

**CINEMA AND THE MEDIATION OF EVERYDAY LIFE
IN 1940S AND 1950S SPAIN**

Until recently, academic research on Spanish cinema has been limited to the study of art cinema. The Spanish academy has traditionally been – and largely still is – wary of the study of popular culture, which tends to be seen as conferring negative cultural capital on those who participate in it – whether as practitioners, consumers or researchers. One reason for this is that the intellectual opposition to the Dictatorship, which drew its inspiration from Marxism, imbibed the Frankfurt School's mistrust of popular culture as a form of ideological indoctrination by the culture industries. Given that Spanish opposition intellectuals were working under conditions of dictatorship, it is not surprising that they should have endorsed the negative view of popular culture held by Adorno and Horkheimer, developed as a result of their experience of the Nazi manipulation of culture for propaganda purposes.¹ Indeed, a major feature of the Franco Dictatorship was its championing of folklore and of other areas of popular culture (football, bullfighting and film), as part of its populist political project.

This suspicion of popular culture has been especially strong in the field of cinema, where there are additional factors operating that are not specific to Spain. The development of film studies in the 1970s, in Europe generally, was marked by an emphasis on *auteur* cinema – a legitimizing strategy designed to confer intellectual prestige on the new discipline's object of study. A lasting result of this, still today, is a tendency to equate European cinema with art cinema (and thus a preferred object of study), by contrast with Hollywood cinema which tends to be seen as popular. While the study of Hollywood cinema inevitably, given its international prominence, became a major object of study, it was not until the mid 1980s – broadly speaking – that film scholars shifted their previous emphasis on the negative ideological aspects of Hollywood production to a positive engagement with its pleasures. The study of European cinema, however, tended to remain largely focused on art cinema until the 1990s.² The fact that the study of Spanish cinema developed in universities in the 1980s, at a time when the accepted paradigm was that of

¹ See, for example, Max Horkheimer and Theodor W. Adorno, *Dialectic of Enlightenment* (London: Continuum, 1976).

² A landmark volume in this respect was Richard Dyer and Ginette Vincendeau (eds), *Popular European Cinema* (London: Routledge, 1992).

‘national cinemas’, reinforced the emphasis on art cinema in the Spanish case, since the fact that the study of Spanish cinema developed later than that of the mainstream European cinemas (French, German, Italian), and that it did so from Departments of Spanish rather than Departments of Film, meant that Spanish film scholars felt a particularly strong need to legitimize their object of study by stressing its artistic quality. The result, for the study of cinema of the Franco period, has been an almost exclusive focus on the oppositional neo-realist art cinema which emerged in 1950s Spain and continued through to the Dictatorship’s end in 1975. Studies of cinema in post-1975 democratic Spain have also tended to construct their objects of study as art cinema, even when they make use of popular genres such as melodrama or comedy (an obvious example is the case of Almodóvar, whose use of Hollywood narrative and visual conventions tends to be seen as evidence of auteurist self-reflexivity).³ It is only very recently that film scholars – writing in English from within the British and American academy – have started to address Spanish popular cinema, including that prior to the 1950s.⁴ While studies of Spanish cinema of the early Franco era are now starting to be written within Spain,⁵ the focus still tends to be on exposing the ways in which films of this period are contaminated by Francoist ideology, implying that popular culture is a top-down indoctrination process.

When I started, in the mid-1990s, to research Spanish cinema of the 1940s, I was surprised to discover that the majority of these films, while subject to strict censorship, offered pleasures that did not fit the dictatorship’s political project. I also started to wonder how these pleasures might have enmeshed with the pleasures offered to Spanish film audiences by Hollywood cinema, which, in a time of political repression and extreme material hardship after the Civil War, was the main form of entertainment and thus played a huge compensatory role. For it must be noted that,

³ See, for example, Mark Allinson, *A Spanish Labyrinth: The Films of Pedro Almodóvar* (London: I.B. Tauris, 2001), pp. 122-25.

⁴ See, for example, Antonio Lázaro Reboll and Andrew Willis (eds), *Spanish Popular Cinema* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2004) and the majority of the essays in Steven Marsh and Parvati Nair (eds), *Gender and Spanish Cinema* (Oxford: Berg, 2004).

⁵ See, for example, Luis Fernández Colorado and Pilar Couto Cantero (eds), *La herida de las sombras: El cine español en los años 40* (Madrid: Academia de las Artes y las Ciencias Cinematográficas de España/AEHC, 2001), and José Luis Castro de Paz, *Un cinema herido: Los turbios años cuarenta en el cine español (1939-1950)* (Barcelona: Paidós, 2002).

although film scholars in Spain have almost entirely ignored Spanish popular cinema, an enormous amount is written in Spain on Hollywood. This can partly be seen as the flip-side of an anxiety about whether Spanish cinema is as good as other national cinemas, which, on the one hand, leads to the privileging of Spanish art cinema and, on the other hand, produces an automatic assumption that foreign movies are superior. Thus Spanish film critics bemoan the perennial difficulties that Spanish cinema has in competing with Hollywood, while at the same time tending to reproduce the imbalance by writing predominantly about American movies.

It must be clarified here that a large number of the books written in Spain about Hollywood cinema are not by academics but by film critics coming from the world of journalism, and by novelists (who also write for the press) whose fictional work, explicitly influenced by Hollywood, straddles the high/popular cultural divide. What is most striking about the work of these non-academic writers is their engagement with the pleasures of Hollywood cinema for audiences (including themselves). This emphasis stands out since there is an almost total lack of academic studies of film audience reception in Spain, apart from a small number of sociological analyses which are not concerned with questions of subjectivity.⁶ A repeated theme in novels of Juan Marsé, for example, is the importance of Hollywood movies in shaping the imaginary of children from deprived Republican backgrounds, growing up in post-war Barcelona's popular neighbourhoods.⁷ Marsé has additionally published personal evocations of Hollywood cinema.⁸ The novelist Terenci Moix, whose first novel (in Catalan) was titled *El dia que va morir Marilyn* (*The Day Marilyn Died*) (1969), has, in his voluminous popular writings on Hollywood, given a sophisticated insight into the contestatory potential of such Hollywood cinema – and even of Spanish popular cinema of the early Franco period – for popular audiences in general, and for gay audiences in particular.⁹ Moix's autobiography traces a sentimental education based almost

⁶ See, for example, María Antonio Paz, 'The Spanish Remember: Movie Attendance during the Franco Dictatorship, 1943-1975', *Historical Journal of Film, Radio and Television*, Vol. 23, No. 4: (2003) 357-74. Paz is working within the discipline of information science.

⁷ Key examples are the novels *Si te dicen que caí* (1973; authorized for publication in Spain 1976), *Un día volveré* (1982), *El embrujo de Shanghai* (1993).

⁸ See his *Un paseo por las estrellas* (Barcelona: RBA, 2001) and *Momentos inolvidables de cine* (Barcelona: Caroggio, 2004).

⁹ See: *Mis inmortales del cine: Años 40* (Barcelona: Plaza & Janés, 1992); *Suspiros de España: La copy y el cine de nuestro recuerdo* (Barcelona: Plaza & Janés, 1993); *Clásicos de cine* (Barcelona: Planeta, 1994); *Mis inmortales del*

entirely on movie-going experiences.¹⁰ An even more explicit understanding of how popular audiences, suffering from the repression and hardship of the post-war period, particularly women, were able to develop strategies of survival through contestatory readings of superficially reactionary popular songs (many of which figured in Spanish movies of the 1940s) is offered by Manuel Vázquez Montalbán, a life-long member of the Spanish Communist Party as well as writer of popular thrillers.¹¹ The importance of Hollywood for Spanish audiences in the post-war period is also attested to in a number of Spanish films, most memorably Víctor Eric e's *El espíritu de la colmena* (*The Spirit of the Beehive*) (1973), whose child protagonist produces a contestatory reading of James Whale's 1931 *Frankenstein* that leads her to befriend a fugitive on the run in 1940, one year after Franco's military victory in the Civil War. It is notable that critics of the film have interpreted its engagement with Hollywood cinema as an artistic engagement with metafictional strategies,¹² rather than seeing it as a testimony to the importance of Hollywood for popular audiences.

This article discusses a research project, funded by the Arts and Humanities Research Board (AHRB) for 1999-2004, which developed the insights offered by writers such as Marsé, Moix and Vázquez Montalbán into popular audience response to cinema in the early Franco Dictatorship. In so doing, we wanted to plug the gap in academic study of audience reception in Spain, and to pay due attention to spectator responses to popular cinema – whether Spanish or foreign. The period covered by the project (the 1940s and 1950s) is one dominated by popular cinema – especially in the 1940s, the great period of the studio system built around genres and stars rather than around directors. The interviews conducted for our project show that the appeal of

cine: Años 30 (Barcelona: Plaza & Janés, 2001); *Mis inmortales del cine: Años 50* (Barcelona: Plaza & Janés, 2001); *Mis inmortales del cine: Años 60* (Barcelona: Plaza & Janés, 2003).

¹⁰ *El cine de los sábados* (Barcelona: Plaza & Janés, 1990); *El beso de Peter Pan* (Barcelona: Plaza & Janés, 1993).

¹¹ See his *Crónica sentimental de España* (Madrid: DeBolsillo, 2003 [1970]). I had the good fortune to give a paper on the research project described in this essay with Vázquez Montalbán in the audience, shortly before his untimely death (Annual Conference of the Association of German Hispanists, Regensburg, March 2003; see Jo Labanyi, 'El cine como lugar de memoria en películas, novelas y autobiografías de los años setenta hasta el presente', in *Casa encantada: Lugares de memoria en la España constitucional (1978-2004)* (Frankfurt am Main: Vervuert, 2005), pp. 157-72.) I am pleased to say that he was supportive of the project.

¹² See, in particular, Xon de Ros, 'Innocence Lost: Sound and Silence in *El espíritu de la colmena*', *Bulletin of Hispanic Studies*, Vol. 76 (1999), 27-37.

the oppositional neo-realist art cinema that developed in Spain in the course of the 1950s, alongside the development of Film Clubs screening foreign art movies, was limited to university audiences. The project – titled ‘An oral history of cinema-going in 1940s and 1950s Spain’ – was undertaken by a team of researchers: Vicente Sánchez Biosca in Spain; Susan Martin-Márquez, Kathleen Vernon and Eva Woods in the US; and myself in the UK. The AHRB award allowed us to employ two research assistants (one female and Spanish; one male and British) to conduct the oral history interviews in Madrid and Valencia over a period of three years. We interviewed just over 60 people in Madrid and just over 50 in Valencia. We subsequently contracted consultants to interview just over 20 people in each of La Coruña and Seville in order to look at cities with a very different social and political make-up. It should be stressed that we are not claiming to have interviewed a representative sample of the population (though our sample is large by the standards of most social science projects). What interested us was to show the heterogeneity of responses in a period – the early Franco Dictatorship – that has tended to be seen in black-and-white terms, with everything associated with the regime being dismissed as ‘bad’, and everything associated with the opposition hailed as ‘good’. We made a point of interviewing people of all political persuasions: their varying positions represent a continuum of overlapping responses, not a divide between opposing camps.¹³

While the project opened up a wide range of cultural issues, as I hope to show in this article, gender is a major factor for two reasons: first, because cinema audiences were predominantly female; and second, because women – in the period under study – had most need of emotional compensation. For Nationalist victory in the Civil War meant the loss by women of all political, social and economic rights, as well as the responsibility for ensuring the family’s survival

¹³ A dossier of essays on aspects of the project appeared in *Studies in Hispanic Cinemas* Vol. 2, No. 2 (2005), 105-135. A first book in English analyzing the interviews conducted in Madrid and Valencia, *The Mediation of Everyday Life: An Oral History of Cinema-going in 1940s and 1950s Spain*, will be published by Berghahn Books in 2008. This monograph – co-written by the researchers and the two research assistants, Steven Marsh and María José Millán – is aimed at film specialists who may now know Spanish but are interested in the project’s methodological and theoretical implications. A second monograph in Spanish is planned, aimed at Spanish specialists, and incorporating the La Coruña and Seville interviews. We expect this second book to be accompanied by two CDs with audio extracts from the interviews and a database of images relating to cinema culture in 1940s and 1950s Spain.

in times of extreme material hardship and political repression.¹⁴ And thirdly, with the shift from fascist to consumerist ideology in the 1950s, it was women who were chiefly interpellated: the role of cinema in shaping fashion and household consumption has been studied in relation to Hollywood.¹⁵ I shall return to the questions of emotional gratification and consumerism, and to the emotional significance of cinema for women in particular.

The project worked within the parameters of a particularly British brand of cultural theory, exemplified by Raymond Williams and the Birmingham Centre for Contemporary Cultural Studies. That is, we rejected the Frankfurt School's understanding of culture as a top-down process of indoctrination of the masses by the culture industries. Instead, we opted for a revisionist form of Marxist criticism that draws on Gramsci's notion that culture is the means whereby power is negotiated by dominant and subaltern groups, in an interactive process of hegemony and counter-hegemony.¹⁶ The important thing here is that both dominant and subaltern groups are seen as heterogeneous mixes of contrary tendencies, and that subaltern groups are not seen as passively assimilating the cultural products they consume, but as selecting those aspects which are useful to them and reworking their meanings to suit their own ends. Although this Gramscian framework, which assigns a degree of agency to the consumers of popular culture, has been highly influential in Latin American studies,¹⁷ it is necessary to stress its importance for the study of Spain, given

¹⁴ For an excellent analysis of what the early Franco Dictatorship meant for women, see Helen Graham, 'Gender and State: Women in the 1940s', in Helen Graham and Jo Labanyi (eds), *Spanish Cultural Studies: An Introduction* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1985), pp.182-195.

¹⁵ See Anne Massey, *Hollywood beyond the Screen: Design and Material Culture* (Oxford: Berg, 2000) and Jackie Stacey, *Star Gazing: Hollywood Cinema and Female Spectatorship* (London: Routledge, 1994).

¹⁶ For a good survey of the British tradition of cultural studies, see Simon During, *The Cultural Studies Reader* (London: Routledge, 1993), pp. 1-25. A useful anthology of Gramsci's writings on culture is found in Antonio Gramsci, *Selections from Cultural Writings*, ed. David Forgacs and Geoffrey Nowell-Smith (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1985). A coherent discussion of the relevance of Gramsci's cultural writings for the study of cinema is offered by Marcia Landy, *Film, Politics, and Gramsci* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1994).

¹⁷ Raymond Williams's work, influenced by Gramsci's interactive view of culture, has enmeshed productively with a strand of Latin American cultural theory concerned to reject the notion of 'acculturation' (whereby the colonizing power imposes its culture on the colonized in a one-way indoctrination process) for that of 'transculturation' (whereby the colonized select and rework the imposed culture of the colonizers for their own purposes). See: Ángel Rama, 'Processes of Transculturation in Latin American Narrative', *Journal of Latin American Cultural Studies*, Vol. 6, No.

the negative view of popular culture that has predominated in Spain as a result of the orthodox Marxist formation of the anti-Franco opposition, combined with the association of popular culture with the populist ideology of the Franco Dictatorship.

The adoption of this Gramscian framework was also important given the emphasis in film studies on gaze theory, which focuses on the role of the consumer (in this case, the spectator). In the English-speaking world, it was feminist work on Hollywood film melodrama that pioneered both the study of popular cinema and work on spectatorship; this, too, made gender a major area of interest in our project. However, in its beginnings – I refer to Laura Mulvey’s seminal essay ‘Visual Pleasure and Narrative Cinema’¹⁸ – gaze theory operated within an implicit Frankfurt School perspective, critiquing Hollywood films for imposing patriarchal gender norms on spectators, through their use of camerawork to construct viewers (of both sexes) as male. Mulvey herself, and later Silverman, came to argue that the cinematic gaze was a more complex construction, allowing a considerable amount of slippage between different spectator positions;¹⁹ nevertheless, the focus was still largely on what the cinematic construction of the gaze does to the spectator, rather than on how the spectator might manipulate it strategically for his or her own ends. As a result, it was felt adequate to discuss spectator response in terms of hypothetical spectators who, as products of the cinematic gaze, could be deduced from the film text. It was not until Jackie Stacey’s 1994 *Star Gazing: Hollywood Cinema and Female Spectatorship* that film scholars – still led by feminist critics – started to investigate actual audiences by engaging in fieldwork. Even so, Stacey simply worked from questionnaires sent to her female informants. A major subsequent development has been Annette Kuhn’s project interviewing British film spectators from the 1930s, published in 2002 as *An Everyday Magic: Cinema and Cultural Memory*. I acknowledge my debt to Kuhn in conceiving our project.

Kuhn found that her ethnographic approach forced her to rethink and broaden the objects of film studies, taking into account not only the direct relationship of the spectator to the film, with the spectator viewed as agent, but also the integration of cinema-viewing into everyday life

2 (1997 [1974]), 155-71. and Néstor García Canclini, *Hybrid Cultures* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1995 [1990]).

¹⁸ Laura Mulvey, *Visual and Other Pleasures* (London: Macmillan, 1989), pp. 14-26. The essay was first published in 1975.

¹⁹ See *ibid.*, pp. 29-38 and Kaja Silverman, *Male Subjectivity at the Margins* (London: Routledge, 1992).

practices.²⁰ Nevertheless, her book follows Stacey's earlier questionnaire-based study in focusing to a considerable extent on the issue of stars and their role in the identity construction of cinema-goers. When we started to think out a structure for our own project, we assumed stars would play a major role. They are indeed important, but we found that much more than this emerged from our interviews. Although many of our findings coincide with those of Kuhn, I think it is fair to say that, proportionately, stars play a less important role in our project, while everyday life experiences emerged as the dominant focus.

This is largely explained by the differences between 1930s Britain and 1940s and 50s Spain. For this period in Spain was one in which everyday life experiences were affected by very particular political and economic circumstances, which in turn inflect the cultural significance of cinema-going in specific ways. In addition to the approximately half million killed in the war (of which some 150,000 were victims of reprisals), another 40,000 were executed by the regime after the war's end in 1939. In the months after Nationalist victory, around 700,000 Republican supporters were interned in concentration camps and half a million fled into exile. Those on the losing side were 'purged' from their jobs and denied identity papers, and frequently had property confiscated. In 1940, 280,000 political prisoners were still in Francoist jails. While the number of executions reduced after 1942, an ongoing war against resistance fighters continued until 1951, peaking in 1947-49. In the 1940s, the regime's isolationist economic policies produced massive hunger and consequent emigration to the cities; it was only over the period 1953-58 that production and income got back to pre-war levels. At the same time, these two decades saw the regime's rhetoric move from overt fascism to capitalist developmentalism (still within totalitarian structures).²¹ A key issue that emerged in our project was the fact that escapist pleasure can, under totalitarianism, take on a positive as well as negative function. That is, the escapism afforded by popular cinema can allow spectators to preserve a space of privacy intact from the incursions of the state. For it must be remembered that fascism was, in Spain as elsewhere, as much directed against liberal individualism as it was against socialism:²² its goal was to colonize the private

²⁰ See Annette Kuhn, *An Everyday Magic: Cinema and Cultural Memory* (London: I.B. Tauris, 2002), p. 237.

²¹ For the post-war repression, see Santos Juliá's seminal study: *Víctimas de la guerra civil* (Madrid: Temas de Hoy, 1999), pp. 274-411. For a survey of economic tendencies and change from the 1940s through to the 1960s, see the essays by Richards and de Riquer in Graham and Labanyi (eds), pp. 173-82 and 259-71.

²² This is clearly evidenced by the two versions of the film *Raza*, which General Franco scripted under a pseudonym. In the original 1941 version, recently rediscovered in a Berlin archive, the attacks are directed as much against liberal

space of the individual, placing even the most intimate areas of activity – like motherhood – in the service of the state. Thus the question of audience response to popular cinema is, in the Spanish context, a highly political as well as personal matter. This is a complicated issue since, with the evolution of the Franco regime towards a pro-US stance in the course of the late 1940s and early 50s, the escapist pleasures afforded by popular cinema, which in the immediate post-war period allowed a measure of resistance to the totalitarian state, at the same time laid the ground for the consumerist desires that started to be propagated by that same state from 1959 on – although the possibility of material satisfaction of those desires did not become a reality for most of the population till well into the 60s.²³ For capitalist consumerism to work, desire has to be stimulated in advance of the goods being made available. The impact of those Hollywood luxury kitchens on Spanish spectators is attested to in our interviews; indeed, as electrical household goods started to become accessible for the more affluent in the 1950s, the phrase used to express admiration for a well-stocked refrigerator – an infrequent spectacle – was ‘parece una nevera americana’ (it looks like an American fridge).

The second major factor that made our project into more than a contribution to star studies is that the most significant information arises at those points when the interviewees wander off the subject of cinema to discuss some aspect of their lives which comes to mind, or conversely at those points when they make a connection from something in their lives back to cinema. It is probably significant that the oral historians I consulted at the start of our project were anthropologists, concerned with culture as a broad network of symbolic practices. I took their advice to avoid questionnaires, which would shape and constrict the replies, and to go for

parliamentary democracy as against socialism. In 1949, at a time when the regime was courting the political and economic support of the United States, taking advantage of the new Cold War climate, Franco ordered copies of the original version to be destroyed and replaced with a revised version. In this revised version, all shots of the fascist salute and images of fascist insignia are excised, as are the derogatory references in the original to liberal democracy and to the United States. As a result, this bowdlerized version of the film comes over as an anti-communist tract. See Fernán Alberich, ‘Raza: Cine y propaganda en la inmediata posguerra’, *Archivos de la Filmoteca*, Vol. 27 (1997), 50-61.

²³ 1959 is the date of the first Stabilization Plan, devised by the Opus Dei technocrats who acquired key cabinet positions from this date on, in order to open up the highly protectionist Spanish economy to foreign markets. As a result, in the 1960s, Spain saw the highest economic growth rate of any country except Japan (see de Riquer in Graham and Labanyi (eds), pp. 259-71). This economic boom would continue through to the late 1980s, under democracy, with further deregulation of the economy.

unstructured interviews, which allow much richer data, providing an insight into the cultural imaginary and subjectivity of those interviewed.²⁴ Thus our interviewees were simply told that we wanted them to talk about their memories of going to the cinema in the 1940s and 1950s, and were given the freedom to raise whatever issues came to their minds, with minimal reigning in and prompting.²⁵ Our adoption of an approach that has been found productive by anthropologists meant that our project has – even more than that of Kuhn – become an investigation not just of cinema-going practices, but of how cinema-going enmeshed with the practice of everyday life. The title of the book in English will thus, like that of this article, be *Cinema and the Mediation of Everyday Life*. Effectively, what we have written has become a social history of the 1940s and 50s in Spain, as mediated by the cinema. That is, cinema has emerged as a key cultural practice that had ramifications for a wide range of cultural activities, from the use of urban space to photographic portraiture. Indeed, we have enough material to produce further publications on specific cultural aspects.²⁶ Effectively, then, the project ceased to be a film project as such, and became an ethnographic study of cultural practice in the broad sense of the practice of everyday life.

This shift in focus placed Certeau firmly centre stage in the theoretical apparatus for our project, but other theoretical frameworks also came into play.²⁷ This happened both because our

²⁴ We did originally devise a detailed questionnaire, but on further reflection decided not to use it. The interviews conducted for Kuhn's study did follow a questionnaire, albeit loosely applied; and additional informants' views were solicited by postal questionnaire.

²⁵ There were some differences of methodology between the two researchers. The Valencian research assistant, with previous experience of oral history work, used a life-story format, asking people to talk about particular periods of their life, in chronological order, but with freedom to move around their memories of that particular period as they chose. The Madrid research assistant imposed no temporal constraints. The results were productive in both cases: the Valencian interviews tend to be longer and provide more historical information; the Madrid interviews allow a greater insight into the non-chronological way in which memory operates.

²⁶ I am grateful to the British Academy for providing me with funding for a further 2004-7 project, which has examined the cultural function of film magazines in Spain in the 1940s and 1950s, including the connection with fashion and photographic portraiture. Two of the researchers for the original project – Kathleen Vernon and Eva Woods – were my co-researchers for this second project.

²⁷ We are indebted not only to Michel de Certeau's *The Practice of Everyday Life*, but also to the development of everyday life studies as a discipline. For Certeau, see the following editions: *The Practice of Everyday Life* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1984) and Luce Giard and Pierre Mayol (eds), vol. 2 (Minneapolis: University of

interviews gave us much more than anticipated, and because of the ideas that emerged from working together as a team. Although collaborative research is time-consuming, it also proved hugely rewarding in that ideas emerged in the course of the research process that none of the individual researchers could have anticipated or produced on their own. The breakthrough in our project came at a team meeting held in New York in December 2002, where we had a sudden revelation. Specifically, we realized for the first time that we could not start with what we, as film historians, thought were the key issues in Spanish cinema-going of the 40s and 50s, and treat our interviewees' memories as an answer to those issues. For, in many cases, our interviewees showed no interest in issues that we had thought were important, and brought up issues that had not occurred to us from our knowledge of cinema of the time. What suddenly became obvious to us was a very simple insight: that we had to base our analysis on what our interviewees chose to talk about, and not on what we had expected them to talk about. Simple as this insight may sound, it proved remarkably difficult to come to terms with its implications. It required us to restructure the project completely, so that the analysis of the interviews would no longer be organized according to specific features of cinema of the time, but according to specific features of the interviews. These features are defined not in terms of content but of processes: individual chapters are devoted to memory work; story-telling and sense-making; identification and affect; material culture and lifestyle; spatial practices. All of these processes are subsumed under the over-arching concept of performance, since we wish to stress that both the interview process and the practices of cinema-going remembered are acts undertaken strategically by agents and directed at some kind of audience.²⁸ Since many of the processes analyzed operate at three levels – in the interview situation, in the past cinema-going practices, and in the films remembered – we have been interested to explore how these three things enmesh. This shift of focus onto processes rather than

Minnesota Press, 1998). For an overview of everyday life theory, see Ben Highmore, *Everyday Life and Cultural Theory: An Introduction* (London: Routledge, 2002) and *The Everyday Life Reader* (London: Routledge, 2002).

²⁸ In this respect, we hope to have been able to go beyond Kuhn's study, whose chapters – while containing many valuable and subtle insights into the processes involved in memory work – are organized in terms of what is remembered, rather than in terms of how it is remembered. The chapter on material culture and lifestyle in the forthcoming monograph *The Mediation of Everyday Life: An Oral History of Cinema-going in 1950s and 1960 Spain*, deals with the role played in our interviewees' lives by film magazines and photos of stars (including those used in advertising or given away as collectibles with particular food brands), as well as the impact of cinema on fashion and consumerist aspirations. It includes a case-study analysis of a Valencian collector of film paraphernalia.

content brought two new theoretical frameworks into play: performance theory,²⁹ and work on spatial mapping. With respect to this last concept, the work of Giuliana Bruno has been a major inspiration.³⁰

I should also mention that the chapter heading ‘identification and affect’ replaced an earlier chapter heading ‘identification, desire and pleasure’, which we revised since the former heading implied that we were working within the psychoanalytical model of spectatorship on which so much Anglophone film criticism (especially feminist film criticism) has been based. Analysis of our interviews suggested that such a psychoanalytical framework does not provide an adequate framework for discussing the ways in which our informants talked about their intense response to the films they saw. Not only do our interviewees come from a culture which has not been informed by psychoanalysis,³¹ but the interviews suggest that the concept of desire, as understood in psychoanalysis (that is, as the product of oedipal tensions), is not helpful in this context. When the interviewees remember their attraction to stars, they seem to be talking not so much about desire as about projective identification. While it could be argued that the impulse driving such projective identification is itself triggered by desire in the sense of lack, this lack seems best explained, not in any oedipal sense, but by the very material and emotional lacks that conditioned life for so many people in the period following the Civil War. We hope that in challenging the dominance of

²⁹ In particular, Herbert Blau, *The Audience* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1990) and *To All Appearances: Ideology and Performance* (New York: Routledge, 1992). See also Joseph Roach, *Cities of the Dead: Circum-Atlantic Performance* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1996). For Blau and Roach, memory and performance are intimately related.

³⁰ See Giuliana Bruno, *Atlas of Emotion: Journeys in Art, Architecture, and Film* (New York: Verso, 2002).

³¹ The study of Freud was banned under the Franco Dictatorship. Before the Civil War, the strongly neurological basis of Spanish psychiatry prevented psychoanalysis from securing recognition as a practice. Although Freud’s works had been translated in Spain in the 1920s, at the instigation of the philosopher Ortega y Gasset, psychoanalysis remained a topic of interest limited to avant-garde intellectuals. With the Civil War, the few psychoanalysts practising in Spain went into exile in Argentina. Psychoanalysis only re-established a toe-hold in Spain with the influx, as refugees from dictatorship in the 1970s, of a significant number of Argentine psychoanalysts, who mostly set up practice in Barcelona where they enjoyed great success with bourgeois clients, particularly in intellectual circles. Medical or behavioural models of mental healthcare remain dominant in Spain. I owe this information to conversation with Filiberto Fuentenebros de Diego, of the Universidad Complutense, Madrid, currently writing a history of Spanish psychiatry (forthcoming).

psychoanalytically informed models of spectatorship we can make a significant contribution to film studies.

In summary, our revised list of chapter headings is based on the different ways in which the interviews show the experience of cinema-going to enmesh with everyday life both in the present time of remembering and in the past time that is remembered. This shift of focus was a major milestone in making us realize the full implications of working with living subjects. In this respect, I should mention a methodological issue which emerged as crucial. We did not transcribe the interviews but worked directly from the audio tapes. This was slow but, in my view, was essential if we were to analyze our data as live performances, and not as a corpus of texts. This is especially important since the majority of the researchers moved into film studies from an earlier training in literary studies, which makes the temptation to slip into habits derived from textual analysis strong.

The fact that this was a project in memory work – the writings of Certeau were crucial also in this respect – meant that we could not expect to reconstruct what cinema-going practices were like in the 40s and 50s. Rather, we were exploring the cultural significance of the ways in which it is remembered. The question of whether or not knowledge of the past was handed down to future generations arises in our interviews: one informant noted that the fact that the Civil War was never mentioned at home meant that he grew up knowing more about the American Civil War, since he had seen it at the movies. Temporality is inevitably a key issue in any oral history project, since the memory process involves establishing a relationship between past and present. All the interviewees make a clear distinction between the remembered past and the present moment (given that their ages range from the mid 60s to the 90s, with a high preponderance in their 70s or 80s, one might have expected some confusion here). Only one person, Judit H., interviewed in Valencia, said she felt nostalgia for the 1940s and 50s, but she immediately clarified that it was not the period she was nostalgic for but the fact that she was young and full of hopes for the future. All the rest say firmly that they have no nostalgia for those years, since living conditions have improved so much, and one has to accept change. We are, of course, talking about a particular past period when, even for the relatively well off and right-wing, there was a palpable lack of material goods and strict control of private as well as public life. The interviewees are unanimous in disliking the violence in today's films and in preferring the films they saw in their youth, despite the fact that many are highly critical of Spanish cinema of the time. (Interestingly, none of them –

not even those with an oppositional intellectual formation, who might have been expected to adopt a classic Marxist rejection of popular culture as the vehicle of political indoctrination – expressed any criticisms of Hollywood cinema.) But not a single person expressed a desire to return to those decades. This was the case even with those who declared themselves to be Franco supporters – for example, the widow of a member of the Civil Guard (paramilitary police) who worked at Franco's residence, El Pardo Palace, whose cinema (where Franco organized regular private showings) she attended from her marriage in 1951 till her husband's death.

The issue of temporality also arises in the ways in which people, through memory, organize their lives into different periods. Perhaps not surprisingly, the interviewees tend to periodize their lives in terms of family life-stages – marriage, birth of children – rather than historical events. The end of the Civil War was necessarily raised by them, since it marked the start date of the period we wanted them to remember. It is also clear that, for a large number, the end of the war had meant physical dislocation – the majority of people interviewed had relocated to escape political persecution or as part of the massive wave of migration to the cities to escape post-war hunger – while, for those on the losing side, Nationalist victory meant extreme personal distress, with the loss of loved ones and consequent economic hardship for families left without a male breadwinner and, for many, fear of (or actual) personal arrest. Nevertheless, the recollection of cinema-going does not construct a break between the pre-war period of the Republic – when cinema established itself as a major form of entertainment in Spain – and the post-war period of the Franco Dictatorship. This is no doubt partly because most of our interviewees were adolescents or children at the time of the war, and thus do not have a distinctive memory of what the Republic was like. (They do, however, make a clear distinction between seeing films in the village where they grew up, and later in urban cinemas after migrating to the city; the first film seen after arriving in the city is in some cases a landmark memory.) But there also seems to be no sense of a difference between cinema-going under the Republic and under the early Franco Dictatorship. Several interviewees move to and fro between the two periods, even though they have been asked to talk about cinema-going only in the two decades after the end of the war. And a considerable number mistakenly attribute to the 1940s films that were in fact made under the Republic: for example, the folkloric musicals *Morena Clara* and *Nobleza baturra* – both starring Imperio Argentina who continued to star in folkloric musicals after the war. This mistake is understandable, given that Imperio Argentina's pre-war films – banned in the Republican zone

after she and her film director husband, Florián Rey, accepted a contract to work in Nazi Berlin in 1938-39³² – were shown again under the early Franco Dictatorship (this fact was mentioned by one cinema projectionist interviewed in Valencia). These historical circumstances seem to have led some of our interviewees to regard her pre-war films – which, at least in the case of *Morena Clara*, have a social protest agenda – as products of the Franco era. This misremembering is no doubt also explained by the fact that the folkloric musical genre with which Imperio Argentina was associated, although invented in the Republic as part of a national-popular cultural project, became a staple of 1940s and early 50s cinema and, for many commentators on Spanish cinema, remains the genre most associated with the Franco regime.

The failure of several of our interviewees to distinguish clearly between fiction films of the Republican and Francoist periods corroborates the point made, when interviewed, by Florentino Soria (scriptwriter and actor, Deputy Director General of Film and Theatre 1962-67, and Director of Filmoteca Española 1970-84): namely, that cinema was the one area of culture that provided continuity between the Republic and the Franco regime, since directors, actors and technicians remained largely the same, and Hollywood was a major presence in both periods.³³ I would suggest that one of the reasons for the importance of cinema in the lives of those who lost the Civil War was that it offered a degree of continuity with the past at a time when everything else seemed to have been lost.

What this means is that cinema provided a way of articulating experience, whose continuity was crucial if people were to make sense of their lives under hugely changed circumstances. The British cinema-goers of the 1930s interviewed by Annette Kuhn rarely remembered the stories of the films they saw, though they retained vivid memories of the experience of going to the movies and of the stars themselves.³⁴ We have found that, although

³² This contract was with the Spanish-German production company, Hispano-Film-Produktion, set up with Goebbels' blessing, which allowed the Nationalists, deprived of access to Spanish production facilities which were in the major cities under Republican control, to make films at Berlin's UFA studios. The films made – in multilingual versions – were, curiously, folkloric musicals, aimed at allowing the German film industry to break into the lucrative Spanish American film market. See Román Gubern (ed.), *Historia del cine español* (Madrid: Cátedra, 1995), pp. 178-79.

³³ Given Soria's prominence in the film world, we felt it appropriate to give his full name, despite giving just the first name and initial of the family name of our other informants. This practice was adopted on the advice of oral historians we consulted.

³⁴ See Kuhn, p. 253.

stars were important, it is the stories that have stayed in our interviewees' memories. Indeed, a constant point made is that films then had a proper 'argumento' (plot), unlike films now. And a large number of the people interviewed (especially but not only women) repeatedly launch into a detailed, animated account of the plot of a particular film. Often the film's title has been forgotten, and sometimes the names of the stars too, but the story remains – and its retelling sometimes acts as a cue bringing back the title and stars. One factor in play here is the dominant orality (still) of Spanish culture, especially at the popular level, which makes story-telling an integral part of everyday life. Several interviewees – female and male – told how friends and family would recount to each other the stories of the films they had seen, whether at mealtime, or as women sat sewing together in the communal patio: such story-telling was clearly an important element in social bonding. A popular game – remembered only by men – was to act out the story of a film with the other boys having to guess the film's title from the performance. The evident animation of so many interviewees as they retold for us the stories of films they had seen forty or fifty years ago reinforces the importance of cinematic narrative in providing a structure for the narration of experience – or rather, a structure for the narration of desire.³⁵ For all the people interviewed were completely lucid about the attraction of the cinema being its *lack* of realism: that is, its articulation of 'ilusiones' (hopes) which, through the cinema, could be kept alive at a time when their realization in reality was frustrated for the majority.

The importance of desire as the impulse driving cinematic narrative is especially important given that the interviews make it clear that films were often not viewed from start to finish, as an integral whole. If one misses the end of a film, it is the desire, and not its satisfaction, that remains. These haphazard viewing practices were due to two major factors. First, the fact that, apart from the luxury central cinemas in Madrid's and Valencia's respective Gran Vías where new films were premiered, cinemas ran a continuous programme (*sesión continua*) of two or three films, repeated twice through the afternoon and evening. People would come in at any point, and leave when they had to get home (especially girls whose parents demanded they be home by 9:00 pm). It was frequent to stay on to watch part or all of the first film again: many people went to the cinema to keep warm at a time of coal shortages, and, in local cinemas, it was normal to take one's dinner to

³⁵ As above, I use the term 'desire' here not in a psychoanalytical sense, but as a response to material hardship and political repression.

eat while watching the film. The frequent practice of sitting through films twice may help explain people's extraordinary retention of the details of the plot.

The second reason why many people did not see films from beginning to end was the obligatory enforcement, in the years immediately following the civil war, of the fascist salute and the singing of the fascist anthem *Cara al sol* (*Face turned to the Sun*) at the start or end of the programme – whether the programme comprised one film, as at a premiere, or two or three films, as at a *cine de re-estreno* or *cine de barrio*.³⁶ When speaking at the Cultural Memory seminar at the Institute of Romance Studies, University of London, in 1999, the Italian oral historian Luisa Passerini observed that the narrative structures of her interviewees varied according to their class background, and that the dominant narrative structure of her working-class informants was the picaresque: that is, the tale of how they 'got away with' bending the rules, in a display of what Certeau would call 'tactics' or 'the art of the weak'.³⁷ The leftwing people interviewed by us – communist or anarchist, mostly working-class – never tired of telling anecdotes about their ruses for avoiding the singing of *Cara al sol* and the fascist salute. Those who were not leftwing told of other people doing this. The most favoured trick was to go to the toilets – or leave the cinema – before the end of the film: many people consistently left early for this reason. People learnt which cinemas had capacious toilets or accessible exits, and also which cinemas were more or less strictly patrolled by the police who would often block the toilet door or exits: every cinema had to have a member of the police present to enforce the singing of *Cara al sol* and the giving of the fascist salute. Sometimes the police would have the anthem played in the middle of the programme – or even in the middle of a film – to catch people out. The penalty for not complying was a heavy fine for a man, and for a woman having your head shaved and being dosed with castor oil (*aceite de ricinio*).³⁸ In missing the film's end in order to evade police control, people were missing the

³⁶ Movie houses were divided into three categories: the luxury *cines de estreno*, in the city centre, where new films were premiered; *cines de re-estreno*, where previously released films were shown, with cheaper tickets; and then *cines de barrio* (local cinemas) with basic facilities and sometimes dubious reputations, which made available at extremely cheap prices films that had been released for some time.

³⁷ See Michel de Certeau, *The Practice of Everyday Life* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1984), pp. 34-9.

³⁸ A standard form of public humiliation used by the Francoist repressive apparatus against those defeated in the war or suspected of opposition to the regime. Castor oil produces an uncontrollable emptying of the bowels; being obliged – sometimes at gunpoint – to down as much as a litre of castor oil forced those regarded by the Dictatorship as its enemies to label themselves as 'dirty'.

often conventional plot closure that typifies so much popular cinema, as anarchic forces are tamed through the 'happy end', or through the punishment, repentance or death of the transgressor. It had previously struck me, when watching a large number of Spanish films of the 1940s, that what stays in one's mind is not the conventional ending but the high degree of gender trouble that drives the plot prior to that moment. Given that people sometimes did not see the end, the scope for non-conventional readings and identifications was considerable.

The association of cinema-going with the expression of desire was also literally realized in the sense that couples had nowhere else to go to be alone together.³⁹ This was often true even of married couples, given cramped living conditions usually shared with members of an extended family network. Many interviewees talked of audiences listening with rapt attention; one (a sociologist) perceptively noted that viewing habits acquired from television have since changed this. But one suspects that many were raptly involved in other things, in what must have meant a constant two-way traffic between the expression of their own desires and the expression of desire on screen, suturing the spectator into the narrative in the most fundamental way. As numerous interviewees recalled, the back rows were popularly known as 'la fila de los mancos' (the row of the one-armed). A smaller number of interviewees confirmed that many cinemas were linked to prostitution, both female and male; some also stated that certain cinemas were regular haunts for homosexuals.⁴⁰ Among the picaresque anecdotes were repeated stories – usually about other people, though just a few interviewees were candid enough to admit it had happened to them – of the ushers enforcing morality by shining their torch on over-ardent couples. Some told of complicit ushers whom you could bribe to leave you alone, or who, if you were a man, would seat you next to a *pajillera*.⁴¹ Some right-wing interviewees clearly approved of the ushers'

³⁹ While I am, in this paragraph, referring to sexual desire, I would insist again that its contours are better explained by the political and material circumstances of the day than by psychoanalytical theory.

⁴⁰ Not surprisingly, given the fierce repression of homosexuality under the Franco Dictatorship, none of our elderly interviewees admitted to having themselves engaged in homosexual practices. The interviewers did not feel it appropriate to probe the interviewees on this matter. On the repression of homosexuality under Franco, see Arturo Arnalte, *Redada de violetas: La represión de los homosexuales durante el franquismo* (Madrid: La Esfera de los Libros, 2003).

⁴¹ Women who masturbated men in cinemas for small amounts of money. In the immediate post-war period, many women, without a male breadwinner in the family, were forced to make ends meet in this way. The *pajillera* is a mythical figure in the novels of Juan Marsé (see, for example, *Un día volveré* (Barcelona: Plaza & Janés, 1982)).

interventions. But the general verdict was that the ushers were part of the State's repressive apparatus, who would denounce couples to the police, resulting in the same penalties as for failing to give the fascist salute or sing *Cara al sol*: that is, a substantial fine for the man, the woman being dosed with castor oil and having her head shaved (and sometimes shaved again after her hair had grown back), and with the couple's names being published in the local press 'por inmorales' (labelled as guilty of immoral behaviour). Homosexuals caught in the act were arrested on the spot. In one Valencian cinema, the usher was nicknamed 'Satán'. In such an environment, the relation between the cinema and the expression/blocking of desire was intense. What emerges here is the importance, when talking of cinema as the articulation of desire, not just of the film's contents or even of the political and economic context of the period, but also of the material conditions in which films were viewed.

The importance of knowing about viewing conditions was brought home dramatically in one particular instance. Three of the Valencian interviews were – quite coincidentally – with men who had been political prisoners in Valencia's Cárcel Modelo after the war,⁴² and who had all been involved in the cinema in the prison: one as a spectator, another selling the tickets, and another – Ramón Q. – as the organizer. Ramón's story is extraordinary. Arrested in 1940 with thirty others, three of whom were executed, for distributing leaflets for the CNT (anarchist trade union), he was sentenced to twenty years' imprisonment, but 'redeemed' ten of them, being released in 1950, through the scheme known as 'Redención de Penas por Trabajo' (Redemption/Remission of Sentences through Labour).⁴³ In Ramón's (relatively fortunate) case, the 'voluntary' forced labour involved running cultural activities in the prison, including weekly cinema showings on Saturdays and Sundays. He got the films, free of charge, via his father's connections with a distribution company. In a picaresque scenario in which everyone was trading something off against somebody else, the deal was that the prisoners paid for entrance tickets, with the proceeds going to the Prison Director to help him pay off the projector he had bought for

⁴² The post-war repression was especially savage in Valencia, since the city had been the seat of the Republican Government since November 1936, when Madrid came under heavy siege, and had held out until the war's end.

⁴³ For this system of penal labour, which offered prisoners the opportunity to reduce their sentences by 'volunteering' to work in 'labour battalions', see Isaiás Lafuente, *Esclavos por la patria: La explotación de los presos bajo el franquismo* (Madrid: Temas de Hoy, 2002). These 'labour battalions' were used to build public works and were also loaned out to private companies on good terms with the regime. Given the total lack of safety procedures and often gruelling work conditions, the death rate among such 'volunteers' was high.

himself, ostensibly to 'loan' to the prison. Ramón had to report to him on the takings; when the Prison Director complained that they were going down, Ramón pointed out that, since the films were heavily censored by the prison chaplain, the prisoners were losing interest. (He also reported that the distribution company was getting increasingly unhappy with Ramón cutting and splicing the reels to enforce the chaplain's cuts.) The result was that the Prison Director stopped the chaplain from censoring the films and took on the role of censor himself, in practice letting the films through because it increased the takings which in turn went into his own pocket. What Ramón did not tell the Prison Director was that one reason why audiences had been dwindling was that Ramón, having seen the films before being obliged to cut them, would tell the prisoners what was in the censored bits, so that the incentive to see the movie decreased. The cuts were usually kisses or scenes in which a subordinate insulted a superior – this last category of cuts must have wreaked havoc with westerns.

Almost all of our interviewees were aware of the existence of film censorship; censored scenes were often met with boos and hisses. Several also said that the censorship heightened desire, as you always imagined something more exciting than what had been cut (several talked of their disappointment on seeing certain films uncensored later).⁴⁴ A repeated point was that the explicit sex scenes in today's cinema were much less conducive to desire since they left nothing to the imagination (one male interviewee, who got very heated about the subject, went so far as to say that with all this explicit sex on screen nowadays everyone was going to end up 'sterile'). Prudishness apart, there is an important point here, for it is clear that film audiences in the 40s and 50s, knowing that the films they were watching were censored, were anything but passive viewers. The censored bits – often visible since the image would jump or briefly go blank – literally provided a gap in the text which the viewers could fill with their own desires, reinforcing the suture between desire on screen and desire in the head.

This identification process was furthered through the material process by which cinema costume influenced contemporary fashion – something that Jackie Stacey had previously demonstrated with regard to 1940s British female spectators. A large number of our female interviewees worked as seamstresses to support their extended families who were often left without a male breadwinner. The sister of one of them made dresses for two major Spanish stars,

⁴⁴ Several interviewees had assumed that in the film *Gilda*, released in Spain in December 1947, to public controversy, Rita Hayworth had in the original movie taken off considerably more than the famous black glove.

Ana Mariscal and Amparito Rivelles. All of the women were *modistas* (seamstresses) in practice, given that they made (or refashioned) their own clothes, and all of them admitted freely, usually getting very animated, that they modelled their clothes on stars in the movies (Hollywood stars in every case). This was true even of the most politically committed women – and men. The most frequently mentioned example was ‘los zapatos Gilda’ (high-heeled shoes with an ankle-strap), the film *Gilda* having achieved notoriety as a result not only of a prolonged publicity campaign billing Rita Hayworth as the sexiest woman to appear on screen, but also of priests’ sermons lambasting the film, despite its authorization for release (with cuts) by the censors.⁴⁵ Next came the classic example of the ‘rebeca’ (the standard Spanish word for cardigan) worn by Joan Fontayne in the film *Rebecca*, followed by Veronica Lake’s peek-a-boo hairstyle, covering one eye. Joan Crawford’s hairstyle and make-up were also imitated, as was Barbara Stanwyck’s loose maternity dress in *Imitation of Life*. Several men admitted freely to imitating the hairstyle, hat, or clothing of an admired star: for example, Robert Taylor, Humphrey Bogart, Carlos Gardel, or Fred Astaire (in this last case, his string tie and boater). When we interviewed a couple together, it was sometimes the man who brought up the subject of the imitation of fashion before the woman. Most interviewees insisted on how they dressed up even when going to a local cinema, though this was especially important when they went to a *cine de estreno* in the city centre, where the luxury décor was part of the experience and made it worth paying three times the price of a ticket at a local cinema. Even those interviewees whose financial situation in the post-war period was desperate had all managed to find the money to go to a *cine de estreno* occasionally. It seems clear that the admiration of stars dressed in lavish costumes enmeshed with their own enjoyment of dressing up to go to the cinema or of wearing clothes modelled on those of stars in their everyday life. One male interviewee (Fede, in Valencia)⁴⁶ said it did not matter if the stars were not good-looking since their wonderful clothes made them look dazzling. Costume drama was popular with many of the women interviewed – one (Mercedes F., in Madrid) commented explicitly on the pleasure afforded by the costumes. In other words, cinema seems to have produced an intense and pleasurable identification with stars precisely because of spectators’ awareness that the identities projected by both the stars and themselves were the product of dressing up. These people had no

⁴⁵ See Gubern, p. 104.

⁴⁶ Fede asked to be known just by the informal version of his first name.

need of Judith Butler to tell them that identity is performative.⁴⁷ Indeed, what else could it be in the immediate post-war period when for most people, given the dire material deprivation and political repression, identity had to be based on make-believe or acting out, as survival strategies? It is worth noting here that a considerable number of the people we interviewed had lived since the Civil War under a false name, to avoid political reprisals, literally becoming ‘another person’. One – the 88-year-old anarchist Carmen D. (her assumed name), interviewed in Valencia – said that even worse than having to abandon your family to avoid arrest was having to give up your family name. (At her funeral, attended by the Valencian research assistant who had, shortly before, interviewed her for our project, she was given back her original name in a moving moment.)

As previously noted, the way that the interviewees talked about their favourite stars shows considerable fluidity in the interplay between desire and identification. That is, desire was only in a fairly small number of cases for a star of the opposite sex seen as sex object, and much more frequently tipped into some kind of identification process. Several women talked of knowing girls who slept with a male star’s photo under their pillow, and of how girls would throw kisses and scream when the Argentine tango singer and film star, Carlos Gardel, appeared on screen⁴⁸ – though none confessed to having done this herself. Several men and women recounted the anecdote of the Mexican star Jorge Negrete being mobbed by girls at Madrid’s railway station on his arrival from Paris, and being slapped by an official (one said by Franco’s son-in-law) when he asked ‘¿Es que no hay machos en España?’ (Aren’t there any real men in Spain?).⁴⁹ The previously mentioned Carmen D. talked of her life-long passion for Carlos Gardel, and in another interview, her younger sister Encarna M. told how Carmen’s boyfriend painted a moustache on her poster of Gardel out of jealousy; and how her own brother and boyfriend hated Gardel because she also adored him.⁵⁰ Encarna added that if her brother and boyfriend had had female pin-ups, she would have had a row with them too. But as Carmen talked about her passion for Gardel, she

⁴⁷ See Judith Butler, *Gender Trouble: Feminism and the Subversion of Identity* (New York: Routledge, 1990).

⁴⁸ Gardel was killed in an air accident in 1935; his films were re-released in Spain in the 1940s.

⁴⁹ Each interviewee who recounted this anecdote remembered it differently. Given that, thanks to censorship, no mention of Negrete’s insult to Spanish manhood, nor of the castigatory slap, appears in the extensive press coverage given to Negrete’s arrival – in film magazines, the daily press, and the Francoist newsreel NO-DO – it is impossible to verify the facts.

⁵⁰ Although sisters, Carmen and Encarna officially have different family names since Carmen changed her name from Isabel M. after the war.

insisted that it wasn't a physical attraction but that his voice 'me daba una cosa que yo no podía...' (gave me something that I couldn't...). In other words, his voice seems to have entered into her producing an identification with his expression of desire. Many women imitated the hairstyles and clothes of female stars (one woman – the previously-mentioned Judit H. in Valencia – chose to be interviewed sitting beneath a framed photograph of herself on the wall, at around the age of 20, in a classic Hollywood pose).⁵¹ But, when asked to list the stars they remembered, most women first came up with male stars, in what sounded less like sexual attraction than admiration for their independence and toughness, perceived as qualities to which they themselves aspired. Most of these women had, in effect, been forced by economic or political necessity to live lives that required just such manly qualities. A large number of women as well as men preferred adventure films: 'las del oeste' (Westerns), especially. Given the difficulty of being alone, or finding any kind of privacy, in post-war Spain, this admiration for the tough loner seems significant.

The phrases constantly used in the interviews – by women and men – to express what cinema meant to them were: 'te metías en la película' (you entered the film), 'las películas americanas te llenaban más' (American movies 'filled' you more) etc. – that is, an intense identification to the point that some of them – women and men – admitted to losing all sense of self and sometimes not even noticing the film had ended. There is a double sense of losing yourself and finding yourself in the phrases that are used: 'te metes en la sala y empiezas a vivir' (you enter the movie theatre and you start to live); 'todo esto te hacía vivir algo que tú no tenías' (all this made you live something you didn't have); 'todo estaba prohibido... [el cine era] la forma de soñar... la forma de proyectarte' (everything was forbidden... [cinema was] a way of dreaming... a way of projecting). In these last cases, the speakers are referring to Hollywood movies which expressed their desires precisely because they gave them a glimpse of a world that was 'other' in the literal sense of being foreign. Although both men and women spoke of the strength of such projections (though men only when referring to their boyhood and adolescence), it is clear that women – having to bear the brunt of the material hardship and total denial of women's rights – were in the most need of such compensatory identifications. To quote Francisca S., who worked for a film distribution company in Madrid, speaking again of Hollywood: 'esas mujeres

⁵¹ This was one of the few interviews recorded in video as well as audio, thanks to the Fundación Salvador Seguí of Valencia which introduced us to some of our interviewees in exchange for being able to make video recordings of the resulting interviews for its own purposes.

que podían hacer lo que querían... esa libertad... soñar despierta... [y pensar] si yo fuera ésa' (those women who could do what they wanted... that freedom... like dreaming while awake... [and thinking] if only that were me).

What is important here is that people's viewing of different cinematic genres – almost all listed more than one favourite genre – offered them a varied repertoire of subject-positions that could be internalized as appropriate. Thus one could identify with the tough guy of the western and with the suffering heroine of the costume drama, as the occasion required. Comedies (especially American comedies) were very popular and many of the interviewees spoke of the importance of the happy end. But the same people also spoke of the importance of tragic endings that enabled you to externalize the emotions that you could not express in public and often not in private either, if you had to hold the family together (some of the women interviewed – for example, the previously mentioned Valencian anarchist, Carmen D. – were supporting households of seventeen people). As Carmen's younger sister Encarna put it, as she remembered what going to the movies had meant to her at a time when, after the war, she had no idea if her boyfriend or brothers or elder sisters were alive: 'se alegraba una un poco; pero si era una película que era para llorar, pues lloraba, te hinchabas, nos hinchábamos de llorar' ('they made you feel a bit better; but if it was a film that made one cry, then one cried, you cried your eyes out, we cried our eyes out').⁵²

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⁵² My translation respects the suggestive, if grammatically awkward, changes of person of the verb in the original Spanish.