrites' history in order to reflect an era when Republican memories are being recuperated within the public domain, and it therefore makes the opponents of fascism our points of identification. *Espinazo* also draws attention to the problems inherent to collective amnesia and the 'silent knowledge of unquiet graves'; Santi (i.e. the past) haunts the inhabitants of the orphanage until what happened to him is publicly acknowledged (and also avenged), and only then can the rest of the children move on.¹⁵² At the same time, *Espinazo* could also be seen to fit within democratic Spain's unspoken pact to forget; by effectively placing the 'blame' onto one individual (Jacinto) who dies in the course of the narrative, the film draws a line under the events of the past so as to move on with the present.

According to Hardcastle, the fact that none of the boys supports Jacinto in his endeavours is a 'fantasy of unified resistance against a despotic fascist tyrant that wholly misrepresents the deep, emotional and political division across Spain before, during and after the war' (2005: 125) but, aside from there being nothing within the film to suggest that Jacinto is a believer in fascist ideology (it is incidental that his taking advantage of the current situation to settle old scores is open to a political interpretation), the casting of Eduardo Noriega also goes against a black and white reading of the film. His casting makes it difficult to see Jacinto in such a stereotypical light, as his performance and the associations of his star image (specifically the fragility and instability), alongside the undercurrents of sadness and rejection within the role (for example, the scene where he finds old photographs of himself (one as a baby being held by his mother and the other taken later when he was a child in the orphanage) and also in Carmen's observation that he was always the saddest of the orphans), add layers of complexity to a character who could otherwise have been a simple stereotype (and fitted within Hardcastle's description); Noriega's casting does not stop Jacinto being the 'bad guy' (indeed the dark edge within his image (the *galán oscuro*) is one of his unique elements as a Spanish star) but the associations he brings with performances of psychological depth suggests a desire to make the 'bad guy' as rounded a character as those with whom we are supposed to identify. It is reductive to read the character simply as a 'fascist tyrant', or a stereotypical brute, despite the left-

¹⁵² This also highlights a problem that some people have with the *Ley de Memoria Histórica*: they think that it will not be enough for events to be acknowledged, and that people will be looking to assign blame to specific individuals as well, which could become divisive and reopen old wounds.

leaning interpretation of a divisive period of Spain's history that the film otherwise offers. Nonetheless, Hardcastle's insistence on reading Jacinto as a *fascist* (rather than as representing *fascism* on a purely allegorical level, which is how del Toro positions the character in his own description) fits with Vincendeau's argument that while female stars relate to the national in an allegorical way, male stars 'elicit an identification with public figures and actual historical events' (2000: 36).



Figures 10-11: violent caresses

Espinazo emphasises the generic elements of Noriega's stardom rather than any national associations and the role seems tailored for Noriega in relation to audience expectations based on his previous successes, such as *Tesis* and *Abre* (which both had horror elements within a thriller framework), although it was actually written with Javier Bardem in mind. Del Toro says in the 'making of' documentary on the DVD that 'originalmente el personaje estaba concebido como un bruto más grande, como un tipo más bestial' and that Noriega had added a higher level of intelligence and 'una patología mucha más oscura'. He also states that the beauty of the character is that on the outside he is 'perfect', but on the inside he is morally ruined, which reinforces and exploits the 'association of beauty and malevolence encapsulated within Noriega's star persona' (Davies 2006: 139). *Espinazo* therefore picks up on several strands of Noriega's star image that originate in the Amenábar films (for example, a disjunction between appearances and reality (here a 'hard man', and a lot of attention is paid to Noriega's physique, who is actually somewhat damaged and fragile)) but transfers them into Spain's past (and a setting that is much more overtly 'national' than the Amenábar films) without the contemporaneity of Noriega's origins overtly inflecting the vision of the past onscreen. The emphasis on the generic aspects of stardom within his image and Noriega's lack of national associations give him a malleability that allows him to represent Spanish identities in a state of flux, without inflecting our

view of the past in the way Penélope Cruz often does with through the overtly national associations (and the conflict between tradition and modernity) ingrained in her star image.

Hardcastle also hones in on Noriega's star image when she says that 'subtly evident in [...] Noriega's very physical and riveting performance is a fear of fascism's power to seduce its chosen audience' (2005: 128). The film manages to harness Noriega's seductive menace in an effective manner, and aside from the entwining of seduction and undercurrents of violence in Jacinto's relationship with Carmen, there are two instances where he threatens people in a vaguely seductive way: when he cuts Carlos's (Fernando Tielve) face after finding the boys next to the water tank, and when he kills Conchita (Irene Visedo). In both instances Noriega / Jacinto's tone of voice indicates the violence beneath the surface but his actions start off by suggesting otherwise: he almost caresses Carlos's head before pulling him up by the hair; and when Conchita refuses to apologise and get in the car, he holds her head as if in a caress as he stabs her, pulling her towards him in an embrace so that her head rests on his shoulder. The knowing use (and exploitation in the press (see Lázaro-Reboll (2007: 41)) of Noriega's star image in conjunction with the use of genre expectations (horror / ghost story with aspects of a thriller) was arguably responsible for the film's box office success in comparison to Noriega's other forays as a leading man into Spain's past.¹⁵³ This is reinforced by the success of *El Lobo* (henceforth referred to as *Lobo*), another film that combines Spain's past with the thriller genre and the fractured identities within Noriega's star image.

Lobo is the culmination of the forgotten stories within Noriega's work.¹⁵⁴ It tells the true story of the only man to successfully infiltrate ETA (between 1973-1975); his work led to the biggest-ever operational success against ETA by the Spanish secret services. Balfour and Quiroga argue that 'the plurality of identity and diversity of culture in contemporary Spain need to be located in history, not embedded in imagined narratives of the past. Least of all can they rest on amnesia' (2007: 202-203), and *Lobo* is one of a series of recent Spanish films based on real people and actual events under the dictatorship.¹⁵⁵ The documentaries on the Spanish DVD, and the newspaper coverage at the time of the film's release (for example, Duva (2004)),

¹⁵³ *Alatriste* was a massive box office hit in Spain but Noriega is not the leading man in that film.

¹⁵⁴ Noriega received his second Goya nomination for this film.

¹⁵⁵ Another example is *Salvador*.

emphasise that this was the first time that the story of Mikel Lejarza (Txema (Noriega) in the film) had been properly told, although the producers were also at pains to make clear that the film was ‘objetiva y equilibrada’ and that ‘no es la visión de Lobo’ (García 2004a). The thirty year gap between the events and their representation onscreen highlights how ‘certain conceptions, values and visions are prioritised in the cultural processes of representation’ (Hallam and Street 2000: 7); this film recovers a forgotten version of the national narrative, but it was not made until there was a critical mass with the will to remember what happened under the Franco dictatorship (the focus on ETA complicates the matter because they are still active and still fighting the Spanish State, although it is important to note that the Spanish State in the era onscreen was a dictatorship and ETA perhaps had wider support as they were perceived as taking on a tyrant –that is not the case today).

Set between 1973 and 1975 in the last years of the dictatorship (‘se habla de una de las etapas más importantes en la reciente historia de España’ (Noriega, in Casanova 2004: 39)), *Lobo* is unusual in taking neither an *etarra* nor a victim of ETA as its focus, but rather someone who is caught in the middle and who sympathises with some of ETA’s aims but not their methods. Although Noriega suggests that the Franco years setting perhaps makes it easier to deal with because there is a distance (people can tell themselves that Spain was different back then)¹⁵⁶, the choice of protagonist draws attention to the issue of what it meant to be Basque in this era in Spain and arguably also why regional nationalisms remain so contentious. As previously stated, in the case of Spain it is not a matter of centre and periphery but also regional and autonomous ‘nationalities’ that each have their own fissures and fragilities (Berthier and Seguin 2007: xvii); the film shows not only a Spain on the brink of an uncertain future, but also Basque nationalist identities becoming increasingly fragmented and internally divided, as illustrated by the different positions taken by the ETA leadership (as embodied by Jorge Sanz and Patrick Bruel).

Within this context Noriega and his star image are again positioned within a fragmented identity that operates on several levels: on a national level, Txema is in the precarious position of being a Basque working for the Spanish State; on a personal level, he spends most of the film pretending to be something he is not; and on a narrative level, given that Txema is coerced into infiltrating ETA, and he initially

¹⁵⁶ Stated by Noriega at the London Spanish Film Festival, 24th September 2005.

agrees with some of their politics, there is a possibility that he could ‘go native’ and turn his back on his secret service masters (especially since they are not always supportive), adding another layer of uncertainty to his identity. Balfour and Quiroga write that:

The reinvention of different national identities in Spain since the return of democracy illustrates their malleable nature. The widespread acceptance of triple identities, which encompass identification with the region, Spain, and Europe, shows that plurality is a reality. Yet that flexibility is limited. Neither Spanish nor regional nationalisms have been able, or willing, to disassociate themselves completely from their ethnic components. (2007: 203)

Lobo arguably shows that this was even stronger during the dictatorship, and Txema’s fragmented identity puts him in an untenable position in terms of Basque identities because in that era there was no place for ambiguities or subtleties. This is clearly shown in the scene where he asks ‘¿Y qué de los vascos que dicen ser españoles y quieren seguir formando parte del Estado español?’ and is told ‘Ésos...que se vayan’, and so he ends the film in exile.

Just as Txema’s fragmented identity recalls Noriega’s earlier roles, so too does the psychological fragility that he displays as the pressure of pretending to be something he is not becomes too much. This fragility is arguably again tied to geographical location because although the Basque Country is obviously of key ideological importance to the character (and it is also where his family is), once he infiltrates ETA he spends most of the narrative over the border in France (with brief forays to Madrid); his separation from his regional space (a dislocation) is arguably a contributory factor to his fragile mental state.¹⁵⁷ Once again this psychological fragility is visualised via the iconographic use of Noriega’s ‘look’. For example, in the scene in the aftermath of the revelation that there is a mole inside ETA, when Txema finds himself on the run from both sides of the law: looking intensely into a mirror as he starts to bleach his hair (‘the shining long jet-black hair which is his distinctive sign’ (Perriam 2004: 219)), the camera moves in closer and closer on Noriega / Txema’s reflection as his eyes betray his fear and the smears on the surface of the mirror bisect his face. This visually represents his divided self and also foreshadows the later transformation of his face when he goes into exile. *Lobo*

¹⁵⁷ Some Basque nationalists lay claim to parts of France, so it could be argued that he is still in the ‘Basque Country’ when in France, but he is outside of *his* specific regional space (the Basque Country within Spain’s borders –as indicated via his dual allegiances).

encapsulates many of the thematic strands (stemming from the Amenábar films) in Noriega's star image.



Figures 12-13: a moment of introspection represented via Noriega's *mirada* in *El Lobo*

ETA is not a popular subject matter for Spanish filmmakers, in part because it is such an incendiary issue in Spain (and one that continues to unfold) but also because the received logic had been that Spanish audiences did not want an issue that still features in their news broadcasts to appear on their cinema screens, although *Lobo*'s success at the Spanish box office flies in the face of such wisdom.¹⁵⁸ Noriega is not politically outspoken like Bardem¹⁵⁹, but he took issue with the way that the theme is avoided for fear of retaliation:

Quizá [*El Lobo*] no es militante, pero en un tema así es imposible no mojarse. Si en literatura o en cine no podemos tratar el tema de ETA, tendríamos que pensar que estamos dando la razón al terrorismo y que actuaríamos con coacciones. Es verdad que es un tema que no ha sido tratado suficientemente [...] (García 2004b: 52)¹⁶⁰

He hoped that the film would open debate and bring about some consideration of why the problem still existed even with Spain having changed (Casanova 2004: 39), and arguably the film is a balanced view of what happened while Lejarza was undercover (neither ETA or the secret services come out of it very well). It is also extremely well made with high production values, and the director hoped that *Lobo* could function as both a possible conduit for debate and as an entertaining action film (García 2004a).

It was precisely this combination of elements that the reviewer in *El País* objected to, as although he argued that the number of films dealing with ETA were not in proportion to the importance the group had assumed in the social and political lives of

¹⁵⁸ It was released in November 2004 but managed to end the year in third place overall among Spanish films released in 2004. See the Appendix for details.

¹⁵⁹ Although like Bardem (and Cruz) he protested against the Iraq War at the Goyas in 2003.

¹⁶⁰ The *Lobo* producers were sent death threats by ETA when the project was announced and no sequences were filmed in the Basque Country because the risk was not seen as worth taking (stated by Noriega at the London Spanish Film Festival, 24th September 2005).

Spain in the last forty years, he also felt that certain stylistic elements of the genre that the film had been moulded for (the thriller) were inappropriate given the seriousness of the topic (Ocaña 2004: 52).¹⁶¹ However, it is through these genre-based concerns that the film best taps into audience expectations in regards to its leading man (most of Noriega's greatest successes at the Spanish box office have been within the thriller genre¹⁶²) and the film also draws on other aspects of Noriega's image as well; *Lobo* manages to combine the high-end commercial values of his most effective films with the specificities of an issue that is particular to Spain, and Noriega is again performing an identity that is inherently fragile and unstable.

The films in this section (and the previous) all unfold in periods of Spanish trauma, when Spanish identities and sense of nationhood were in dramatic flux, and the positioning of Eduardo Noriega within these specifically Spanish narratives is an example of how Spanish stars come to be embedded 'in the imaginary and real social construct that is Spain' (Perriam 2003: 10). Although Balfour and Quiroga caution against the 'imagined narratives of the past' (2007: 203), one could define culture as the stories or myths that we tell ourselves in order to explain the complexities or banish the contradictions of our individual societies (Campbell and Kean 1997: 9); Arturo Pérez-Reverte (whose books are the basis of *Alatriste*) says that the most important line in *Alatriste* is 'cuento lo que fuimos' because 'somos lo que somos porque fuimos lo que fuimos'.¹⁶³ But in our imaginings of the national past we also reveal the current concerns circulating in society, as can be seen in *Espinazo*. Conflict is the basis of drama, but it is noticeable that these films are specifically set in eras when Spanish identities were unstable; the films are indicative of a contemporary desire to re-examine Spain's troubled past and by extension attempt to understand contemporary Spain.

There are clear distinctions in terms of how the different periods are represented and how Noriega's respective characters react to the traumas that Spain undergoes. The eras in which *Alatriste* and *Invierno* are set are far enough in the past to be 'safe' for exploration; they do not provide an obvious route to the present. The past, in those films, is a foreign country and nationness is therefore shown to be 'profoundly historical' (Williams 2002: 2). The films that unfold in the 20th-century are a

¹⁶¹ He specifically refers to the use of slow motion in certain sequences and the way that (in his opinion) the gunplay of some of the *etarras* appears Tarantino-esque (ibid).

¹⁶² See the Appendix and the Industrial Contexts chapter for further details.

¹⁶³ Stated in the DVD documentary 'Cuento lo que fuimos'.

different matter; these events are still in living memory. What these films have in common is that Noriega's characters are powerless in the face of the events that unfold, and to different degrees this leads to instability and a fragmentation of their identities: frustration and thwarted ambition cause Jacinto to bubble with a repressed rage that unbalances him and must eventually find an outlet; Txema's identity as a Basque in 1970s Spain puts him in an ambiguous position in a personal and national context, and he spends most of the film pretending to be something he is not, before being given a new identity and being sent into exile. As with the other historical films, in remembering Spain's past these films are recovering forgotten versions of the national, but in the cases of *Espinazo* and *Lobo* the political is implicit in a way that it is not in *Alatriste* or *Invierno*, and therefore they can be seen as projections of the past that challenge existing conceptions of how that past unfolded.

Espinazo looks inward at Spain during one of its darkest periods and given the events that are unfolding outside of the orphanage, it seems appropriate that the narrative operates within the conventions of both the thriller and the horror film. The story that del Toro tells is shaped by wishful thinking, and the reading of the film as a parable of the Spanish Civil War does not fit with the facts of history. Historical films can project a version of the past that is shaped by the era in which they are made, and in an era when the recuperation of Republican memory is being publicly sought it is perhaps understandable that *Espinazo*'s ending is misleadingly positive, and our points of identification are those opposing the character who represents the fascist element. *Lobo* also unfolds in a period of deep uncertainty for the country, with the future of Spain hanging in the balance. The situation with ETA is still unfolding in the present and given that the film is set three decades ago it does not offer solutions, but it does shine a light on events in a three-year period that had been little publicised (despite their operational success). *Lobo* again shows Noriega performing an identity that is inherently fragile and unstable; the events of *Espinazo* and *Lobo* represent conflicts that have not yet been resolved within the Spanish psyche and therefore they cannot be represented or performed as stable.¹⁶⁴

¹⁶⁴ Events further in the past are not necessarily 'stable', after all historical events are open to reinterpretation in light of new ideas or perspectives (e.g. that of minority groups that were previously ignored), but instability seems particularly pronounced in the representations of more recent (contentious) periods that are still within living memory.

This chapter has investigated how Eduardo Noriega has interacted with ‘the national’ onscreen and how the national is manifested in his star image. It is with Noriega that we start to see a distinct change in terms of how the star image interacts with the national, in a way that can be clearly traced back to the industrial imperatives of his initial films. In contrast to Javier Bardem and Penélope Cruz, Noriega’s star image is not obviously ingrained with Spanishness because the two Amenábar films at the start of his career did not concern themselves with questions of national identity in a palpable manner (as Bardem and Cruz’s early films did), which again highlights the importance of early roles in shaping star images (Morin [1960] 2005: 27, 29).

The importance of *Tesis* and *Abre* to Noriega’s star image and to his later, more overt, interactions with the national, underlines that it is arguably the industrial contexts of Spanish cinema in this period rather than contemporaneous national discourses that have had the greater influence over the form and content of Noriega’s star image (although the repetition of Spain’s past within his films points to a continued cultural interest in the national); although industrial imperatives are to a certain extent shaped by national specificities (a film industry makes films tailored to its national audiences’ perceived tastes), Noriega’s star image points to an increasingly internationalised form of Spanish cinema via an emphasis on the genre cinema that Amenábar’s films have helped popularise. In many ways his stardom is defined by the generational shift in Spanish cinema, and the accompanying changes in visual and narrative style (seen in how films such as *Tesis*, *Abre*, *Guerreros*, and *Espinazo* utilise the tropes of genres that are not traditionally seen as belonging to ‘Spanish cinema’), that was already underway when he first appeared (unlike Bardem and Cruz who arguably arrived before this shift had properly started); of the four stars examined in this thesis, Noriega is the clearest illustration of Willis’s contention that stars ‘cannot be separated from the industrial contexts of their production’ (2004: 3), as his star image is integrally connected to the mainstream generic frameworks of his more successful films, despite what appears to be a concerted effort on his part to reside within the art-house categories of cinema.¹⁶⁵

At the same time, in their lack of overt national specifics, *Tesis* and *Abre* also suggest that if stars ‘act out aspects of life that matter to us’ (Dyer 1986: 17) then what ‘matters’ about the national in Spain slowly changed after 1992 (which is to be

¹⁶⁵ The Industrial Contexts chapter looks at the commercial implications of genre consistency.

expected given that the meanings of nationhood inevitably shift over time (Williams 2002: 3)), and that in what has been described as a ‘post-national’ period it would be better to examine cinema in terms of pluralities and the blurring of boundaries ‘instead of seeking to locate an essentialised notion of national identity’ (Street 2009: 2). A contemporary star need not be explicitly national to be revealing of contemporary Spain, so although Noriega’s star image is not ingrained with Spanishness in an obvious way, his negotiations with Spain’s past in his later films are symptomatic of a contemporary desire within Spain to better understand the historical nature of Spanish identities and the underlying divisions that have their roots in Spain’s tumultuous history. Indeed Noriega’s star image is reflective of an uncertainty as to what Spanishness *is* in an era that has seen Spain undergo massive social changes; early films such as *Abre* and *Fuente* position Noriega within national landscapes made foreign through the lack of overt national characteristics and / or symbols, pointing to a distancing from cultural roots and arguably projecting a fear of the possible dilution of nationally-specific cultural characteristics.

Noriega’s films generally posit (i.e. they project as well as reflect) that contemporary Spanish (male) identities are fragile and unstable, and link that instability to a lack of cultural roots and / or a distance from national spaces (as detailed above). This suggests that straying from your national roots (or avoiding the national past) is as problematic as reflecting or projecting those identities that embrace the stereotypical perceptions of male Spanishness (as seen in Bardem’s negotiations of the *macho ibérico* archetype). Noriega does not interact with the *macho ibérico* type onscreen (his menace usually stems from psychological imbalance rather than machismo –for example, César’s hysteria in the scene where Sofía becomes Nuria in *Abre*) and unlike Bardem he is not perceived as embodying ‘the Spanish male’ in an obvious way (at least in part because his early films avoided an obviously national frame of reference). Arguably what Noriega projects and / or reflects across his films is that the *macho ibérico* is no longer an adequate point of reference for defining the Spanish male (hence Noriega not interacting with, or performing, the type), but neither do his performances or films settle on a stable alternative (beyond emphasising the need to acknowledge cultural roots). Although many of his films (especially the historical ones) place his star image in negotiation with inward-looking reflections and / or projections of the national through ‘dramatisations of local myths and realities’ (Babington 2001: 10), this does not mean

that his star image becomes reflective or projective of those things; ‘the national’ does not ‘stick’ to his star image, and his stardom is not defined by his interactions with the national.

Although films such as *Espinazo*, *Alatriste*, and *Lobo* combine an entertaining format with an examination of Spain’s past, it is the format (i.e. the requirements of genre) that takes precedence over the consideration of the national and is given greater emphasis within the overall perception of Noriega’s star image, eliding the Spanish specificities that are present (undeniably so given the sheer volume of national narratives he has performed in); the industrial imperatives shape how, and what of, the national is represented onscreen and within Noriega’s star image. Eduardo Noriega relates to a specifically Spanish cultural environment through the themes, concerns, and narratives of his films, but his star image more obviously reflects and projects the changing shape and form of contemporary Spanish cinema.

With Eduardo Noriega heralding an increasing emphasis on the industrial over the national, we now move on to consider these issues in relation to the newest star in this thesis: Paz Vega.

Paz Vega:

Paz Vega is the newest star examined in this thesis; she has considerably fewer films to her name than the other stars under discussion, but the relative shortness of her filmography does not detract from her being regarded as a star by the Spanish film industry and Spanish trade press. Vega's film stardom began with the release of *Lucía y el sexo* (Medem, 2001), but where she differs from the other stars in this thesis is that her fame predates that first seminal film. She was a TV star in the hit sitcom *7 Vidas*, which she starred in between 1999-2000 (making three series within those two years).¹⁶⁶ This aspect of her stardom distinguishes her from Bardem, Cruz, and Noriega; it is a relatively recent phenomenon that some Spanish film stars establish their careers in television, specifically in long-running series. This seems to be a growing trend (Belinchón and Gosálvez 2005: 51) and it is not always viewed as a positive reflection of the talents of the individual, although in Vega's case her prior fame has not adversely affected her rise to film stardom: the word 'meteoric' is frequently used in conjunction with her career. Given that her television career is a distinguishing element of Vega's stardom, we will briefly look at the significance of *7 Vidas* and Vega's role within it.

7 Vidas ran between 1999 and 2006, making it (at that point) the longest running (204 episodes) Spanish sitcom. The intention was to emulate successful American sitcoms such as *Friends* but with a show that reflected its intended (Spanish) audience:

La idea era escribir sobre una pandilla de amigos treintañeros que vivían en un entorno urbano. Sí, vale, como en *Friends*, pero con la pequeña diferencia de que en lugar de Ross o Chandler, nosotros teníamos a Paco Jimeno, algo más... autóctono. Porque eso es lo que se quería, que los personajes y lo que les sucediera fueran reconocibles por los españoles, que la gente, cuando se sentara a ver la serie, se sintiera identificada. (Pastor and de Pando 2006: 26)

This is an example of how, in being rooted in the local, indigenous stars can 'give things to home audiences that Hollywood luminaries cannot' (Babington 2001: 10). Vega was one of the original five central actors, playing Laura, the *pija sevillana* cousin of David (Toni Cantó) and Carlota (Blanca Portillo) who moves in with them in order to become 'una proletaria como ellos' (Pastor and de Pando 2006: 21) and

¹⁶⁶ Vega returned to *7 Vidas* for two episodes in May 2005.

becomes integrated into their friendship with their neighbours, mother and son Sole (Amparo Baró) and Paco (Javier Cámara).



Figures 1-2: the well-groomed *pija sevillana*, Laura, in *7 Vidas*

Two elements set Laura apart from the other characters: class and regional identity. Laura has had a privileged upbringing in comparison to her cousins and has been raised with the sole expectation of finding a rich husband (an early episode sees Sole and Carlota persuading Laura to earn some self-respect by getting her first job and her own money).¹⁶⁷ Likewise, her regional identity also marks her as different, as Laura is from Seville but the series is set in Madrid (Paco calls her ‘la sureña’ when she is out of earshot), and she shares this characteristic with Vega. When Vega left Seville and arrived in Madrid to become an actress, she was told she would not find work because of her accent (Montoya 2001: 84), however she was taken under the wing of casting director Luis San Narciso (seen as a mark of quality for any film or television project) who cast her in several television series, culminating in *7 Vidas*, without her losing her accent (ibid). Vega’s being a *sevillana* is a defining part of her star image within the Spanish star system and several of her performances reference her Andalusian origins, often via an emphasis on her accent (as in *7 Vidas*).¹⁶⁸ Vega’s television fame can therefore be seen as having created certain audience expectations and associations in relation to her image before she actually appeared on the big screen; the emphasis on her regional identity and her perceived warmth as a person date back to her television career and remain part of her star image today.

Alongside Bardem, Cruz, and Noriega, Vega has consistently been positioned as one of the definitive Spanish stars of the contemporary period (see the survey of Spanish stars of the last sixty years in *Fotogramas* (2007b)). Perhaps unsurprisingly, given their closeness in age and the fact that Penélope Cruz is currently the ‘biggest’

¹⁶⁷ This is the beginning of ‘the independent woman’ element in Vega’s star image (discussed below).

¹⁶⁸ A.R. Almodóvar (2000) sees Vega as representative of a new generation who speak without feeling the need to imitate the accent of Castilla.

Spanish female star, Vega has repeatedly been compared and contrasted to Cruz in terms of looks, performances, and career, and the Spanish press has attempted to create a rivalry between them. Arguably both star images construct the two women as heirs to Victoria Abril, although in rather different ways; Evans notes that Abril is the ‘otra estrella / niña del cine español’ (2004: 58) in relation to Cruz, whereas Vega is connected to Abril through the explicit nudity in some of the representations of their bodies and through having worked with Vicente Aranda, and all three women have worked with Almodóvar. But while Cruz is constructed as the ‘girl next door’ and ‘nuestra Penélope’, as well as being seen as embodying an innate and timeless Spanishness, Vega’s star image is defined by contemporaneity and an association with liberated Spanish women via her sex-appeal. On the surface Vega has fewer interactions with concepts of the national than Cruz, as she has fewer films that engage with the national in an obvious way (the exceptions being *Carmen* (Aranda, 2003) and *Teresa, el cuerpo de Cristo* (Loriga, 2007)), and although contemporary social issues do appear (for example, domestic abuse in the drama *Sólo mía* (Balaguer, 2001)) it is questionable whether such issues are nationally-specific. At the same time, arguably the emphasis on her body and sex appeal within Vega’s star image has overshadowed the traces of Spanishness that are present, not least her regional identity (returned to below).

This chapter examines the manner in which the national is manifested in Vega’s star image, and the ways in which she interacts with ‘the national’ onscreen. We begin by looking at the film that launched her film career, *Lucía y el sexo* (henceforth referred to as *Lucía*), which may not engage with the national in an obvious manner but is nonetheless integral to understanding the development of Vega’s image, and her later interactions with the national.

An Independent Woman?:

Vega was obliged to leave *7 Vidas* by Julio Medem when she was cast in *Lucía* (Belategui 2001) and the importance of the film to Vega’s career and star image cannot be overstated as it reinvented ‘Paz Vega’; it was a leap to go from primetime television comedy to working with a director who epitomises art-house cinema. Vega says that she could not believe that she had been chosen for the part (‘¿escogerme a mí, que venía de una serie que era todo lo contrario al cine de Medem?’ (Belategui 2001)) and that the film is ‘mi antes y después’ (Ponga 2005: 92), while García states

that 'ella es y será siempre Lucía' (2003b: 34). Vega's image within the film is on the surface at odds with both her *7 Vidas* image and that of the films that followed. With the exception of the scene where Lucía makes her declaration of love, Vega hardly wears any make-up in Medem's film; Laura in *7 Vidas* was always expensively and fashionably dressed (commented on within the show), which was replicated off screen in Vega's own very glossy, very groomed image. In contrast, Lucía is a 'natural' woman, someone associated with nature, natural instincts and the body. However what both roles, and many of Vega's later ones, have in common is her portrayal of 'an independent woman' (returned to below). As discussed in the other case studies, Morin talks about the role that elevates an actor to being a star ([1960] 2005: 29): that role is usually the foundation for the star image and while later roles may inflect it, the original image is often still present in some form. Vega's star image is formed through a combination of *7 Vidas* and *Lucía*, and different elements come to the fore in different roles and films. Vega's star image illustrates Dyer's observation that within the 'structured polysemy' of the star image certain 'meanings and affects are foregrounded and others are masked or displaced' ([1979] 1998: 3); we will see that the elision of national specifics (and the greater emphasis on other elements, such as sex appeal) in the foundation of Vega's star image sets up contradictions in those films with more overtly national narratives.

Lucía is an anomaly in Medem's filmography because the rest of his films to date have a strong concern with cultural roots, and with individuals searching to understand where they came from, or their geographic origins are shown to influence the person they become; characters in films such as *Vacas* (1992) and *Tierra* (1996) are rooted in the landscapes where the films take place. *Lucía* inverts the process. Lucía is not returning home to rediscover and reaffirm her regional identity and she is rootless due to her lack of family; she flees Madrid to escape her past and to try and reinvent herself (as in the scene in the sea where she repeats 'voy a vivir sola', to convince herself that she does not need other people). Although Hayward argues that cinema is 'a cultural articulation of a nation' that addresses the national even if subverting it ([1993] 2005: x), it is difficult to extrapolate 'the national' from *Lucía*'s plot: this thesis concentrates on the national, but it is necessary to discuss the various non-national elements in *Lucía* that shaped Vega's star image because they have an impact on how she interacts with the national in later films. It is perhaps significant that this was the first of Medem's films to take a woman as its main protagonist and

correspondingly there is a shift in emphasis from nation to gender; as we saw with *Jamón jamón*, certain gender tropes are universal rather than specifically Spanish, and some of those stereotypical dichotomies also surface in *Lucía*.¹⁶⁹

In terms of Vega's role, the film fits within a (Spanish) domestic trend of contemporary and youthful films with 'strong female characters whose attitudes to sex were mostly uninhibited and fun' (Stone 2007: 157), and Fecé and Pujol highlight this when they discuss how the film shaped the popular perception of Vega's image:

Desde que la industria del entretenimiento descubrió el potencial sex appeal de Paz Vega en *Lucía y el sexo*, la chica se ha convertido en el paradigma mediático de la "nueva" mujer española: un atractivo cóctel de *belleza, juventud, independencia, talento, rebeldía...* (2003: 159)

Following what Dyer says about stars relating to social types within a given society ([1979] 1998: 47), Pujol Ozonas argues that *Lucía* represents a recognisably (contemporary) Spanish 'type' ('la mujer independiente, sexualmente activa, trabajadora, asertiva, moderna y liberada' (2005: 98)). Although Pujol Ozonas also sees the events of the film as reducing *Lucía* to a passive secondary character (ibid), arguably *Lucía* is a proactive character who takes control of her own story when she leaves Madrid; earlier scenes are difficult to disentangle from Lorenzo's (Tristan Ulloa) imagination or novel. For example, Smith uses the island sequences (and earlier ones, such as *Lucía* investigating the apartment) to argue that 'significantly, although Lorenzo is said to control the narrative [...] *Lucía* is generally granted the point of view' (2005a: 244). Stone sees Lorenzo as having stolen *Lucía*'s identity as material for his novel and says that this culminates in 'the shot of her naked reflection in his unplugged computer monitor suggesting that she is trapped on the inside and helplessly looking out' (2007: 171), but that image occurs early in the narrative (the morning after they first meet), and another way of reading it is that it foreshadows her becoming Lorenzo's inspiration and that what he writes will be influenced by her presence. Although the position of muse is usually considered a passive one, it is *Lucía*'s often impetuous and instinctive decision-making (such as her initial declaration of love) that inspires Lorenzo; she takes risks and it is hard to describe

¹⁶⁹ Medem's focus on a woman may have been a deliberate strategy to escape 'the national' in *Lucía*. Medem's work (pre- and post-*Lucía*) is infused with 'nationness', but specifically Basqueness rather than Spanishness, which highlights the complexity of 'the national' in Spain but also that Medem's status abroad as *the* Spanish art-house director is not straightforward.

such behaviour as passive.¹⁷⁰ But although Lucía can be read as an independent and assertive woman, the film's treatment of women overall is nonetheless problematic, particularly the manner in which Vega is presented onscreen.

The film is responsible in no small part for the explicit sexualisation of Vega's image; although she was positioned as a love interest in *7 Vidas*, she represented family and the 'safe' girl next door (she was in love with her cousin and lusted after by her neighbour) and Vega has publicly despaired of the fact that after *Lucía* 'se dijo de mí que era una *sex symbol*, y nada más lejos de lo que quiero' (García 2003b: 36).¹⁷¹ Pujol Ozonas argues that it is characteristic of Medem's films that the female characters are defined by their sexuality, and that they *are* their sexuality: she argues that each of the three women in *Lucía* can be regarded through this prism, with Lucía representing carnality and love (2005: 103). Stone acknowledges that the lack of female subjectivity is a recurring weakness in Medem's films (2007: 161) but also argues that Medem's films and their treatment of women must be 'contextualised within Spanish cinema' and that the women 'must be recognised as connecting with both the lineage of abused and saintly females in the *cine metafórico* and a tradition of sexual content in the Spanish cinema of the democracy' (2007: 13). *Lucía* is not a 'national narrative' in the vein of *Carmen* or *Teresa*, but the way in which it utilises Vega's body and the explicitly sexual images that it produces is in keeping with the industrial imperatives of Spanish cinema (sex sells): 'the fact that *Lucía y el sexo* is Medem's most explicit and most profitable film to date is not purely coincidental' (Stone 2007: 13), which underlines that stars 'cannot be separated from the industrial context of their production' (Willis 2004: 3) and highlights the centrality of industrial imperatives to the shaping of Vega's star image.

Lucía's sex scenes are inflected by her association with love, and this differentiates her from the other women in the film; love and an integral sweetness are central to Lucía's character and have also come to be key aspects within Vega's star image, as seen in the romantic strand in her comedies and the way that the sexual endeavours of a number of her subsequent characters are explicitly tied to love.¹⁷² Despite the film being an anomaly in other senses, the association with love roots Lucía firmly within

¹⁷⁰ For example, Belén (Elena Anaya) chose her mother over Carlos but the Belén in Lorenzo's novel chose the man (as Lucía had said she would).

¹⁷¹ Some of her photoshoots undermine that statement (see her official website): for example, in December 2007 she appeared on the cover of Spanish *Elle* wearing only Swarovski crystals (fig.9).

¹⁷² The title of one of her first film magazine profiles encapsulates Vega's star image: 'sexo y simpatía' (Montoya 2001).

Medem's filmography because 'el amor –la búsqueda del amor, el dolor que acarrea su pérdida, la lucha del ser humano por conseguir que sea eterno, que dure toda una vida...–es uno de los grandes temas de la obra de Julio Medem' (Angulo and Rebordinos 2005: 27) and Lucía's narrative quest can be found within that description of the theme. However, although Lucía's sex scenes are distanced from pornography through their construction as acts of love, Vega / Lucía's body is nonetheless presented as spectacle. For example, at the end of their first encounter Lucía is too drunk to do anything other than go to sleep, so Lorenzo undresses her and tucks her into bed; during the sequence Vega is on her back on the bed as Lucía is undressed, with the camera directly above her, and static, allowing the shot to take in the full length of her body as the clothes are removed, turning it into a kind of passive striptease for the viewer. The striptease (and also the Polaroid sequence) fragment Vega / Lucía's body in the manner described by Mulvey ([1975] 1989) as indicative of a fetishization of the female star body, and Vega / Lucía spends a noticeable amount of the film nude: in the shower, investigating Lorenzo's apartment while he is asleep, swimming in the sea, and walking along the beach. Vega is by no means the only female Spanish star to whom this sexualization of her and her star image has happened (we have seen the overt sexualization of a young Penélope Cruz at the outset of her career, and there are other recent examples such as Elsa Pataky); this is the framework within which Spanish cinema tries to place emerging young female talents.



Figures 3-4: Lucía's passive striptease

Unlike Cruz, Vega does not have an innate Spanishness as part of her star image; although Vega's regional identity is one that is often taken to represent 'traditional Spain', this is usually elided by the emphasis on her body and physical appearance (which stems from *Lucía*). Her regional identity generally becomes stronger in the comedic roles, which tend to place more emphasis on the romantic than the sexual.

The emphasis on Vega's body over her regional (and national) identity is in part because, as we have seen, gender trumps nation in the representation of women, and also because Medem's film explicitly shaped Vega's star image that way. The ideological reading of stars as embodying or representing hegemonic struggles within a given culture (Dyer [1979] 1998: 2), with the implication that certain stars gain prominence in their national industries because of their closeness to certain ideals prevalent at a given time (or because they can be shaped to fit those ideals), arguably has relevance to Vega's stardom, not least via her status as representing the figure of the 'new Spanish woman' or simply the 'independent woman'. If stars 'function as reflectors of the time and as signs to be reflected into society' (Hayward 2006: 380) and perform a culture's current perceptions and conceptions of femininity (Babington 2001: 19), the way that 'Paz Vega' (the star image) is constructed as 'el paradigma mediático de la "nueva" mujer española' (Fecé and Pujol 2003: 159) is an example of an inward projection (into Spanish culture) of current ideals of femininity (i.e. she is not necessarily reflective of the average Spanish woman, but is presented as something to aspire to). Nonetheless Vega and her star image are reflective of general changes within Spanish society and culture (such as the increasing independence of women), as well as changes in Spanish cinema. Paz Vega is representative of the increasingly globalised form that Spanish cinema has been taking in the last ten-to-fifteen years; she is part of the new generation of stars and filmmakers who deliberately mould their work for the international marketplace and are therefore less specifically Spanish, although that does not prevent them from engaging with local realities onscreen as well.

We turn now to the films that Vega made in the aftermath of *Lucía* to see how these components developed within her star image.

Silent Women:

Released two months after *Lucía*, *Sólo mía* saw Paz Vega nominated for 'Mejor actriz' at the Goyas the same year that she was nominated for (and won) 'Mejor actriz revelación' for Medem's film: the two films together had revealed previously unrecognised dramatic gifts (Ponga 2003: 74). A story of domestic violence, *Sólo mía* follows the marriage of Angela (Vega) and Joaquín (Sergi López) and a slide into physical and psychological abuse. The film was supported by various associations specialising in domestic abuse (Casanova 2001: 119) and was roundly praised for

offering ‘una denuncia clara acerca de una lacra que prácticamente aparece cada día en las páginas de los periódicos españoles’ (Caparrós Lera 2005: 187); the film offers an indigenous star performing ‘local [...] realities’ (Babington 2001: 10).¹⁷³ Vega says that it is probably the work she is most proud of as an actress and that ‘es una película casi pionera, necesaria’ (Ponga 2005: 92), and her performance was widely praised (for example, see Fernández-Santos (2001)) despite the film’s descent into the female revenge thriller sub-genre (‘la película se cierra sobre un final indigno’ (Fernández-Santos 2001)).¹⁷⁴

Between 2003 and 2007, on average at least one woman a week in Spain lost her life at the hands of her partner (Belaza 2008: 40), but in the period covered by this thesis (1992-2007) there has been a change in attitude to the problem, often pinpointed as beginning with the murder of Ana Orantes in 1997 after she publicly denounced the abuse she had suffered at the hands of her husband: ‘la conmoción que causó la muerte de Ana Orantes sirvió para abrir los ojos de la sociedad ante un problema que hasta entonces se consideraba restringido a la intimidad del hogar’ (Rincón and Martín-Arroyo 2007). This shift towards considering it a social rather than private problem has been duplicated within the legal arena with a series of laws dating from the late-1990s intending to make it clear that ‘ya no existen excusas para las violencias en el hogar’ (Montalbán Huertas 2008); on coming to power in 2004, Zapatero referred to the issue as Spain’s ‘worst disgrace’ (Hooper 2006: 139) and pledged that further legal action would be taken.¹⁷⁵ Hooper observes that the exceptional aspect of *violencia machista* in Spain is ‘not necessarily its pervasiveness, but rather the public’s feelings of embarrassment and shame about it’ (ibid). This is a negative example of nationhood being based *in* and *upon* the assumption of difference (Hayward [1993] 2005: 3); there is the view within Spain that it is a specifically Spanish problem linked to the figure of the Spanish *macho*. In reality the problem is endemic across Europe (and worldwide); one in five European women experience violence at the hands of their male partner at some point in their life, and in the UK one woman dies every three days as a result of domestic violence (Diamantopoulou 2002). But given the Spanish perception that it is a specifically Spanish problem, *Sólo*

¹⁷³ Two other films in recent Spanish cinema deal with domestic violence: *Solas* (Zambrano, 1999) and *Te doy mis ojos* (Bollaín, 2003).

¹⁷⁴ But the ending again positions Vega as an independent woman.

¹⁷⁵ For further details see: Hooper (2006: 138-140), Belaza (2008), and Montalbán Huertas (2007 and 2008).

mía illustrates how Spanish stars can come to be embedded in both the imaginary and the real social construct of Spain (Perriam 2003: 10).



Figures 5-6: The fairytale marriage turns into a nightmare in *Sólo mía*

The film's strength lies in its unfolding in 'un contexto de clase media alta urbana, sin problemas de alcoholismo o desempleo, huyendo de estereotipos' (*Fotogramas* 2001: 183): it avoids any 'excuses' for Joaquin's behaviour. In 2000, the Spanish Government completed an inquiry into domestic violence, attempting to understand the scale of the problem in Spain, but although women's associations welcomed the attention to the issue, they also had problems with the survey (Iribar 2000). One of the most contentious aspects was that the information was used to create a 'profile' of the average mistreated woman ('una mujer que ya ha cumplido los 45 años, con pocos estudios y que tiene en su casa su trabajo' (Iribar 2000)); campaigners argued that this was an image from another era, and that it homogenised women and failed to reflect the variety of circumstances in which domestic violence takes place (Bustelo and Lombardo 2007: 81). In this context it is striking, as already stated, that *Sólo mía* avoids the clichés of the genre by setting the story in a prosperous middle class household, and also that Angela is very different from the profile created by the Government's inquiry.

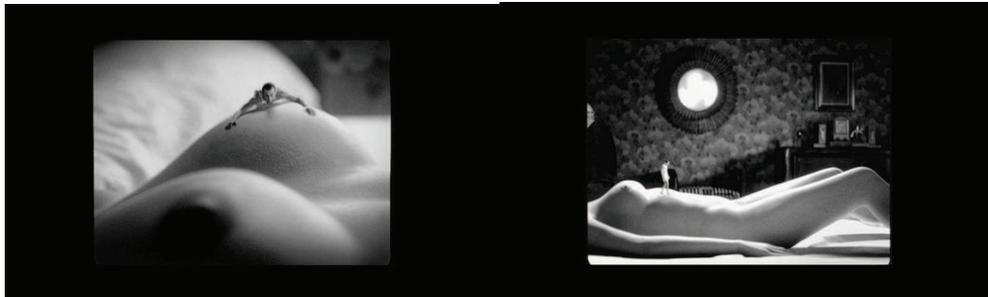
Angela is immeasurably more vulnerable and fragile than Vega's other characters, but her similarity to Vega's own image (young, fashionable, funny –as seen in sequences where she is in the company of friends) not only illustrates that there is no set 'type' of victim of domestic violence (it can occur to members of the younger generation that Vega is representative of) but also arguably heightens the impact. In terms of the confusion and fear that Vega / Angela projects when Joaquin flies off the handle, Vega is aided in her performance by the violence being genuinely shocking (in so far as it usually comes without warning) and the use of subjective camera work that means that the camera sometimes takes her place during a beating. The physical

violence and the resulting bruises again place an emphasis on Vega's body, but in a very different way to *Lucía*; although the film highlights her beauty, she is not presented as a sexual object and nor is her body overtly spectacularised. In relation to Vega's star image and the national, the film positions her within a narrative that looks inward at contemporary Spain and presents an issue that is seen as a national problem (despite its international proliferation) and also reflects changing attitudes and the national concern about that issue in Spain.

Vega's next film, *Hable con ella* (Almodóvar, 2002) (henceforth referred to as *Hable*), avoids the national (although Almodóvar films have a certain national status – returned to below) and returned to the use of her body as spectacle in the manner of *Lucía*. Vega has a minor role, appearing in the silent film-within-the-film (*El amante menguante*) (which Benigno (Javier Cámara) goes to see and then recounts to the comatose Alicia (Leonor Watling)), and therefore *Hable* will only be discussed briefly. *El amante menguante* shows a seemingly consensual sexual act ('seemingly' because the woman on whom it is enacted, Amparo (Vega), is asleep at the time), and parallels are made between Watling's comatose character and Vega's silent (and sleeping) one (the silent film obscures an event that the audience only finds out about much later: Benigno's rape of Alicia), recalling the passivity and spectacularisation of her body in *Lucía*'s passive striptease sequence. Although Amparo starts out associated with the mind rather than the body (she is a scientist – another independent woman), arguably she has less autonomy than the comatose Alicia because her body is separated from her head, separated from her 'self' once she is nude, and her body comes to stand for that of another woman (Alicia).¹⁷⁶ This 'standing-in' is signalled by Benigno's actions just prior to his re-telling of the film: he has to sit down when he uncovers Alicia's breasts (he is about to give her a sponge bath) because he feels dizzy; Amparo's breasts are also the first part of her body to be uncovered in the film. 'Uncover' is also the operative word because in both cases there is a sense of revelation in the way that their breasts are revealed, and the way in which Vega / Amparo's body is fragmented by the camera (as Alfredo (Fele Martínez) looks at different parts of her body) again recalls Mulvey's description of the

¹⁷⁶ From a practical point of view the separation of Vega / Amparo's head and body is because the body that Martínez / Alfredo clammers over is a combination of model and bluescreen (the shots of Vega's face are inserts). But the body onscreen is presented as if it were Vega's, so the presence of 'the body' in terms of her representation onscreen and her star image is perpetuated and maintained (not least because of the echoes of *Lucía* in the presentation).

spectacularisation of the female star body ([1975] 1989: 19). I will return to the discussion of this scene in relation to *Carmen* where something very similar occurs, but this sequence in *Hable* can be taken as a metonym for Vega's star image in terms of how her onscreen nudity reduces Vega to her femaleness (literally in this case as the focus is on her breasts and genitalia) thereby often eliding the sense of 'the national' within her star image (especially since the silent film hides the usual marker of Vega's regional identity –her accent), but also how she and her body act as a blank surface onto which different identities or stories can be projected (in this case the blurring of Amparo and Alicia in Benigno's mind, which recalls the blurring of Lucía and Belén in Lorenzo's novel / imagination in *Lucía*).



Figures 7-8: Vega reduced to her femaleness in *Hable con ella*.

The two films in this section, taken in conjunction with *Lucía*, demonstrate that Vega's acting talents stretch beyond the comedy genre that initially made her name.¹⁷⁷ That one film is by an unknown first-time director and the other by a national icon is indicative of the path Vega's career has taken; she has managed to mix newer directors with auteurs and big names. Vega's career illustrates that in smaller national markets the mainstream and the auteur (which are not mutually exclusive anyway) can co-exist in a single star image (Vincendeau 2000: 2) without fractures appearing in that image; her star image has been utilised by a variety of directors across a range of genres, with different elements being emphasised as the different circumstances of the films dictate, but maintaining an apparent consistency in the star image. Of the two films in this section, *Sólo mía* more obviously addresses a national issue and positions Vega and her star image within a national context, and also capitalises on two aspects of Vega's image that stem from *7 Vidas*: Angela's youth and class (two of the elements that defined Laura in *7 Vidas*) distinguish her from other Spanish cinematic representations of victims of domestic violence (and confound

¹⁷⁷ The stylised acting in *Hable*'s silent film maintains the comedic side of her star image as well.

preconceived notions of women in this situation). Although domestic violence is not exclusive to Spain, there is a perception within Spain that there is a cultural basis to the problem and therefore the issue is presented as a failing of Spanish society. *Sólo mía* does not present the problem as being uniquely Spanish, but the film looks inward at contemporary Spain and the narrative unfolds within Spanish specifics (for example, the attitudes within Spanish society to women leaving their husbands, and the limits of the current legal system). But the film is not without its problems: although Caparrós Lera defends *Sólo mía* from the accusation that it raises questions but does not provide answers (2005: 188), ultimately the lack of realistic solutions to the narrative situation is the weakest aspect of the film.

Hable is difficult to relate to questions of the national (aside from the obvious challenge to national gender stereotypes of one of the female protagonists being a *torero*), but Almodóvar's position within Spanish cinema (and the outside perception that he *is* Spanish cinema) confers a certain status on his work and the performers therein within the national context. He also shapes how that national context is perceived outside: 'No other Spanish cultural product has been as instrumental in the 1980s and 1990s in shaping the world's impressions of Spanish national identities' (Allinson 2001: 25). Although *Hable* is from what is seen as Almodóvar's 'serious' period of filmmaking (Smith 2003: 150), and as already stated the film does not overtly negotiate the national, Vega's role within the film fits with the outside view that Almodóvar's cinema projects Spain as being inherently sexual and outrageous (something that is not exclusive to Almodóvar but widespread in Spanish cinema (Jordan and Tamosunas 1998: 112)); *El amante menguante* is both sexually explicit (via the model body, but explicit nonetheless) and wilfully surreal. Despite what the sequence obscures (a rape), it is also one of the few light-hearted (because of the stylised acting and the surrealism) parts of what is at times a very dark narrative. That is in keeping with Vega's star image being associated with sweetness (and light), and as in *Lucía* the sexually explicit content is implicitly connected to love via Vega's character. Almodóvar's film knowingly utilises and exploits the associations (generated by *Lucía*) centred on Vega's body as a (sexual) spectacle, and the repetition of certain elements from her earlier work shows how traces of earlier roles continuously resurface in different contexts (Drake 2004: 77), but also emphasises that in Vega's case the repetition is centred around the generic elements of her stardom.

Of the films examined so far, Vega has more obviously interacted with the national in the film that avoided the sexually explicit (*Sólo mía*). With that in mind, we turn our attention to two films that emphasise the romantic rather than the sexual, to see whether the national becomes more apparent without the presence of sexual spectacle.

Funny Girl:

7 *Vidas* became a launching pad for those actors at the centre of the comedy, with many of them going on to have successful film and / or theatrical careers.¹⁷⁸ It is perhaps unsurprising therefore that when Vega returned to the comedy genre with the films *El otro lado de la cama* (Martínez-Lázaro, 2002) (henceforth referred to as *Cama*) and *Di que sí* (Calvo, 2004), she appeared opposite two other alumni from the show: Guillermo Toledo and Santi Millán respectively.¹⁷⁹ Aside from becoming a phenomenon in its own right, *Cama* is seen as having consecrated the new generation and format of stardom embodied by its leading actors (Fecé and Pujol 2003: 158) although, despite what Fecé and Pujol say, in terms of the commodification of their media ‘personalities’ (their appearances within the popular press and advertisements) it is difficult to see a great difference between this group of stars and earlier ones such as Penélope Cruz. Perhaps there has been an increasing emphasis on the consumerist side of the ‘celebrity lifestyle’, as although few ‘serious’ Spanish actors display their homes and souls in the *prensa rosa* (Jordan and Allinson 2005: 124) and traditionally the political background of Spanish actors causes a ‘disdain for the consumption-led celebration of stardom’ (ibid), the younger or newer stars (including Vega) do seem to revel in the consumerist dream to a greater extent than their forebears (although there are exceptions to this trend –for example, Toledo is an example of a politically-committed star who shuns the trappings of the star lifestyle).



¹⁷⁸ For example, four of the original five actors have appeared in Almodóvar films.

¹⁷⁹ For further information about the phenomenon of film stardom originating in television see: Belinchón and Gosález (2005), Fecé and Pujol (2003), and Pujol Ozonas (2005).

Figures 9-12: Vega appears on a range of magazine covers, in advertising, and fashion shoots.¹⁸⁰

The comedy genre ‘in all of its variegated forms and ideological alignments, has been one of the most dominant, popular and commercially successful genres in Spanish cinema’ (Lázaro-Reboll and Willis 2004: 13): the Appendix details the dominance of comedy in the recent Spanish cinematic landscape. *Cama* is one of the most successful comedies (and one of the most successful Spanish films irrespective of genre) in recent years in Spain. A musical comedy about serial bed-hopping and infidelity among a group of young friends (played by Vega, Toledo, Ernesto Alterio, Natalia Verbeke and Alberto San Juan), *Cama* sought to represent modern Spanish attitudes towards relationships by placing the traditional (and international) tropes of romantic comedy (misunderstandings, heartbreak, and happy endings) within a Spanish context; like *7 Vidas*, *Cama* aimed to reflect the lives of its intended (national) audience. Caparrós Lera takes a despairing view of the relationships in the film and what *Cama* reflects of ‘sociedad madrileña y, por ende, española’ in its ‘agudo estudio de mentalidades contemporáneas’ (2005: 99). Traditionally musicals support the ideological status quo (i.e. marriage is desired, social stability is achieved, and they ‘resolve the fear of difference’ (Hayward 2006: 276)); with its bed-hopping infidelities and catchphrase ‘todos somos bisexuales’, *Cama* goes against the grain and / or is evidence that the status quo has shifted in contemporary Spain. Caparrós Lera argues that the reason that the film was such a big hit was that ‘lamentablemente, mucha gente joven vive así’ (2005: 99), again illustrating that the indigenous star is perceived to represent local realities (Babington 2001: 10) and also ‘typical’ contemporary ways of behaving, feeling and thinking, which are always culturally and historically specific (Dyer 1986: 1, 15-16). The attitudes and behaviours displayed in *Cama* may not be exclusive to Spain but are nonetheless a perception and projection of a local reality and the lives of some contemporary young Spaniards; the film utilises Vega and her star image to reflect and project (i.e. it reflects a certain

¹⁸⁰ The advertising campaigns and fashion shoots are further evidence of Vega as a blank surface that other identities are projected onto: aside from the ‘Chocolate possession’ campaign (where she was ‘blacked up’ for photographs rather than the image being digitally altered), Vega appeared in another Magnum campaign based around the seven deadly sins that involved her taking on seven different personalities (with different appearances).

group within society but arguably also projects their attitudes as the norm, which is questionable) this younger generation and their ‘liberal-minded’ attitudes.¹⁸¹

Jordan and Morgan-Tamosunas note that while genre films ‘respond to transnational cultural trends, they also display signs of their own cultural specificity in their various articulations’ (1998: 62). Green highlights the cultural specificity of *Cama*’s musical numbers in her review, saying that:

how well the musical renditions in the film will translate across cultures and languages is yet to be tested. Most audiences outside of Spain and Latin America, where the film is sure to do big business, will not recognise the original pop songs. This could dampen positive reception, as the tunes seem to have been selected as much for their nostalgic resonance as for any foot-tapability: without the song and dance numbers, which offer good-natured satires of the musical genre, [the film] is just one more in a long line of feelgood Spanish romantic comedies –albeit with a hipper twist thanks to a new generation of writing and acting talent and accompanying cultural references and humour (2002).

Most of *Cama*’s soundtrack consists of hit songs from the 1980s and early 1990s by acts such as Kiko Veneno, Tequila, and Los Rodríguez; the music was specifically chosen to match the intended (Spanish) audience demographic (Díaz López 2008: 153). Vega opens the film sharing the song ‘Luna de miel’ with Verbeke, and although (unlike the rest of the cast) she does not have any solo songs, she participates in several songs that have different actors singing different verses, such as the central ‘Echo de menos’ number and the performance that closes the film, ‘Mucho mejor’.

One of the ways in which genre films express their cultural specificity is ‘in the way female characters [...] have been reimagined and reformulated in order to reflect changing perceptions of women in Spain’ (Jordan and Morgan-Tamosunas 1998: 62-63). *Cama* is unusual in the romantic comedy genre for sidelining its female leads and concentrating on the machinations and tribulations of the men, despite Vega and Verbeke being the more established names: the men are frequently seen together as a group as well as with their partners, whereas the women are never seen together without at least one of the men also being present. *Cama* was the biggest Spanish film of the year, and so successful that it spawned a sequel (*Los dos lados de la cama* (Martínez Lázaro, 2005)) that confirmed the filmmakers’ stronger interest in the men

¹⁸¹ Sonia (Vega) is more broadminded than the men and it is she who coins the ‘todos somos bisexuales’ phrase when her boyfriend (Alterio) is incredulous that her best friend is gay.

by writing out the characters played by Vega and Verbeke and introducing three new women instead. The emphasis on the male protagonists leads Caparrós Lera to suggest that the film is a criticism of Spanish *machismo* (2005: 200), and arguably the film is a further example of the anxiety over contemporary Spanish masculine identities that we have seen in the films of Javier Bardem and Eduardo Noriega; *Cama* finds a richer seam of comedy in the foibles and insecurities of the male characters and therefore leaves the relatively confident female characters alone.

Nonetheless Díaz López observes that Vega's:

presencia en la película [...] recoge los elementos ya atribuidos a su carrera cinematográfica, donde se pueden destacar con claridad la erotización constante de su figura femenina, pero también cierta calidad cariñosa y enfáticamente atractiva asociada a su leve acento y condición andaluza. (2008: 159)

Arguably the film plays more on the bubbly personality that had been on display in *7 Vidas*, and Vega's reputation as a fashion plate, than the erotic associations of *Lucía* or *Hable*, but although her trademark kindness and warmth is evidenced through her character's sympathy for Toledo's cuckold (so sympathetic that she sleeps with him despite being the girlfriend of his best friend), the film does not feature the love that is usually at the centre of her cinematic relationships: *Cama* is a romantic comedy in which lust takes precedence over love and romance. The film looks inward at Spain by incorporating music that has cultural significance for Spanish audiences and showing characters who connect with younger generations of Spaniards, but the attitudes and lifestyles portrayed are by no means exclusive to Spain and ultimately the requirements of genre are more important than a serious consideration of 'the national'.

In between *Cama* and *Di que sí* Vega made *Carmen* (discussed in the next section) and also her first foray into Hollywood film with *Spanglish* (Brooks, 2004), also a comedy, wherein she plays the Mexican housekeeper (Flor) of a particularly neurotic American household (headed by Adam Sandler). She has one of the lead roles in the film (unusual given that it is her US debut) and Flor fits Vega's existing star image: she is constructed as a desirable woman (Sandler's character falls in love with her), but is also sweet-natured and gives Vega the opportunity to display her comedic

abilities.¹⁸² On the whole, her US roles to date put more emphasis on her appearance and sex appeal (with the exceptions of *Spanglish* and *10 Items or Less* (Silberling, 2006), both of which give her more to do and highlight her comedic gifts), something that we saw with Penélope Cruz's early US career as well. It is beyond the scope of this thesis to examine the work Vega has done outside of Spain because, unlike Cruz, so far Vega's work abroad has not had a big enough impact to have altered the shape or perception of her image in Spain, although that may change in the future as her American projects are beginning to accumulate and she is currently has five more English-language films in the US awaiting release.¹⁸³ However, *Spanglish* was produced by Columbia Pictures and it is perhaps significant that when they opened a Spanish arm of the company (the first US studio to do so), Vega was given the lead in the first film that they produced in Spain: *Di que sí*.

Di que sí was comparatively less successful than *Cama*, but it still earned a place in the top ten Spanish films of 2004 and also relied more heavily on the appeal of Vega (*Cama* is an ensemble piece). The film revolves around a daytime television gameshow, 'Si al amor', wherein two couples (who have only just met) compete in a series of challenges with the winners being sent on holiday to get to know each other, before returning the following week to possibly get married on national television. The show is a send-up of *teletasura*, the reality and talk shows that abound in Spain's television schedules.¹⁸⁴ Through a series of mishaps an actress (Estrella (Vega), who thinks she is attending an audition) and a cinema usher (Víctor (Santi Millán), who thinks he is attending a job interview) become contestants on the show, and win the holiday when their mismatched temperaments are a hit with the studio audience. The film generally positions Millán / Víctor as the straight man and allows Vega / Estrella to engage in a series of pratfalls and disasters (which Víctor usually bears the brunt of). Although the film's tagline was 'una comedia...con odio a primera vista', hate is a strong word for the irritation that Víctor initially feels around the undeniably kooky, but warm and friendly, Estrella; Estrella is another of Vega's sweet-hearted young women. Aside from the sweetness of her character and love being at the centre of the narrative, the film also taps into Vega's star image for a sense of glamour and her

¹⁸² It is telling that director James L. Brooks sought out Vega after seeing *Lucía*; Flor has echoes of Lucía's personality.

¹⁸³ These films are *The Human Contract* (Pinkett Smith, 2008), *Not Forgotten* (Soref, 2009), *The Six Wives of Henry Lefay* (Gould, 2009), *The Spirit* (Miller, 2009), and *Burning Palms* (Landon, 2009). There is also *Triage* (Tanovic, 2009), which is a European English-language project.

¹⁸⁴ See Smith (2006: 113-142).

reputation for wearing fashionable, and sometimes outrageous, outfits: Vega / Estrella wears a different outfit in virtually every scene.



Figure 13-14: Physical comedy and glossy style combined in *Di que sí*

It is also through costume that the film briefly pokes fun at Spanish stereotypes: in the first sequence of the film, Estrella breathlessly arrives at her acting class wearing a red and white polka-dotted flamenco dress and explains that she has been serving gazpacho to Japanese businessmen. The rapidity with which this sequence is dispatched suggests that that particular image of Spain does not have much relevance to contemporary Spanish audiences: it is acknowledged, but as a projection of Spanishness that is ‘not real’, and as a joke (the other students laugh as Estrella explains what she has been doing). That Estrella wears trainers with the dress (because she could not run in the appropriate shoes) also points to this image of Spain being restrictive and cumbersome (she also has to carry the skirt of the dress because there are so many layers), and perhaps hiding the (stylish) reality of contemporary Spain but maybe also suggesting that the image of the ‘traditional Spanish woman’ is one that contemporary Spanish women can put on or cast off with ease (much like Estrella’s ever-changing outfits).¹⁸⁵ Nationhood is not a static construct and its definition inevitably shifts over time (Williams 2002: 3), and the invocation and swift dismissal of the stereotypical image of Spanish femininity in *Di que sí* supports the view that as Spanish society has moved on correspondingly notions of Spanishness have also shifted. Although the film dismisses that dated concept of Spanishness, it still acknowledges its past existence and / or its continuing relevance to the imaginary construct of Spain that the outside world has; cinema articulates the nation even if it challenges certain perceptions of nationness (Hayward [1993] 2005: x). Davies also argues that it is important not to dismiss stereotypes as being beneath our

¹⁸⁵ Estrella also wears trainers with her wedding dress at the dress rehearsal, which is indicative of her again participating in an image that she does not see as ‘her’; earlier in the film Estrella says that she had sworn never to get married, and at this point in the narrative she and Víctor are marrying for the cash prize (they later marry for love).

contemplation in regard to Spanish cultural identities: ‘these images must mean something to Spaniards too [...] in the relation of how others see them to how they see themselves’ (2004: 6). Aside from that brief sequence and the satire of Spanish television via the gameshow, the film does not directly concern itself with the national as such (it is worth remembering that it was made by an international company and as such is indicative of the increasingly international forms of cinema circulating within Spanish cinema) although certain threads of the comedy and specificities of the characters (such as Víctor’s weakness for *croquetas*) are arguably particular to Spain.

The most obvious aspect of this is that Estrella, like Paz Vega, is from Seville and Vega’s Andalusian accent is given free rein (probably the most emphasis it had been given since *7 Vidas*); Vega / Estrella’s accent becomes more pronounced the faster and more passionately she speaks. Outside of Spain the Andalusian identity is one that is readily taken to represent ‘Spanishness’ in a broad (and stereotypical) sense through the associations with flamenco and bullfighting (symbols of ‘Old Spain’); outside audiences may not perceive Vega’s regional identity as being something distinct to ‘Spanishness’ (in a nationally-inclusive sense). At the same time, that stereotypical perception of Andalusia suggests that Vega wearing the flamenco dress in the opening sequence is also an overt performance of a stereotyped *regional* identity as well as the broader perception of the stereotype as a *national* one; the sequence could therefore be seen as a projection that affords Spanish audiences the opportunity to laugh at their own stereotypes (‘their own’ in the sense of stereotypes that are applied broadly to the Spanish from outside and also stereotypes that the Spanish use in relation to other Spaniards (of different regionalities)).¹⁸⁶ Usually the issue of regional and autonomous ‘nationalities’, each with their own fissures and fragilities (Berthier and Seguin 2007: xvii), problematise ‘Spanish’ identities through their plurality. But arguably Vega and her Andalusian / *sevillana* identity normalise this plurality via her star image because although her accent is heightened for comedic effect in *Di que sí* (and also *7 Vidas*) little else is made of her ‘difference’, contradicting Hayward’s view that national culture attempts to present a ‘homogenised fixed common culture’ (2000: 99); Vega’s regional identity and its presence within the mainstream acts as an acknowledgement of cultural heterogeneity

¹⁸⁶ Allinson notes (in the context of Almodóvar’s work) that the Andalusian accent is ‘considered the most humorous accent in Spain’ (2001: 44).

because, in terms of her films set in the present day, outside of the comedies (where it is emphasised) this identity is not highlighted but it is nonetheless there.

McDonald describes (US) 'star vehicles' as employing strategies that exploit the star for the production and consumption of the film (2000: 1) and both of the films discussed in this section reaffirm aspects of Vega's star image that have been present from *7 Vidas* onwards: youth, style, humour, and (in *Di que sí*) her southern origins. Although both *Cama* and *Di que sí* make the most of her beauty by dressing her in stylish outfits that emphasise her youthful vitality and the characters' hip credentials, neither film fixates on her body in the manner of *Lucía*, and although both films are romantic comedies and deal with relationships, neither shows her in any explicitly sexual or nude scenes (with the exception of her briefly being topless in *Cama*). Both films admittedly highlight her physical beauty (and in *Di que sí* the amount of time it takes her to get ready) but what is more memorable is the physical comedy that she engages in, especially in *Di que sí* where she proves herself to be an adept physical comedian. Both films also include certain Spanish specificities (the music in *Cama* and the satire of Spanish television in *Di que sí*) but instead of sexual spectacle overriding the significance of the national, here the requirements of genre are more important than any reflections and / or projections of the national; relationship tribulations and the boy meets girl narrative are not exclusive to Spain. In their emphasis on genre ('the meeting place between a variety of diverse forces that necessarily operate within but also across territorial spaces' (Beck and Rodríguez Ortega 2008: 1)) these films exemplify the blurring of national boundaries within cinema (globally) in this period and the attempts of the Spanish film industry to internationalise their produce; both films (although containing certain national specificities) utilise 'an aesthetic framework and set of styles heavily influenced by the transnational visual media [...] and [assimilate] American genre cinema and its conventions' (Jordan 2000: 75-76) and are therefore symptomatic of the developments undergone by 'Spanish cinema' in this era. However, between *Cama* and *Di que sí* Vega managed to marry her reputation as a pin-up with her quest to be taken seriously as an actress, as well as engaging for the first time with an overtly national narrative.

Stories of Spain:

Carmen is perhaps the most famous representation of Spanish womanhood: ‘the Carmen story has become to some extent, in the Western middle-class cultural imaginary, part of the narration of Spain as nation and Spanishness as type’ (Powrie et al 2007: 155). Donapetry says of the various cinematic incarnations of Carmen that ‘cada una de ellas se ha puesto a Carmen al servicio de una ideología peculiar de su tiempo y su lugar’ (1998: 26), which in the case of the Spanish interpretations of the myth arguably underlines the importance of historical shifts in relation to nationness as ‘an image constructed under particular conditions’ (Higson [1989] 2002: 139). Vega’s Carmen is fiercely independent and uses her body as both a weapon and a method of enticement, and views her body as hers to do with as she wishes (at least until her husband reappears), arguably replicating in an earlier Spain the modern morality of the independent and liberated woman (the ‘social type’ that Vega represents) that we have seen in films such as *Lucía* and *Cama*. Several of the reviews pick up on the idea of contemporariness within the film, which Smith sees as a problem (saying of Vega that ‘Her persona is too contemporary for a period role’ (2004a: 44)) but Torreiro sees as having powerfully enhanced the reasons that Carmen is seen as a threat (her independence and refusal to be dominated –and Vega’s magnetic performance is mentioned as being integral to this enhancement) (2003: 53).

Despite the emphasis on the way that Carmen uses her body to get what she wants, the surprise of this version of *Carmen* is how little nudity or sexually explicit material it contains, especially given the construction of Vega’s star image and some of the other work of director Vicente Aranda (for example, *Amantes* (1991)). Aranda’s film does not really use Vega’s body as a spectacle until after Carmen dies and then it is revealed in a way that recalls *Hable*, with the camera panning down her prone body as a mantilla is pulled to uncover her naked form on the altar. In the sequence in *Hable* the only sound is that of Alberto Iglesias’s score, which allows the adulation of Vega / Amparo’s body to proceed unhindered by comment, and similarly in *Carmen* there is nothing to distract us as Don José (Leonardo Sbaraglia) gazes at Carmen’s body in silence, although Aranda’s camera takes in the full length of Vega’s body from head to toe (in contrast to Almodóvar using inserts of Vega’s face with a model body), emphasising that it is Vega’s (real) body that is on display. The presentation of her body in this manner is a recurrent feature in Vega’s films and is another example of how performances contain echoes of earlier roles (Drake 2004: 77) and the repetition

of certain tropes and iconographies (generic, rather than nationally-specific, in Vega's case) through which star images maintain their apparent consistency (Dyer [1979] 1998: 62, 98).



Figures 15-18: the revelation of Carmen's body.

Her position laid out on the altar could be read as a recuperation of Spanishness via a reconfiguration of Carmen as a martyr, and the image of Don José silently contemplating her covered body on the altar lends itself to ideas of worship and deification, although this image is then perverted by the manner of her body's revelation. The slow and erotic uncovering, as with *Hable*, causes a fetishization of the star body, with the female form becoming an embodiment of the relationship between love, sex, and death as well as being, in this case, an encapsulation of the epigraph to Mérimée's novella – 'Every woman is poison. But she has two good times: one when she's in bed, and the other when dead'. Like *Hable*, the sequence also reaffirms and perpetuates the centrality of 'the body' within Paz Vega's star image as well as offering an example of the deification of the star body (idolised and unattainable). It is significant that in the three films where Vega's body is revealed for the viewer in this way (the passive striptease in *Lucía*, and the revelation sequences in *Hable* and *Carmen*), Vega's character is either unconscious or dead in the sequences concerned; the characters are not in control of their bodies and Vega is presented as an immobile spectacle. This 'disembodiment' is perhaps most heightened in *Carmen* because of Carmen's active and conscious use of her body during the majority of the narrative.

Although Vega was hesitant to return to onscreen nudity, she said ‘pero cómo decir no a Carmen, un personaje con el que cualquier actriz sueña, y más si eres andaluza’ (Ponga 2003: 80). The use of Vega to play a character who has come to be taken as the epitome of Spanishness is interesting because while she is from the region where Carmen herself originates (and her accent was described as ‘refreshingly authentic’ (Smith 2004a: 44)), within Spain Vega is not constructed as embodying the nation in the same way as Penélope Cruz. Although, as already noted, outside of Spain Vega’s regional identity is one that connotes Spanishness in an obvious manner, highlighting that the sense of reflection or projection can differ depending on the perspective of the viewer. But in interviews at the time of the film’s release, Vega emphasised the connection that she felt with the role by virtue of her regional roots:

Es verdad que me ha ayudado el hecho de haber nacido en Sevilla; estoy relacionada con la fábrica de tabacos, con el mundo del toro, con el baile y el cante. Conozco un poco el mundo de los bandoleros, de la serranía de Ronda porque he pasado todos los veranos de mi vida allí porque mi madre es rondeña. Ha sido como volver a mi territorio [...] (García 2003b: 36)

It is nonetheless significant that in the latest Spanish interpretation of the story, instead of casting the woman who is arguably the biggest Spanish female star at this time (and Cruz has a longstanding desire to play Carmen (see Benamon (2005: 64))), they cast someone whose stardom was still on the rise.¹⁸⁷ It is indicative of Vega’s standing within the industry that she was given the role, although to an extent the character is bigger than the actor playing her: the story and character are the ‘star attraction’ rather than the actor. But Vega’s participation in this production of mythical Spanishness nonetheless again embeds her ‘in the imaginary [...] construct that is Spain and the world’s view of Spain’ (Perriam 2003: 10).

Vega describes her performance as being a collaborative effort with Aranda:

Ese punto juguetón que tiene hasta en los momentos malos; de niña traviesa, pícaro, es mío. Vicente quería una Carmen fría, dura, muy hermética, sensual, pero sensual falsa y calculadora. Y lo tiene. Pero aunque sepa mucho y esté muy resabiada, Carmen tiene 20 años, es una niña. Una niña pícaro, juguetona, y que sonrío. Creo que ese matiz se lo he dado yo. (Ponga 2003: 78)

¹⁸⁷ Aranda’s producer insisted he approach Cruz about the role but she had made a verbal promise to Bigas Luna to be his Carmen if and when he managed to make his long-proposed version: Cruz told Aranda that she would be happy to make both films but Bigas Luna’s would have to be first (Silio 2003: 53).

Although the elements that Vega mentions as being ‘hers’ are in keeping with her star image, overall her incarnation as Carmen presents a character who is much colder than any other she has played; Vega’s characters are usually warm-hearted and have the best of intentions. However, the coldness and falseness performed by Vega fit the perception of Carmen as a classic *femme fatale*, a treacherous woman who uses her looks and sexuality to bring a ‘good man’ down, leading to her own destruction; as Labanyi points out, *Carmen* is a myth ‘in which the image of Spanishness –Carmen herself– is destroyed’ (2002b: 258). In common with the traditional *femme fatale*, Carmen is not punished for being a gypsy, or any of the actual ‘crimes’ that she has committed, but for doing as she pleases and her unconditional freedom; this is what society will not tolerate (Donapetry 1998: 28).



Figures 19-20: accoutrements of Spanishness

The *femme fatale* is associated with the idea of femininity as masquerade and Doane interprets Riviere’s concept of masquerade (that excessive femininity is used by women as a mask to ‘hide the possession of masculinity’ ([1929] 1986: 38)) as meaning that ‘femininity can only be sustained by its accoutrements’ (1991: 34). As stated in the Cruz chapter, Davies ties this to the national by suggesting that stereotypical images of Spain also act as ‘a sort of masquerade’ (2004: 6), and arguably in *Carmen* it is not simply femininity that is sustained by its accoutrements but also Spanishness; Aranda’s film contains a series of symbols of stereotypical Spanishness (such as the fan and the lace mantilla), most of which are concentrated on Vega / Carmen’s costume. It is significant that Carmen emphasises her Spanishness in order to influence those around her (specifically men) because masquerade is also associated with deception and as disguising ‘an intent to lay claim to masculine power’ (Davies 2004: 6). Riviere said that ‘genuine womanliness’ and ‘masquerade’ cannot be separated, ‘they are the same thing’ ([1929] 1986: 38), which suggests that there is nothing behind the performance, and similarly Davies posits that the

masquerade of nationness is ‘a “pretence” of Spanishness that in many ways becomes indistinguishable from whatever the real thing might be’ (2004: 6).

The conception of nationness as masquerade, and one that may have nothing behind it, could arguably be said to have parallels with Vega’s star image and its relation to the national. As stated in the Penélope Cruz chapter, Cruz has instances when she participates in an overt performance of Spanishness (e.g. the ‘Los Piconeros’ sequence in *La niña de tus ojos*) but that does not detract from the belief that there is also a ‘genuine’ Spanishness behind the performance as well. In contrast Vega’s image is not palpably shaped by national specifics and she is not taken to innately embody Spanish femininity in the same manner as Cruz. Vega is representative of the increasingly globalised framework of contemporary cinema; her image from the outset has been less specifically Spanish (although somewhat contradictorily she has the strongest regional identity of the four stars discussed in this thesis). The idea of her star image (and body) as a blank surface onto which other identities can be projected fits with masquerade; when Vega participates in a performance of Spanishness (for example, in *Carmen* and also the flamenco outfit sequence in *Di que sí*) it feels like a performance of nationness that is only on the surface and does not necessarily go more than costume deep.

That both *Di que sí* and *Carmen* highlight Vega’s *regional* identity suggests that although the lack of emphasis on Vega’s regional identity in many of her films represents an acknowledgement of cultural heterogeneity (and fissures in the national being reconciled), when the regional *is* emphasised it disturbs representations of the national; the highlighting of the regional in these specific films could also explain why Vega’s invocations of Spanishness come across as surface covering (although in the case of *Di que sí* the invocation of the national (the flamenco outfit) is so brief that it arguably does not interfere with the rest of the narrative accepting Vega’s regional identity and again reconciling or masking the fissures in Spanish national identities). On the other hand, what is regional to Spaniards is straightforwardly Spanish to viewers outside of Spain, meaning that Vega’s regional identity does not disturb the national, and in fact projects the national, outside of Spain’s borders. The complex significations of the regional within Vega’s star image also reinforces that one star can have a contradictory relationship with the national that varies from film to film; Vega’s regional identity can either point to national cohesion or disunity, depending

on the circumstances in which it is performed and the perspective from which it is viewed.

Carmen also acts as an example of how real and ‘reel’ personas can merge in certain roles (and how a film can influence perceptions of a star), as it was around this time that some Spanish commentators began to question Vega’s ambitions; the perception that ambition is unbecoming in a woman (which we saw in relation to Cruz’s US career) began to attach itself to Vega in the period following *Carmen*’s release (paralleling Vega’s first forays into US cinema). For example, García appears to draw parallels between Carmen’s use of men and the series of men who have been influential within Vega’s career when she observes that the actress had dropped her original agent for one with greater international contacts (noting that her former agent still represents Eduardo Noriega and Fele Martínez –with the inference that if he is good enough for them then he should be good enough for Vega) (2003b: 34). She goes on to say:

A ella le da igual que el realizador tenga nombre o no. Al menos es lo que dice. Lo que sí es verdad es que en un espacio muy corto de tiempo ha trabajado a las órdenes de algunos de los más afamados realizadores del cine español (2003b: 36).

The ‘al menos es lo que dice’ suggests Vega is being deceptive but she *has* worked with new, as well as established, directors and has always been open about wanting an international career.¹⁸⁸ The speed with which she has ascended to the firmament of Spanish stardom is much commented on without it necessarily being acknowledged that if all these famous directors want to work with her, perhaps talent as well as ambition may enter the equation. Arguably, as with Eduardo Noriega, Vega’s good looks distract from her acting abilities as well as eliding some of the regional and / or national specificities of her stardom. Where she differs from Noriega is that his star image does not interfere with his performing the national (in fact despite the lack of overt national specifics, his star image nonetheless complements the national narratives he has engaged with), but the elision of national specifics in the foundation of Vega’s star image sets up contradictions when she performs more overtly national narratives, as seen in *Carmen* and Vega’s other national narrative, *Teresa, el cuerpo de Cristo* (henceforth referred to as *Teresa*).

¹⁸⁸ See the Appendix for details of who has directed her.

Four years after *Carmen*, Vega performed another iconic Spanish woman, Saint Teresa of Ávila (1515-82). *Teresa* focuses on Teresa's early spiritual life and follows her up until her founding of the Order of Discalced Carmelites and her first convent in 1562; both Loriga and Vega have made it clear that they see it as the story of the woman rather than the saint she became (the pressbook). The closing titles of the film state that she went on to found twelve more convents, was canonized in 1622 (a mere forty years after her death), and that her writings are considered key to the Spanish literature of the Golden Age. Her status within Spain is indicated by the Cortes having ratified in 1617 a petition by the Discalced Carmelites suggesting that Teresa (at this point beatified but not yet canonized) be elevated to the status of co-patron saint of Spain, something that came into effect in 1627 (Rowe 2006: 574). Her status was revoked two years later after a sustained campaign of resistance against her election by followers of Santiago (the patron saint of Spain) (ibid), but it is nonetheless significant that in their campaign Teresa's followers highlighted her Spanish specificities (she lived her whole life in Spain, had her mystical experiences in Spain, and founded her convents there) and argued that 'no other Spanish saint had as close a relationship with Spain as did Teresa' (Rowe 2006: 587). This is echoed within Loriga's film, which shows that she was arguably a product of the conditions in which Spain found itself in that era: 'En realidad, Teresa solo pudo existir en España, como Lutero en Alemania. Teresa es nuestro pasado' (Díaz Yanes 2007).

Teresa shows a woman of doubts and contradictions who stood up to the Church authorities (despite being investigated by the Holy Inquisition) and went her own way. For Loriga, Teresa's independent spirit was part of the appeal of the story:

Es la historia de una mujer en contra de un esquema de vida muy rígido, en unas condiciones muy duras para el desarrollo intelectual, espiritual y humano. De modo que una mujer en esa época –en una época en la que se suponía que las mujeres no eran nada– se atreviese a ser casi todo lo que una mujer puede ser y que acabase haciendo historia, me pareció que merecía la pena. Otra cosa que siempre me interesó es que no fuera una mártir. Que no era una de estas historias típicas de mujeres que dicen “se atrevió a desafiar al mundo y pagó por ello”... Santa Teresa luchó contra todo el mundo y salió ganando, en su día y en la historia. (the pressbook)

Given Paz Vega's star image as a modern, liberated (and decidedly sexy) woman, her casting may at first glance seem odd. But if one can view Teresa as a woman with much in common with modern women who 'van en contra de lo establecido [...] luchan en un mundo de hombres y que consiguen lo que persiguen' (Vega, in an

interview on the DVD), casting a woman who has been taken as representing the prototypical independent Spanish woman of the 21st century makes sense. Arguably Loriga also knowingly uses the sexual connotations of Vega's star image in his desire to show Teresa as an attractive and vivacious woman, as well as via the depictions of Teresa's religious ecstasies (discussed below) (another example of the exploitation of star images for the 'production and consumption of films' (McDonald 2000: 1)), which would prove to be controversial for the contemporary Catholic Church in Spain.

As Smith observes, the combined reputations of Ray Loriga (a Gen-X author) and Paz Vega convinced potential audiences that the film would be blasphemous (which it is not) (2008b) and the Catholic authorities in Spain came out against the film before it had screened anywhere. Prior to the film's release a statement from the Conferencia Episcopal said that, although the film was not offensive, 'la aproximación mística de Santa Teresa a la figura de Cristo como una relación carnal roza el limite de lo aceptable cuando recalca el contacto físico y casi sensual' (cited in A.A. 2007: 60). Teresa experienced religious ecstasies during which she saw visions of Christ and felt both extreme pleasure and pain; she wrote of one such instance that 'me dejaba toda abrasada en amor grande de Dios' (*Vida XXIX*, 13). The film's poster (fig.24) appeared to confirm the worries of the Church (it shows Vega's naked back in profile with a male hand with the stigmata resting on her shoulder –very much capitalising on Vega's existing star image), although in fact the film is a great deal subtler than that image suggests and is not so crude as to explicitly relate religious ecstasy to sexual orgasm. But the poster demonstrates the risks of trying to exploit the associations of a given star image, and the Church's reaction to Vega being cast also highlights that stars exceed the boundaries of their roles (King 2002: 150); Vega's star image precedes her actual performances.



Figures 21-22: Loriga's vision of the transverberation of Teresa's heart and a close-up of the face of Bernini's sculpture of the same event

Some of the visions are staged as painterly tableaux, which impact on Teresa emotionally or spiritually, and others are shown to involve physical sensation (for example, caresses); the film is unequivocal in connecting these sensations to Teresa's intense love for God, but it is difficult to represent those sensations without the images also being open to other (more sexual or erotic) interpretations. Teresa understood why such events could be open to an erotic interpretation, stating that 'one makes these comparisons because there are no suitable ones' (Fernández-Armesto 2000: 136). The film's vision of the transverberation of her heart has certain similarities to Bernini's statue *The Ecstasy of Saint Teresa* (1647-1652), which was based on the same passage in her writings and has also been subject to various interpretations. Howe says that the sculpture 'captures both the passionate eroticism latent in the incident as well as the mystical rapture which the saint claims to have experience' (1988: 231) while Lacan argued that 'you need but go to Rome and see the statue by Bernini to immediately understand that she's coming' (cited in Hayes 1999: 333). Hayes refers to Bernini's statue when he argues that 'the more artfully one tries to represent the sacred, the more profane the result' (1999: 340) and Loriga encounters the same 'problem'.



Figures 23-25: the emphasis on Teresa's physical punishments and suffering draws attention to Vega's body, while the controversial poster and other promotional images also suggest possible erotic content

Loriga's film does not avoid sex. For example, there is the suggestion that Teresa lost her virginity before becoming a nun (an early sequence shows her being kissed by a man and as he embraces her a thorn, on the rose pinned to his jacket, pierces her pale flesh and blood runs down her breast –in the next scene her father says that she has dishonoured the family name). It also seems significant that in her visions Teresa does not wear her (white) nun's habit or gowns but a luxurious red dress; she appears

before Christ as a woman, not as a nun. The rose piercing her breast is also later paralleled by the cilice that she binds ever tighter to pierce the flesh of her stomach and back (again causing bleeding –see fig.23), something that she does in an attempt to be closer to God; the film appears to make a connection between the sensations that she seeks in relation to God and possible sexual experience. The possible dual readings of the vision sequences (as relating to love but also possibly being sexual) clearly ties to Vega's star image and the centrality of love to the associations that she has with scenes of sexual content. It is possible that Vega's star image impregnates those sequences with meanings and significance that were not intended by the filmmakers, although this seems unlikely given that Loriga says that he thinks it important to acknowledge that Teresa was a beautiful woman and was known to be quite coquettish (pressbook). Like the physical damage done to Angela in *Sólo mía*, the physical punishments that Teresa subjects herself to (such as the cilice and self-flagellation) also draw attention to Vega's body (the camera focuses on the effects these punishments have on her physical being), as do the fantastically ornate costumes she wears in the first half of the film, again emphasising the centrality that 'the body' has to her star image (in a variety of contexts).

The two films discussed in this section connect Vega's characters to the national and images of Spanishness in a relatively straightforward manner. As stated above, Carmen has long been taken as an iconic representation of Spanish femininity. She is an example of how Spain and / or Spanishness is viewed from outside of Spain's borders (*Carmen* is a French creation) and is a projection of Spanish difference and exoticism through foreign eyes, although in the case of Aranda's film we are given a Spanish interpretation of the foreign view. The contemporaneity of Vega's performance also looks inward to reflect and project the independent and liberated women of contemporary Spain who Vega ordinarily plays within a contemporary setting. Despite this connection to the liberated woman within Vega's star image, there is nonetheless a jarring effect between Vega's image and the character. Vega is associated with the body but not with seduction in the mode of the vamp or the *femme fatale*: films that have previously used her body as a spectacle (*Lucía* and *Hable*) have used her in sequences that are structured around love rather than just sex. Vega's star persona does not have the requisite iciness to fit a character so coldly calculating that she uses her own body for nefarious ends. That is not to say that Vega fails in achieving the portrayal of Carmen that she set out to give, only that there is something

'off' in the overall effect in relation to her existing star image, although this did not have any impact on the success of the film at the Spanish box office.

Like Carmen, Teresa was a woman ahead of her time in terms of her tenacity and her drive to achieve what she wanted, but unlike Mérimée's fictional heroine Teresa succeeded, and on her own terms. Loriga's film does not go into great detail about the problems that the Church was facing in Teresa's era but the divisions are apparent in the various factions that try to exert their influence over Teresa or use her for their own aims. Her national identity is not a focus of the film but Rowe notes that it was in the campaign to have Teresa instated as the co-patron saint of Spain that emphasis was placed on her Spanishness, and both before and after that period greater emphasis was placed on her status as a writer and as a defender of the entire Catholic Church (i.e. not just the Church in Spain) (2006: 585). Loriga's film is a specifically Spanish narrative but *Teresa* is not overtly interested in the 'state of the nation' and nor does it imbue its protagonist or narrative with obvious symbols of Spanishness in the manner of Aranda's *Carmen*.

Loriga and Vega both say that Teresa still has relevance today, not necessarily in terms of her religious ideals but in relation to independent women who find themselves 'fighting' in a modern man's world (interviews on the DVD and the pressbook); Loriga describes Teresa as 'una heroína y un icono de feminismo cuando esa palabra no existía' (Agencias 2007). Arguably the filmmakers utilise the resonance that the independent woman has today (in conjunction with the media construct of 'Paz Vega' as the 'new Spanish woman') in order to give contemporary audiences a way into the film, rather than trying to connect Spain's past to its present by inserting contemporary attitudes into an historical setting (as seen in *Belle époque*) in an attempt to suggest consistency between then and now (as seen in Hobsbawm's 'invented tradition' (1983), which elides the historical specificity of nationhood). The recurrence of the independent woman within Vega's work points to the importance and resonance that this image has in contemporary Spain. *Teresa* utilises Vega's star image to subtly (but nonetheless controversially) suggest what it does not state explicitly: that there were parallels between Teresa's mysticism and sexual experience. At the same time, *Teresa* resurrects an aspect of Vega's star image that *Carmen* ignored (the centrality of love within her image), which alongside the emphasis on Vega's body within the film, arguably makes *Teresa* a more complete encapsulation of Vega's star image than the more obviously sexual *Carmen*.

This chapter has investigated how the national is manifested in Paz Vega's star image and how she has interacted with 'the national' onscreen through a detailed textual analysis of specific films and performances including an examination of the ways in which her star image interacts (and possibly interferes) with particular roles and representations, and a consideration of how industrial imperatives have contributed to the shape of her star image. Like Eduardo Noriega, Vega interacts with the national in a markedly different way to either Javier Bardem or Penélope Cruz, although her interactions and manifestations are a similarly complex combination of reflections and projections.

Vega emerged almost a decade after the cultural flashpoint of 1992, and the fact that her stardom was achieved after the period when Spanish identity was overtly (and publicly) being negotiated has impacted on her interactions with the national; if, as Hobsbawm suggests (1983), certain concepts become ingrained in a culture because of their utility at a given time, Spain had clearly moved on from the need to overtly code their stars with national meanings by the time of Vega's arrival. *Lucía* avoided 'the national', instead placing an emphasis on Vega's body and appearance as well as giving her star image an association with love in conjunction with scenes of a sexual nature, and reinforcing the warmth that Spanish audiences had already seen on their television screens in *7 Vidas*. Her first big film therefore arguably highlighted the generic aspects of her stardom at the expense of her national (and regional) specificities, and as such underlined the part that industrial imperatives play in shaping a star image –as stated above, sex sells in Spain and the Industrial Contexts chapter showed that in commercial terms that aspect of Vega's image is profitable at the Spanish box office.

At the same time, Vega's *regional* identity has been on display since *7 Vidas* and she has by far the strongest regional identity of the four stars examined in this thesis; if Vega's star image has any national identity ingrained within it, it is a specifically regional (*sevillana*) one rather than Spanishness in a broad sense (something that is highlighted if she is placed alongside Cruz's Spanish everywoman), although *outside* of Spain that regional identity is representative of the world's conception of Spanishness. Vega's star image therefore contains some quite complex significations of the national, even though they are not necessarily obvious on the surface; although an overt relationship with the national has become less important in terms of what the

film industry requires of Spanish stars, an interaction between the star and the national still takes place. Vega's star image is also indicative of the increasing regional diversification within Spanish identities in this period, and as such has some contradictory elements: sometimes Vega's star image reconciles (as described by Gledhill 1991: xiv) the fissures in regional-national identities (as in *Lucía* and *Cama* where nothing is explicitly made of her regional identity, pointing to an inclusive cultural heterogeneity being represented in Spanish cinema) and at others exposes them (as in *Carmen* and *Di que sí* where the emphasis placed on her regional identity (sometimes) undermines her performances or manifestations of a broader Spanishness), at least within Spain. This also contradicts Hayward's argument that national cultures assert a fixed homogenised common culture irrespective of reality (2000: 99); whether reconciling or exposing the fissures in regional-national identities, Vega's regional identity is nearly always present and therefore projects cultural heterogeneity within Spain (as well as giving her star image coherence even if it is inflected in different ways in different films).

Most of Vega's reflections and projections of the national are directed inwards at Spain, with the possible exception of *Carmen*, which 'has been from the very beginning the product of foreigners' (Smith 2004a: 43) even if it is moulded by Spanish hands in this instance. *Sólo mía* engages with what is seen as a national 'issue' (the only one of Vega's contemporary-set films to explicitly do so) but by the end genre overwhelms the national, and that is the pattern for most of Vega's Spanish films: the requirements of genre, or the circumstances of the narrative, trump in-depth consideration of the national in films such as *Cama* and *Hable* as well. But as stated in relation to Eduardo Noriega, a star's engagement with the national need not be explicit to be revealing and many of Vega's comedies (including *7 Vidas*) lightheartedly reflect something of the 'typical ways of behaving' (Dyer 1986: 15) ('gestures, words, intonations, attitudes, postures' are all connected to indigenous cultural codes (Hayward 2006: 376)) of contemporary Spain (and the lives of contemporary Spaniards) back at their national audiences. Likewise, although 'the independent woman' is not a specifically Spanish construct, in the Spanish media's formulation of Vega as an archetypal 'new Spanish woman' her star image is used to project that universal type within a Spanish context. It is also possible for a film to negotiate the national in a complex manner, however fleetingly, despite a surface attention to other more generic elements. *Di que sí* utilises the outside perception of

Spanishness (those elements that mark Spanishness as different to other nationalities) as a source of humour, thereby allowing Spanish audiences to critique this vision of Spain; the film engages in several layers of projections and reflections as Vega's regional identity is projected as difference within Spain (or is reflective of there *being* differences within Spain), while also representing what outside audiences would consider a reflection of traditional notions of Spanishness.

Paz Vega has performed within narratives that have historical and / or cultural significance for Spain (i.e. *Carmen* and *Teresa*), but this is not an obvious thread in her career or star image, and arguably other elements (such as her sex symbol status, or the requirements of genre) elide or overwhelm the national specificities embedded within her films (alongside her regional identity interfering with her being read as national). In terms of her relationship with the national, Vega's star image highlights the increased regionalism within Spain but is also representative of a shift in how the Spanish film industry shapes its produce, and her star image reflects and projects an internationalised form of cinema being produced in Spain (as seen in the styles and genres that point to global media influences circulating within Spanish culture – a way of looking outward that goes beyond Higson's framework (2000: 67)). Although Vega's US career to date has generally sustained the stereotypical perception of Spanish actresses as 'Latina bombshells' and exotic foreign 'others', she has achieved substantial roles in films such as *Spanglish* and *10 Items or Less* (where nationality is not the sole characteristic of the character) in a relatively short timescale and at the time of writing she has made more films outside of Spain than within (ten Spanish films to eleven non-Spanish productions); the ease with which Paz Vega has crossed national boundaries is directly related to the industrial taking precedence over the national within her star image.

With that in mind we now move to the final chapter, to consider the degree to which industrial and national factors shaped contemporary Spanish stardom between 1992 and 2007, and the ways in which the stars can be said to reflect and / or project the national.

Conclusion:

Taking Javier Bardem, Penélope Cruz, Eduardo Noriega, and Paz Vega as case studies, this thesis has examined some of the ways in which contemporary Spanish stardom interacted with 'the national' between 1992 and 2007, by considering the utilisation of their star images in reflections and projections of Spain and / or Spanishness in specific films and how the national is manifested in their respective star images as a result. The investigation has involved cultural contextualisation and an exploration of how the stars fit within developments in the Spanish film industry between 1992 and 2007; this thesis has investigated how a new generation of stars have interacted with an evolving sense of Spanishness onscreen and been shaped by factors specific to the Spanish film industry in this era. The choice of four stars who emerged at different times during the 1992 to 2007 period has also made it possible to track gradual changes undergone by Spanish stardom in terms of the form and content of star images in relation to the national. As stated in the Introduction, the aim has not been to define 'Spanishness' or 'Spanish cinema' but rather to examine how Spanish cinema can be said to mould its stars according to national, industrial, and / or cultural specificities. In this conclusion I intend to summarise and draw together the main findings of the various chapters.

As outlined in the Introduction and the Literature Review, the existing work on national stardom (e.g. Babington (2001), Perriam (2003), Vincendeau (2000)) shows the importance of cultural specificity to stardom, and that the relationship between stars and the national informs the shape and content of their stardom. This thesis has built on that work by emphasising the importance of cultural specificities and by largely taking a text-based approach to the analysis of the chosen stars and their images. I have sought to apply a combination of cultural and film (specifically star) theory in conjunction with concepts of how 'the national' is formed (i.e. as something that needs to either evolve or be maintained) to a reading of contemporary Spanish stardom; the overall approach taken is that both 'nationness' and stars are cultural constructs that are specific to a given time. I have also covered new ground in the analysis of national stardom by incorporating the industrial contexts of (Spanish) stardom, through an investigation of the Spanish film industry and cinema that the stars were part of between 1992 and 2007, in order to include all three central facets of stardom (production, content, circulation) in the consideration of their star images.

The central investigation of the thesis has been into how stars interact with the national onscreen, and how their star images manifest ‘the national’ as a result, and as detailed in the Introduction, I have adapted Higson’s approach to national cinemas (2000: 67) to categorise these interactions with the national as either reflections or projections (returned to below). Accepting that outside influences are inherently part of contemporary cinema and stardom (and cinema has always been multinational anyway (Marsh and Nair 2004: 3)), the use of the (adapted) reflection-projection framework to categorise stars’ interactions with the national can work in tandem with the belief that nationhood’s definition ‘inevitably shift[s] over time’ (Williams 2002: 3) (i.e. that national identities and traditions are not fixed in place (see Hobsbawm (1983)); what Spanish stars reflect and / or project of the national changes alongside broader cultural developments specific to Spain. What this thesis has argued, however, is that *how* (and *what*) the stars reflect and project of the national is not simply shaped by national cultural factors, but also implicitly and integrally impacted by contemporaneous industrial factors and imperatives.

The Industrial Contexts chapter chronicled the changing circumstances of the Spanish film industry between 1992 and 2007 and concluded that these changes or developments (for example, the influx of a younger generation of directorial talent and the continued instability of the Spanish film industry) can be said to have had a direct influence over the form and content of Spanish stardom in this era. The collective filmographies of the four stars, encompassing a range of styles and genres and a variety of established and new directors, are indicative of the particularly pronounced heterogeneity inherent to Spanish cinema in this period (for example, through the broadening of the cinematic styles and genres incorporated into Spanish cinema by directors such as Amenábar and de la Iglesia), and also draw attention to the flexibility that such heterogeneity requires of stars circulating within that cinema; industrial imperatives (i.e. what an industry requires of a star) shape the *content* as well as the *form* of stardom (the ‘what’ and the ‘how’). An increasingly international form of cinema has been being produced in Spain and this has an impact on the types of stars that are simultaneously created. Drake says that stars are ‘a means by which Hollywood has been able to present itself as a global rather than national film industry’ (2004: 76); the newest Spanish stars are symptomatic of the aspirations that the Spanish film industry has to tap into the global film market and not to be restricted by their national boundaries. The increasing ease with which contemporary Spanish

stars now circulate abroad is indicative of their having participated with, and been shaped by, this international-style cinema at home, although the increasing number of Spanish actors attempting to start international careers also highlights the perception of perpetual ‘crisis’ in the Spanish film industry.¹⁸⁹

Although the economics of stardom in terms of salaries and production costs and / or the star as capital have not been discussed, in terms of how the chosen stars fit within the industrial environment of this period the Industrial Contexts chapter also considered how the box office records of the four stars fit within the box office trends of the period and analysed how that positions them within the Spanish film industry and the current panoply of Spanish stars. In contrast to the popular wisdom that Spanish stars do not ‘sell’ in Spain (for example, see Green (2004b: 21)), I have established that Spanish stars *can* be a factor in the commercial success of a film in Spain (illustrated through the four stars appearing in 26% of the yearly top ten Spanish films between 1992 and 2006); just because they are not made for profit, does not mean that Spanish stars cannot be profitable. Admittedly this is often in conjunction with other factors (such as genre), but arguably it still suggests that rather than looking at Spanish cinema as the traditional national cinema that is auteur-led and reliant on directors, Spanish stars should receive greater acknowledgement for contributing to a film’s possible success than is currently the case.¹⁹⁰

The Industrial Contexts chapter outlined the contemporaneous industrial circumstances of the stars’ production (essentially the industrial backdrop to their respective emergences), but in the case study chapters attention was paid to how, and what, specific films reflect and / or project of the national, and the central thesis question of how the stars participate in that interaction or negotiation was addressed. It is noticeable that few of the films made by these four stars engage in an outward-looking projection of Spanishness (the obvious exceptions are Bardem’s performance of the *macho ibérico* in *Jamón jamón* and Vega’s masquerade of stereotypical and / or mythical Spanishness in *Carmen*) in the manner described by Higson (i.e.

¹⁸⁹ The exodus of talent has become such a pronounced phenomenon that in December 2007 *Fotogramas* had a twenty-page special entitled ‘El cine español conquista Hollywood’, looking at fifteen Spanish actors and directors who were either already established and / or working in Hollywood (e.g. Bardem, Cruz, Vega and Banderas) or making their first forays into the foreign territory (e.g. Maribel Verdú, Isabel Coixet, Juan Carlos Fresnadillo).

¹⁹⁰ Spanish film studies has already started to move away from the auteur-led perspective (for example, see the collections in Lázaro-Reboll and Willis (2004) and Beck and Rodríguez Ortega (2008), which approach Spanish cinema through ‘popular’ cinema and genre respectively), but Spanish stars as yet have not had sustained attention from this perspective.

Spanishness as difference) (2000: 67), and it is overwhelmingly through *inward-* looking projections and reflections of Spain that the four stars interact with and / or manifest the national. However, their interactions with the national also differ from each other, and this can be traced back to the ways in which their respective first films negotiated the national.

Morin emphasises the importance of the role that turns an actor into a star ([1960] 2005: 29) because that role shapes the career and stardom that follows; initial films also have an impact on how stars interact with the national onscreen, and support Willis' assertion that stars 'cannot be separated from the industrial contexts of their production' (2004: 3). The initial key roles of all four chosen stars have shaped how they respectively interact with the national; the initial films of Bardem and Cruz (*Jamón jamón*, *Huevos de oro*, and *Belle époque*) negotiate a complex set of inward-looking reflections and projections (as well as some outward projections), whereas the initial films of Noriega and Vega (*Tesis*, *Abre los ojos*, and *Lucía y el sexo*) are less obviously concerned with the national in terms of either content or possible audiences (although that is not to say that there is no negotiation of the national taking place). The evolution (indicative of stars' positions as 'shifting signifiers' (Hayward 2006: 380)) of how the national is manifested within Spanish stardom is apparent when the stars are considered in chronological order (i.e. the order in which they attained stardom): 'a change in generation is often accompanied by a rearrangement of the terms in which national identity is articulated' (Triana-Toribio 2003: 141).

Javier Bardem and Penélope Cruz first came to public attention in 1992 in *Jamón jamón*, a film that self-consciously explores the roots and symbols of Spanish identity at the same time as setting up a conflict between traditional and modern Spain; the film suggests that by 1992 Spain had arrived at a juncture when it had to decide what it wanted Spain and Spanishness to mean and represent, and how much influence the past was going to be allowed to have over Spain's future. As is suggested within the case studies, the fact that the film plays with mythical aspects of Spanishness and was released at a time when Spain was questioning its identity in a very public fashion is perhaps why it has become emblematic of that era of Spanish cinema; the prominence of Bardem and Cruz in the aftermath of this film, and the manner in which their

respective images are ingrained with Spanishness, is at least in part because of how their first key roles connected with the Spanish zeitgeist.¹⁹¹

Jamón jamón manages to encompass both broad projections of difference from the outside world and subtler reflections on the choices that Spain was facing, and likewise the initial star images of Bardem and Cruz on the surface seem close to stereotypical perceptions of Spain (the *macho* and the passionate Lolita) but on closer inspection reveal contradictions and fissures in those images (such as the conflict between tradition and modernity). Over time the two stars have developed in slightly different ways, as Bardem's image is inherently contemporary whereas Cruz's is tied to Spain's past (an association that stems from the other film she released in 1992, *Belle époque*), but they are both held as ideal (and sometimes problematic) embodiments of Spain and overall their films are more concerned with inward-looking reflections and projections of Spain than with outward projections of Spanishness in the sense of projecting difference. By extension their respective star images offer subtle negotiations of the national in an era of ongoing social change, including the ways in which their respective star images reconcile or mask (following Gledhill (1991: xiv)) the fissures and fragilities formed by the strong sense of regional identities and 'nationalities' within Spanish identities (Berthier and Seguin 2007: xvii). This is evident in films such as *Los lunes al sol*, *Mar adentro*, *La niña de tus ojos*, and *Volver*, where specific regional identities are invoked through Bardem and Cruz's respective performances (most obviously through accent) but the stars are still taken as representing the Spanish (i.e. national rather than regional) everyman or everywoman: they perform the regional but their star images (which have accrued associations with Spanishness in its broadest sense through *Jamón jamón* and later films) mask or reconcile the fissures that the regionalities should set up in terms of national identity, and they continue to represent the nation as a whole, and 'Spanishness' continues to be the prism through which their performances are viewed.

The degree to which national specificities (and the specificity of having emerged in the Spain of 1992) have shaped the form that their stardom has taken can be seen in the continued emphasis on their 'Spanishness' in its most inclusive sense, although this has developed in different ways in their respective images. For example,

¹⁹¹ Cruz's good looks no doubt also played a part in her rapid ascent to star status, but there are plenty of other attractive Spanish actresses who have not managed to attain her level of stardom nor her status on the national stage.

Bardem's most recent Spanish films (*Los lunes al sol* and *Mar adentro*) have been made with the newer generation of Spanish filmmakers who (in these films, at least) aim for the universal rather than the specifically national (through an emphasis on the regional) and therefore Bardem's films have moved from explicitly to implicitly dealing with the national. This movement is indicative of the increasingly internationalised forms of cinema being produced in Spain (industrial changes have informed or inflected Bardem's later image even though the foundation of that image pre-dates many of the developments), but at the same time the national's continued presence within his image and performances points to the specificity of when his star image was formed (the cultural resonances embedded in the foundation of his star image still remain). In contrast to Bardem and his later films, Penélope Cruz has continued to explicitly interact with the national, most notably through the conflict between tradition and modernity, a trope that highlights the ongoing negotiation between the past and present in the presentation of contemporary Spanish identities. The different ways in which Cruz's films interact with that negotiation (detailed in the case study) also emphasise that the stars' involvements with the national onscreen play out hegemonic discourses circulating within the broader culture (i.e. they can contest as well as support predominant conceptions and perceptions of nationness). Part of the reason that Cruz's films have continued to explicitly negotiate the national is that she has returned to work with certain filmmakers (Bigas Luna, Fernando Trueba, Pedro Almodóvar) who deliberately continue to reiterate and reinforce Cruz's national meanings and associations onscreen.

In contrast, Eduardo Noriega and Paz Vega entered the Spanish film industry at a time when a generational shift in terms of directors was underway and they both made their first seminal films with directors of this new generation (Alejandro Amenábar and Julio Medem respectively), unlike Bardem and Cruz whose first films were made with established directors of previous generations (Bigas Luna and Fernando Trueba). By the time Eduardo Noriega arrived in 1996 / 1997 there are readily apparent differences in how the star image relates to the national. Arguably this stems from Noriega's first seminal films, *Tesis* and *Abre los ojos*, avoiding overt national specifics and not obviously engaging with Spanishness, and looking outwards for their treatment of genre and visual language; Noriega's early films operate in the nebulous transcultural and transnational zones of what constitutes contemporary Spanish cinema through Amenábar's use of Hollywood styles and genre tropes, and

the requirements of those genre tropes (a form of industrial imperatives) shaped the foundation of Noriega's image. One can also see a change not only in *what* is represented as the national, but also *how* the national is represented; the Amenábar-Noriega collaborations do not address 'Spain' in the same way as Bardem films such as *Jamón jamón*, *Boca a boca*, or *Carne trémula*. The Amenábar-Noriega films approach the national indirectly and in an abstract manner through the themes of contemporary urban alienation, the fragility of contemporary masculine identities, and psychological instability; as Spain comes to see itself differently in light of social changes, and seeks to redefine itself (arguably in the world's eyes as well as its own), Noriega's early characters are correspondingly unsure of their place in the world and arguably project a fear about losing touch with cultural roots and what will happen as Spain continues to change (will it still recognisably be Spain?). But at the same time, the absence of national specifics in *Tesis* and *Abre los ojos* is also due to Amenábar explicitly trying to move away from the national in his filmmaking through his use of popular genres not commonly associated with 'Spanish cinema'; there is an industrial basis to what the images present of the national as well as a cultural interpretation.

The interrelation between cultural roots (or national geography) and psychological (in)stability is detailed in the case study across the length of Noriega's career to date, and it is his early films that set up that interrelation. The Amenábar films also placed a greater emphasis on the generic over the nationally-specific in Noriega's star image; he has multiple interactions with the national in his later films (specifically through historical narratives set in periods when Spanish identities were in dramatic flux) but he is not perceived as explicitly representing 'the Spanish male' because his negotiations of the national do not 'stick' to his star image in a discernable way, and instead his 'seductive menace' has become a dominant star trait.¹⁹² There is generally also a greater emphasis on the requirements of genre than on national specificities within his films¹⁹³; his most successful films are usually thrillers (the genre in which he made his name) irrespective of how they relate (or not) to the national.¹⁹⁴ That is not to say that national specificities are no longer present within the star image (for example, the themes, concerns, and narratives that he repeatedly engages with

¹⁹² The regional is also less obvious in Noriega's star image than it is with the other three stars: apart from the routine references to Cantabria and Santander in magazine profiles, and the regional backdrop of *El invierno de las anjanas*, little emphasis is placed on his regional identity onscreen.

¹⁹³ The higher profile films that he has made abroad (*Vantage Point* (Travis, 2008) and *Transsiberian* (Anderson, 2008)) also fit this genre-based pattern.

¹⁹⁴ See the Industrial Contexts chapter and the Appendix for further details.

onscreen point both to a contemporary desire within Spain to better understand the historical nature of Spanish identities and also an uncertainty as to what Spanishness *is* in an ever-changing Spain), but they are overshadowed by other (more generic) elements.

Paz Vega emerged in 2001, well after the cultural flashpoint of 1992, and that is evident in how she interacts with the national onscreen. Vega's first seminal film (*Lucía y el sexo*) avoided overt national references and that avoidance is arguably deeper rooted than in Noriega's early films because, as detailed in the case study, it is difficult to extrapolate 'the national' from Medem's film beyond its contribution to 'Paz Vega' being presented as a media construct of the 'new Spanish woman'. The emphasis on Vega's body and appearance, and avoidance of the national, in *Lucía y el sexo* (i.e. as with Noriega, the generic aspects of her stardom are highlighted at the expense of her national (and regional) specificities) means that the national feels like something that is only ever overlaid onto her existing image rather than interacted with (in contrast to Noriega, the generic components of whose star image enhance the manner in which his interactions with the national usually unfold). Hence the jarring 'fit' in those of Vega's films with an obvious national narrative and / or interaction with the national (namely *Carmen* and *Teresa, el cuerpo de Cristo*): *Carmen*'s cold-hearted protagonist jars with the sweetness inherent to Vega's star image; and her sex symbol status was controversial in relation to her representation of the woman who would become a saint in *Teresa*.

At the same time, however, Vega's star image contains a highly complex negotiation of the national through her regional identity, which is by far the strongest of the four stars. Although an emphasis on her regional identity can further interfere with her manifestations of the national by undermining knowing projections or performances of Spanishness (for example, in *Carmen* and *Di que sí*—detailed in the case study), the lack of emphasis on her regional identity (which is still nonetheless present) in other films projects and reflects cultural heterogeneity within Spain.¹⁹⁵ As stated in the case study, if Vega's star image has any national identity ingrained within it, it is a specifically regional (*sevillana*) one rather than Spanishness in a broad and nationally encompassing sense, although *outside* of Spain that regional identity is

¹⁹⁵ This also reinforces that one star can have a contradictory relationship with the national that varies from film to film; Vega's regional identity can either point to national cohesion or disunity, depending on the circumstances in which it is performed.

representative of the world's conception of Spanishness. The star need not be explicitly national to be revealing of the culture from which they originate; although few of Vega's films address Spanish social issues (*Sólo mía* is an exception), many of her comedies reflect and project cultural specificities ('gestures, words, intonations, attitudes, postures' are 'indigenous cultural codes' (Hayward 2006: 376)) back at their national audience. Despite the complexity of her relation with the national, what is ultimately foregrounded in Paz Vega's star image is the industrial imperative of 'sex sells' and the overt sexualization with which the Spanish film industry attempts to code its female stars; as noted in the case study, the emphasis on this generic element of her stardom disrupts and / or distracts from her more specifically national (or regional) qualities.

It is clear that Spanish stardom underwent a shift in the time between the emergences of Penélope Cruz and Paz Vega in terms of how Spanish stars interact with, and relate to, the national; if stars act out 'aspects of life that matter to us' (Dyer 1986: 17), the question of what mattered for Spanish audiences (and the Spanish film industry) clearly changed in the aftermath of the overtly national discourses of 1992. The constant state of flux inherent to cultural constructs, meaning that their forms shift over time in accordance with the prevailing ideological discourses, highlights the parallel between stars and nationness as cultural constructs. This is more obvious in the cases of Bardem and Cruz given the elevated national significance of 1992, but the images of Noriega and Vega and their interactions with the national are also indicative of changing ideals and values within the broader culture and society; as stated above, how a star relates to a specific national and cultural environment (Babington 2001: 22) need not be overt to be revealing. Noriega has elements in common with Bardem and Cruz that Vega does not (namely the specificity of a substantial number of his films relating to the national), but what he and Vega have in common is that Spanishness has not become the defining feature of their stardom and instead greater emphasis is placed on the generic elements within their star images. As outlined above, these differences can be traced back to the stars' respective early roles, suggesting that just as 'nationhood is always an image constructed under particular conditions' (Higson [1989] 2002: 139) the same is also true of stardom.

It is difficult to quantify the influences that come into play in shaping the images of contemporary Spanish stars, and obviously there are some limitations to the generalisations that I can make given that only four stars have been examined in detail

(although the fact that each is different to the others is indicative of there being no set pattern followed by all). But the four chosen stars in this thesis have worked with different combinations of directors from different generations (i.e. the newer stars have not worked exclusively with newer directors, nor vice versa), which would suggest that despite the importance of their initial films to the form their image takes and the manner in which they relate to the national, the industrial factors (such as the new filmmakers) alone do not fully explain the shift within Spanish stardom. There is also a relationship between national cinemas and their native audiences, as national film industries create films primarily for their home market and therefore films will be tailored to the perceived tastes of that audience; the majority of stars initially achieve stardom within their own home market and therefore 'play out' contemporaneous cultural conceptions of (for example) gender and articulate 'what the culture prizes as national characteristics' (Babington 2001: 19), and this inevitably changes over time. Industrial imperatives are therefore to a certain degree informed by national circumstances (or specificities), and changing attitudes and tastes within a society will therefore also be contributory factors in moulding the form and content of national cinemas, and by extension national stars.

But at the same time, it is also true that the audience can only choose from what is put on offer by the national film industry, and while there are still Spanish stars who are very specific to their home culture and who would not necessarily 'translate' if their work were shown abroad (for example, Santiago Segura and the *Torrente* films), it seems to increasingly be the case that Spanish stars cross borders with relative ease (Vega is a prime example of this given how quickly her US career has taken off), and this again comes back to industrial imperatives (and the Spanish film industry looking to expand its boundaries). For many of the newest stars, industrial imperatives have arguably become more important to their star images than their relationship with the national (or rather an overt relationship with the national has lost some of its importance in terms of what the industry requires of its stars)¹⁹⁶; national specificities shape the form that stardom takes only to the extent that the star (and the film industry) feels it is politic for their image to be shaded with national 'colour' and there is a greater emphasis on the generic elements of stardom, although it should also be noted that neither the star or the film industry has full control over the star image

¹⁹⁶ Vega's complex projections and reflections of her regional identity highlight that there is still a relationship between star and nation even if it is not on obvious display.

or how they are perceived. Ultimately, both the industrial and national factors can be seen as integral to the contemporary Spanish star image, and although the balance currently seems to be tilting in favour of the industrial imperatives, the end result is very much individuated by each specific star, which offers a vast range of possibilities in terms of star manifestations of the national onscreen.

In conclusion, this thesis has found that contemporary Spanish stars interact with the national in complex combinations of inward-looking reflections and projections (and the occasional outward-looking projection). But between 1992 and 2007 there were gradual changes to these interactions due to factors specific to the Spanish film industry in this era and other cultural / societal changes. As the boundaries of 'Spanish cinema' have expanded (to incorporate a more culturally diverse range of influences and produce an increasingly internationalised form of cinema), the industrial imperatives gradually increased their influence over the star image between 1992 and 2007 and an overt relationship with the national became less important; the industrial imperatives of the period have explicitly shaped how the national is manifested onscreen through Spanish stars. So while in the cases of Javier Bardem and Penélope Cruz overtly national factors and characteristics were the more important factors at the start of their careers (and remain ingrained in their star images), with Eduardo Noriega the balance starts to shift towards the industrial imperatives (although like Bardem and Cruz he has many explicit interactions with the national onscreen), and by the time of Paz Vega's arrival the industrial outweighs the national (although an interaction with the national still takes place). The contribution that this thesis has attempted to make to star studies and Spanish film studies is to show that Javier Bardem, Penélope Cruz, Eduardo Noriega, and Paz Vega in different ways reveal that onscreen reflections and projections of the national are more complex than Higson's framework (2000: 67) suggests (namely they underline that there is a process of negotiation in interactions with the national which involves industrial considerations), and that the cinematic manifestations of the national through Spanish stars between 1992 and 2007 were integrally shaped by factors and imperatives specific to the Spanish film industry in this era.

APPENDIX

1992	No.	Title	Director	Genre	Release Date	Annual Gross (€)*	Total Domestic Gross (€)	Total Spectators
	1	<i>Belle époque (P.C.)</i>	Trueba	Comedy	02/12/1992		5,108,975	1,818,267
	2	<i>Sevillanas</i>	Saura	Music Documentary	27/04/1992		3,795,874	1,334,230
	3	1492	Scott	Hist. Drama	09/10/1992		2,789,918	971,935
	4	<i>Jamón jamón (J.B. & P.C.)</i>	Bigas Luna	Comedy	20/08/1992		1,808,588	673,467
	5	<i>Makinavaja, el último chorizo</i>	Suarez	Comedy	13/05/1992		1,656,369	644,964
	6	<i>Salsa rosa</i>	Gómez Pereira	Comedy	22/01/1992		1,445,599	5,80,629
	7	<i>La Marrana</i>	Cuerda	Hist. Comedy	05/11/1992		1,143,386	435,761
	8	<i>Orquesta club Virginia</i>	Iborra	Comedy	11/09/1992		648,695	261,606
	9	<i>Aquí, el que no corre...vuela</i>	Fernández	Comedy	25/03/1992		630,386	256,678
	10	<i>Una mujer bajo la lluvia</i>	Vera	Comedy	28/02/1992		611,548	234,250

Other films released in Spain by the four stars (including non-Spanish) (total gross/spectators): n/a

Prestige indicators: J.B. (*Jamón jamón*) nominated -Goyas, Fotogramas de Plata. Winner –Premio Sant Jordi, Unión de actores (Premio revelación), Círculo de escritores cinematográficos. **P.C.** (*Jamón jamón*) Nominated –Goyas, Fotogramas de Plata, Unión de actores (Premio revelación), *Belle époque*, nominated –Fotogramas de Plata. Winner - Unión de actores (Actriz de reparto)

*Note: Annual grosses for before 1996 are not available in any form on the Ministry of Culture's website. Films released between 1992-1995 are listed in order of their total domestic gross, although it is likely that films released towards the end of the year (for example, *Belle époque*) took most of their takings in the following year and may have appeared in more than one year's top ten (which would knock those at the bottom out of the chart).

Films highlighted in red feature one or more of **Javier Bardem, Penélope Cruz, Eduardo Noriega, or Paz Vega (indicated by the initials next to the title).**

1993	No.	Title	Director	Genre	Release Date	Annual Gross (€)*	Total Domestic Gross (€)	Total Spectators
	1	<i>Kika</i>	Almodóvar	Comedy	28/10/1993		3,038,616	1,037,808
	2	<i>¿Por qué lo llaman amor cuando quieren decir sexo?</i>	Gómez Pereira	Comedy	12/02/1993		2,004,967	721,947
	3	<i>Todos a la cárcel</i>	García Berlanga	Comedy	22/12/1993		1,176,009	401,764
	4	<i>Huevos de oro (J.B.)</i>	Bigas Luna	Comedy	23/09/1993		1,382,216	477,967
	5	<i>Acción mutante</i>	de la Iglesia	Comedy	03/02/1993		989,931	368,289
	6	<i>Somos Peligrosos (Usease Makinavaja 2)</i>	Suarez	Comedy	14/05/1993		782,897	315,164

7	<i>Madregilda</i>	Regueiro	Dramatic Comedy	01/10/1993	778,716	260,355
8	<i>El amante bilingüe</i>	Aranda	Drama	01/04/1993	738,404	273,225
9	<i>Intruso</i>	Aranda	Drama	03/09/1993	676,876	249,087
10	<i>Tiempo verano de lujurias y azoteas</i>	Chávarri	Comedy	29/01/1993	495,345	190,223

J.B. (*Huevos de oro*) nominated –Goyas. Winner –Fotogramas de Plato.

1994	No.	Title	Director	Genre	Release Date	Annual Gross (€)*	Total Domestic Gross (€)	Total Spectators
	1	<i>La pasión turca</i>	Aranda	Drama	16/12/1994		3,777,141	1,240,061
	2	<i>Todos los hombres sois iguales</i>	Gómez Pereira	Comedy	25/02/1994		2,492,905	843,839
	3	<i>Los peores años de nuestra vida</i>	Martínez-Lázaro	Comedy	02/09/1994		2,157,328	723,677
	4	<i>Días contados (J.B.)</i>	Uribe	Drama	03/10/1994		1,948,443	688,168
	5	<i>¡Por fin solos!</i>	del Real	Comedy	18/08/1994		1,851,491	634,469
	6	<i>Historias de la puta mili</i>	Estaban	Comedy	14/01/1994		1,602,742	570,117
	7	<i>Todo es mentira (P.C.)</i>	Fernández Almero	Comedy	06/10/1994		1,085,570	366,794
	8	<i>Canción de cuna</i>	Garci	Comedy	15/04/1994		702,052	232,147
	9	<i>Alegre ma non troppo (P.C.)</i>	Colomo	Comedy	25/03/1994		624,660	210,891
	10	<i>Cómo ser infeliz y disfrutarlo</i>	Urbizu	Comedy	10/02/1994		517,906	220,022

J.B. –*El Detective y la muerte* (Suárez) (319,644€/131,113).

J.B. (*Días contados*) - Winner –Goya (Actor de reparto), Unión de actores, Concha de plata (San Sebastián Internacional Film Festival –jointly with *El Detective y el muerte*). **P.C.** (*Alegre ma non troppo & Todo es mentira*) nominated –Fotogramas de Plata.

1995	No.	Title	Director	Genre	Release Date	Annual Gross (€)*	Total Domestic Gross (€)	Total Spectators
	1	<i>Two Much</i>	Trueba	Comedy	28/11/1995		6,951,104	2,141,868
	2	<i>El día de la bestia</i>	de la Iglesia	Comedy	16/10/1995		4,367,321	1,416,712
	3	<i>La flor de mi secreto</i>	Almodóvar	Drama	08/09/1995		3,196,999	981,750

4	<i>Historias del Kronen</i>	Armendáriz	Drama	29/04/1995	2,344,136	771,950
5	<i>Boca a boca (J.B.)</i>	Gómez Pereira	Comedy	04/10/1995	2,263,494	763,548
6	<i>Tierra y libertad</i>	Loach	Drama	07/04/1995	1,428,740	441,181
7	<i>Los hombres siempre mienten</i>	del Real	Comedy	03/02/1995	1,363,027	456,889
8	<i>Nadie hablará de nosotras cuando hayamos muerto</i>	Díaz Yanes	Drama	04/10/1995	1,314,141	408,318
9	<i>La ciudad de los niños perdidos</i>	Jeunet & Caro	Drama	11/08/1995	834,584	267,196
10	<i>La tabla de Flandes</i>	McBride	Drama	13/01/1995	754,646	248,753
P.C. –Entre rojas (Rodríguez) (146,171€/49,358)						
J.B. (Boca a boca) winner –Goyas, Fotogramas de Plata, Círculo de escritores cinematográficos.						

1996	No.	Title	Director	Genre	Release Date	Annual Gross (€)	Total Domestic Gross (€)	Total Spectators
	1	<i>Two Much</i>	Trueba	Comedy	28/11/1995	2,217,968	6,951,104	2,141,868
	2	<i>El día de la bestia</i>	de la Iglesia	Comedy	16/10/1995	2,108,556	4,367,321	1,416,712
	3	<i>Libertarias</i>	Aranda	Drama	18/04/1996	1,851,512	1,907,615	594,994
	4	<i>Aquí llega Condemor</i>	Saenz de Heredia	Comedy Western	27/06/1996	1,628,095	1,705,030	581,904
	5	<i>Malena es un nombre de tango</i>	Herrero	Drama	10/04/1996	1,127,570	1,145,346	344,192
	6	<i>La Celestina (P.C.)</i>	Vera	Drama	04/11/1996	1,079,597	1,393,595	443,979
	7	<i>El perro del hortelano</i>	Miró	Comedy	07/10/1996	993,291	3,221,954	975,689
	8	<i>Hola ¿Estás sola?</i>	Bollaín	Drama	24/11/1995	982,612	997,142	300,596
	9	<i>Éxtasis (J.B.)</i>	Barroso	Drama	08/02/1996	927,016	934,361	290,908
	10	<i>El efecto mariposa</i>	Colomo	Comedy	28/11/1995	753,179	973,006	326,933
P.C. –Brujas (Fernández Almero) (342,743€/125,408)								
J.B. (Éxtasis) nominated –Fotogramas de Plata, Unión de actores.								

1997	No.	Title	Director	Genre	Release Date	Annual Gross (€)	Total Domestic Gross (€)	Total Spectators
	1	<i>Airbag</i>	Bajo Ulloa	Comedy	26/05/1997	6,925,452	7,205,891	2,195,715
	2	<i>Carne trémula (J.B. & P.C.)</i>	Almodóvar	Drama	29/09/1997	4,750,808	4,990,598	1,433,308

3	<i>El amor perjudica seriamente la salud</i> (P.C.)	Gómez Pereira	Comedy	29/11/1996	3,589,966	3,631,182	1,057,447
4	<i>Secretos de corazón</i>	Armendáriz	Drama	10/03/1997	2,945,605	4,274,071	1,200,086
5	<i>Perdita Durango</i> (I.B.)	de la Iglesia	Comedy	30/10/1997	2,324,460	2,573,606	779,816
6	<i>El perro del hortelano</i>	Miró	Comedy	07/10/1996	2,035,364	3,221,954	975,689
7	<i>Abre los ojos</i> (P.C. & E.N.)	Amenábar	Drama	15/12/1997	1,811,881	6,442,471	1,794,224
8	<i>Tesis</i> (E.N.)	Amenábar	Thriller	22/01/1996	1,798,197	2,646,145	854,735
9	<i>La buena estrella</i>	Franco	Drama	30/05/1997	1,603,936	2,399,039	684,356
10	<i>Martin</i> (Hache)	Aristarain	Drama	27/09/1997	1,556,901	2,084,174	576,269

E.N. - *Cuestión de suerte* (Moleón) (187,564€/50,884)

J.B. (*Carne trémula*) nominated –Goyas, winner –Fotogramas de Plata (jointly with *Perdita Durango*). P.C. (*Carne trémula*) nominated - Unión de actores. E.N. (*Abre los ojos*) nominated –Goyas.

1998	No.	Title	Director	Genre	Release Date	Annual Gross (€)	Total Domestic Gross (€)	Total Spectators
	1	<i>Torrente, El brazo tonto de la ley</i>	Segura	Comedy	17/02/1998	10,254,169	10,902,631	3,010,736
	2	<i>La niña de tus ojos</i> (P.C.)	Trueba	Dramatic Comedy	11/11/1998	4,772,270	9,474,031	2,497,859
	3	<i>Abre los ojos</i> (P.C. & E.N.)	Amenábar	Drama	15/12/1997	4,576,930	6,442,471	1,794,224
	4	<i>Cha-cha-chá</i> (E.N.)	del Real	Comedy	30/06/1998	2,769,332	3,036,141	855,715
	5	<i>Los amantes del círculo polar</i>	Medem	Drama	19/08/1998	2,393,175	2,790,178	750,007
	6	<i>Barrio</i>	León de Aranoa	Drama	17/08/1998	2,007,276	2,921,995	788,629
	7	<i>Los años bárbaros</i>	Colomo	Melodrama	02/09/1998	1,775,353	1,826,993	492,506
	8	<i>El abuelo</i>	Garci	Drama	25/09/1998	1,734,715	4,179,666	1,097,334
	9	<i>Cosas que dejé en La Habana</i>	Gutiérrez Aragón	Drama	19/12/1997	1,337,581	1,348,775	362,678
	10	<i>Secretos de corazón</i>	Armendáriz	Drama	10/03/1997	1,288,875	4,274,071	1,200,086

P.C. (*La niña de tus ojos*) winner –Goyas, Fotogramas de Plata, Unión de actores. E.N. (*Cha-cha-chá*) nominated –Fotogramas de Plata.

1999	No.	Title	Director	Genre	Release Date	Annual Gross (€)	Total Domestic Gross (€)	Total Spectators
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1	<i>Todo sobre mi madre</i> (P.C.)	Almodóvar	Drama	05/04/1999	7,336,553	9,961,687	2,589,612
2	<i>Muertos de risa</i>	de la Iglesia	Comedy	04/03/1999	6,298,063	6,299,097	1,669,917
3	<i>La novena puerta</i>	Polanski	Suspense	19/08/1999	4,990,314	5,071,394	1,339,053
4	<i>La niña de tus ojos</i> (P.C.)	Trueba	Dramatic Comedy	11/11/1998	4,139,154	9,474,031	2,497,859
5	<i>La lengua de las mariposas</i>	Cuerda	Drama	10/08/1999	3,678,048	4,632,493	1,181,526
6	<i>Nadie conoce a nadie</i> (E.N. & P.V.)	Gil	Thriller	24/11/1999	3,611,312	5,529,004	1,410,323
7	<i>Entre las piernas</i> (J.B.)	Gómez Pereira	Drama	12/01/1999	3,450,561	3,470,643	923,196
8	<i>El milagro de P. Tinto</i>	Fesser	Comedy	18/11/1998	2,909,857	4,192,144	1,128,269
9	<i>Sobreviviré</i>	Albacete & Menkes	Comedy	19/11/1999	2,607,496	4,116,052	1,080,029
10	<i>Manolito Gafotas</i>	Albaladejo	Comedy	18/06/1999	2,543,378	2,552,809	691,758
J.B. – <i>Los lobos de Washington</i> (Barroso) (432,913€/110,706). P.C. – <i>Volavéunt</i> (Bigas Luna) (1,532,735€/394,812). E.N. – <i>La fuente amarilla</i> (Santesmases) (311,464€/84,243). P.V. – <i>Zapping</i> (Carbajosa) (217,541€/61,596).							
E.N. (<i>La fuente amarilla</i>) winner – Mejor Actor (Festival de Menorca), and also chosen by the Spanish film industry to represent Spain in the ‘Shooting Star’ initiative (organised by European Film Promotion, an offshoot of the EU MEDIA Programme).							

2000	No.	Title	Director	Genre	Release Date	Annual Gross (€)	Total Domestic Gross (€)	Total Spectators
	1	<i>La comunidad</i>	de la Iglesia	Comedy	29/09/2000	5,825,941	6,709,857	1,601,861
	2	<i>Año Mariano</i>	Guillén Cuervo & Elejalde	Comedy	11/08/2000	5,354,196	5,507,689	1,416,260
	3	<i>El arte de morir</i>	Fernández Almero	Thriller	31/03/2000	3,234,057	3,245,033	821,513
	4	<i>Todo sobre mi madre</i> (P.C.)	Almodóvar	Drama	16/04/1999	2,597,138	9,961,687	2,589,612
	5	<i>You're the One</i>	Garci	Drama	14/10/2000	2,375,746	3,354,798	787,705
	6	<i>Segunda piel</i> (J.B.)	Vera	Drama	19/11/1999	2,182,748	2,209,599	555,045
	7	<i>Nadie conoce a nadie</i> (E.N. & P.V.)	Gil	Thriller	26/11/1999	1,838,212	5,529,004	1,410,323
	8	<i>Lista de espera</i>	Tabio	Comedy	02/06/2000	1,525,883	1,596,208	379,999
	9	<i>Solas</i>	Zambrano	Drama	05/03/1999	1,507,499	3,675,508	944,573
	10	<i>Sobreviviré</i>	Albacete & Menkes	Comedy	19/11/1999	1,461,197	4,116,052	1,080,029
J.B. – <i>Before Night Falls</i> [English lang] (Schnabel) (2,152,206€/519,181). P.C. – <i>Woman on Top</i> [English lang] (Torres) (967,541€/239,000). E.N. – <i>El invierno de las anjanas</i> (Telechea) (191,786€/47,003), <i>Plata quemada</i> (Piñeyro) (434,646€/105,244), <i>Carretera y manta</i> (Arandia) (222,684€/56,632).								

J.B. (*Segunda piel*) winner –Fotogramas de Plata, and also the first Spanish actor to be nominated for an Oscar (*Before Night Falls*). **E.N.** nominated –Fotogramas de Plata (for all three films)

2001	No.	Title	Director	Genre	Release Date	Annual Gross (€)	Total Domestic Gross (€)	Total Spectators
	1	<i>Los Otros / The Others</i>	Amenábar	Thriller	31/08/2001	26,560,672	27,254,163	6,410,561
	2	<i>Torrente 2</i>	Segura	Comedy	16/03/2001	22,050,842	22,142,173	5,321,969
	3	<i>Juana la loca</i>	Aranda	Hist. Drama	11/09/2001	7,185,574	8,895,196	2,067,026
	4	<i>Lucía y el sexo (P.V.)</i>	Medem	Drama	22/08/2001	5,305,757	5,539,448	1,317,054
	5	<i>No te fallaré</i>	Ríos San Martín	Drama	22/02/2001	3,147,126	3,167,024	781,683
	6	<i>El espinazo del diablo (E.N.)</i>	del Toro	Hist. Drama/ Supernatural	26/03/2001	2,981,037	3,006,235	712,178
	7	<i>El bola</i>	Mañas	Drama	04/10/2000	2,586,447	2,998,768	740,510
	8	<i>Sin noticias de Dios (P.C.)</i>	Díaz Yanes	Drama	18/10/2001	2,288,206	2,747,552	609,409
	9	<i>Tuno negro</i>	Rodríguez & Peran	Drama	16/07/2001	2,284,859	2,315,920	583,344
	10	<i>Gente pez</i>	Iglesias	Comedy	27/07/2001	2,264,464	2,278,425	567,956

P.C. –*All the Pretty Horses* [English lang] (Thornton) (708,097€/172,377), *Blow* [English lang] (304,628€/68,677). **P.V.** – *Sólo mía* (Balaguer) (662,993€/156,912).
E.N. (*El espinazo del diablo* & *Visionarios*) nominated –Fotogramas de Plata. Also named as the male ‘European Revelation’ of 2001 at the Cannes Film Festival. **P.V.** (*Lucía y el sexo*) nominated – Fotogramas de Plata, Unión de actores (for Premio revelación and Mejor actriz), winner –Goyas (Actriz revelación), Premio Sant Jordi. *Sólo mía*, nominated –Goyas (Mejor actriz), Círculo de escritores cinematográficos.

2002	No.	Title	Director	Genre	Release Date	Annual Gross (€)	Total Domestic Gross (€)	Total Spectators
	1	<i>El otro lado de la cama (P.V.)</i>	Martínez-Lázaro	Musical / Comedy	09/04/2002	12,172,898	12,609,642	2,824,958
	2	<i>Los lunes al sol (J.B.)</i>	León de Aranoa	Drama	12/09/2002	7,577,326	9,772,063	2,103,094
	3	<i>El hijo de la novia</i>	Campanella	Drama	14/11/2001	5,717,706	7,230,460	1,574,801
	4	<i>Hable con ella (P.V.)</i>	Almodóvar	Drama	28/02/2002	5,231,334	6,208,691	1,367,450
	5	<i>Darkness</i>	Balagueró	Horror	04/10/2002	3,987,669	4,048,792	903,036
	6	<i>La caja 507</i>	Urbizu	Detective	08/02/2002	2,285,911	2,333,248	510,587

7	<i>A mi madre le gustan las mujeres</i>	Fejerman & Paris	Comedy	08/01/2002	1,927,499	1,934,806	431,092
8	<i>Kamchatka</i>	Pñeyro	Drama	23/10/2002	1,860,645	2,983,604	628,099
9	<i>Lugares comunes</i>	Aristarain	Drama	16/09/2002	1,731,641	1,987,053	424,756
10	<i>800 balas</i>	de la Iglesia	Comedy	15/10/2002	1,726,009	1,783,553	405,337
J.B. – <i>The Dancer Upstairs</i> [English lang] (Malkovich) (300,382€/67,232). P.C. – <i>Vanilla Sky</i> [English lang] (Crowe) (2,550,819€/581,661). E.N. – <i>Guerros</i> (Calparsoro) (933,753€/213,114). <i>Novo</i> [French lang] (Limosin) (353,750€/75,573). P.V. – <i>Novo</i> .							
J.B. (<i>Los lunes al sol</i>) winner –Goyas, Fotogramas de Plata, Unión de actores, Círculo de escritores cinematográficos. P.V. (<i>El otro lado de la cama</i>) nominated –Fotogramas de Plata, and named as the female ‘European Revelation’ of 2002 at the Cannes Film Festival							

2003	No.	Title	Director	Genre	Release Date	Annual Gross (€)	Total Domestic Gross (€)	Total Spectators
	1	<i>La gran aventura de Mortadelo y Filemón</i>	Fesser	Comedy	30/01/2003	22,827,620	22,847,733	4,985,983
	2	<i>Días de fútbol</i>	Serrano	Comedy	03/09/2003	11,617,115	12,212,123	2,562,132
	3	<i>Carmen</i> (P.V.)	Aranda	Drama	22/08/2003	6,299,854	6,398,306	1,380,728
	4	<i>El oro de Moscú</i>	Bonilla	Comedy	28/01/2003	5,807,869	5,809,747	1,259,885
	5	<i>Planta 4º</i>	Mercero	Tragicomedy	03/10/2002	4,492,457	5,388,230	1,143,301
	6	<i>Te doy mis ojos</i>	Bollaín	Drama	08/09/2003	3,289,523	5,020,984	1,063,305
	7	<i>Mi vida sin mí</i>	Coixet	Drama	05/02/2003	2,499,596	2,638,181	562,434
	8	<i>Al sur de Granada</i>	Colomo	Comedy	07/01/2003	2,352,662	2,361,472	508,343
	9	<i>Los lunes al sol</i> (J.B.)	León de Aranoa	Drama	12/09/2002	2,076,250	9,772,063	2,103,094
	10	<i>Soldados de Salamina</i>	D. Trueba	Drama	11/03/2003	2,023,967	2,060,650	433,270
P.C. – <i>Fanfán la tulipe</i> [French lang] (Krawczyk) (317,315€/66,220), <i>Gothika</i> [English lang] (Kassowitz) (6,647,943€/1,375,084). E.N. – <i>Les mains vides</i> (French & Catalan) (Recha) (131,049€/26,626).								
P.V. (<i>Carmen</i>) nominated –Fotogramas de Plata.								

2004	No.	Title	Director	Genre	Release Date	Annual Gross (€)	Total Domestic Gross (€)	Total Spectators
	1	<i>Mar adentro</i> (J.B.)	Amenábar	Drama	02/09/2004	19,353,426	19,829,666	4,097,557
	2	<i>Isi y Disi</i>	de la Peña	Comedy	23/07/2004	7,362,347	7,672,789	1,437,916
	3	<i>El Lobo</i> (E.N.)	Courtois	Drama	02/11/2004	7,070,792	7,750,026	1,569,700

4	<i>La mala educación</i>	Almodóvar	Drama	18/03/2004	6,116,247	6,116,247	1,241,637
5	<i>Crímen perfecto</i>	de la Iglesia	Comedy	22/10/2004	4,216,832	4,250,837	860,710
6	<i>El asombroso mundo de Borjamari y Pocholo</i>	López Lavigne & Cavestany	Comedy	03/12/2004	3,316,634	3,367,646	669,610
7	<i>Di que sí (P.V.)</i>	Calvo	Comedy	06/11/2004	2,957,992	2,971,383	611,049
8	<i>Te doy mis ojos</i>	Bollaín	Drama	24/09/2003	1,699,377	5,020,984	1,063,305
9	<i>Luna de Avellaneda</i>	Campanella	Drama	04/11/2004	1,563,270	1,738,004	346,638
10	<i>Hipnos</i>	Carreras	Thriller	08/10/2004	1,291,175	1,294,633	262,546

J.B. – *Collateral* [English lang] (Mann) (5,726,910€/1,150,007). **P.C.** – *Non ti muovere* [Italian lang] (Castellitto) (424,596€/86,732). **P.V.** – *Spanglish* [English lang] (Brooks) (1,001,981€/201,751).

J.B. – (*Mar adentro*) winner – Goyas, Fotogramas de Plata, Unión de actores, Círculo de escritores cinematográficos, Premio Sant Jordi. **P.C.** (*Non ti muovere*) nominated – Goya, won David di Donatello [Italian Film Awards]. **E.N.** (*El Lobo*) nominated – Goyas, Fotogramas de Plata.

2005	No.	Title	Director	Genre	Release Date	Annual Gross (€)	Total Domestic Gross (€)	Total Spectators
	1	<i>Torrente 3. El Protector</i>	Segura	Comedy	29/09/2005	18,057,762	18,168,924	3,575,759
	2	<i>El Reino de los cielos</i>	Scott	Hist. Drama	06/05/2005	11,920,950	11,984,398	2,388,162
	3	<i>Princesas</i>	León de Aranoa	Drama	02/09/2005	5,952,270	6,089,953	1,194,073
	4	<i>El penalti más largo del mundo</i>	García Santiago	Comedy	08/03/2005	5,106,121	5,137,691	1,054,823
	5	<i>7 Virgenes</i>	Rodríguez	Drama	23/09/2005	4,645,804	4,859,866	995,579
	6	<i>Sahara (P.C.)</i>	Eisner	Action	22/04/2005	3,774,870	3,792,192	765,106
	7	<i>Tapas</i>	Corbacho & Cruz	Tragicomedy	13/05/2005	3,736,666	3,781,271	737,723
	8	<i>Los 2 lados de la cama</i>	Martínez-Lázaro	Musical Comedy	20/12/2005	3,235,168	7,865,479	1,539,589
	9	<i>Habana Blues</i>	Zambrano	Drama	18/03/2005	3,086,631	3,128,984	624,857
	10	<i>Camarón</i>	Chávarri	Biopic	23/09/2005	2,945,097	3,153,806	646,954
	P.C. – <i>Head in the Clouds</i> [English lang] (Duiigan) (263,591€/51,249). E.N. – <i>El método</i> (Piñeyro) (2,458,904€/469,079).							

2006	No.	Title	Director	Genre	Release Date	Annual Gross (€)	Total Domestic Gross (€)	Total Spectators
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1	<i>Alatriste</i> (E.N.)	Díaz Yanes	Adventure	01/09/2006	16,489,511	16,660,528	3,169,021
2	<i>Volver</i> (P.C.)	Almodóvar	Dramatic Comedy	16/03/2006	10,120,241	10,236,083	1,929,504
3	<i>El laberinto del fauno</i>	del Toro	Drama	11/10/2006	7,156,755	8,893,488	1,681,000
4	<i>Los Borja</i> (P.V.)	Hernandez	Biopic	06/10/2006	6,598,611	6,710,638	1,270,585
5	<i>El perfume, historia de un asesino</i>	Twyker	Drama	23/11/2006	6,499,507	7,649,521	1,410,708
6	<i>Los 2 lados de la cama</i>	Martínez-Lázaro	Musical Comedy	20/12/2005	4,461,257	7,865,479	1,539,589
7	<i>Va a ser que nadie es perfecto</i>	Oristrell	Comedy	26/10/2006	2,653,625	2,703,565	508,626
8	<i>Salvador Puig Antich</i>	Huerga	Biopic	15/09/2006	2,598,866	2,702,878	503,480
9	<i>Yo soy la Juani</i>	Bigas Luna	Drama	20/10/2006	2,340,311	2,380,840	443,294
10	<i>Los Managers</i>	Guillén Cuervo	Comedy	06/07/2006	2,044,113	2,059,496	405,238
J.B. – <i>Goya's Ghosts</i> [English lang] (Forman) (1,660,471€/326,043). P.C. – <i>Bandidas</i> [English lang] (Roening & Sandberg) (3,444,188€/674,950).							
P.C. (<i>Volver</i>) winner –Goyas, Fotogramas de Plata, Unión de actores, Círculo de escritores cinematográficos. Also joint winner of the Best Actress award at the Cannes Film Festival, and the first Spanish actress to be nominated for an Oscar.							

2007	No.	Title	Director	Genre	Release Date	Annual Gross (€)	Total Domestic Gross (€)	Total Spectators
	1	<i>El orfanato</i>	Bayona	Suspense	10/09/2007	24,317,951	25,053,720	4,418,233
	2	<i>REC</i>	Plaza & Balaguero	Terror	20/11/2007	7,748,900	8,189,203	1,426,688
	3	<i>Las trece rosas</i>	Martínez-Lázaro	Drama	14/09/2007	4,321,579	4,658,801	860,904
	4	<i>Café solo o con ellas</i>	Díaz Lorenzo	Comedy	29/06/2007	2,437,791	2,449,215	453,248
	5	<i>Pérez, el ratoncito de tus sueños</i>	Buscarini	Animation	10/11/2006	2,182,273	3,657,317	702,565
	6	<i>La carta esférica</i>	Uribe	Adventure	31/08/2007	2,114,819	2,133,104	381,689
	7	<i>El ekipo ja</i>	Muñoz	Comedy	19/01/2007	1,629,034	1,629,034	303,508
	8	<i>La caja Kovak</i>	Monzon Jerez	Fiction	11/12/2006	1,596,899	1,599,063	295,491
	9	<i>El laberinto del fauno</i>	del Toro	Drama	10/10/2006	1,594,031	8,893,488	1,681,000
	10	<i>La torre de Suso</i>	Fernández	Comedy	17/09/2007	1,527,865	1,593,039	282,149
P.C. – <i>Chromophobia</i> [English lang] (Fiennes) (183,826€/34,943). E.N. – <i>Canciones de amor en Lolita's Club</i> (Aranda) (360,749€/65,161). P.V. – <i>Teresa, el cuerpo de Cristo</i> (Loriga) (641,176€/121,746). <i>Fade to Black</i> [English lang] (Parker) (16,158€/3,514), <i>10 Items or Less</i> [English lang] (Silberling) (367,215€/68,939), <i>La masseria delle allodole</i> [Italian lang] (Tavani brothers) (85,327€/14,550).								

All figures relating to total domestic gross and total number of spectators were taken from the Ministry of Culture's film database on their website - <http://www.mcu.es/bddpeliculas/cargarFiltro.do?layout=bddpeliculas&cache=ini&language=es> last accessed 01.11.08
 Annual gross figures for 1996-2000 were taken from ICAA (2004) - *The Spanish Film Industry 1996-2003: Trends*.
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Average Spectator Numbers:

	Javier Bardem	Penélope Cruz	Eduardo Noriega	Paz Vega
All films, 1992-2007	910,782 (17 films)	777,019 (27 films)	680,174 (17 films)	725,781 (15 films)
Spanish-Language films, 1992-2007	1,002,120 (13 films)	1,066,293 (15 films)	764,051 (15 films)	1,052,240 (10 films)
Non-Spanish-Language films, 1992-2007	515,615 (4 films) [all in English]	415,427 (12 films) [10 in English, 1 in French, 1 in Italian]	51,099 (2 films) [1 in French, 1 in French / Catalan]	72,865 (5 films) [3 in English, 1 in French, 1 in Italian]
'Spanish'* films, 1992-2007	894,723 (15 films)	1,047,469 (16 films)	717,962 (16 films)	957,904 (11 films)
-1992-1996	504,141 (6 films)	526,842 (7 films)	854,735 (1 film)	n/a
-1997-2001	760,414 (5 films)	1,482,381 (7 films)	518,512 (10 films)	736,471 (4 films)
-2002-2007	1,648,481 (4 films)	1,347,469 (2 films)	1,089,508 (5 films+)	1,084,438 (7 films)
Films by Spanish directors, 1992-2007	1,002,120 (13 films)	1,066,293 (15 films)	784,684 (13 films)	1,052,240 (10 films)
-By established Spanish directors	680,740 (4 directors, 5 films)	1,443,472 (4 directors, 8 films)	325,092 (3 directors, 3 films)	1,710,930 (4 directors, 4 films)
-By 'new' Spanish directors	1,202,983 (6 directors, 8 films)	635,231 (6 directors, 7 films)	922,562 (9 directors, 10 films)	613,113 (6 directors, 6 films)

* Note: -A distinction is being made between 'Spanish' films and 'Spanish-language' films because there are films classified as 'Spanish' by the Ministry of Culture (because of Spanish financial backing) that are not in Spanish.

+ Note: The figures for *Canciones de amor en Lolita's Club* have not been included because at the time of compiling these statistics (Spring 2008), the film was still on release).

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