

THE REPRESENTATION OF THE FAMILY IN THE
SPANISH CINEMA FROM 1950 TO THE
PRESENT DAY.

by

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SUMMARY

The principal aim of this thesis is to study the ways the family has been represented in Spanish cinema both during the dictatorship of General Franco and in the early years of democracy after his death. The family, both as a social institution and as the privileged domain of individuals, provides unrivalled scope for conducting an examination of a whole range of issues peculiar to Spanish society in the second half of the twentieth century, since the relationships of power, domination and submission in the context of the family under patriarchy may represent the experiences of a whole society smothered by a repressive and authoritarian regime. It is indeed through the depiction of the family, and the exaltation or degradation of family values as presented in key films, that we may most clearly understand the political, social and moral ideas which have prevailed in Spain over the last forty years. The family, a medium as powerful as any other institution of the State — the Police, the Army, the Church, the School — in shaping and preserving the rigid structures of a male-dominated society, offers a yardstick for measuring the real extent of the changes which are supposed to have taken place in Spain since the mid-point of the century, during which time the nation has become transformed from a backward, deeply conservative and

poverty-stricken country of the post-war era into a developed and complex society consolidated under Socialist governments since 1982.

Espousing Molly Haskell's view that 'Movies are one of the clearest and most accesible of looking glasses into the past, being both cultural artifacts and mirrors', I intend to explore selected aspects of this varied subject matter as depicted in a range of Spanish films made during the last four decades.¹ Without ignoring the problems and peculiarities of the Spanish Film Industry, I shall progress from a study of the general preoccupations introduced in films of different periods to a discussion of the specific treatment of the theme of the family in them. Exploiting recent developments in ideological, psychoanalytical and feminist theories, and drawing on earlier works of major film theorists, I shall investigate the topics of patriarchy, marriage, monogamy, the nuclear family, notions of masculinity and femininity, the role of women in society and other matters included under the general term of Sexual Politics.

1.- Molly Haskell, From Reverence to Rape, The Treatment of Women in the Movies, New York, Holt, Rinehart & Winston, 1973, p.xii

INTRODUCTION

THE FAMILY, PATRIARCHY AND THE CASE OF SPAIN

The changing configuration of the family and the radical re-evaluation of its functions and purposes are crucial features of our culture in the mid and late 1900s. Central to the organization of society and an influential force in determining the social status of the individual, the family performs a double service which has been interpreted differently according to the needs of specific groups at various moments in history. Until recently, however, the contrasting views held by sociologists, anthropologists, ideologists, theologians, etc., were never so disparate as to cast doubts on the intrinsic nature of the family, because

The family itself appears, to some extent, to be an inevitable, necessary institution, and it appears thus because individuals are born into it and because the "natural", inevitable and necessary nature of the family is part of a familistic ideology.¹

The impact in our century of Freudian ideas, stressing the significance of early childhood events in promoting or thwarting personal development, and revealing that family relationships — particularly those of parents with children of the opposite sex — could cause traumas and neurosis in later years, has widened the area of

investigation into the family, which in recent decades has increasingly involved a psychoanalytical perspective, at the same time as it has incorporated the many strands of contemporary feminist theory.

In addition to these different levels of interpretation of the family, on which I shall expand at a later stage in this introduction, the relevance of the family in our time is manifested too by its pervasive presence as a theme in the artistic expression of Western culture where, particularly in literary and cinematic form, the family has been placed at the centre of many films — for instance, Hollywood family melodramas of the fifties and sixties, or Ingmar Bergman's career as a whole. A host of figures who have explored the almost infinite ramifications of family life in Spanish culture reflect this overall concern, since Spain has been subjected in the last fifty years to the same influences as other Western countries, even if the distinctiveness of Spain's historical experience sets it apart from general Western trends in certain respects. From the early post-war period when Camilo José Cela and Carmen Laforet emerged on the literary scene, a long list of names testifies to an abiding interest in investigating the reasons for individual behaviour and its roots in the peculiar social structures of the family: Juan Goytisolo, Luis Martín Santos, Ana María Matute, Antonio Buero Vallejo, Miguel Mihura and Rosa Montero, are just a few representatives of this tendency.²

It has often been noticed that families are the focus of attention in many contemporary Spanish films, particularly those which dissect Francoist society from a critical vantage point. Essays by Marsha Kinder on 'The Children of Franco in the New Spanish Cinema' and Peter W. Evans on El espíritu de la colmena and Cría cuervos have been seminal in highlighting the predicament of children within the asphyxiating prison of the family where, contrary to the traditional view that the home is an idyllic enclave of peace, unity and happiness, we encounter a world of hatred, resentment, and perverted desires which cause destruction and death all around.³ The images which those films project of both adults and children who are at one and the same time innocent victims and monstrous aggressors, have been seen by film directors and critics alike as the consequence of an abnormal and disproportionate emphasis on relationships of power and submission in Spanish society during the repressive Franco era. The distorted visions that they offer of family lives characterized by fear, oppression, desolation and violence, and the presentation of fathers as, variously, emasculated or despotic figures, and of mothers as either "angels" and victims or castrating monsters, is highly ironic, if we consider that as a matter of policy Francoism exalted the family for being a safe refuge against the evils of the world; idealized women in the roles of virtuous wives and saintly mothers; and rewarded the paterfamilias for his

tireless contribution to the aggrandizement of the nation.

Even though the films mentioned in Kinder and Evans' studies all form part of a series of works produced around the time of the disappearance of the dictatorship (the earliest, El espíritu was made in 1973 and the last, El nido in 1980), many others since the beginning of the fifties had centred on families and the complex relationships involved in family life. Some, like Crónica de nueve meses (Mariano Ozores, 1967) which follows the lives of four couples during the months prior to the birth of their babies, sing the praises of family life by presenting characters who, though suffering all kinds of strain and set-backs, nevertheless remain happy and united: irrespective of their social status, financial situation or the number of children they already have, the parents are singularly devoted to each other, dedicate their time and energies to the well-being of relatives and friends, are totally committed to their offspring, and believe unquestioningly in the goodness and fairness of the society to which they belong. Many other Spanish films, however, focus on the family as a way of denouncing the destructive forces which ^{are} inherent in its very structure, regarding the family as a kind of microcosm of the State, which duplicates many of the ills and tensions of its social fabric. Manuel Gutiérrez Aragón, the director of Camada negra (1977) — one of the films chosen by Kinder for consideration —,

has explained his decision to investigate the roots and causes of fascism in society within the structure of the family on the grounds that 'esta película es también de alguna manera una reflexión sobre la familia, porque el fascismo se repite en cada familia'.⁴ The suggestion that 'the family may be innately fascistic' derives from the recognition that all patriarchal societies, and not only fascist societies 'are committed to the subordination of women and children in the family'.⁵ Especially in the case of Franco's Spain, the family was used to inculcate in children from an early age the fundamental principles upon which the nation was built, reproducing the polarity of power and impotence typical of the ideology which supported the regime where 'Strong figures and submissive figures polarized around the Falangist ideals of authority, hierarchy and order'.⁶ John Hopewell, one of the authors who has done most in recent years to promote awareness of Spanish cinema abroad, also locates the origins of sexual and political repression in the institution of the family, declaring that

Repression, Spanish directors often emphasise, begins at home, and the family is the earliest, the strongest, and perhaps the most inevitable instance of repression facing Spaniards under — or indeed after — Franco.⁷

Hopewell's observation points to some of the principal concerns of my thesis, which will be dealt with at length in later chapters. It also very conveniently

defines the temporal coordinates of my study, which encompasses the period 1950 to the present day. In discussing the theme of the family in a selection of films made at specific moments of this period, I shall necessarily refer to the precise political, social and cultural climate in which they were produced. At this point, however, it may prove useful to include some remarks about Francoism, as a means of providing both a general frame for understanding the implications of allusions to the family in the films selected for attention, and a point of reference from which to judge accusations about the repressive nature of this particular institution, not only under authoritarian rule but also under democracy.

The regime imposed by Franco after the Nationalist victory in the Civil War, has been variously defined by different historians as fascist, totalitarian, autocratic and authoritarian, terms which though descriptive of certain facets of the Franco dictatorship do not necessarily fit a system of government which had no fixed ideology and which evolved in line with the changing circumstances of the time. In this sense, the autarkic forties, with their predominantly Falangist orientation and monolithic structure of power, were to a certain extent typical of Fascism, characterized by the cult to a single leader, a glorification of militarism, the crushing of all political opposition, and the eradication of popular and democratic organizations. Franco, however, did not

rely exclusively on one party, but chose instead to disband the Falange, and thus to consolidate his authority by attracting different political groups — generally called "families" — that were prepared to lend him support. For Raymond Carr and Juan Pablo Fusi, this is in fact the major peculiarity of Francoism, as well as the reason for its success. 'The secret of Franco's power,' they wrote

lay in his manipulation of the political families (and for this purpose we must include the Falange, the army and the representatives of the church). No one family was given a monopoly of power; no one clan was permanently excluded from office.⁸

The unity of Franco's Spain rested indeed on two institutions, the Army and the Catholic Church, with the latter (in a sense the main beneficiary of the War) acting — at least until the early 1970s — as a nucleus around which the other institutions and factions revolved. If we consider that the Nationalists obtained wide-spread support, both during the War and certainly after it, for their programme of returning Spain to a traditional and religious way of life, then the role of the Church becomes truly significant, so much so that, as Carr and Fusi remark, 'Catholicism was the only ideological link between all the victors of the Civil War'.⁹ As we will see later on, the Church's influence in all areas of Spanish life, particularly in the realm of the family and that of education, was to have profound repercussions on the behaviour, mentality and values of Spaniards, both those who supported and those

who opposed the regime.

A further point worth mentioning about Francoism concerns the way it encouraged an apolitical stance among its people, in deliberate contrast to the politicization of the country in the years of the Republic. This policy, obviously beneficial to a dictatorship which wanted its people to accept and internalize their oppression, actually became superfluous from the late fifties onwards, as political apathy spread throughout Spain and improvements in the economic situation gave way to a consumer society in the "booming" 60s. The sociologist Rafael López Pintor observed that by the early seventies what Spanish people valued most were 'seguridad física, tranquilidad social and mantenimiento de un bienestar material del que muchos estaban gozando por primera vez'.¹⁰ A positive consequence of the materialism encouraged by a government unwilling to concede political freedoms, was that demand for consumer goods altered irreversibly the rigidly authoritarian mentality which had prevailed during the first decades of Francoism. Adherence to the values of a competitive capitalist society forced Franco's administration to adopt a more flexible approach to social change, and in the last analysis helped to prepare the ground for the arrival of democracy. López Pintor gives statistics for the year 1972 which confirm the gradual turn-about in political opinion throughout Spanish society:

El sector más autoritario de la sociedad el más opuesto al cambio democrático, engrosaba aproximadamente por aquel entonces el 14 por ciento de la población urbana Una "generación tolerante" a la que pertenecía el 37 por ciento de la población urbana adulta que fueron ideológicamente definidos como los menos autoritarios y los que más interés sienten por política. No son, sin embargo muy radicales, aunque desde luego, son menos conservadores que la "mayoría indiferente".¹¹

What these figures demonstrate is the enormous gap that existed at the end of the Franco era between the bunker - a minority holding entrenched reactionary ideas - and the rest of the population, clearly in favour of political liberalization if only to continue enjoying a standard of living to which they had become accustomed.

The last decade of the dictatorship particularly provides evidence of the contradictory nature of Francoism, a system made all the more difficult to define because of its unpredictable and inconsistent behaviour which allowed a greater diversity of attitudes than would have been possible in a rigidly controlled state.¹² The term "stabilised authoritarianism" coined by Juan Linz with reference to the dictatorship, describes regimes characterized by a 'limited pluralism, political apathy afforded [sic] by the materialism of a consumer society, and repression'; many analysts, however, regard this as an unsatisfactory definition of the Franco dictatorship and view Francoism instead 'as a typical "Fascist" compromise between different groups of a capitalist ruling class'.¹³

Whatever label we attach to Francoism, it can be argued that a regime based on political and sexual repression, subordination to figures of authority, and unconditional acceptance of the ideas and values of the nation, was but an extreme example of the structure of power which had dominated the Western world since the beginnings of our civilization. The feminist writer Marilyn French, summarizing the work of C.J. Friedrich, Hannah Arendt and others who have explored the nature of totalitarian and authoritarian regimes, concludes that 'Totalitarianism is rooted in the same ideals as authoritarianism, the same ideals that inform all Western institutions — the ideals of patriarchy'.¹⁴ Looked at in this way, the fascist regimes which emerged in the early twentieth century merely intensified many of the practices and attitudes which had typified patriarchy since its origin and which, in French's opinion, would be used to perpetuate male control over women: the stratification of society, the institutionalization of power and the use of coercion.¹⁵ Thus Francoism, while suppressing certain individual rights and freedoms taken for granted in democracies, continued to apply the traditional patriarchal pattern of submission and domination which entailed the supremacy of some men over other men and all men over women.

Male supremacy, as Engels has observed, became established first of all in the patriarchal family, when monogamy displaced earlier forms of social

organization including the punaluan and the pairing families studied by Lewis H. Morgan, whose Ancient Society was the starting point for Engels' The Origin of the Family. Interestingly, Engels traces the roots of the term "family" to the Romans, who used it

to denote a new social organism whose head rules over wife and children and a number of slaves, and was invested under Roman paternal power with rights of life and death over them all.¹⁶

The unequal situation of the partners within the new form of marriage, which led Engels to compare the husband with the bourgeoisie and the wife with the proletariat, on the basis of woman's subservience and dependent economic status, seemed to him to presage the disappearance of female oppression once class struggle ceased to exist. Some feminists, however, have rejected Engels' thinking as utopian, pointing to the continuing superiority of males in socialist societies where traditional family structures and values have been reinstated. This is the situation which applied in the democratic Spain of the late seventies and early eighties, where, as John Hopewell observes,

The Spanish family still challenges the democratic nature of Spain by its denial of economic and emotional independence in the name of those most tyrannising of forces: parental domination and filial love.¹⁷

Hopewell in fact testifies here to the continuing dependence in contemporary Spanish society of young people on their parents who remain free to exercise excessive influence on their children's lives until

such time as they leave home to create their own families. This peculiarity of Spanish family life, understandable from a historical and sociological point of view which takes into account the tradition in Latin countries of encouraging large families and advocating lasting unity and close emotional ties between parents and children, has serious drawbacks in regard to the development of individuals to full maturity and is crucial to our analysis of family relations in the Spanish cinema.

Against this background, the ideal qualities associated with the nuclear family unit — those of perfect love, happiness and trust which Zaretsky associates with 'the Ruskinian idyll of the nineteenth-century imagination', where the family was seen to symbolize a comforting refuge against a dehumanized capitalist society — come increasingly to be seen as incompatible with our Freudian awareness that

The Oedipus complex portrays anger, resentment, jealousy, fear, and guilt as normal components of the relations between and among parents and children.¹⁸

The widespread dissemination of Sigmund Freud's theories in the twentieth century, regardless of the fact that they have been contested by certain groups of feminists opposed, above all, to some of his findings concerning women, have to be taken into consideration when writing about the family, given that Freudian ideas have permeated Western thinking and shaped the

attitudes of a great number of artistic creators, amongst them many Spanish film directors.

Out of the enormous range of issues covered by Freud, particular importance is attached to his theories tracing the formation of individual character back to childhood experiences. Terms such as Oedipus complex, castration fears, penis envy, incestuous desires, unconscious feelings, repressed sexuality, have become a fixed part of our cultural frame of reference, inasmuch as they tend to coincide with most people's recollections of their early lives. Used to define the family drama, where all girls and boys must make the transition from an original mother-fixation to a proper male or female position, they explicitly acknowledge the role of sexuality from infancy and the tensions and frustration implicit in the development of personality. Starting with the concepts of the bisexual nature of infants, and of the mother as the first object of the child's libidinal instincts, Freud developed his theory of the Oedipus complex to describe the stages through which the male child has to go as he seeks to transfer his pre-oedipal identification with the mother to the father. The son's reconciliation with the father, whom he has previously regarded as a rival for his mother's love, stems from his fear of castration and is a requirement that he must fulfil in order to reach normal adult malehood. In the case of the girl, however, Freud never managed to differentiate and to deal satisfactorily with her position, but he

indicated nevertheless that she too has to reject the original mother identification and, being aware of her already castrated state — which she blames on her mother — turns to her father in search of the missing penis that she lacks. Unable to conceive her father's child, she must wait until she marries and find in her husband the father's substitute who can finally help her to become whole by giving her the child she desires.

The very complexity of the transition, and the active participation expected of the parents make the attainment of normal, i.e. heterosexual and trauma-free, adulthood highly problematic and prone 'to maldevelopment or fixation'.¹⁹ According to Freud, failure to go through the different phases of growth produces unstable, neurotic, repressed or deviant adults. It may induce many men to spend the rest of their lives seeking their mothers in other women, or to reject women altogether and become homosexuals. For women, an excessively strong attachment to the father will lead to their looking in every man for the father-figure of their childhood. As we shall see, the family drama envisaged by Freud is frequently encountered in Spanish films, both in those which question Francoist society and those which acquiesce in the status quo. We must bear in mind, however, that in a medium like the cinema, predominantly under the control of men, male fears and anxieties about mothers and female sexuality will

readily find expression.

Whatever the final consequences for individuals, the Freudian analysis of the family served to confirm the opinion that this institution was the means for effecting their socialisation and eventual integration into the community. Contrary to the widespread view, itself supported by a traditional and conservative mentality and denounced by the feminist writer Juliet Mitchell, that 'The family provides an impregnable enclave of intimacy and security in an atomized and chaotic cosmos',²⁰ the sociologist D.H.J. Morgan, writing about the interconnection of family and ideology, observes that

Patriarchalism, then, involves two dominances, that of men over women and parents (particularly fathers) over children. These patterns of domination are learned in the family, projected on to the wider society, encountered in the wider society and reflected back from that society on to the family.²¹

While Freud may be credited with perceiving the role played by society in conditioning people's attitudes and behaviour, it was left to the Marxist theorist Louis Althusser to provide a comprehensive account of the ways in which individuals are absorbed into the very fabric of society. In a number of seminal essays written in the late 60s, Althusser developed the concept of ideology which he describes as 'the imaginary relationship of individuals to their real conditions of existence',²² and used it to emphasise the unconscious entrapment of all people within a given

set of social ideas and practices, thus undermining the suggestion that the family could be a private realm outside the boundaries of society.

Beside drawing attention to the fact that we are all "inside" ideology, Althusser, in his examination of the way a dominant ruling class imposes its interests, erases any distinction between the public and the private, pinpointing the interrelationship between two State Apparatuses, the Repressive and the Ideological, which are used indiscriminately and often in coordination to maintain the status quo. The Repressive State Apparatus, which according to Althusser comprises the Army, the Police, the Courts and the Prisons, functions primarily by violent means, while the Ideological Apparatus — the legal, the political, the cultural — operates in an altogether more insidious fashion, by presenting as natural all those ideas which serve the interests of the dominant ruling class.

Of all the Ideological Institutions, Althusser singles out the School-Family, as being the most influential in our times and as having dislodged the Church-Family from its previous position of influence. In the case of Spain, the Church and the School became virtually synonymous as a consequence of the enormous importance attached to religion by General Franco who gave the Catholic Church unlimited control over all areas of education, thus creating the conditions for a kind of indoctrination still more pervasive than that imagined by Althusser's model State, which

takes children from every class at infant-school age, and then for years, the years in which the child is most "vulnerable", squeezed between the family State apparatus and the educational State apparatus',²³

Not surprisingly, representatives of these two institutions, and of the Army which helped Franco to establish the dictatorship, abound in Spanish cinema, with the peculiarity that, while in the work of some directors they reinforce the ideas and values proclaimed through other official channels, under other directors they conveniently subvert or satirize the regime. Of course, this was not an easy aim to achieve, since the Franco state machinery created laws of censorship which made it virtually impossible for dissident ideas to circulate, and ensured that deviations from official doctrine were severely punished. An ideology, however, is not a completely closed system; it admits contradictions, ambiguities and fissures, as is the case of Spain under Franco, where the same regime which implemented archaic ideas and repressive measures sought to project an image of benevolence and progress to its citizens and neighbours.

Much more than other spheres of Spanish life, 'the "safe-guarding of the family", i.e. of the authoritarian and large family', became a primary concern of Franco's regime, a feature which according to Reich is common to every reactionary government.²⁴ The definition offered by Carr and Fusi of the typical

Spanish family during the dictatorship, is thus wholly in character:

The classic family of Francoism was traditional and authoritarian with a careful control of the children's social and sexual activities, a control reinforced by attendance at religious colleges.²⁵

The images of family life presented by the two institutions, the School-Church and the Family, were of course those peculiar to a society with a long and powerful tradition of bolstering family structures, which derive sometimes from the influence of the Catholic faith and ^{at} others from a much more diverse cultural heritage. The Catholic Church, with its view of marriage as an arrangement facilitating procreation and accommodating male sexual needs, gave its sanction to the family on condition that the woman accepted her subordinate position within the house where, exalted as mother — asexual, pure, virginal — she was forced to repress her sexuality. The dichotomy virgin/whore, also encountered in other cultures, was a prominent feature of post-war Spanish society where, as Lidia Falcón and María Teresa Gallego mention, La perfecta casada by Fray Luis de León and the encyclical Casti connubii, became essential points of reference in a woman's education.²⁶

The disproportionate emphasis placed by religion on male concupiscence and the view that 'sólo la procreación justificaba las relaciones conyugales', placed women on a separate plane from that of men's sexuality, and gave rise to an undue preoccupation with

feminine virtues such as modesty, purity and chastity. An inevitable reaction to women's exclusion from the sexual sphere was men's seeking sexual satisfaction outside marriage, another phenomenon found not only in the Spain of the time, but, according to Engels, in many cultures where

together with monogamous marriage and hetaerism, adultery became an unavoidable social institution — denounced, severely penalized, but impossible to suppress.²⁷

Infidelity, as we shall see, is a prominent feature in many films made throughout the period chosen for study here, with prostitutes, kept women, and third parties in triangular relationships having as important roles to play as the legitimate wives. During the Franco era, however, when adultery and extra-marital relationships went against the teaching of the Catholic Church and the code of morality upheld by successive conservative administrations, restrictions of censorship limited the scope for discussion of the theme and forbade its open and sympathetic treatment. In the post-Franco years film directors, now free from censors' constraints, could for the first time deal with this facet of married life, exposing the limitations and frustrations inherent in the institution of marriage. Infidelity, for which women in Spain were still punishable, in law, in 1963 by death by their husband or father, acting with impunity, is a traditional male prerogative which represents yet another instance of the double standard permitted to men. In the hands of directors opposed to

traditional prejudice, however, it is used to comment, for example, on the waning of desire in long-term relationships, or as an acknowledgment that men — and this could also apply to women — find in extra-marital affairs a deeper sense of love, understanding and sexual fulfilment than they could ever encounter in more rigid and conventional relationships. Yet still, as Peter Evans and Robin Fiddian observe in their article on El sur, male longing for glamorous and seductive temptresses reveals the inescapable force of convention and indoctrination:

[Because] the cruel irony of many women's lives is to be found in the way some men, advocating domesticity as a way of life for all good wives and mothers, eventually abandon them after they have adjusted themselves most perfectly to their ideological role.²⁸

The end of the dictatorship speeded up changes in the religious and political spheres which were already taking place in Spain prior to the death of General Franco. The Catholic Church, which in the late 60s backed away from the unconditional support it had given to the regime since the end of the Civil War, had by now become an obsolete and marginalized force in Spanish society, and the institution of the family benefitted from this new attitude. The "Reformas del Código Civil" of 1975 and 1978 reversed all previous norms which had determined the structure of the family in Spain for centuries, except for the brief period of the ^{Second} Republic. According to the new laws the status of husbands as head of the family was removed; the

requirement of obedience demanded of wives was scrapped; adultery and concubinage ceased to be criminal offences; and the sale of contraceptives was legalised. Some of the most radical measures, nevertheless, had to wait until 1981 to find a favourable reception in the Cortes, i.e. the law of divorce, and the "Filiación Patria Potestad y Régimen Económico del Matrimonio", which put an end to discriminatory legislation against women. The last to be passed was the law on abortion, h s to certain circumstances, d delayed until 1985 when the new Socialist administration was firmly established in power.²⁹

These innovations, which have enormous repercussions for the future of the family in Spain, reflect to a large extent those which have occurred throughout the Western world where the institution of the family has experienced unprecedented upheaval in line with dramatically changing conditions in social and economic affairs. In particular, the secularization of modern nations, scientific advances which have helped to develop new methods of birth control and provided better care in pregnancy and childbirth, the increased longevity of the population as a whole and, above all, the impact of feminist ideas, have contributed to the disintegration of the traditional family unit as it has been known for several generations. In place of the old nuclear family of couples united by the sacred ties of marriage, with

women dedicated to procreation and domestic chores and men seeking a living outside the home in a world of alienation and competitiveness, we are becoming accustomed to more open types of relationship, both inside and outside marriage, with divorce, separation and re-marriage creating new patterns in the formation of different kinds of families. These changes have come about partly in response to a more flexible morality and partly as a result of alterations to the legal system which would have been unimaginable a century ago when the only real option open to a woman was marriage or destitution, when married women lived in a state of perpetual dependence because of lack of financial means, and when divorced or separated women were shunned by society and very often lost any claims to their children.

Underlying the reasons behind the different attitudes towards the family are universal concerns about world over-population and fears of a nuclear holocaust. But the main catalyst has been the diffusion of feminist ideas which have raised people's consciousness about the pitfalls of masculine domination and the continuing subordination of women at all levels of social life and, above all, in the family, the traditional female realm par excellence. It seems inevitable that an analysis of the family should tend to concentrate on women, since marriage and the creation of a family, as Simone de Beauvoir has pointed out in her book The Second Sex, 'is the destiny

traditionally offered to women by society', in many cases marriage being for young girls the only means of integration into the community.³⁰ This inextricable link between women and marriage has prompted Juliet Mitchell to remark that 'the family does more than occupy the woman: it produces her'.³¹ Yet, this by no means implies that a study of the family should neglect to examine the position of men in marriage and their roles as husbands and fathers, because one of the consequences of feminist interest in questioning the constraints and limitations imposed on women under patriarchy has been a developing concern about whether men themselves may have been subjected to the same kind of social pressures making them conform to pre-conceived notions of masculinity.

Over recent decades many traditional ideas about women's roles in the family have begun to crumble, as a consequence of women's wanting to play a larger role in society, sometimes out of financial need but very often as a means of acquiring an independent status. The new family unit which has become prevalent since the mid-1970s of the century, smaller in size and therefore less physically demanding, should ideally have allowed mothers to devote less time to mothering and domestic chores and more to outside interests. As we will see below, in many instances this simply has not been the case because, as family conditions improved, motherhood became a full time job for many women who in fact have had to dedicate more and not less time to their

children and their homes. And this in spite of the emergence during the period in question of a new pattern of married life shaped by early marriage and late death, which has increased the amount of time available to women for activities other than procreation and rearing children. Inevitably, all these changes in family life have opened up unprecedented possibilities for women; they certainly have affected the lives of men, who have had to fit in with new domestic arrangements requiring them, for example, to spend more time bringing up and educating the children — in the past an occupation usually left to the mother — and contributing to the running of the home, sharing with a working wife the endless responsibilities of family life.

However limited they may seem to some sections of the population, these changes in traditional attitudes to male/female roles and behaviour are undeniably important steps towards the creation of more flexible and egalitarian societies, with women increasingly stepping out of their restricted positions within the domain of the family and thus fulfilling some of the conditions laid down by feminists for the transformation of our Western societies. The need to propose alterations within existing family structures stems from the fact that, however disappointing the experience of monogamous heterosexual relationships, many people still continue to arrange their adult lives around a partner and a family unit. The feminist

movement, by forcing people to examine the reasons behind social, economic and political pressures to make them conform to preconceived notions about their roles, positions and attitudes, has challenged the very foundations on which patriarchy rests. It has made men and women aware of the detrimental consequences that a blind acceptance of social expectations has had for the whole of society. The advances made over the last few decades in regard to the integration of women in productivity areas, the relaxation of attitudes towards alternative forms of sexuality and the acceptance of diverse types of family relationships, are becoming precarious in the current economic, social and moral climate of many Western nations.

We cannot ignore, for example, recent evidence which seems to suggest that women have now been placed in a double bind, inasmuch as the disruption of conventional forms of family life has unfortunately provided ammunition for conservative sections of society to blame women, particularly mothers, for the behaviour of their children. Ann Dally, studying the images of motherhood projected in our societies, notes the disproportion that exists between women's real socio-economic powerlessness and the idealization of mothers, and draws attention to the impossibility of women's ever attaining the status of "good mothers" because, as she remarks,

When things go wrong with children and young people, as so often happens in our complex and difficult society, mothers are blamed, usually for having gone out to work and neglected their children or for having stayed at home and overprotected them.³²

Equally damning are the results of surveys conducted during the past years into male/female relationships, revealing patterns of behaviour which contradict the optimistic expectations of certain sections of society. The Shere Hite findings in the United States indicate that women still feel abused, patronized, and frozen out of their marriages, a mood of discontentment which is driving women to initiate divorce proceedings, in ninety one cases out of a hundred, from their husbands whom they accuse of not providing them with enough love, companionship and support, and little practical help beside money.³³ For its part the British television programme, 'Lovell. Attitudes to Love, Sex and Marriage', revealed amongst other things that

Every culture has its ideal of the family — and in every culture that ideal falls sadly short of what its women want and expect The Family as the Pillar of Society means women staying at home and subordinating their hopes and wishes to the needs of others Men talk with confident satisfaction about their families, while the women talk of the stress and the suffering of their lives ... Everywhere women's lives are harder than men's, their duties more onerous Women, almost alone, are responsible for the upbringing of children in all societies...³⁴

Even though we do not as yet have any surveys of women's experience in Spain as comprehensive as those conducted in other countries — Salustiano del Campo and

Manuel Navarro's Análisis sociológico de la familia española, published in 1985, gives statistics which only go up to the late seventies — Cambio 16 has over the last few years carried out a number of limited, but nonetheless valuable, investigations into new patterns of behaviour in Spanish society, which appear to confirm the findings relating to other Western nations.³⁵ A very recent article on the relationships of the sexes, 'Minifaldas de protesta contra la discriminación de la mujer', published in the number of Cambio 16 for March 20 1989, includes figures which support the claim that Spain is no different from other countries in the E.E.C. in regard to changes in attitudes to male/female roles, even if in certain respects it continues to lag behind them:

Un estudio realizado por la Comisión de la Comunidad Europea refleja que la mentalidad de los comunitarios conserva tintes machistas. En él se afirma que sólo el 38 por ciento de los varones es partidario de la igualdad de papeles en la vida familiar. La mitad de los maridos prefiere que su esposa trabaje, siempre que su empleo no la absorba demasiado para que se pueda ocupar de las labores del hogar. En España el 65 por ciento de los hombres casados no es partidario de que su mujer trabaje fuera de casa.³⁶

Commenting on these facts, the sociologist Julio Iglesias de Ussel explains that in his view 'El reequilibrio entre los sexos no se logrará hasta que los hombres dejen de ser tan tradicionales y machistas',³⁷ a proces which according to the sources quoted above is already taking place in Spain. We must make a distinction, nevertheless, between the old and

the new generations because, while, as John Hooper writes in his book, 'Opinion polls suggest that many young Spaniards of both sexes are, if anything, rather less sexist than their counterparts in the rest of Europe',³⁸ a large proportion of Spanish men still display typically machista behaviour. The reasons for this are of course partly historical, and connected with the indoctrination and upbringing of Spanish males since the beginning of the period covered by this thesis.

Emmanuel Reynaud, who has exposed the detrimental consequences for men of adhering too rigidly to socially determined rules which prescribe the language they should use, the behaviour they should follow, the jobs they should hold, recognizes that

Man reproduces all the patriarchal values, to the point of embodying the very power that oppresses him; he is in the ridiculous position of being guarantor and victim of the system.³⁹

Particularly damaging for men has been the expectation that they should sublimate all their "feminine" qualities — sensibility, tenderness, warmth — in favour of recognizable male traits which society not only has encouraged but also condoned: violence, aggression, domination, competitiveness, and so on. In regard to the family, Saint Paul's early precept that 'más vale al hombre casarse que quemarse'⁴⁰ has subsequently been complemented throughout the ages by society's insistence that, in order to achieve respectability and maturity, men should settle into a married state and

bear the responsibilities attached to a paterfamilias. It is difficult, however, to reconcile the images of good husbands and fathers with the parallel social demand that men should be truly masculine, pursue virile activities and fulfil their male needs. Many Spanish films explore this contradiction with their directors showing how the pressures to identify masculinity with the performance of a public role may often lead to the disintegration of men's private lives.

This was not the case in the series of militaristic and religious films made in the immediate post-war years, which portrayed men in "manly" roles demonstrating that very quality of manliness in guarding and defending the Patria and its new ideology. Raza, made in 1941 and based on a script produced by the Generalísimo himself writing under the pen name of 'Jaime de Andrade', was conceived as an exaltation of the heroic and mystical qualities of the Spanish combatants of the Civil War. The film presented the ideal characteristics of the ideal members of an ideal family, redolent of the nation as a whole: honour and hidalguía; respect for, and subordination to religious and patriotic values; the division of masculine and feminine roles according to the most traditional notions of womanhood and manhood — which dictates that the place of women is at home, where through their understanding and tenderness they guide the hearts of men and children; the motivation of the man to act as

provider and protector of the weak, that is, women and children. The two protagonists in Raza are José, the army officer, dedicated, courageous and the quintessentially virile man, warrior and man of action, and his brother Jaime, a priest, equally courageous, who accepts martyrdom with exemplary fortitude at the hands of the godless reds, his undisputed bravery even cancelling out the suggestion of possible loss of masculinity implied in his putting on of the long, feminine-looking sotane. A noteworthy feature of this film, and of many others portraying men of action who pledge their lives to the fatherland and to God — like Balarrasa (1950) or La patrulla (1954) — is the special kind of relationships which the main characters have with women. By the very nature of their positions — as in war or adventure films — the men are away from home and free from domestic obligations, thinking about the women they have left behind but engaged in all-male activities.

Religious films, for their part, limit the concern with male/female affairs to mother/son relationships, owing primarily to the celibacy of the protagonists, the priests. Particularly in those films where the action takes place on the war front, a spirit of camaraderie is all important, and there is little or no competition between the men, who devote all their energies to fighting the enemy. In such films, involvement in action and the conquest of fear are sufficient demonstration of their manhood. In these

circumstances men can be portrayed idealistically, appearing not only as accomplished warriors but also as suitable prospective husbands and providers. This paternalistic ethos, fostered by an authoritarian regime which presented the head of State as a kindly father figure, coincided with the official propaganda picture of men as tireless workers and devoted paterfamilias, and of women as model housewives and mothers who were to preserve the spiritual qualities of the nation. The idealized picture of human relations portrayed in films like Raza would eventually be unmasked by directors bent on demystifying the Civil War and bringing a critical perspective to bear on it and its aftermath.

As I intend to show in the chapters that follow, these directors would need to surmount numerous obstacles placed in their path by an administration unwilling to concede any artistic freedom. Indeed, the entire social, political, economic, and industrial situation often conspired to limit their efforts and success, a fact which I shall take into account in each chapter of this thesis, providing a comprehensive overview of the broader contexts within which individual directors operated and made their films. I shall begin by considering the work of directors like Luis Berlanga, Juan Antonio Bardem and Fernando Fernán Gómez, who laid the foundations of a cinema critical of the Spanish status quo, in the early 1950s. Subsequently I shall proceed chronologically through

the major periods of Spanish cinema under and after Franco, using contemporary theoretical models of the understanding of film as guide-lines for detailed analysis of individual works and broader trends in Spanish cinema concerned with the representation of the family. Throughout, I shall consider the family in its widest sense, branching out to explore all sorts of interrelated questions which criss-cross the central area of concern of my thesis. The emphasis on specific topics related to the family will vary from chapter to chapter and even from subsection to subsection, sometimes } cussing^{on}_h the place of women in the family, at others^{on} the relations between the sexes, parents and children, mothers and fathers, etc. This approach is in fact totally necessary, given that certain issues were more important at certain times, both in terms of the period in which the films were made, and in terms of my own argument and the evidence and data upon which it is based.

CHAPTER ONE

NEOREALISM VERSUS SPANISH TRADITIONS

El cine es un arma incruenta y eficaz de penetración política, y hubiera sido imperdonable toda blandura o negligencia en el acto de arrebatarlo a las manos enemigas. Había que dotar a nuestro cine, desde un principio ya, de personalidad profundamente hispana, que permitiera ejercer, sobre todo, una influencia ideológica irresistible.
(Fernando Mèndez-Leite, Historia del cine español, p.393.).¹

I - A Historical Overview

After the Civil War the level of development achieved by Spanish cinema during the years of the Republic suffered the same fate as all other cultural activities under the Nationalist regime. Even though the film industry in Spain prior to 1936 had lacked the necessary economic resources to compete on equal terms with works produced in other countries' cinemas, a significant number of films were made by distinguished film directors which received acclaim both in Spain and abroad: La aldea maldita (1929) and Nobleza baturra (1935) — the last with the major star of this period,

Imperio Argentina — by Florián Rey; Malvaloca (1927) and La verbena de la paloma (1935), by Benito Perojo; and Patricio miró a una estrella (1934), by José Luis Sáenz de Heredia, are just a few of the best known titles from this period.²

Reference to pre-war Spanish cinema would not be complete without the mention of Luis Buñuel who, after making his two masterpieces in France, Un chien andalou (1929) and L'Age d'Or (1930), both made in collaboration with Salvador Dalí, returned to Spain to film Las Hurdes (1932) — a work which was banned by the Republic — and to create a Spanish film company, Filmófono, which set out to produce popular works for mass consumption along the lines of the American studios. Some of the films made Filmófono under the supervision of Buñuel, who often had a handⁱⁿ directing them — e.g. Don Quintín el amargao (Luis Marquina, 1935), La hija de Juan Simón (Sáenz de Heredia, 1935), ¿Quién me quiere a mí? (Sáenz de Heredia, 1936) and ¡Centinela alerta! (Jean Grémillon, 1935) — draw on the same cinematic and theatrical traditions which made other works of this time attractive to large audiences: the genres of the españolada and the sainete respectively. Filmófono, however, would disappear after the Civil War, while CIFESA, the other major film-producing company, continued into the Franco era, contributing to the diffusion of Nationalist ideology until the beginning of the sixties when it ceased to exist.

For all Franco's interest in the cinema as a means of indoctrination — after all, he scripted Raza and was said to have supervised the script of Alba de América, the CIFESA superproduction of 1951 directed by Juan de Orduña — the dictatorship did little to encourage and promote the film industry, hence the accusation by some critics, which is nevertheless debatable, that 'No hubo cine oficial franquista ni funcionó la propaganda por medio del cine'.³ One of the reasons for the lack of a cinema of marked Francoist values must be found in the conflicting interests of those groups which took control of the film industry after the war: the sindicato, which botched its administration in typically bureaucratic fashion, the Church, which was given the upper hand in questions of morality and zealously implemented a narrow-minded mentality, and the racketeers, whose only concern was to make money. The consequence, as John Hopewell writes, was that

Between them, in frequent fits of absence of mind, these forces managed not so much to direct as to destroy a dynamic Spanish film industry. Three factors are crucial: censorship, compulsory dubbing, the subordination of national production to the importing of foreign films.⁴

To the strict norms of censorship established by law in 1938 — at the height of the war — and continued, with only } alterations in the sixties, until 1976, were added new measures which reinforced the State's control over cinema: in 1939, norms which compelled directors to present scripts for censorship prior to

the making of films; in 1941, legislation demanding the dubbing of all films into Spanish, a measure designed to protect the Spanish language which would have negative repercussions for the cinema in Spain up to the present day; and in 1952, the creation of the Comisión de Clasificación y Censura, which as well as protecting the moral and political integrity of the Spanish people, was designed to select the films deserving State subventions, a process which was conducted mainly on ideological grounds. As Emilio C. García Fernández observes:

La censura estatal se ejercía a través de dos mecanismos específicos de presión: aquel que incidía sobre el contexto ideológico de la película y aquel otro que cercaba el sistema de producción.⁵

In opposition to these measures which would weigh heavily on film production in Spain until the end of the dictatorship, in 1947 the administration opened the Instituto de Investigaciones y Experiencias Cinematográficas, a step which later it greatly regretted since the institution became an important focus of dissident ideas throughout its whole existence.

State censorship, self-censorship and the limitations of the industry would indeed determine the kind of cinema which was allowed to be made during the Franco era. Though I have chosen to start my examination of the theme of the family in Spanish cinema in 1950 — a date which is generally acknowledged as marking the beginning of contemporary Spanish cinema

— a brief survey of the period immediately preceding will help to provide a context for my work.

The decade of the forties, following on three years of Civil War and the exile of countless intellectuals and artists after the Nationalists' victory — the absence of Buñuel must be considered particularly crucial —, was a period of mediocrity, in every way a regression from the impressive cultural achievements of the early twentieth century which culminated in the flourishing cultural life of the Second Republic. The cinema of the immediate post-war years in Spain reflects the spiritual and material poverty of the time, as a consequence of the strict imposition of values rooted in the dominant ideology of the victorious faction, and the atmosphere of political isolation and economic stagnation which resulted from the Civil War and the defeat of the Axis powers in 1945. From 1939 to 1950 the type of films which were encouraged were those which served as a vehicle for the articulation of the traditional ideas of Catholic Spain. The depressing realities of life under a dictatorship were concealed by films which exalted heroic and glorious actions of the past and glorified the traditions of a nation which had produced saints and pious monarchs, missionaries and exemplary converted sinners. Films were not, of course, the only means used to implement those ideals: traditional values were also imposed through other channels of indoctrination (church sermons, books by stalwart

Francoists, speeches by high-ranking officials, educational institutions, etc.). But cinema, with its popular appeal and immense influence on the masses, excelled in the presentation of topics considered typical of the Spanish mentality and way of life throughout the centuries.

Raza, inspired by Franco's ideas, established the norms and criteria for success in the Spanish cinema: a nostalgic backward gaze to the country's heroic past and that of its people (exemplified in the film's evocation of the historical hero, Churruca, and the period of Spanish imperial dominance), a militaristic, patriotic attitude, implying a rejection of foreign values and attitudes (manifested in the struggle against the United States), a defence of Spanish Catholic traditions and praise of the spirit of sacrifice which put country and God (in the person of his representative on earth, either a King or Franco) before any temporal concerns (family, house, friends, comforts).⁶ From this model derived the films of the historical, religious and patriotero genres which held sway throughout the forties. Spain was a poor and backward country isolated from the rest of the civilized world, and still suffering the results of a fratricidal war; but on screen its people could identify with what was presented to them as the real Spain, a country renowned for its glorious history and famous figures: Doña María la Brava (1948), the film by Luis Marquina about Doña María de Padilla; El doncel de

la reina (1945), by Luis Fernández Ardavin, concerning the Catholic Queen and the conquest of Granada; Locura de amor (1948), by Juan de Orduña, based on the tormented life of Doña Juana la Loca.⁷

These films and many more which dealt with gitanos and toreros, and flamencos and zarzueleras reinforced a topical, wholly contrived message of Spain's uniqueness. The only field in which films were allowed a certain degree of freedom from the constraints of censorship was that of literary adaptations. In the post-war period Sáenz de Heredia and Rafael Gil — two directors who adapted to working under the dictatorship after making their names at the time of the Republic — sought in the works of nineteenth-century authors (Pedro Antonio de Alarcón, Armando Palacio Valdés), or in more recent writers (Jacinto Benavente, Miguel de Unamuno, Carmen Laforet) justification for the minor sexual, political and religious transgressions depicted in their films. El escándalo (1943), based on Alarcón, and Las aguas bajan negras (1947), inspired by Palacio Valdés' La aldea perdida — both directed by Sáenz de Heredia — and La fe (1947), an adaptation of Palacio Valdés' book of the same title, and Lecciones de buen amor (1943), after Benavente — both by Rafael Gil — are amongst the many films adapted from literary works in this decade.

II - Spanish Cinema in the Fifties

Even though this kind of cinema continued well into the middle of the Franco era, the beginning of the fifties saw a substantial change in the attitudes of some new directors towards the cinema they wanted to create. A major development took place in 1951, the year of Esa pareja feliz, a film which resulted from the collaboration between Juan Antonio Bardem and Luis G. Berlanga, both of whom had recently been awarded degrees by the newly established Instituto de Investigaciones y Experiencias Cinematográficas. The reasons for this change were various but inevitably the social and economic conditions in Spain — in comparison with the previous decade — improved considerably in the fifties. Moreover, by this time the international situation required the participation of Spain in combatting the Communist threat to Western Democracies, and the major powers — encouraged by the attitude of the United States towards Franco — finally recognized the regime. Under these circumstances, a token degree of liberalization was deemed suitable by the Spanish Government. Cultural life in particular benefitted from the opening of frontiers which facilitated travel to foreign countries, a certain relaxation in the application of the norms of censorship which began to stimulate intellectual debate, and the importing of books which, having been previously banned, now started arriving from Argentina.⁸ In these ways, for the first

time since the period of the Republic, the Spanish people were able to come into contact once more with controversial ideas and modes of thought from abroad.

Other circumstances also speeded up the changes in Spanish cultural life at this crucial time. Just as significant as the easing of official restrictions were the conditions under which a new generation of intellectuals emerged. This new generation — known in Spanish literature as La generación del medio siglo — was a homogenous group of novelists, dramatists, film directors and the like, who shared the same ideas and rebelled against the same impositions. The first generation of post-war intellectuals had consisted primarily of ex-combatants, like the writers Camilo José Cela, Miguel Delibes and Antonio Buero Vallejo. This new generation was made up of individuals affected by the war, but who had not taken an active part in it. They were people who had studied at university or served a particular apprenticeship, who took part in the same tertulias, were involved in the same cultural activities and contributed to the same magazines.

An important event which was to influence this group of writers and film directors was the introduction of a new cinematic mode in Spain at the beginning of the fifties. In the same way that writers and readers suffered cultural deprivation, so cineasts and filmgoers had had to make do with the cinema permitted by the regime, a stock of innocuous foreign films — many important works were banned from entering

the country — and of domestic products which accepted and exalted the values of Francoist society. It is not surprising that the showing of Roberto Rossellini's Italian Neorealist film, Roma, città aperta, in 1950 provoked a dramatic reaction in the literary and cinematographic fields, and that groups of young intellectuals flocked to the Primera Semana de Cine Italiano which was held in Madrid the following year. As Santos S. Villanueva has explained, apart from

a tradición realista española, es el cine neorrealista italiano el elemento fermentante y catalizador de nuestra cultura no solo cinematográfica sino literaria y hasta general de posguerra.⁹

Vicente Molina Foix's view that, for a whole generation of Spaniards 'El cine era un alimento espiritual más que la literatura, más que la poesía, más que la música, más que el teatro, más que nada', is confirmed by the emphasis given to film and cinematic forms in the works of writers like Rafael Sánchez Ferlosio, who translated a story by Zavattini which became the script of Milagro en Milán, or Jesús Fernández Santos whose novel Los bravos 'Está construida como técnica de montaje cinematográfico de secuencias'.¹⁰ It is worth recalling, too, Ignacio Aldecoa's connection with the cinema, since not only were several of his works translated to the screen, but he was a close friend of the film director Mario Camús and scripted several films, e.g. Gayarre, made in 1958, and Young Sánchez (1963) — the latter based on his own story. Of course he was not the only author to write

for the Spanish cinema; other names which may be cited are those of Gonzalo Torrente Ballester, who co-scripted Surcos (1951), Alfonso Sastre (Amanecer en puerta oscura, (1957), Alfonso Paso (Quince bajo la luna, (1959) and Miguel Mihura (Solo para hombres, 1960).¹¹

If both native and foreign cinemas were a strong influence on Spanish novelists of the fifties, for the film directors who emerged at that time the impact of Neorealism was to be decisive. Even though some directors, Juan Antonio Bardem for example, expressed some reservations about the forms which Neorealism adopted, this new movement in the cinema helped them to break with the kind of films which had been made in Spain prior to the debut in 1951 of Esa pareja feliz. What was essential for directors like Bardem and Berlanga was the questioning of existing forms and the need to represent the social conditions prevailing in the country. Under the circumstances it is not surprising that Esa pareja feliz should start with a parody of existing cinema, which was evasive in its attitude towards the reality of Spanish life and was seen as a vehicle of indoctrination and as a means for making acceptable the values imposed by an authoritarian regime. Felix Fanès, in his study of the film, adroitly observes that

L'obertura de Esa pareja feliz suposa una crítica a la producció de CIFESA, crítica que es presenta en una doble direcció. D'una banda, contra els films històrics com a falses formes de representació. La burla, en aquest sentit, és evident: tot en la seqüència es encartronant i polsegós: el joc dels actors, els vestits, els diàlegs, etc. ... Però, d'una altra banda, la seqüència sembla perseguir una segona fita: no es tracta tan sols de fer burla de u'ns diàlegs, d'una iconografia, d'una falsa entitat històrica, sinó també de satiritzar un determinat estil de posada en escena, concretament l'estil Orduña, que consistia — com és ben sabut — a resoldre totes les seqüències amb el menor nombre de plans possibles, fo a no això factible, fo a no raonable.¹²

Having poked fun at the conventions of recent cinema, the camera in Esa pareja feliz then proceeds to focus on one of the individuals involved in the production of the "historical" film, namely, an electrician, thus demonstrating that the new directors — like the novelistas del medio siglo — have become 'conscientes como tales de su labor reveladora de la realidad'. Stripped of all pretentiousness and condescension, they 'dirigen su mirada hacia el humilde, sin trampas, sin concesiones popularistas en general, y los hacen protagonistas de sus narraciones'.¹³

It must be remembered^{however} that films which aimed at breaking with the tradition of an escapist cinema were going to constitute no more than a fraction of the entire production of the decade. Most continued to treat historical, religious and folkloric themes, with the subsequent addition in the fifties of films about children — such as Marcelino, pan y vino (Ladislao Vajda, 1954), El pequeño ruiseñor (Alvaro del Amo,

1956) and Un traje blanco (Rafael Gil, 1956) — which, because of an inherent sentimentality, failed to question the social conditions and problems from which they derived. Those that did helped to lay the foundations for the new Spanish cinema of the sixties. In this chapter of my thesis I shall concentrate on films made during the fifties and early sixties by directors who would continue, with varying degrees of success, to develop the pattern which they had already established, i.e. Berlanga, Bardem and Fernando Fernán Gómez. Others, like José Antonio Nieves Conde, the maker of the first truly neorealist film in Spain, Surcos (1951) — although some critics give that honour to Edgar Neville's El último caballo (1950) — who had started in the profession soon after the war and continued his career as film director until the beginning of the seventies, would evolve unevenly, mixing some interesting films which raised important social issues with others which, though banal, were often commercially successful. Marco Ferreri, who came to Spain in 1955 as a Totalscope lens salesman and promptly directed two films which are most commonly associated with the Neorealist tradition, was denied a work permit after making El pisito (1958) and El cochecito (1960), and had to continue his career in the cinema working in other European countries.

A number of characteristics are common to the films made by this group of directors of which the most important are the influence of neorealism and the

mediation of contemporary historical and political realities in their films, and the depiction in them of the physical and moral deprivation in urban and rural environments. Concerning the first point, it must be made clear that despite the influence of Neorealism in film and fiction, not all the film directors accepted unconditionally the premises outlined by the Italian Neorealists, and while they saw the advantages that the new aesthetic could bring to Spanish cinema, they nevertheless expressed reservations about some of its methods.¹⁴ Juan Antonio Bardem, regardless of his admiration for the principles of Italian Neorealism, has criticized some aspects of the movement:

Yo siempre he tenido un gran afecto personal hacia él [Zavattini] aunque no compartía sus ideas; desespectacularizar el cine es justamente lo contrario de lo que yo siento. Ese "cine-verdad" puede ser válido para un tratamiento sociológico o de información, pero a mí me interesa el espectáculo; por eso ante las fórmulas que se desplegaban ante nuestros asombrados ojos en aquella Primera Semana de Cine Italiano yo admiraba aquella realidad espléndida que se nos ofrecía; pero lo que no me gustaba, era el procedimiento formal de contarlos.¹⁵

For his part Berlanga has differentiated between two perspectives in Italian Neorealist works, the Christian and the Marxist, and has admitted his preference for a more humanistic type of work, whose origin he traces to the film Umberto D where, he says,

Se empieza a hablar de un nuevo realismo de tipo amable y con final esperanzador que se oponga a la política de miseria y ropa sucia del primer neorrealismo.¹⁶

But after Rafael Azcona started scripting his films,

Berlanga's cinema reflected particularly the influence of Spanish traditions, the most important of which was the esperpento, from which derived the black humour and grotesque features which characterized all of Berlanga's works after Plácido (1961). As I will have an opportunity to show, Fernán Gómez also adopted a particular attitude towards Neorealism and would seek to base his cinema in native Spanish forms - mainly the sainete but also the esperpento.

What all these directors accepted however was Zavattini's view that the new cinema had to be based on 'contemporaneidad', 'lucha contra lo excepcional', and 'el descubrimiento del hombre'. They also accepted his demand that films 'should accept, unconditionally, what is contemporary. Today, today, today'. Like him, the Spanish directors were 'bored to death with the heroes more or less imagined', and shared his ambition 'to meet the real protagonists of everyday life'.¹⁷ This did not preclude the use of imagination. As another Italian director has said

I constantly come back, even in the strictest documentary forms, to imagination, because one part of man tends towards the concrete, and the other to the use of the imagination.¹⁸

Eventually, the reasons why directors were drawn to a realistic portrayal of Spanish society had very much to do with a political commitment, once they became convinced that

El arte oficial español, la prensa española, el mundo oficial español hurtaba la realidad, hurtaba el erotismo, hurtaba la lucha de clases real, hurtaba los cimientos reales y sociales de la vida.¹⁹

This concern with the realities of life in Spain prompted them to organize the Conversaciones de Salamanca in 1955 in an attempt to face up to the problems affecting Spanish cinema, to establish links with political groups opposed to the regime (mostly through their connections with the Communist party), and to contribute to publications of a left-wing tendency, such as Cinema Universitario and Objetivo and, later, Nuestro Cine.²⁰ As José Monleón, the director of the last of these publications, has observed:

Para nosotros el realismo, en el contexto de la época — y eso es bien interesante tenerlo claro —, no era tanto la opción por unos determinados estilos cinematográficos en tanto que estilos como la opción por un determinado cine cuya vocación o sentido o intención última, a través de no importa qué estilo o tipo de película, fuera de alguna manera — dicho vagamente — investigar o desvelar la realidad, frente a otro cine que entendíamos nosotros que la ocultaba o la camuflaba.²¹

In any case, the commitment of the film directors to a realistic art form is clearly indicated within their works. It cannot be a coincidence that many of the films of the fifties contain repeated references to the world of cinema. At a time when political commitment was a necessity in facing the all-pervasive aspects of the totalitarian regime, references to the

kind of cinema which people chose to see are very revealing. The parody of pseudo-historical films which is present in Esa pareja feliz has already been mentioned; for that reason it is important to relate it to another moment in the film where interior duplication occurs. Among the many references in Esa pareja feliz to the world of show business, to theatre, radio and publicity, the scene of the couple's visit to the local cinema reinforces our perception of these realms of experience as forms of escapism. The comparison of what they see on the screen - a handsome, elegant couple, cruising the seas in a ship, romantically in love - with their own miserable existence, living in just one sub-let room, struggling to make ends meet, could not be more extreme. The world of fantasy created by the wife, through her endless participation in fortune-seeking competitions, includes visits to cinemas of sesión continua where, taking refuge among people in the same situation perhaps as themselves, she and her husband can see 'una película española y un melodrama romántico'. Her preference for the 'melodrama romántico' is not shared by her husband who, instead of yielding to the film's romantic appeal, is more interested in remarking on the technical means used to create it. Her views nonetheless are echoed by the querida in Surcos after she has been taken to see 'una de esas películas neorrealistas que ahora se llevan'. Having struggled to leave behind a life of poverty and become the kept woman of a rich black-

marketeer, she rejects the film she has just seen because 'no le gusta ver miseria'.²²

Undoubtedly the reality presented in these films of the fifties is one of material and spiritual poverty, hopelessness and corruption, where people have to cheat, steal or kill in order to survive. The protagonists portrayed in many of the films, like the young couple in Esa pareja feliz, the country family arriving in Madrid hoping for a better life in Surcos, the professional married couple in Fernán Gómez's La vida alrededor (1958) who resort to pluriempleo to improve their social status, all have to use their wits to fight adverse conditions or otherwise succumb in a society where the law of the jungle prevails. The chances of their succeeding are normally minimal, because in a society that lacks solidarity any weakness on their part makes them vulnerable: the idealistic electrician in Esa pareja feliz, cheated by the award of a worthless diploma after years of studying, dismissed from the studios where he works for "borrowing" film material (something which everybody else does), robbed of his meagre profits by the person who suggested the deal in the first place; the elder brother in Surcos, who dies because he is not tough enough to carry through the illegal activities he has chosen out of necessity; the father in the same film, arrested by the police for showing kindness to children who are too poor to buy the sweets and trinkets he sells in the streets; the young sister — again in

Surcos — robbed of her dream of becoming a professional singer and trapped instead as the mistress of the father-figure (a black-market racketeer) who promised to help her, these are all examples of losers in a power-seeking, corrupt world.

The male characters, particularly in many of the films of this period, are divided between victims and victors, clearly an extension of the winners and losers of the Civil War. Some of the films go to inordinate lengths to describe those attributes which distinguish the successful individual: toughness, lack of feelings, deceitfulness, while those who fail — and who are accordingly considered impotent — are portrayed as gentle, considerate, even sentimental, in short as sharing those qualities traditionally associated with women. Thus, for example, Bardem's Calle Mayor (1956), which depicts a provincial world lacking in hope and incentives, offers men the choice of conforming to the rules of the game (getting a job, having a wife and some d , strolling along the calle mayor in the evening), or flouting social expectations by the ultimately tame gestures of practical jokes, bouts of drunkenness and visits to the local brothel.²³ The typical machista behaviour of the group is exemplified in this film by the pressure put on one of them to make a quite spurious offer of marriage to a naive and gullible spinster. Although initially reluctant to be coerced into what he rightly considers a vile action, Juan is soon persuaded by the other men who taunt and

accuse him of not being man enough to carry out the plan. Caught on the horns of a dilemma, since he has neither the courage to go all the way nor the wish to lose face, he opts out, and runs away like a coward. His attitude is counterpointed in the film with that of Isabel, who accepts her life as a spinster and decides to remain in town and confront a not very promising future as a lonely old maid, keeping her mother company and visiting the friends who were lucky enough to "catch" a husband and start a family, the only acceptable solution for a young woman in a provincial town.

The sense of integrity which distinguishes Isabel from the other characters in Calle Mayor is also a belated feature of Juan in Bardem's previous film Muerte de un ciclista, made in 1955, another work which portrays the lack of moral values in a corrupt society, in this case the professional middle-classes.²⁴ Juan, a profesor adjunto de Matemática Analítica, who is involved in an adulterous relationship and has lowered his moral standards in trying to adjust to the social environment of which he is part, is redeemed by his eventual recognition that he has done wrong to one of his university students and by his decision to face punishment for la muerte del ciclista alone. The film, which reflects the influence not only of Neorealism but also of Soviet cinema — particularly in the editing — and of film noir — a term used to describe a genre of Hollywood films made mostly in the forties which depict

a menacing and alienated world, and is recognizable by its expressionistic lighting and characteristic mise-en-scène — presents a desolate vision of Spain, manifested not only in scenes of the dilapidated and squalid working-class quarters but also in the film's vistas of the arid and wasted countryside which surrounds the city. Muerte de un ciclista is the first film, moreover, to include a reference to the social unrest in Spain in the mid-fifties, in particular to conflicts in the University, which set the pattern for the strikes and demonstrations which would become permanent features of Spanish society in the following decades.

A distinction must, however, be made *between urban and rural lives* as presented in these films. Not surprisingly, all the examples mentioned so far belong to films whose narratives are set in the environment of the big city, in all cases Madrid. Life there is presented as a continuous struggle, and in none of the films cited does the situation of the people eventually improve. In fact, the characters end up more or less as they began, and the happy ending in some of the films must not deceive us into reading an optimistic conclusion to their problems: Juan and his wife, after a lucky day as a pareja feliz, are still in the same situation as they were before they won the competition, worse in a sense if we consider that Juan is now out of work. The family in Surcos decides at the end to go back to the country; in the interim, however, one of

its members has been killed, another dishonoured, and all of them degraded by the things they have done since arriving in the city.²⁵

A stark contrast to this last example is a film centred on events that take place in a rural environment, Bienvenido, Mr. Marshall. The inhabitants of Villar del Río form a small community and live in a place where even the town clock has stopped, creating the impression of a world unchanged by time and belonging to a frozen moment in history. Beside a few "civilized" amenities, like the film which arrives for the weekly show or the battered old bus which joins the village with the outside world, very little is seen at the beginning which could indicate the year or even the decade in which the action of the film is set. Life in Villar del Río is disrupted only when external forces interfere with its homely tranquility. Even though the unexpected visit of the Americans, which fails ultimately to materialize, provokes an upheaval in the lives of the people, and eventually causes friction, resentment, and the shattering of illusions, the community survives the experience thanks to their down-to-earth and simple existence and the solidarity they enjoy as a group.

'Authenticity' is a positive quality which is a consistent element in the majority of the films made by Bardem, and one which is equally present in Bienvenido, Mr. Marshall, a film he co-directed with Berlanga, where an unprepossessing reality — the

colourless habitat of a small Castilian village - is concealed beneath the trappings of a false one - a stereotyped Andalusian pueblo of whitewashed houses, flowers, Sevillian patios, and people with guitars and castanets. Even though Bardem, like many critics, appreciated the limitations of some of the films of the fifties, because, as he said

Surcos escapa al darnos una explicación virgiliana, del éxodo campesino a la ciudad. Si hay éxodo habrá una razón. Surcos no la busca. Escapa. Bienvenido Mr. Marshall escapa, en otra medida, a la fantasía,²⁶

he nevertheless felt the necessity of adopting a largely positive attitude when confronted with the realities of Spain. It is true that Bienvenido Mr. Marshall offers a mainly idealistic solution to the problems of the country and its people, but the optimism displayed in the film is not so much a desire to avoid the issues which it raises as a confirmation of the inherent potentialities of individuals to overcome their difficulties without the intervention of external forces, whose negative consequences are implicit in the dream sequences with the association of the M Carthy witch-hunts with the Inquisition, which in turn could be read as a coded reference to political oppression under Franco.

This conviction, assumed by many Spanish directors and particularly by Bardem, was one of the strategies adopted by those who were opposed to the Francoist ideology. Together with their decision to investigate

new ways of presenting the social conditions of the nation and of rejecting the cultural legacy of their predecessors, the new generation of intellectuals chose during the fifties to return to those past forms of Spanish literature where writers had dealt in similar ways with the same problems. This is a characteristic already found in the theatre of Buero Vallejo, where some of the plays

se encuentra[n] el tema de España desde una perspectiva intelectual muy semejante a la de un Larra, a la de un Galdós, a la de los escritores del 98... Esto es, una perspectiva desde la cual el criticismo aparece como la forma más positiva, necesaria y honrada de un patriotismo auténtico.²⁷

A parallel desire to tackle the problems of Spain from this perspective presumably motivated the heterogeneous group of falangistas, católicos and comunistas to meet in Salamanca to discuss the problems affecting the cinema. Their stance of opposition — it must not be forgotten that they were re-discovering the works of writers who were proscribed in Spain following the defeat of the Republican side — was articulated at this time through the pages of magazines of various tendencies, including the Catholic orientated El ciervo, Indice — which in 1951 offered the film page to Ricardo Muñoz Suay, like Bardem a member of the Communist party —, and Revista, which followed the ideas of the disenchanted ex-falangist Dionisio Ridruejo.²⁸ As Román Gubern has indicated,

En aquellos años de severísima censura administrativa, el espíritu regeneracionista del 98 fue recuperado por esas revistas como reacción tras la catástrofe político-social de la Guerra Civil y sus secuelas, parangonables a la "catástrofe nacional" que concienció a los intelectuales del 98.²⁹

If renuncia and autenticidad can help us, with the benefit of hindsight, to understand the limitations of the films of this decade, censorship must be held responsible for many inconsistencies and shortcomings in the presentation of the themes chosen by the directors of the realist tradition. In this respect the explanation given by Gubern in relation to the films of the sixties is equally applicable to those of the previous decade. Censorship, he says

podía permitir una cierta crítica de costumbres, podía permitir un cierto comentario crítico de la vida cotidiana española, de sus frustraciones, pero evidentemente no podía permitir planteamientos realistas.³⁰

The limitations which censorship placed on directors has been registered by Bardem when he complained that

Para hacer un film es necesario un cartón de rodaje. Para tener el cartón de rodaje es necesario el visto bueno de la censura previa. Para tener esa licencia es necesario el visto bueno de la censura definitiva.³¹

So, at every stage in the production of a film censorship was applied and in that way nothing which could have been considered damaging to the ideology of Francoism was allowed to pass unnoticed. Inevitably these strict measures influenced the way that directors presented their material and led to the imposition of

self-censorship. Censorship was not only applied at an official level, but was also used by the studios. As a result scenes in films were cut, happy endings or reasonable conclusions imposed, double versions made (one for home consumption, another for international markets). Some films suffered particularly at the hands of censors, like Bardem's La venganza (1957) which dealt with the situation of the 'campesinos que se desplazan de Andalucía a Castilla siguiendo las cosechas', or Berlanga's Los jueves, milagro, also made in 1957, a film in which

La censura mutila hasta la desfiguración
lo que hubiera podido ser una virulenta
sátira de costumbres de dos de los
pilares básicos del franquismo: el
Ejército y la Iglesia.³²

But all these obstacles and constraints did not prevent Spanish directors from trying to give a true picture of reality as they perceived it. The preceding discussion of the settings of films and the conditions they portrayed provides a background against which to analyse the family and the presentation of family matters. I will discuss these issues in relation to Surcos, since the other films mentioned so far touch the structure of the family only marginally, and from there I will proceed to analyse the work of Fernán-Gómez, a director who developed along different lines from those followed by Bardem or Berlanga, and whose films are consistently centred around families.

III Neorealism and the Representation of the Family

The picture of family relations which emerges in the majority of films made in Spain at this time certainly seems to confirm Shulamith Firestone's observation that

The family is neither private nor a refuge, but is directly connected to — is even the cause of — the ills of the larger society which the individual is no longer able to confront,³³

since the individuals depicted in them are no more able to achieve fulfilment in a private domain than in a public one. Furthermore, many of the films — and Surcos is the main example — situate the destruction of family ties within the overall collapse of social values. Raymond Carr relates this situation to the peculiar conditions of Spain during this period when, he says

There were the classic conflicts and personal tragedies of rapid industrialisation similar to those that had accompanied Great Britain's industrial revolution in the nineteenth century: overcrowded cities, the break up of families, the rural migrant plunged into the impersonal society after the face-to-face society of the pueblo.³⁴

Surcos, made by the Hedillista Nieves Conde, is a bleak confirmation of these facts, which not even the alternative ending imposed by the censors (in the original script Toni, the young daughter, jumps from the train which is taking the family back to their village and returns to Madrid) softens in any meaningful way.³⁵ The film dealing with the deprivation of working-class individuals, centres on two families

whose members, in their efforts to make a living, become corrupted and degraded by their contact with an uncaring and inhuman society. The depiction of poverty, spiritual misery and lack of human values in Surcos — a film which curiously enough was personally authorised by Franco himself — is so extreme, that as John Hopwell indicates 'A censorship clampdown in the late Fifties meant that few films in the decade dealt so directly and dramatically [as Surcos] with Spain's social ills'.³⁶

Even though Surcos is testimony to the disintegration of Spanish society in the post-war years — there are specific references to the black market, to estraperlistas, to the fortunes made by contrabando, and the picture of Madrid is that of a dirty and soulless city still showing the effects of the Civil War: many buildings are in ruins, there are frequent power cuts and people crowd several to a room — the portrayal of families and the expectations of male and female roles reveal the intrinsic ideological nature of its maker, confirming Bordwell's view that

Since films are human artefacts, meaning is a social phenomenon. The meanings in a film are ultimately ideological; that is, they spring from systems of culturally specific beliefs about the world.³⁷

It is thus significant that the urban family, which from the beginning is presented as materialistic, unfeeling and without religious or moral values, lacks the figure of the father, whose absence is read as the

cause of the low standards which mother and daughter now apply to their lives. These two women, who are characterised by their greed, unprincipled behaviour and unbridled ambition, will, by their example, ultimately precipitate the destruction of the rural family, one of whose members will die in a confrontation with contrabandistas and another will lose her honour and reputation.

Surcos in fact distinguishes between two types of women: those who are good, who marry and become wives and mothers, and others who in exchange for their sexual favours accept financial improvements in their lives. The film, which describes the plight of women in a society lacking the means to provide full employment under conditions of economic austerity, does not however try to examine the reasons for the choices which the women must make. Instead, it classifies them according to the readiness with which they adjust to their new situation: thus, the country mother is soon cajoled by her peers in Madrid into relaxing her moral values because they represent an obstacle to the improvement of the family's position. Her attitude is condemned in the film, which shows her neglecting her domestic duties and, instead of leading the family in the prayer of the rosary, as she was seen doing at the beginning, accompanying her daughter to the local theatre, where she intends to make her debut as a tonadillera. Toni herself, an impressionable and naive country girl, is encouraged to model her behaviour on

that of her cousin Pili (whose flexible moral attitudes allow her convenient mobility from one boy friend to another) or that of the kept woman in whose house Toni first finds a job. Eventually all of them are made to pay for their transgression of the norms which regulate the behaviour of decent women in society: the mother sees her family falling apart under the strain of the materially-orientated community while the "loose women" become pawns who are easily picked up and discarded by the men. Their fates contrast with that of Rosario, the girl who deservedly wins the affection of Manolo, the youngest member of the family. Rosario, who is modest, hard-working and honest, interestingly, lives on the outskirts of the city, in a chabola. Physically different from Toni and Pili - both of whom are dark sensual types - Rosario, a perfectly appropriate name for a girl of her nature, is blonde, pale and fragile-looking and in contrast to her city counterparts wears no make up and dresses in home-made clothes. Removed from the pervasive influence of the urban environment, sharing a poor — but happy — existence with her widowed father (it is, of course, important that within the context of the film the mother is absent in this family), she earns her living by putting on puppet shows for children. She eventually falls in love and marries Manolo who thus escapes the menacing atmosphere of the city and, without going back with his parents to an unpromising future as a labrador, finds solace within a family unit, the only

one which the film sanctions.

Rosario apart, all the other women in Surcos are portrayed as characters who succumb to social and economic pressures and accept compromise as a way of escaping from their miserable existences. They are moreover easy targets for abuse in an uncaring society. Lacking the strength of the men and educated to be submissive victims, their final destiny seems to depend on their ability to find a man who can take care of them (either within or outside marriage); failing that, and particularly if they are poor they enter either domestic service or a brothel, where they will again fall prey to the whims of men. The contrast of these two groups of women — those who, independently of love, manage to get a man, and the others who fail to get somebody to protect them — is not only encountered in Surcos, but is a prominent feature in other fifties films: Isabel's fate, in Calle Mayor, is compared with that of her married friends and that of the girl in the brothel for whom Juan cares so much; unable to form a steady relationship both women are rejected by society. One, too poor to support herself, ends up in the degrading job of a prostitute; the other in the role of a solterona who, in a society which values marriage for women above all else, will be considered a freak, somebody to feel sorry for, and even a threat, as Mary Ellmann says:

But our distrust of maternity is an innocuous preoccupation in contrast to our resentment of those who do not take part in it. Nothing is more reliable than the irritability of all references to prolonged virginity: behind us, and undoubtedly before us, stretch infinite tracts of abuse of maiden ladies, old maids, schoolmarms, dried up spinster etc.etc.³⁸

The men, for their part, are presented as competing by fair means or foul, against opponents whose basic objectives are the same as their own. The individuals who succeed in this normally unchivalrous competition are usually the ones whose disregard of any form of honesty allows them to take advantage of whatever means they have at their disposal to achieve their projected aims. Successful characters demonstrate certain recognizable attributes — toughness, lack of feeling, self-centredness —; the ones who fail are characterized by their inability to follow these norms and accordingly lack the nerve to be aggressive, deceitful or callous. *Falling in love*, as Pepe does in Surcos or having too much regard for a person's feelings, as was the case of Juan and his attitude to Isabel in Calle Mayor, are human values not clearly appreciated by Pepe's cronies (who take advantage of his vulnerability to manipulate him and eventually get the better of him), or by Juan's friends (who despise him for being only half-hearted about deceiving Isabel).

According to a certain line of reasoning, the self-esteem of a person who suffers social humiliation

might still be preserved by retreating to a private realm where individuals could at least escape from the demands which society imposes on them. Conformist men traditionally make a last attempt to assert their male prerogatives within the nucleus of the family, where they think that no matter how inferior their role in society, they can still prove their superiority. Such men often feel that as head of the family and breadwinners they are entitled to the respect and subordination of the other members of the household. Surcos takes this idea for granted. It shows the degradation of a father who loses his moral authority over his wife and children because he has no job to go to. But the film falls into the trap of equating physical power with moral power, since it restores the man's authority in the home through physical violence. Having been previously relegated to the role of domestic skivvy (he is seen in the kitchen, wearing an apron and peeling potatoes or washing the dishes), he recovers his position as head of the family after the incident in which he hits his wife and daughter. They, who before had taken over the affairs of the family, now totally accept his superiority, and agree, as he suggests, to return to their country farm which they left trying to find better opportunities in the city. The final scene in the film (imposed by censors who objected to Toni going back to Madrid, where no longer a virgin and without money or a training she would be easy prey for men), of peaceful fields which we watch

while listening to a cheerful and triumphalistic music, where the family is returning, does not diminish the impact of the previous one, where the last remaining members of the family gather in the cemetery. Isolating them for the first time from their surroundings, the camera centres on the lonely, unhappy group of people, dressed in black and showing in their faces their sadness and defeat, while they wait to bury not only Pepe but we assume all their hopes and . p for the future.

This negative and pessimistic vision of the realities of life in Spain at the beginning of the fifties is still found in works made a decade later, where the depressing lack of material and spiritual human values is thrown into relief by the depiction of wasted urban and rural environments and even by the choice of actors who play important roles in the films, as John Hopewell points out:

Physical deformation has moral correlatives. ... The characters' inability to transcend their circumstances is best seen in their bodies. The brother in El extraño viaje [a film made by Fernán Gómez in 1964] looks like a retarded cherubim, his sister has a tiny face perched on a pumpkin of a body, and a book has been written on Isbert's dwarf-oak physique.³⁹

José Isbert in fact, one of the most original and distinguished actors of the Spanish cinema, played the main role in two of the most successful and incisive films of this period, Ferreri's El cochecito (1960) and Berlanga's El verdugo (1964). Both of them scripted by

Azcona, the works are the best example in Spain of the influence in several Spanish film directors of the cultural heritage of Valle-Inclán, Solana and Goya, with their satirical, grotesque revelation of human life. Carlos F. Heredero's words about some of Berlanga's films are equally applicable to the majority of the films made by Berlanga, Ferreri and Fernán Gómez:

Plácido y El verdugo constituyen
dos monumentales panorámicas,
ferozmente negras y esperpénticas,
inteligentemente analíticas, sobre
toda la sociedad española de la época.⁴⁰

IV The Case of Fernando Fernán Gómez

Given the extent of Fernán Gómez's use of the family in a great number of his films of the fifties and early sixties and his peculiar status within the films industry in Spain, I shall consider some of his work here, acknowledging the importance of a director who, in the opinion of Carlos and David Pérez Merinero in their critical analysis of Spanish cinema in the sixties, was one of a group of

tres auténticos francotiradores
[quienes] fueron ignorados, olvidados
u obviados por el "Nuevo Cine Español":
Edgar Neville, Marco Ferreri, y
Fernando Fernán Gómez.⁴¹

Known primarily as an actor whose cinematic career began in the decade of the forties, Fernán Gómez started making films in the early fifties, that is, coinciding with the emergence in Spain of a new kind of

cinema being formed under the influence of Neorealism. What is surprising about a figure who has continued to direct films for more than three decades is not so much the unfavourable reception given to some of his films by both critics and audiences as the fact that others were completely ignored. His fifties films remained by and large hidden from a di in the sixties and seventies. El mundo sigue, made in 1963, was only given its first public showing on television in the early eighties, and the screening of El extraño viaje (1964) was delayed likewise for several years. From the mid-seventies, however, there have been intermittent attempts at re-discovering the cinema of Fernán Gómez who today is acclaimed by some critics as one of Spain's most original and inventive film directors.⁴²

Fernando Fernán Gómez was inspired to direct films through his experience and involvement with the industry as an actor, and through his friendship with Spanish film directors who, like Carlos Serrano de Osma, Pedro Lazaga and Lorenzo Llobet-Gracia, were considered in the forties outside the mainstream and as creators of excessively experimental and marginal works.⁴³ In opposition to the formalist cinema advocated by these directors, Fernán Gómez aimed at producing commercial films, designed to entertain people, even if from the beginning he insisted that 'dentro de esta trivialidad, el contenido sí fuera por lo menos coincidente con mis ideas'.⁴⁴ Certainly some of the ideas which he transposed to the cinema — like

the setting of a manicomio in the film of that name, as the ideal location for Spaniards in 1952 — were at odds with most people's accepted notions of entertainment, and completely foreign to the dominant cinematic values of the decade.

Very much aware of the social and political constraints of life in Spain, he was above all concerned as an actor and director with the problems affecting the film industry in the country. Convinced of the necessity for change, like Bardem, Berlanga and many other of his friends, he became involved in the Conversaciones de Salamanca. While supporting the positive collective efforts made in those years to raise the standards of Spanish cinema, *Fernando Fernán* Gómez has added his voice to the criticism made both of the Conversaciones and of the films instigated by the Government's attempts at liberalization. Like others before him, *Fernán Gómez* has lamented the fact that permission for the talks to be repeated in following years was withheld, and regretted the relative lack of success of the new film directors of the sixties who as a rule failed to achieve general recognition because the public at large still preferred the more traditional 'películas folklóricas, de cuplés o niños'. The decision of those directors to 'hacer tabla rasa' of all the names not directly involved in their opposition to the regime has, in *Fernando Fernán* Gómez's view, been as damaging as the excessive politicization which characterized the film industry

from then on. Thus, according to him, the polarization of directors influenced either by humanitarian and Christian values — those inspired by Italian neorealism — or by leftist tendencies — those politically orientated towards Moscow — deprived Spain of any kind of worthwhile cinema not cast in either of those moulds, because, as he has observed

Directores que hacían una obra, buena o mala, pero absolutamente independiente de estas líneas no estuvieron ni siquiera subestimados, simplemente se les ignoró.⁴⁵

This polarization would eventually become evident in the powerful influence of Catholic values promoted by García Escudero from his position as Director General de Cine in the sixties and in the discriminatory policies of the Communist-controlled productora UNINCI. At the same time these two attitudes were communicated to the public through the pages of the two major magazines of the sixties: Film Ideal and Nuestro Cine.

Faced with these alternatives, Fernán Gómez adopted a position of non-political involvement, choosing instead 'un rechazo irónico, nada contenutista, de la realidad'.⁴⁶ His concern with the social and political situation of Spain is however shown in the kind of films he made and in the choice of themes dealt with there: the miseries and frustrations of the people, the narrowness of prevailing ideas, the corruption of figures of authority, sexual and political repression in the country. His dogged persistence in making films, despite the fact that they

were consistently censored, mutilated, ignored or only screened in inadequate conditions, is testimony above all to his unwavering political convictions.

Unquestionably, Fernando Fernán Gómez belongs to that generation of Spanish artists who revitalized literature and cinema during the decades of the fifties and sixties. Interestingly, he was not only an actor and film director, but also a writer of poetry (A Roma por algo, 1952), drama (Pareja para la eternidad, 1947) and fiction (El vendedor de naranjas, 1961).⁴⁷ The distinctive characteristics of his films, however, made them incompatible as much with the dominant cinema which catered for a mass audience as with an iconoclastic one of more limited appeal. While it is true that some aspects are not exclusive to his films alone but are common to those of the best known directors of the time — description of social conditions in Spain, contrast of urban and rural environments, etc. — his work displays at the same time unmistakable traits of structure and outlook which distinguish his cinema from that of other directors. These qualities may be the result of his total identification with the subject matter of the majority of his films, since normally he chose their themes or accepted only those projects whose narrative outline could be made to reflect his ideas; his quasi-total control of the production of his films — a positive asset in the otherwise limited framework of self-financing, denied support by the principal

productoras —; the repeated use of the same faces and names in one film after another; and his involvement in the development of the screen-play of his films, which he scripted or co-scripted in most cases. It is for these reasons that he could state that 'Nadie como el director experimenta la sensación de tener la materia en sus manos y estar dándole forma de una manera inmediata'.⁴⁸

Notwithstanding the pressures normally imposed on Spanish film directors through strict norms of censorship, and taking into consideration collective influences always at work in any cinematic production, Fernando Fernán Gómez has managed to imprint his personal signature on all his films. A director greatly influenced by literature — he has, for example, always admired that particular brand of French cinema which has a literary orientation, as he has revealed in conversations with Juan Tebar —, his films often originate in ideas and situations found in contemporary works of Spanish authors like Juan Antonio de Zunzunegui's costumbrista novel, El mundo sigue, and Miguel Mihura's Sublime decisión on which Sólo para hombres was based, which are assimilated to his personal vision. Since throughout his long and productive career he has concentrated on a fixed repertoire of themes and ideas, an analysis of a number of his films will allow us to evaluate his contribution to the theme of the family in Spanish cinema, while at the same time permitting a revaluation of a director too often

considered either too banal or too radical, too ternurista or too crude, in short, a director maldito. My selection of Sólo para hombres (1960), El mundo sigue (1963) and El extraño viaje (1964) has the advantage of presenting some films made contemporaneously with those by directors of the New Spanish Cinema who were producing their ópera prima at roughly the same time: Manuel Summers' Del rosa al amarillo (1963), Miguel Picazo's La tía Tula (1964) and Basilio Martín Patino's Nueve cartas a Berta (1965). They are moreover films based on completely different kinds of material and belonging to different genres: Sólo para hombres is a comedy, El mundo sigue is a family melodrama and El extraño viaje is a film inspired by the traditions of the thriller.⁴⁹ What unites the films is their insistent interest in the family as the centre of narrative and thematic attention.

Superficially at least, these films differ not only in style but also in their settings, the way they deal with specific situations, and in the fact that they supposedly represent three different stages in the socio-historical processes of the country. Sólo para hombres, following Mihura's play, displaces the action to Madrid at the end of the nineteenth century and focusses primarily on the restrictions placed on a young woman from a middle class family. El mundo sigue, very much in the spirit of Zunzunegui's novel, describes the demoralized world of Madrid during the

post-war years and evokes the disintegration of an entire society through the portrayal of the collapse of traditional family values. For its part, El extraño viaje, adapted from an original idea of Fernando Fernán Gómez's fellow director and friend, Luis G. Berlanga, examines the fate of individuals within the narrow social world of a small community and the claustrophobic environment of the family. In spite of their differences, the three films are linked by their interest in the institution of the family, and by the fact that they are either centred on women's problems or consider the problem of society through an analysis of the position which women hold within the family unit.

Contrary to the supposition that an improvement in a country's economic and social conditions might result in a more favourable projection of its realities on the cinema screen, Fernán Gómez's films ignore all the facts that might testify to Spain's national recovery after the devastation of the Civil War and the long years of economic and human misery, and choose instead to portray obstinately a very bleak reality, the reality of

l subdesarrollo español, el que preside la vida del país, aunque las apariencias externas quieran indicarnos lo contrario. La represión sexual, la mediocridad del entorno, la presión que éste ejerce sobre los personajes, éstos pugnando por salir de su mísera condición, sus renunciaciones, el enclaustramiento colectivo, el enfrentamiento de padres e hijos, la vida en el pueblo, la vida en la capital.⁵⁰

As recreated in the cinema, social conditions in Spain at the beginning of the fifties — seen in films like Surcos or Esa pareja feliz — are no better nor worse than those presented in El mundo sigue. Fernando Fernán Gómez's film, however, betrays a defeatist attitude not encountered in Esa pareja feliz, where the couple could still look forward to some kind of happiness other than that which they have enjoyed for just one day, or even in Surcos where Manolo, the young brother, could at least re-start his life far away from the corrupting influence of the city. In El mundo sigue, a film of hysterical tones and uncompromising solutions, and later on in El extraño viaje, that degree of hope is gone, as the characters remain trapped to the end in their own miseries and frustrations, with only death providing relief for their suffering. These films, in fact, bear witness to the prolongation of the 'one long winter' of the 1940s and 50s, as Francisco Umbral summed up the experience of post-war Spain, well into the decade of the booming sixties.

Fernán Gómez also dispels any notion that human values could still be found in the little towns and villages of Spain, where it might be thought that people could retire to enjoy peace and happiness. El extraño viaje shatters our illusions in this respect because the simple, down-to-earth peasants of Castile are presented as greedy, mean-minded and resentful, even worse specimens of humanity than those found in

the big cities because their ignorance and suspicion make them cruel and vindictive, barbarians ready to stone a band of musicians at the first sign that they may not be able to play at their usual Sunday dance. Deliberately out of keeping with the topos of a peace-loving, good-natured and simple folk community, the inhabitants of the little town in this film are depicted as malevolent — they watch over others like birds of prey, hoping for the worst to happen to them; lustful — the men gawp at the modern young girl and make salacious remarks about her and other women; gossips of the worst sort, always spying on their neighbours, incapable of a good deed or a kind thought towards their fellow men and women.

The film's negative view of the mores, attitudes and values of country people is made all the more apparent since it is set against the relative well-being fostered in the country by economic development. The inhabitants of this provincial town have begun to enjoy certain facilities until then reserved for the big cities: they are aware of all the latest information to do with politics, culture and leisure, as the collage at the beginning of the film seems to suggest; they trade at "La Parisienne", a trendy shop which stocks a wide selection of underwear more in tune with the tastes of a sophisticated city clientele — exemplified by Luisa in El mundo sigue — than with those of a small country town; the inhabitants have become accustomed to modern music and dance, and even

the older citizens display a passable knowledge of them.

In keeping with its grotesque depiction of the social world, El extraño viaje focusses on a family which is an inversion of a normal, united and happy family. Its three members — two sisters and a brother — who live out of the way in a large, labyrinthine and gloomy house reminiscent of a Gothic horror story, are but a distorted and esperpentic reflection of the ideal family represented in the propaganda and art of the Francoist State. The eldest, Ignacia, a humourless and repressive woman, combines in the film all of the roles and functions generally encountered in the most rigidly conventional families. In fact, she displays a combination of male and female characteristics: her unusual name has a distinctly masculine ring to it, and the black and severe clothes she wears associate her with the figure of Philip II, on whom she models herself for a fancy dress party; with her younger lover, however, she uses luxurious sexy underwear and adopts typically feminine stratagems to seduce and keep hold of the young man. In the domestic sphere Ignacia is also an exaggerated and monstrous representation of the caring, nurturing mother and the benevolent, attentive father, imposing draconian standards of discipline which keep her brother and sister in awe of her.

Based on an original idea of Berlanga's, El extraño viaje 't comparison with that director's

film, Bienvenido, Mr. Marshall, made some eleven years earlier. Like El extraño viaje, Bienvenido, Mr. Marshall is set in a little town somewhere in Castile and records the effects of outside interference in the lives of its inhabitants. The coincidences between the two films end here, though, because all the redeeming qualities of the pueblo community in Bienvenido — solidarity, hard work, the simple life, love for the land — are nowhere to be found in El extraño viaje. The traditional peasant values still maintained in Villar del Río, despite the social, cultural and economic development already taking place in the country, are only possible because the place has remained unchanged by the passage of time and has rejected outside influences. El extraño viaje demonstrates the impossibility of ever escaping from the pervasive influence of the world at large: eventually both urban and rural societies are contaminated by the malaise afflicting Spain.

But the depiction of Spanish society as cruel, deceitful and senseless is not confined to Fernán Gómez's films of the sixties which are shaped primarily by the conventions of tremendismo (La familia de Pascual Duarte by Camilo José Cela comes readily to mind) and the esperpento: his comedies of the ^{late} fifties, La vida por delante (1958), La vida alrededor and the later Sólo para hombres express the same pessimistic view of the social realities of the country. Fernán Gómez's two films, which he dismissed as 'comedias

triviales, ligeras' were written specially for the screen and follow the chequered fortunes of a young married couple forever struggling against the system.⁵¹ Treading a precarious line between survival and destitution, outnumbered by liars and cheats, these two young professional people move through life purposefully because their faith in each other helps them overcome the obstacles they encounter each day. As in Berlanga's film where people are redeemed by their adherence to traditional country values, so in Fernán Gómez's works the couple — in Francoist cinema guarantors of the sacred ideology of the family — are redeemed by the power of love, *something valued in and for itself*, regardless of whether it leads to marriage, the family and the prolongation of dynasties.⁵² Otherwise absent from Spanish cinema of the dictatorship which could not reconcile a positive depiction of love with an unremittingly pessimistic representation of society, love,⁵³ as featured in these films, is the only means of survival in an un-Christian, unloving world, because as the director himself observed,

Se ha insistido bastante en que el amor es una enfermedad; para mí la enfermedad es el desamor, y eso que llamamos amor es el remedio, la medicina buscada, y para muchos inexistente, que nos cure del desamor, del presentimiento de soledad inminente con que el hombre se ve a cada momento amenazado.⁵⁴

Sólo para hombres is the last of Fernán Gómez's films of this period to highlight redeeming qualities

in the life of the individual or the group. Normally dismissed as no more than a comedia ternurista, it received very adverse reviews when first screened, and even Ramón Freixas, in an article published in 1982, expressed his disappointment with the film for its feminist overtones. Beneath its humorous disguise, and through the displacement of the setting to the year 1895 — whose mores it ostensibly criticizes — Sólo para hombres

satirises various aspects of the character and customs of his [Mihura and the director's] fellow countrymen, the working habits, courtship, the position of women, and the difficult economic situation of the middle-classes.⁵⁵

All of these are themes which Fernán Gómez had already touched on in previous films, and which were to reappear in subsequent works. At the time of making Sólo para hombres conditions in Spain had changed so little since the turn of the century that its retrospective setting could not prevent it being interpreted as an 'attack on the more current and seemingly timeless problems of Spain's economic structure'.⁵⁶ If the country's economic structures and the problems of the middle-classes were still substantially the same, the position of women was arguably no better in 1960 than at that time.

Sólo para hombres, besides presenting these characteristics, is an important film in Fernán Gómez's career in as much as it introduces for the first time the theme of the family as an essential factor in

people's lives. This institution, as the microcosm through which an entire society may be examined, acquires ever increasing prominence after its representation in this film. Sólo para hombres confirms above all the conviction, first expressed in La vida por delante and La vida alrededor, of the superiority of articulate women, of independent spirit, intelligence and energy, and indeed makes the female figure the central character around which all the others revolve.⁵⁷ Josefina, played by Analía Gadé, the same actress who would interpret Florita in Sólo para hombres, is a career woman bent on escaping the traditional role allocated to women by her society. Not afraid to vaunt her sexuality and multifarious charms — including a generous cleavage —, Josefina parodies several of the accepted notions of her sex — submissiveness, naivety, modesty — by displaying traits of character normally assigned to men. Introduced as a doctor, she is not only wittier, more intelligent and practical than her lawyer husband, she is also clearly the partner who plans their lives and lays down the directions which they are to follow if they wish to improve their situation in the future. Losing her husband, temporarily, to a woman who conveniently embodies all the accepted notions of femininity she has consciously discarded, Josefina battles to win Antonio back without losing her self-respect as a human being. Choosing to disregard all preconceived ideas about masculinity and femininity, La vida por delante and La

vida alrededor present a topsy-turvy world where thieves are intelligent and charming, people in positions of authority pedants and opportunists, and women witty, sexy and in command, for once, of their destinies.

But where the contradictions of the position of women within and outside the family converge most tellingly with the effects of the social conditioning of individuals, and the importance of the institution of the family in the formation of character traits receives most attention is in El mundo sigue, a film considered by some to be Fernán Gómez's best, even if it was never put on general release because 'las distribuidoras estimaban que no le gustaría nada al gran público'.⁵⁸ It is indeed ironic that the director intended it to be a melodrama for mass consumption, a type of 'cine que respondiera a la vida de los seres medios de las ciudades y a lo que era su problemática cotidiana'.⁵⁹

Based on a novel by J.A. Zunzunegui, an author who acted as a 'testigo de cargo de la sociedad actual' and whose work 'is envisaged as possessing a 'Realismo que bordea en el más tradicional naturalismo ... considera al ser humano como una criatura vulgar y deprimente',⁶⁰ the film's message can be summed up in the words of the quotation from the Guía de pecadores by Fray Luis de Granada with which it opens:

Verás maltratados a los inocentes,
perdonados a los culpados, menospreciados
los buenos, honrados y sublimados los
malos, verás los pobres y humildes
abatidos y poder más en todos los
negocios el favor que la virtud.⁶¹

A singularly uncompromising work, El mundo sigue surveys the devastation of post-war Spanish society, unequally divided between the vencedores and vencidos, and examines the lives of men and women struggling desperately to find their way in an uncaring, forlorn world. Given that film conveys its meaning not only through dialogue or the sometimes obvious images that it presents but, more significantly, through its mise-en-scène, that is to say, setting, lighting, camera angles, costumes, I will make reference, whenever necessary, in following the narrative of El mundo sigue, to the mise-en-scène, which will sometimes complement and at other times extrapolate the hidden realities both of the characters themselves and of the film's own repressed truths.

As depicted in this film, life in post-war Madrid is a continuous descent into hell, a process of constant degradation and prostitution, a perpetual cycle of pain and suffering. Again, as in many of the films discussed already, the material and spiritual deprivation of the people is rendered more acute by their frequently being visualized amidst the squalor of their houses and places of work, by the atmosphere of alienation which pervades the local neighbourhoods, and by the desolation of the city environment, manifested

in those vistas of the arid new arrabales, which are totally lacking in any features to suggest that they are intended for human habitation. Trapped in a never-ending succession of physical and moral poverty (which, as in earlier films of the fifties, we assume extends to the whole country), the characters survive under the protection of empty symbols, like those religious statues and pictures which preside over the family home, or those emblems of futile quimeras, the guinuelas, which hang ominously in the streets over the heads of the luckless inhabitants.

This society, at the mercy of unscrupulous individuals who have made it to the top by trampling on others, is reflected in a family whose members try against all the odds to stake out for themselves a personal territory for defence against all intruders. This comparison of family and society at large with the behaviour of animals in the wild, is exemplified by the attitude of the two sisters in the film. Eloísa (a dark-haired woman) and Luisa (the fair one), can be said to embody two aspects of a single personality - the good and the bad -, while symbolising the division of Spanish society into those who triumph and those who are defeated - the victors and victims of the Civil War -, and typifying two kinds of women - the dependent and passive mother/wife and the pseudo-liberated mistress/whore. Beside these differences (which we will find as well with certain variations in other Spanish films, Carlos Saura's La prima Angélica and Cría

cuervos are two obvious examples), there are some characteristics which bind the two sisters together — the similarity of their names is an obvious detail — and which make them much more alike than they would care to admit. Repeatedly referred to by their parents and brother as fieras, basiliscos, hienas, their eventual fate mirrors that of the collectivity: unable to co-exist within the same world and, even under the same roof, one of the two survives at the cost of the other, with Eloísa, the weaker, being defeated by her stronger sister. (In this sense we could even say that they hate one another so much because each recognises in the other the repressed self which she would like to be). The final scene of the film is magnificently symbolic of the fate of all those who could not generally adjust to the new morality of the country. Eloísa's suicidal fall onto the roof of her sister's brand new car — an appropriate metaphor of a tenaciously sought-after *social mobility* —, symbolises the fate of that part of the Spanish population which had to perish in order that the arribistas could succeed.

While El mundo sigue criticises a materialistic world through its depiction of characters who prostitute themselves in their obsessive desire to become rich and powerful — for example, the parents, though religious, exploit Luisa's prostitution as a means for acquiring material goods, and the father's view that 'al dinero no se le mira la procedencia' is

the confirmation of the irresistible force of attraction of that 'poderoso caballero Don Dinero' —, the film is primarily interested in the position of women, and directs its attention particularly to the fate of the two sisters. An examination, therefore, of the ways in which they are portrayed may help to form a clearer picture of their common and distinct features.

Eloisa, the daughter who shares the mother's name and who follows her example by marrying and having children, is continuously presented in El mundo sigue in her domestic capacity as mother and wife; Luisa, who has rejected the possibility of a conventional marriage based on love because she believes that 'esto no es Hollywood', decides instead to wait for a man who can materially improve her position in life. In contrast, then, to her sister, she is introduced as a frivolous coquette who resorts to devious feminine stratagems in order to ensure the conquest of a suitable, rich husband. The sisters' decisions correspond nevertheless to many men's accepted notions of a woman's position in society, and in that way they acquiesce in the roles normally assigned to them: mothers and whores. During the course of the film we see nevertheless how the original division between them becomes blurred and how their initially different roles come to overlap.

The contrast between the two women is most marked at the beginning of the film, where their different life styles are emphasized sharply. The first time we see Eloísa she is accompanied by her small children,

wears an ill matching skirt and jumper and has not bothered to comb her hair properly, and complains bitterly about the lack of money and attentions from her husband. Her maternal role is accentuated by the fact that she appears like a madonna figure, carrying one of the children in her arms. Her position as a neglected wife is moreover dramatised by her wounded look and resigned tone of voice which she tries to conceal behind a string of verbal recrimination. Luisa, for her part, is introduced to us in the shop where she works, and already displays some of the attributes which we shall eventually come to regard as central to her personality: physical presence, power to influence the opinions of others, determination with the opposite sex. She is clearly a woman who pays great attention to the way she looks, being well aware of the need to exploit her natural attributes to the full, as if she were one of the expensive artifacts in which she trades. Her elaborate make-up and immaculate coiffure are the visible signs of this cult of appearances. In contrast to Eloísa, who usually walks with her head down, looking at the floor in a meek posture, the first time we see Luisa entering her parents' flat she gives the impression of being a care-free, determined woman (by contrast with Eloísa she looks upwards frequently), very sure of her femininity in the voluptuous summer dress she wears — it is low cut and reveals her good figure.

If Eloísa is presented from the start as a victim

- both of her husband and of society -, Luisa is introduced as a likely victor, given her determination and strength of will. In the first confrontation between the two sisters Eloísa not only resents the freedom and opportunities still available to Luisa, but realizes that she herself has lost the most precious possession she had as a young girl: her good looks. Her coronation as Miss Maravillas, a title both ironic and romantic, now only a memory which she cherishes in her imagination, allows us to imagine an Eloísa very similar to the Luisa of the present, who is pointedly told by her mother on several occasions that she resembles 'una reina'. Tied now to an uncaring husband and burdened with the responsibility of feeding and dressing their children and coping single-handed with all domestic affairs, her appearance has suffered irremediably. The presence of her sister, who has money and time to spend on herself, is a continuous reminder of her own deterioration (just as she is for her mother, who resents Eloísa's hardship, frustration and poverty as resembling too closely her own pathetic life), which is illustrated by her plain hair style, her old-fashioned clothes and her lack of make-up and jewellery. In fact she looks more and more like her mother, something which neither of them is pleased to admit. The evidence, in fact, points to a growing closeness between the old Eloísa and Luisa and a corresponding rejection of the young Eloísa by her mother.

The physical differences between the two sisters become more marked throughout the film, as the one sister, Luisa, starts to improve her social status and the other, Eloísa, continues the descent into poverty when she is forced — by her husband's desertion and her rejection of her boss's "help" — to take up work as a cleaning woman. While Luisa becomes more and more beautiful and elegant, Eloisa has to admit openly that now she could not even sell her body like a prostitute, because 'estoy en el chasis'. The situation of the two sisters is reflected too in their respective homes. Luisa progresses from a modest improvement on her parents' humble flat to the spacious, modern apartment she uses while still single, & finally^{to} the luxurious new pent-house which she shares with her rich husband at the end of the film. Eloísa's meagre finances force her to live in a basement flat with scarcely a furniture, its barred window shutting the inhabitants off from the world outside effectively making it resemble a prison. Constantly framed against doors and windows which limit and constrain her, she is, in the final stages of the film, shot from a higher position in the interior of her home through the bars which separate her from the spacious freedom of the streets above, typifying the incarceration of countless women who are seduced and then trapped by the powerful allure of family life.

Her position worsens even further at the end of El mundo sigue, since she is compelled to return to her

parents' house where once more she is offered a room. A deserted wife now with four children, she must comply again with her father's orders, 'no vuelvas por aquí si no vienes más mansa'. Her spirit of rebellion, expressed in her violent refusal to tolerate her sister's presence in the last scene of the film — when she jumps from the balcony rather than be witness to Luisa's triumph — contrasts with the composure which Luisa has acquired now that she has fulfilled her ambitions. No longer a 'torbellino', Luisa has finally agreed to conform with the feminine behaviour expected of a married woman of means, something which is evident in the sober dresses and hats she wears, and by the calmness of her manner. She is now depicted sitting instead of standing or moving around the room, and has given up smoking and drinking, two activities which earlier had identified her with other women of loose morals, namely the owner of the fashion shop, where Eloisa worked as a single woman, and the model who, like Luisa before, had got a "sugar daddy".

Men themselves are used in the film to support the argument that 'only unscrupulous and ruthless people achieve prestige, influence and happiness in a society devoid of humanitarian features, and appear as counterparts for the women. Thus Faustino, Eloísa's good-for-nothing husband who works as a waiter in a small bar, is presented as an emasculated figure, deprived of qualities conventionally conceived as masculine — he suffers in silence a client's insults

against his manhood and ends up the chulo of an older and richer woman — and is consequently unfit to survive in a world which admits only the survival of the fittest. The same could be said of the other main male characters in the film: the father who, as a policía urbano, is invested with institutionalised authority, lacks moral qualities and has to resort to physical violence (like Faustino) as a means of demonstrating his power; Rodolfo, his only son, an even weaker version of the father, is the possessor too of some kind of authority — moral this time, since he was once a seminarista —, but is a weakling incapable of decisive action; his neighbour, Andrés, shares this inability to face the world, as we deduce from their continuing dependence on their respective families with whom they still live. Not surprisingly, all of them crave for money as a compensation for their lack of maleness as it is envisaged in patriarchal society, since 'All men, including poor or deprived men, struggle for money because it expresses masculinity, power over and against women'.⁶²

Surrounded by such a collection of impotent and submissive males, the two sisters stand out by virtue of the strength of their characters: they rebel against the accepted norms of society and against their fates. The collapse of male authority illustrated here bears out the view, already mentioned, that 'With rapid dramatic economic change the socialising function of the family and the role of the father become less

important'.⁶³ It reflects too Fernando Fernán Gómez's vision of women as being stronger and more determined than men. Having portrayed his women in a positive light in previous works, here he makes them the prisoners, often within the family, of economic and social conditions in Spain. El mundo sigue is, after all, a film which centres essentially on the problems encountered by women in a world where the men, supposedly invested by society with the functions of providers and guarantors, are unable to support or protect their women.⁶⁴ Denied any opportunity to fend decently for themselves, women cannot even find a man who might take care of them. Women still remain constrained by the terms of the classic dichotomy between wives/mothers and whores in a world where, all apparent differences notwithstanding, the first category is expected to provide essentially the same services as those for which the second has traditionally been conceived.

Fernando Fernán Gómez certainly went beyond the mere denunciation of the injustices prevalent in an uncaring and dehumanized society by highlighting the position of those individuals most frequently oppressed by a social order based on relations of power and domination, i.e. women. The great majority of the films analysed in this chapter share too the same essential concern with depicting the struggle of men and women against adverse circumstances. In all cases the directors wanted to draw attention to the limitations

and constraints placed on those people who, above all in marriages and families, felt the material deprivation, lack of human values and spiritual misery of their society. In some cases, for example Surcos, the film's primary aim of exposing the social malaise affecting the country was held in balance by the director's — and, we may say, the script writer, Gonzalo Torrente Ballester's — own imprisonment in the dominant ideology in regard to their attitudes to male/female roles and what was deemed to be the 'correct' structure of the family. In others, and Fernán Gómez is an almost unique example in the cinema of the period, the sensibilities of the director were used to radically question all those pre-conceived ideas and notions about men and women, in particular, as observed before, those which challenged their place and role within marriage and the family.

CHAPTER TWO

"EL NUEVO CINE ESPAÑOL" AND "LAS COMEDIAS CELTIBERICAS"

I The Sixties: Political Liberalization and Changes in the Film Industry

The Conversaciones of Salamanca of May 1955 set in motion one of the most controversial debates in the history of the Spanish cinema, the repercussions of which extend down to the present day, when parallels are frequently drawn between the circumstances underlying the creation of the Nuevo Cine Español and measures taken recently by the Socialist administration to encourage and develop a domestic film industry. An examination of the New Spanish Cinema must therefore combine considerations of strictly cinematographic questions with an enquiry into the relations of the cinema to the political, economic and social context of the country.¹ An appreciation of the Nuevo Cine Español in its various aspects will in turn prepare the ground for an analysis, in the second part of this chapter, of the Comedias Celtibéricas, a type of cinema which dominated an important sector of the Spanish film industry in the late sixties and early seventies.

As mentioned in the previous chapter, the

conditions affecting a significant structural change in Spanish cinema were outlined by the participants in the Congress of Salamanca who collectively endorsed Juan Antonio Bardem's condemnation of Spanish cinema as 'políticamente ineficaz, socialmente falso, intelectualmente ínfimo, estéticamente nulo e industrialmente raquítico'.² The film directors, critics, actors and representatives from the administration who gathered in Salamanca succeeded in debating the problems which beset the cinema in Spain and, as films by Bardem (Calle Mayor), Luis García Berlanga (Los jueves, milagro, 1959) and Fernando Fernán Gómez (La vida por delante and La vida alrededor) amply testify, gave the industry a new impetus. The end of the fifties, however, was not a period conducive to freedom of expression, as Bardem and Berlanga discovered to their cost. The proposals for greater economic aid for films of artistic quality, for effective State intervention in the distribution of Spanish films in national and international markets, and for the provision of adequate facilities for the study of film in the universities and in the press, would only be taken up at a later date with the appointment of Manuel Fraga Iribarne as Minister for Information and Tourism in 1962 and his choice of José María Escudero as Director General of Cinema and Theatre.³ García Escudero, who in the opinion of the majority was an honest and well-intentioned professional with a reputation for liberal tendencies

within the reactionary milieu of the Francoist administration, decided to take advantage of new innovative measures advocated by Fraga Iribarne (whose other great achievement was the implementation of a new Ley de Prensa in 1966), to encourage a number of changes beneficial to Spanish cinema. His ideas would eventually be subsumed under an altogether larger project destined to shake up the foundations of a traditional agrarian society and to accelerate its replacement by a modern and technologically advanced socio-political order in Franco's Spain.

At the beginning of the sixties, Spain had had to concede the need for a certain degree of liberalization, a condition made imperative by the changing emphasis in the country's new relationship with the Western democracies. The financial involvement of multinational companies in Spain, the increasing presence of foreigners on its soil (in a working capacity or as tourists), the country's application for E.E.C. membership, all demanded a certain relaxation of the regime's repressive laws and required the presentation of a new image of the country and its people. Means had to be found to encourage the view that Spain was a country *on the road to social and political reform*, and cinema offered itself as a potentially invaluable vehicle for displaying aspects of this new reality before the eyes of international authorities and spectators everywhere. Thus, the State's interests and the need to satisfy some of the

demands for a radical transformation of an increasingly volatile film industry created the conditions in which young professionals coming out of the School of Cinematography might at last apply the theoretical knowledge they had acquired. Another factor in this context was the political decision reached by the then illegal Communist Party (one of the most influential voices in the Conversaciones of Salamanca) to pursue a policy of National Reconciliation.⁴ Clearly, both groups thought they could benefit from engaging in a joint effort. (Over the years that followed, however, it proved impossible to reconcile their conflicting goals and priorities).

We can nevertheless understand the sympathetic hearing given to García Escudero at the time, whose intentions were perceived to be well-meaning, even if of necessity concerned with promoting the interests of the regime. Equally we have to appreciate the dilemma which confronted the film directors, whom it is easy to accuse of being naive but hardly dishonest. They were placed in the position of having either to accept some kind of compromise with the regime or of remaining silent. In the final analysis, as Román Gubern has said,

Habría que examinar las películas una a una y evaluar en cada caso concreto quién perdió más, si la Administración con una película que le resultaba incómoda o el creador cuya obra era "absorbida" y neutralizada por los límites del pacto.⁵

While it is evident that the New Spanish Cinema

produced some films which not only bear testimony to their times but are also intrinsically valuable as works of art, it is equally true that the policies of the administration and of the young directors of the day both cast a mantle of oblivion over films made prior to this period. Another negative result of the direction taken by the new film makers was the disruption of the careers of people like Bardem, Berlanga and Fernán Gómez, who saw their films rejected by the productoras or mutilated by censorship. So, while a new director, Basilio Martín Patino, was offered the choice of two or three productoras for his first venture, Berlanga had to wait four years after the scandal of El verdugo to make his film, La boutique - in Argentina -, and Bardem had to adapt his style to a commercial kind of cinema, after the failure of his 1963 film Nunca pasa nada which was only released in 1965. For his part Fernán Gómez saw the screening of his two works, El mundo sigue and El extraño viaje, delayed by several years.

Of course, it was not only these already established directors who throughout the sixties suffered the consequences of a contradictory policy which envisaged the ultimately unattainable goal of an ideologically acceptable domestic cinema capable of mirroring the realities of the new Spain. After Salamanca, the young directors were to become primarily concerned with producing films which reflected the social situation of the Spanish people, their conflicts

and frustrations. The administration for its part simply expected the delivery of inoffensive art-products suitable for export, in exchange for the concession of a number of prerogatives. To this end it introduced in February 1963 new norms of censorship regulating the subject matter and the conditions under which films could be screened. This package was complemented the following year by an Order issued by the Ministry for Information and Tourism 'for the development of the cinema' as part of the new Plan de Desarrollo of 1964. The new legislation referred to state subsidies in the hope of stopping the previously indiscriminate practice of rewarding films that were favourable to the regime, and proposed control de taquilla which was intended to secure 15% of the takings on a film for its director. This financial incentive would be in addition to a previous payment of up to 50% of the budget costs. The legislators also established that for every three foreign products projected on the Spanish screen one domestic film should also be shown; this provision was easily side-stepped, however, by projecting national works in second-rate cinemas during low seasons.⁶

Theoretically at least, these measures seemed to respond to Bardem's request in Salamanca for a change in the state's attitude towards the cinema:

The state must not regard it [the cinema] as an enemy, it must not coerce it or asphyxiate it. We require the censor to show his face, to show us the way out of his labyrinth, and to codify what is forbidden.⁷

In practice, even though censorship allowed films to be judged not on the basis of individual scenes but on the overall intentions of the works, it still continued to apply over a wide range of sexual, political and moral issues. For the same reason, the administration continued to exclude from the category of 'special interest' (previously 'national interest'), 'películas sin valores culturales o sociales, ni calidad técnica suficiente', or those which 'no contribuyan de algún modo al mejoramiento del nivel social del país'.⁸ The result of this last norm, like the consequences of the control de taquilla — which in García Escudero's view was 'la mano de verdad del cine y la posibilidad de una política cinematográfica fundada en esa verdad' — was particularly damaging for those directors whose work was not included in that category or whose box-office takings were small, since they both lost the state subsidy and failed to recover enough money to invest in new ventures.⁹ César Santos Fontenla, commenting on the impositions of the administration, was right to emphasize the harm done to directors by these measures which, together with autocensura, he declared, 'han constituido una censura auxiliar mucho más efectiva que la "oficial"'.¹⁰ However prejudicial in the long run, what is evident is that over the next four years — from 1963 to 1967, when García Escudero lost his position —, forty-six new directors made their debut, under state tutelage, producing eighty six films. Many of them, it is true, never managed to make a second work and are

now almost completely forgotten, while others lost track of their original intentions and succumbed to the temptations of a commercial cinema of very limited artistic merit, as in the case of Manuel Summers and his series of exploitative films, No somos de piedra (1968), ¿Por qué te engaña tu marido? (1969) or La primera experiencia (1976). Of the remaining directors, a substantial number who had previously received acclaim for their first works either went on to experience repeated failure or disappeared temporarily from the industry, only to reemerge and become quite prolific after the death of Franco, as in the cases of Mario Camus, Miguel Picazo, Jaime Camino and Vicente Aranda.

Irrespective of the success or failure of the films which were produced under such unfavourable circumstances, it would be a mistake to assume that the sixties comprised solely the directors who were to form the core of the Nuevo Cine Español. In order to evaluate their work it is necessary to consider the place of these directors within the overall context of the film industry in Spain during this period. That means, first of all, remembering that veteran directors continued, in some cases quite successfully, to make films which were given preference over new works when prizes were awarded by the Sindicato Nacional del Espectáculo. Examples include Sáenz de Heredia, who in 1963 won huge popularity with La verbena de la Paloma and in 1964 with Franco, ese hombre, and Nieves Conde,

who received the first prize of the Sindicato in 1965 for his religious film Cotolay.

I have already mentioned the fate of Berlanga, Bardem and Fernán Gómez. Special consideration has to be given to Carlos Saura, a novice director who anticipated the New Cinema movement with his first film Los golfos (1959), but who managed quite soon to develop a very personal style which simultaneously set his cinema apart from that of the group concerned with quality films, as well as from that of directors who were making facile works for mass consumption. Above all, Saura's achievement rests on his having created a number of films which were both highly artistic and, even though geared towards a select minority audience, marginally profitable, a factor which guaranteed his continued presence in the industry. He relied for part of his success on the influence of Buñuel - to whom he paid homage by giving him the role of the executioner in Llanto por un bandido (1963) (even if the whole scene was removed by the censors) and by adding Buñuelian touches to this work like the tambores de Calanda in Peppermint Frappé (1967) - and Bergman, with whom he shared a fascination for certain subjects and situations involving, particularly, the family and relationships between couples. His new, and subsequently lengthy association with Geraldine Chaplin, whom he first cast as the leading female role in Peppermint Frappé after the model Teresa Gimpera abandoned the project, and the vote of confidence and

financial support given to him by the producer Elías Querejeta, helped him to achieve the national and international recognition that no other Spanish director, apart from Buñuel, ever obtained during the dictatorship.¹¹

Even though Saura operated independently of most other directors of the time, he shared with them certain aesthetic and thematic preoccupations, a fact which can easily be explained in the terms of a common socio-historical experience and the availability of a specific set of human and technical resources within the industry. So, Luis Cuadrado, who photographed most of Saura's films, was also behind the camera in Patino's Del amor y otras soledades (1969); Mario Camus, director of Digan lo que digan (1967) and Young Sánchez (1963), co-scripted Saura's Los golfos; José Luis Galiardo, the male lead in Camino's Mañana será otro día (1967), brought similar characteristics to bear on a role in Saura's Stress es tres tres, a year later. Many other examples could be added.

An analysis of the cinema of the sixties would not be complete without mentioning the overpowering force of the popular cinema in Spain which attracted crowds to watch musicals like Tómbola (1962) and Cuando tú no estás (1966), starring the niña-cantante Marisol, or Un beso en el puerto (1965) with the ever-popular Manolo Escobar who celebrated the supposedly glorious traditions of the country in songs designed to appeal to the suffering emigrados in Europe. Even more

damaging to the New Spanish cinema were the huge box office successes of a series of films by people like the producer Pedro Masó and the director Pedro Lazaga, who together monopolized a certain kind of market with works like Los guardiamarías and Operación Plus Ultra (1965), Los chicos del Preu and ¿Qué hacemos con los hijos? (1966), No le busques tres pies and La chica de los anuncios (1967), for which they received those very prizes which ideally should have been awarded to the directors of the New Cinema.¹² The imbalance created by these two types of cinema forced Fernando Méndez-Leite to declare that

El principal problema con que se encuentra el cine intelectual en España es la inexistencia de un cine comercial digno, como lo hay en otros países. ... El público necesita, pues, un cine de entretenimiento (palabra que prefiero a "evasión") ... que hoy ha sido sustituido forzosamente por las "comedias Masó", en las que se les presenta un falso mundo de facilidades.¹³

From this cinema derived the comedias celtibéricas which I shall have cause to examine in the second part of this chapter.

A quality cinema which either reinforced or questioned the prevalent ideology; a populist and rather exploitative cinema, geared to satisfy the frustrations of its audiences: these two cinemas, like the Nuevo Cine produced by the young directors, were centered on Madrid and dealt almost exclusively with themes related to life there or in the towns and cities of Castile.¹⁴ In contrast to the meseta-orientated

directors — mesetarios —, who came out of the School of Cinematography, having converged on Madrid from all four corners of the country, there was the cinema of Barcelona, which took its inspiration from life in that city. The depiction of the Catalan bourgeoisie and the representation of a type of entrepreneur who was more self-conscious than his counterpart in the rest of the country is to be found in both the Cine Catalán and the more specific Escuela de Barcelona. This last School, organized around a group of avant-garde personalities — photographers, architects, fashion designers —, explored the possibility of creating a cinema as far removed as possible from the one being made in Madrid. The characteristics of the School of Barcelona were specified in a manifesto published by one of its co-founders, Joaquim Jordà, in the magazine Nuestro Cine in 1967, which expressed, inter alia, the group's desire to collaborate in, and finance, their own works, in clear opposition to the state-subsidized, auteurist works of the New Cinema; second, their formalist ambitions to follow European avant-garde models; and third, an interest in characters and situations different from those presented by the Madrilenian directors, in a bid to avoid the depiction, in Carlos Durán's disrespectful and not wholly serious words, of 'ugly women, who look as though they stink and who, after the slightest love scene, get pregnant and go through terrible tragedies'.¹⁵

The fact that this cinema had almost no impact

outside the boundaries of the School — particularly because of its experimental concerns — and led effectively to a dead end, does not diminish its considerable significance as a record of the peculiar socio-historical realities of Catalonia. The most important films, located for the most part in Barcelona, present a contrast with the Neorealist 'petit bourgeois' preoccupations of the New Spanish Cinema, portraying instead a mainly mercantile, established middle-class, already obsessed with the trappings of a consumer society — cars, fashion models, and sophisticated night clubs abound in their works. This movement, nevertheless, could not escape being influenced by the New Cinema, which it in turn also influenced. The following details demonstrate the extent of the inter-relationships between the two movements: Ricardo Muñoz Suay, one of the personalities of Salamanca served as Director General de Producción in several films of the School of Barcelona; Tusset Street (1968) a work started in Barcelona by a Catalan team under the direction of Jorge Grau — a director later associated with the Nuevo Cine — was completed in Madrid by another director, Luis Marquina;¹⁶ Vicente Aranda and Román Gubern, two directors closely identified with the credo of the School of Barcelona, nevertheless made a realist film, Brillante porvenir (1963), which embodied sociological preoccupations totally alien to the spirit of the Barcelona directors;¹⁷ after years of working in Madrid,

Berlanga, acknowledging his Mediterranean origins, declared his spiritual affiliation to the School; directors like Grau and Camino, whose beginnings are rooted in Barcelona, later developed a cinema more in accordance with the New Spanish Cinema, even though continuing to display certain characteristics typical of the Barcelona style; the Catalan photographer, Juan Amorós, gave the same look to products of both movements.

The clearest expression of the differences between the two groups is to be found in their original declarations of principles. The directors of the School of Barcelona adopted an — ultimately unfeasible — apolitical stance and strove to give their work a European flavour in contrast with the enlightened tradition of "Spanishness" cultivated by the directors of Madrid, whose "leftish" aspirations caused them to fill their films with numerous cultural references.¹⁸ There is undoubtedly some justification for the mutual recrimination exchanged between the two groups, e.g. Ramon Terenci Moix denounced the films of the School of Barcelona for being 'Tan ajeno[s] a la realidad concreta de Cataluña como Las chicas de la Cruz Roja lo es a una visión de España en su totalidad', while the representatives of the School of Barcelona berated the New Spanish Cinema on the grounds of its 'corrección formal, cierto academicismo, centrado en la calidad' and accused its makers of intellectual elitism.¹⁹ But, beyond their differences of opinion, the fact remains

that both movements, together with the ideological and the populist cinema produced in Spain at the time, were deeply rooted, at a conscious or unconscious level, in the historical moment at which they were created.

II "Nuevo Cine Español"

This examination of the historical and political circumstances and the context in which the New Spanish Cinema developed during the sixties, provides a framework within which to outline certain characteristics related to my analysis of the representation of the family, focussing on a limited number of works which may be taken to represent the concerns of the movement as a whole. A collective reading which emphasizes not so much the merits of individual films or directors as those elements which are common to several works may avoid facile distinctions, for example, between those films which enjoyed success — winning critical acclaim, popular support and prizes —, and those which failed — because they were censored, withheld from screening or made financial losses —, between those films with a coherent structure and those which, because of mutilation by the censor, appeared to be inconsequential, bereft of unity and lacking in purpose. Finally, I shall choose to pay particular attention to the reflection or distortion of reality in the films, to the depiction of individuals alienated by an adverse social environment,

and to the representation of taboo subjects, mostly sexual and political. The use of collective devices as a means of circumventing the administration's prohibition in these areas will prepare the way for an analysis of aspects of mise-en-scène of the family in the following films: Manuel Summers' Del rosa al amarillo (1963), Miguel Picazo's La tía Tula (1964) and Oscuros sueños de agosto (1967), B 'C M. Patino's Nueve cartas a Berta (1965), Jorge Grau's El espontáneo (1964), and Jaime Camino's Mañana será otro día (1967).

These films, disparate in many respects, are united nevertheless by a surprising number of common features: all are the first or second ventures by young directors who, within severe budget constraints, preferred to take their cameras out into the streets rather than remain in the studios; they are also films which, with some exceptions, introduce new actors and actresses and, like many other films of the New Spanish Cinema, display an underlying similarity in respect of styles and themes, as noted by César Santos Fontenla:

En cuanto al estilo, si no puede hablarse, en efecto, de una unidad en sentido estricto, sí puede decirse, grosso modo, que oscilan entre las fórmulas neorrealistas y los hallazgos más recientes, de la nouvelle vague francesa, mientras la temática se inscribe, más que al realismo social, al llamado realismo crítico.²⁰

A further point of interest in relation to the films treated here is that my selection includes works which launched the movement around 1963 and others which brought the experience to a close, coinciding with

García Escudero's dismissal in 1967 and with the dramatic decline in the overall popularity of the group. [The disappearance of the Nuevo Cine Español significantly overlaps with the emergence of the Comedias Celtibéricas]. The time-lag between the two phases allows us to detect in the first group the unmistakable influence of the previous Spanish directors, notably Bardem, and in the second a contrary desire to follow new European trends in film-making and also a determination to reflect in their works the preoccupations already expressed by established directors of the New Cinema and the School of Barcelona. Equally, the main characters in these films, who apart from La tía Tula are all young people, change substantially in relation to earlier works: Mañana será otro día and Oscuros sueños de agosto depict youngsters whose mentality, physical appearance and attitudes are supposed to have undergone the same dramatic transformation that has affected society. However, as we shall see, the sophisticated and "trendy" appearance of some characters often conceals old-fashioned values and ideas.

The particular interest shown at this time in the portrayal of the youth of Spain and its problems has been explained in diverse ways. While it is true that the new film directors seem to have wished to exploit the success of contemporary comedies dealing with children and adolescents, an equally persuasive explanation rests in the directors' identification with

people of their own generation, and in officialdom's insistent request that they should represent a utopian new Spain. Young people's interests, so the authorities thought, would not extend to considering forbidden subjects to do with the past — the Civil War, emigration, working-class deprivation —, themes which the films nevertheless obliquely treated. In general terms, the films recreate the immediate past (the late fifties) or, in the case of the ironically entitled Los felices 60 (Jaime Camino, 1965), the present. The directors were, nevertheless, prevented by censorship from exposing the misfortunes of countless numbers of people who did not prosper during the sixties: the underpaid labourers, the unemployed seeking work abroad, the politically disenchanted, and chose instead to depict young individuals, mostly of middle-class origins who in spite of their comfortable position in society, led bored and unsatisfied lives and who, in John Hopewell's words, 'duck a Sartrean "anguish": a recognition that man creates his own fate and is responsible for the world he lives in'. Such characters as Lorenzo in Nueve cartas a Berta are symbolic of 'a whole generation of young Spaniards guilty of a collective act of "bad faith"'.²¹

Studies of the New Spanish Cinema tend inevitably to begin by mentioning Del rosa al amarillo and La tía Tula, two films which effectively inaugurated the movement. Both are works of intrinsic artistic interest, collecting prizes in the Festival of San

Sebastian: Del rosa al amarillo won the Concha de Plata in 1963 and La tía Tula the award to the best director in 1964. Made by directors considered at the time to be among the most promising of their generation, they received a highly favourable reception in the majority of film periodicals when released commercially, and have since become classics of the Spanish cinema. Both works deserve praise for the accuracy with which they depict human sentiments and weakness, the loves of young and old people and the sexual frustrations of a solterona. But these features are especially interesting because they are situated within the overall context of a repressive and meaningless society.

Despite economic and administrative pressures which prevented a more direct approach to the social conditions of the country — for example, four minutes of footage were cut from La tía Tula —, the films reveal a society labouring under a reactionary Catholic morality and a conservative ideology. Even though Del rosa al amarillo and La tía Tula centre on individuals and their immediate preoccupations and try to avoid a — possibly dangerous — analysis of social issues by placing emphasis less tendentiously on the characters' psychology, the social attitudes depicted in the films inevitably impinge upon the protagonists. In this light, Tula's idiosyncratic confrontation with her own sexuality ceases to be a personal problem and becomes a social issue, since her responses are

motivated not only by her own fears and anxieties, but also by a Catholic morality which demanded the sublimation of her feelings as a woman and her willingness to serve, in her own words of complaint, as a 'remedio contra la sensualidad del hombre'. The Church's strict moral doctrine which dominated all areas of people's lives — schools, cinemas, family affairs, sexual mores —, and the rigid social conventions which were designed to prevent any deviation from established norms, are exemplified magnificently in Del rosa al amarillo where both children and old-age pensioners are unremittingly disciplined and regimented by an army of priests and teachers, nuns and Falange indoctrinators, parents and hack writers. Thus, the priests in the school continually talk about discipline and punishment, and are openly biased towards the sons of influential people; in the campamento de juventudes — inspired by the Nazi youth organizations — the leaders, accompanied by a priest, demagogically exhort the young boys, while marching them around the camp, to 'estar preparados en la lucha sin tregua, en la guerra y en la paz'; a teenager reveals the extent of her indoctrination by encouraging the boy she fancies to enter the Navy, because 'si mueres tendría el consuelo de que habrías muerto por la patria'; and the old people in the asilo run by nuns must acquiesce in daily visits to the church, where they are incessantly bombarded with ideas about hell: '¿Y qué será de nosotros en el infierno?',

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exile at the end of the War and many more were removed from their teaching posts by the Francoist administration, with the subsequent deterioration in the education system).

Films like Del rosa al amarillo and La tía Tula also reflect in less conscious ways the social reality of their characters, mostly through the depiction of an arid, ghost-like environment of oppression, which seems to have remained unchanged since time immemorial. The past, crystallized in beautiful and massive old churches and convents, ancient castles and mansions, weighs heavily upon the characters in these films, as it had in Bardem's Nunca pasa nada, which was a re-working of his 1956 film Calle Mayor. In all these films, the narrow streets, the empty and autumnal Castilian fields, the dark nights where the characters wander aimlessly, do not so much restrict and oppress them, as reflect the desolation they feel in their souls.

The stifling provincial atmosphere of these films significantly extends into the city environment not only of Del rosa al amarillo, but also of El espontáneo, where the microcosm of Madrid is seen — as in Fernán Gómez's El mundo sigue — as a prolongation of the empty and sterile world of the provinces. It may be that Del rosa al amarillo delights us, mostly in its first part, with its depiction of the candour, emotional intensity and care-free spirit of enjoyment of the children, and that El espontáneo carries us

along with its picaresque-like character (a latterday Lazarillo) searching for adventures in the streets of Madrid. The mood of the films, however, with the exception of some very touching and comical moments, is anything but lighthearted. Paco takes to the streets in El espontáneo looking for a livelihood and encounters only poverty — urchins making money out of queuing for rich people —, uncalled for abuse — he is shouted at and reprimanded for purely fortuitous accidents —, social injustice — he is dismissed from the hotel where he works for not satisfying the demands of a foreigner expecting full treatment from Spaniards —, spiritual corruption — an aristocrat, played by Fernando Rey, entertains him with the hope of seducing the young and needy Paco —, and eventual death.

It is not surprising that a film which derives so much of its force from the attention that it pays to Spanish sources — the picaresque, Velázquez, and the sainete, mainly through its use of working-class characters and life in the barrios —, should also pay homage to Valle-Inclán and the esperpento, since what we are seeing is clearly an elaboration of Max's celebrated formula in Luces de Bohemia: 'Deformemos la expresión en el mismo espejo que nos deforma las caras y toda la vida miserable de España'. The systematic deformation of the 'males trágicos, crueldades sociales y conducta incongruente que deforman la humanidad y en particular España', has of course inspired many of the literary and visual representations of twentieth-

century Spain.

Max's climactic observation that 'Las imágenes más bellas en un espejo cóncavo son absurdas',²² is relevant, too, to a modern film like Mañana será otro día, which superficially at least seems to be quite unconcerned with the reproduction of life in the terms documented in the films we have been studying. Camino's film, shot in bright colours — in contrast to all the other works referred to until now which, excepting the last few minutes of El espontáneo, are in black and white, a fact which reinforces their depiction of poverty, misery and oppression — on location in Barcelona, introduces a young modern couple who apparently have left their past behind them — there is no mention of their lives in Castile prior to their journey to Catalonia, of their previous jobs, if any, or of their families and friends. The film nevertheless contains several scenes which make a mockery of the superficial modernity and pretensions of its characters and settings. During a visit to the fair, Paco and his boss, a corrupt and unscrupulous businessman, see themselves in the distorted mirrors, which though permitting them to laugh at their deformed reflections, allow the viewer to discover their grotesqueness; Paco and Lisa, the modern-looking couple of the film engage in an endless series of conversations about jealousy, infidelity and honour, in the best Calderonian tradition; Paco, a minor actor, finds work in yet another version of Alba de América now entitled Alba

del nuevo mundo. Examples of the same disparity could be multiplied without significantly altering the point in question. What may be observed is that Mañana será otro día and other films of this period consistently tend either to present a reality which is totally at odds with that alluded to in official state propaganda (NODO ^{-'Noticiario Documental'-} being a clear instance of this), or to undermine strategically the impression of modernity that at another level they so studiously convey.

III The mise-en-scène of the Family in the "Nuevo Cine Español"

The foregoing comments summarise the tone, themes and objectives of the films under consideration. I shall now examine some aspects of the mise-en-scène of the family in them, noting at the outset how the shifts of emphasis that we have already documented in the presentation of society and the depiction of characters in early and late films, are also visible in the development of the portrayal of the family. Like films of the previous decade, Del rosa al amarillo, La tía Tula, Nueve cartas a Berta and El espontáneo focus on the experiences of families which though strained still remain intact. In later films, however, the traditional notions about family life are seen to be increasingly problematic, and works like Oscuros sueños de agosto or Mañana será otro día deal quite directly with the frailty and eventual disintegration of

marriage.

As a film designed to 'servir de testimonio a la realidad de su tiempo', Nueve cartas a Berta is of all the works mentioned here the one which examines most comprehensively the social environment and its influences upon the individual, also analysing most tenaciously the part played by the family in shaping a life and personality.²³ Patino's film about a young law student who suffers a cultural shock while abroad, and upon his return to his native country is compelled to review his preconceived ideas about conditions in Spain, is a searching investigation of human relationships which pays particular attention to the experiences of couples inside and outside marriage. Consistent with its overall aim to record and question the traditional ways and values of society, Nueve cartas a Berta demonstrates that the family is both the cause and effect of the society in which it is set. Even though Lorenzo is coerced into submission by different social agents — the university ^{blu} his critical faculties by feeding him on a diet of carefully selected texts and ideas, the church guides his spirituality along acceptable and strictly orthodox lines — it is the family which ultimately exercises the right to subdue his rebellious spirit. By temporarily accepting his unruly behaviour as a normal step which all individuals must necessarily take in order to reach maturity, it incorporates him into a chain which links parents and children in an unbroken succession. Just as

his father had betrayed his potential as a student of medicine with literary ambitions to become a bank clerk who in his spare time writes the sports section of the local paper, so does the son forget the enlightened people and ideas he had encountered in England and accept the fate of becoming a lawyer in a provincial town, where he ties himself to a bland and colourless wife who is destined, like his mother, to raise the children and attend to all the domestic chores. The façade of cordiality and bonhomie projected by the character of the father in Nueve cartas a Berta is undermined by a comparison with his counterpart in Bardem's Nunca pasa nada, a film which also deals with a repressive environment and its influence on a once committed and now compromised individual. The paterfamilias of Nunca pasa nada, played, incidentally, by the same actor who appears in Nueve cartas a Berta, is portrayed as a typical Spanish male in his attitude and behaviour, ruthless in the exercise of his authority, unconcerned about the feelings of those next to him and quite prepared to discard his wife for a much younger, foreign girl. Paradoxically, the film awakens the audience's sympathy by presenting him — a doctor in a provincial town — as the victim of an insensitive and intrusive society. Thus, either as a tyrannical figure or as a benevolent patriarca, the father, according to Wilhelm Reich, fulfils a very fundamental role:

In the figure of the father the authoritarian state has its representative in every family, so that the family becomes its most important instrument of power.²⁴

The idea of the family as an inescapable force, forever reaching and controlling the individual, is emphasized in Nueva cartas a Berta by the presence of the extended family which surrounds Lorenzo and traps him: parents, grandmother, uncles and aunts, cousins, all assume the collective duty of returning the lost sheep to the fold. Furthermore, this extended family represents the major components of Francoist order: the father is an alférez provisional, i.e. a member of the group of university combatants who had fought with General Franco during the Civil War; one of his uncles is a parish priest; and Juani, his cousin, is a member of the Sección Femenina, the organization founded by Pilar Primo de Rivera to carry out community work by women on behalf of the State.

In this thematically complex film, visual details are crucial. I have already mentioned the stifling atmosphere characteristic of the films of this period, the narrow streets, the dark nocturnal settings, the desolate countryside. The prominent place of religion in Nueve cartas a Berta is brought home by repeated views of Salamanca's imposing Cathedral and by images of nuns and priests walking through the streets, by the procession of Holy Week, by pious paintings and sculptures in the houses, and above all by scenes of people, including Lorenzo, ringing the church bells to

summon the faithful to mass. Equally crucial to Patino's anachronistic world inhabited by old-fashioned people and ideas is the choice of setting, Salamanca, that oldest and most traditional of Spanish cities, which the main character associates with an enlightened Spain—La Celestina, Cervantes, Fray Luis de León, Unamuno—, but also and more pointedly with the burning of heretics. The film maintains a connection with the past through the use of music with resonant Renaissance overtones and the inclusion of medieval illustrations reproducing scenes of daily town life which introduce each of the nine parts into which Nueve cartas is divided. These audio-visual elements reinforce the central motif of an antiquated world of yesteryear.

Above all, given the significance of the family, the film dwells upon images of houses and domestic activity. Since the extended family exercises so much power on Lorenzo, his frequent visits to their homes put him at the mercy of the bearers of an authority handed down to them by successive generations. The houses, like the modern city of Salamanca which is built upon the foundations of an older one, conserve a certain charm while at root symbolizing the permanence of traditional values. Significantly, unlike the generality of houses which are old and rambling, Lorenzo's home is small and cramped, a lugubrious setting which lacks the signs of good taste and prosperity visible in the other family homes. More than anything else it is a metonymic equivalent of the

mediocrity, decay and narrow-mindedness of the family. Lorenzo's attempts to escape, even if only for a while, signal his desperate search for a possible alternative mode of existence. His unsuccessful efforts condemn him at the end to remain forever in an enclosed, restricted space cluttered up by his parents who block the narrow corridors and small rooms, spy on his movements through glass doors, and even deny him privacy in his bedroom, which he shares with a brother.

Lorenzo's capitulation, which the film represents as a cuesta arriba along the narrow, winding street of his at once beloved and hated city, coincides with his reintegration into the family. The scene of their emotional reunion is framed in front of the household's latest domestic acquisition, a television set, which symbolizes their partial adjustment to a modern and progressive world. In a complementary scene of reconciliation he rejoins his girlfriend, against the backdrop of a panoramic view of Salamanca, the city he had so much wanted Berta to know. The impressive architectonic background comprising the Cathedral, some churches and similar institutions, and the two human figures who are easily assimilated into the whole structure of society.

Many of the motifs mentioned in relation to the family in Nueve cartas a Berta are present in La tía Tula which like Patino's film depicts the lives of middle-class Spaniards in a provincial town. Taking into consideration the new directors' common interest

during this period in certain types of character and setting, it is not surprising to find that their films are characterized by a similar look and tone. In this respect, the interiors of the houses of Tula, Lorenzo and Guillermo in Del rosa al amarillo reflect their values and personalities down to the smallest detail of decoration and ornamentation. So, the antique furniture and paintings of the traditional homes indicate their inhabitants' bourgeois status; pious sculptures and images, their religious education; and collections of books and musical instruments, their cultural pretensions.

La tía Tula in particular, a film interested in female figures, focusses almost exclusively on those two settings which have traditionally been associated with women: the house and the church. In a televised interview, Juan Julio Baena, the director of photography in La tía Tula, remarked that his overall concern when shooting the film was to create an atmosphere of being 'encerrado en un confesionario'. On the evidence of the film he succeeded admirably in conveying a confessional intimacy and claustrophobia intensified by the dark tones of the photography and the close-ups.

Only loosely based on the character of that name in Unamuno's novel, Tula is a spirited, hard-working and independent spinster who has had to give up a solitary existence to shoulder the responsibilities bequeathed to her by her married sister's early death.

Dressed in mourning clothes throughout the film, she dedicates her life to looking after Rosa's husband and children and to working for the community in the parish. Her role is, then, that typically reserved for married wives and mothers, and Tula, like Lorenzo's mother in Nueve cartas a Berta, is constantly depicted cleaning, cooking, sewing, tending the sick and comforting the grieving widower and his children. Her house, where interestingly she welcomes her sister's family, is like other family homes seen in other films, an extension of her personality, in as much as it expresses not only her tastes and hobbies, but a traditional way of life. An old and comfortable place, it reflects her commitment to family traditions — group portraits of her ancestors hang on the walls — and her artistic and spiritual nature — a piano stands conspicuously in the main room.

Tula's environment also visually expresses her inner tensions and obsessions. A scrupulous, clean and tidy woman who, we assume from remarks made to a friend — '¡Ganas tienes de aguantar a un hombre!' — had never wanted to marry, Tula is particularly drawn to her sister's children but profoundly ill-at-ease with her brother in law, Ramiro. She is quite a liberated woman for her time who, unlike the wives and mothers portrayed throughout the films of this period, has her own money and is free to live her life as she pleases. This material independence does not prevent the onset of anxiety when she quite unintentionally excites

Ramiro's lust and has a first glimpse of her own nascent sexuality. Her repugnance at his physical proximity is rendered in a series of clattered shots where the characters find their movements constrained by walls, doors and furniture. Tula's claustrophobia is particularly evident in the two bedroom scenes where she and Ramiro are filmed from a fixed point in an unnaturally restricted space which makes it impossible to avoid close contact. After a scene where Ramiro almost rapes her, she tries to establish a distance which the home cannot any longer offer in the company of the children. In the boy, Ramirín — who as his name already indicates is a miniature version of the father — Tula, however, observes the incipient fascination and attraction towards women and sexual matters which to her mind makes male behaviour so objectionable. For that reason Tula is drawn especially to the little girl, Tulita, whose quiet manners, modesty and caring nature she consciously cultivates and encourages.

Of special importance is Tula's hurried decision to prepare Tulita — even though they are still in mourning — for her first communion, a sacrament symbolically representing the innocence of the young children, which she hopes will purify the father's and son's hearts of sinful feelings of lust. Her instinct for purity, which is exemplified in the austerity, whiteness and cleanliness of her kitchen and bedroom, impels her in the latter part of the film towards the

countryside, where she still expects that a return to nature will 'cleanse' Ramiro. But, just as her compulsive washing fails to neutralize the contamination of her contact with him, so will immersion in the river near their relatives' home prove inadequate to extinguish Ramiro's sexual desire. What is more, it exacerbates her own dormant sensuality. Admitting for the first time to herself the need she feels of marrying Ramiro, she is ultimately taken aback by the unforeseeable force of Ramiro's sexual urges. His furtive encounter with Tula's young and inexperienced country cousin will result in an unwanted pregnancy — resolved by a marriage of convenience — and in Tula's return to a lonely existence of emotional emptiness and frustrated maternal desire.

If I have concentrated in a certain amount of detail on these early films of the New Spanish Cinema, it is because later works either duplicate their characteristics or in some cases hardly touch on family affairs. The disintegration of the family unit, already evident in La tía Tula where one of the partners — the mother — is dead, is continued in Del rosa al amarillo where the family is marginal to the story, and in Oscuros sueños de agosto and Mañana será otro día where the collapse of marriage and the disintegration of the family are complete. These last two films record the changes already affecting some sectors of Spanish society, which by the late sixties were bent on replacing their backward ideas, material poverty and

old-fashioned morality with the modern values of a new, apparently more liberated, age. The characters in Oscuros sueños and Mañana será otro día conform in certain ways to these expectations, since the women now have jobs of their own, can plan their families if they choose to go on the pill, and both men and women are free of restrictions imposed by their parents who, in the case of Ana in Oscuros sueños, are separated anyway. These films, as I remarked before, scrutinize the changes which are taking place in Spanish society and expose the superficiality of these changes by overtly referring to the deceptive nature of appearances, never more apparent than in sixties fashion which encouraged the use of false eyelashes and wigs, colourful clothes and excessive make-up. Numerous shots of characters narcissistically contemplating their reflections in mirrors capture the mood of a society engrossed in the search for meaningful señas de identidad.

These preoccupations can also be found in many other films made at about the same time. Carlos Saura in Peppermint Frappé, Stress es tres tres (1968) and La madriguera (1969), while imposing his own particular style thanks to the freedom given to him by Elías Querejeta — the producer of the majority of his films throughout his long-lasting career — and because of his unique status within the film industry in Spain, shares in fact the same concern as the directors of these late sixties works in regard to the conflict between the old

and new Spain. Los desafíos — also produced by Querejeta —, a three-part film directed by Claudio Guerin, José Luis Egea and Victor Erice in 1969 and scripted by Rafael Azcona (Saura's regular script-writer in the sixties and seventies), is further proof of this period's preoccupation with the clash of old mentalities and new ideas and customs, which the film reinforces by casting young or foreign actors and actresses alongside some famous and classic Spanish ones, like Alfredo Mayo, the matinée idol of the forties and the arch-galán of Raza and ¡A mí la legión! (Juan de Orduña, 1942), and Francisco Rabal, already a well-known name on account of his roles in Buñuel's Nazarín (1958), Viridiana (1961) and Belle de jour (1965), and in many Spanish films of the fifties and sixties.²⁵

In the final analysis, all the films examined here convey a fundamentally pessimistic assessment of the social, political and cultural conditions of Spain at this time. While the films of the Nuevo Cine Español dramatize the disintegration of the conventional family, a more forceful attack on the institution of the family will be reserved for works made at a later date when, with the end of the dictatorship drawing near, many of the directors who originated in the New Spanish Cinema came to full maturity. Meanwhile, the Comedias Celtibéricas, which I will pass on to study now, explore the limitations of family life by focussing on individuals, mainly men, negotiating the

transition from bachelorhood to marriage. By concentrating in particular on characters engaged in noviazgos when, prior to the creation of a new family unit, they still live at home, these films are able to comment on the role of the father, on mother/son relationships, and on various myths about love, marriage and family life.

IV The Genre of Comedy

The majority of the works analysed so far share the characteristic of being what most critics would consider "quality" films, that is, films made by serious-minded directors whose primary aim was to produce works of artistic value which would question, as far as censorship allowed, the dominant ideology of the State. This view, confirmed in John Hopewell's statement that 'from the 50s, after all, quality cinema had been a near monopoly of the opposition', has been shared by a great number of authors writing about Spanish cinema, with the result that outside Spain very little has been done to study the commercial and popular films made during the Franco era.²⁶ The foundations for a "quality cinema" in Spain, established during the celebrated Conversaciones of 1955, were specifically designed to redress the balance of many works made in the years following the Civil War (and which still in the fifties constituted the great bulk of the films produced), when audiences were

offered patriotic and sentimentally nostalgic films, e.g. Agustina de Aragón (Juan de Orduña, 1950), folkloric extravaganzas, e.g. Ronda española (Ladislao Vadja, 1951), religious melodramas, e.g. La señora de Fátima (Rafael Gil, 1951), heroic war epics, e.g. Embajador en el infierno (José María Forqué, 1956), and popular comedias rosas, e.g. Las chicas de la Cruz Roja (Rafael Salvia, 1958).

One of the negative consequences of the politicisation of Spanish cinema was the simplistic assumption that for a film to be genuinely committed, it had to give precedence to tragic and dramatic elements over any form of lightheartedness or humour. Pedro Beltrán, who co-scripted several of Fernando Fernán-Gómez's comedies, has condemned this attitude, saying

Se valora más un drama que una comedia, porque lo dramático va directamente de sentimiento en sentimiento; mientras que la comedia — el humor — tiene que pasar por el cerebro en un proceso de inteligencia y no todo el mundo está dotado o bien dispuesto para ello.²⁷

Of course, not all of the Spanish directors who emerged during the sixties, and who are collectively gathered under the label of 'Nuevo cine español', fit into this description. One of the exceptions is Manuel Summers who already in his first film, Del rosa al amarillo (1963), showed a preference for a gentle, ironic and comic approach to his characters. In his subsequent film, La niña de luto (1964), an incisive and witty comment on the mourning practices in an Andalusian

community, Summers' humour became darker and more critical, which perhaps explains the disappointing response of audiences to it. As I have already mentioned, Berlanga, Fernán Gómez and Ferreri also produced successful black comedies, but it is no coincidence that their bleak films, combining elements of distortion, farce, the grotesque, and social satire, should have been prevented from flourishing by the new conditions of Spanish society in the sixties and by the appearance of the Nuevo Cine Español. Ferreri, as I have said, was expelled from Spain, Berlanga, who achieved enormous success with El verdugo in 1963, subsequently became embroiled in confrontations with the administration and did not direct another film in the country until 1969 when he made ¡Vivan los novios! Fernán-Gómez, for his part, felt obliged to give up directing personal films after failing to secure the commercial release of El extraño viaje, which he had made in 1964; he would only resume work in his earlier style after the death of Franco, when he made three of his most distinctive works: Bruja más que bruja (1976), Mi hija Hildegart (1977) and Cinco tenedores (1979).

Of all the different groups of popular films made during the two decades considered so far, the comedias rosas were those which achieved greatest success in the developing fifties, and even if in the final analysis they fail to impress us as anything but flawed films, they are nevertheless of considerable sociological relevance. As one of their critics has said,

Con las deformaciones y omisiones que se quieran, estas comedias reflejan la cotidianeidad, las apetencias y frustraciones de una sociedad retratada epidèrmicamente y sin rigor pero dejando traslucir la mentalidad y los modelos de vida de aquel momento.²⁸

The most popular comedies in this category, for example those produced and scripted by Pedro Masó and directed by Pedro Lazaga, focus primarily on young people and their social interaction, and they continued to be made throughout the sixties — Los guardiamarinas in 1965 and Los chicos del Preu in 1966. Those comedies, however, as Santos Fontela observes, were intended to

mostrar que, en el fondo, a nuestra juventud sana y sin problemas lo único que le preocupa, y lo que al mismo tiempo le une, es la camaradería y el amor, eso sí, y siempre, "a la española".²⁹

They, nevertheless, were works directly indebted to the Spanish tradition of the comedia costumbrista and the sainete, two genres which incorporated a wide range of character types from a working-class background whose main features were their simplicity, honesty and good humour in the face of adversity. According to Florentino Soria, the abundance of such characters in Spanish comedy at the time is attributable to the lack of suitable actors to play the galán, a sociological accident which forced Spanish directors to make comedies with a collective protagonist as an alternative to the classical American comedy centred around a distinctive individual actor, like Cary Grant,

or a couple, like Rock Hudson and Doris Day. Florentino Soria, has drawn attention to the fact that those actors who were conventionally good-looking, such as Alfredo Mayo, Armando Calvo, Jorge Mistral and José Suárez, were generally cast in romantic and sentimental roles, while others, such as Alfredo Landa, Fernando Fernán-Gómez, José Sacristán and José Luis López Vázquez, less good-looking and to a degree even ugly, fitted perfectly into comic roles.³⁰

Inevitably, the availability of a limited range of actors had a bearing on the kind of comedy that was made. Other circumstances also determined the kind of films popular directors wanted to make to satisfy spectators' demands, and they are inevitably related to the conditions of the industry and to the political and social situation in Spain at the time. The new laws passed in 1963 by the General Director of Cinematography and Theatre, José María García Escudero, encouraged the making of serious films of proven aesthetic value which the Administration intended to send to international film festivals to represent Spain. As I have already pointed out, the New Spanish Cinema reached only a small number of cinema-goers because of distribution problems and therefore the market was open to other types of productions. The group of critics writing under the name of Marta Hernández has observed that the decade of the sixties was marked by a polarization in the types of cinema made in Spain:

Películas de "consumo" destinadas a obtener una rápida amortización y a crear una industria potente haciendo desaparecer del mapa las pequeñas productoras sin capital líquido, y películas "culturalmente protegidas".^{30bis}

While a cinema of evasión burgeoned from then on, the directors of the Nuevo Cine Español enjoyed only a short spell of success due to the fact that the directors involved in it were caught up in constant arguments with the censors over the films they wanted to make. They failed, moreover, to win the approval of film critics who denounced their complicity with the administration.³¹

Towards the end of the sixties it became clear that the New Spanish Cinema had failed, since many new directors felt unable to meet the government's requirements that they produce cinematic representations of the new realities prevailing in the country: the economic boom caused by industrial development, greater social prosperity and affluence, the opening up of Spain to multinational companies and tourists, the high levels of employment, etc. In 1967 García Escudero lost his job, and in 1969, following the scandal created by the Matesa affair (when credits granted by the government to the textile firm, Matesa, were diverted for private investment), Franco went so far as to dismiss Fraga Iribarne who had helped García Escudero in establishing the conditions for the creation of the New Spanish Cinema. The end of the decade saw the end of attempts at political, social and

economic reform in the country, with the crisis that affected Spain in the years 1968 and 1969 having particularly adverse consequences for film directors who encountered a hardening in censors' attitudes.

As damaging for the cinema industry as the political situation was the lack of money to finance new projects, a state of affairs brought about by the generous terms which the State had offered in the early and mid-sixties, when directors received grants of up to 15% of the overall box-office takings, works which were classified "de interés especial" were funded to the level of 40% of their total capital investment, and those films which won prizes at international festivals were awarded a further 10% bonus. By 1969, the Informe de la Comisión de Estudio de los Problemas de la Producción Cinematográfica Española warned that the situation 'era tan grave que nos hace temer la extinción de la industria cinematográfica española'.³²

While the more critically minded directors had to wait for an improvement in the country's political and economic fortunes, those who specialized in making popular and commercial films benefitted from the unstable conditions in Spain. They were helped, first of all, by distributors who needed to produce Spanish films in compliance with the laws of 1962, under which they were compelled to screen one national work for every three foreign films exhibited. In order to meet the quota established by the Dirección General, new production companies resorted to financing relatively

cheap films, often made in collaboration with an Italian or French producer, which would pander to the interests of the average spectator and thus ensure huge attendances. Secondly, they were assisted by the administration, which would not tolerate too open a treatment of political or social issues but allowed the release of films dealing with sexual themes, thus favouring the creation of a new kind of cinema, La Comedia Celtibérica or, as it is often referred to outside Spain, the "Sexy Spanish Comedy", greatly influenced by the American and Italian films of a corresponding type.

One of the reasons for this change of attitude towards sexual themes was a certain relaxation of moral standards, prompted by the sexual revolution of the sixties in Western democracies, which inevitably reached Spain via tourism, media coverage and feed-back from greatly eased travel abroad.³³ The moment of destape, i.e. limited display of — usually — female flesh, had finally hit the country. This is not to say that the directors or the Administration were about to throw overboard all the sexual taboos which had constrained Spanish society since the beginnings of Francoism, when those freedoms which had been secured during the period of the Republic were reversed. The introduction of votes for women, their increased public standing, as seen, for example, in the popular appeal of figures like Dolores Ibarruri and Federica Montseny, anarchist support for free love and unmarried mothers,

are concerns which are debated in two Spanish films which hark back to the time of the Republic: Antonio Jiménez-Rico's Retrato de familia (1976) and Fernán Gómez's Mi hija Hildelgart (1977), whose two main characters, a mother and a daughter, are presented as strong, independent and consciousness-raising individuals who are ultimately destroyed by the social pressures of a country dominated for centuries by a reactionary and patriarchal mentality. With regard to orthodox notions of family life the Republic in effect went against the Catholic Church's teachings concerning the indissolubility of marriage by allowing divorce, a privilege which favoured women above all, who until that time had lived in a subordinated state. The religious atmosphere which pervaded Spain in the first decades of the dictatorship made any attempts at dealing with questions surrounding sexuality and the relations between the sexes highly problematical, with the consequence that not even in the form of comedy were these issues aired. The comedies of the fifties and early sixties, as has already been mentioned, tended to focus on young people who were more interested in having a good time, helping worthy causes (for example, the Red Cross) and in enjoying the benefits of the new consumer revolution — cars, record-players, etc. —, than in scrutinizing the motives underlying their behaviour and attitudes towards the institutions of noviazgo, marriage and the family.

For all their differences, both the comedias rosas of the fifties and the "Sexy Comedies" of a later period elicited a common response: both types were extremely popular with Spanish audiences, and were almost without exception dismissed by critics as sub-standard products of little intellectual interest, meagre cinematic value and scant social relevance. Two of Spain's leading directors of comedies have, nevertheless, come to the rescue of this kind of cinema, praising its importance within the overall pattern of Spanish film-making. Berlanga, a director of long standing and considerable reputation both in Spain and abroad, who has never kept in step either with the trend towards "quality" cinema, represented by Carlos Saura and the directors of the Nuevo Cine Español, or with "popular" cinema, is adamant that one of the principal virtues of the comedies was

la de reflejar la realidad española,
a lo largo de su historia, con mucha
más viveza y autenticidad que otro tipo
de cine con mayor afán de transcendencia.³⁴

For his part, Pedro Almodóvar, possibly the most innovative and controversial film director to have emerged in Spain since the death of General Franco, has acknowledged the influence on his comedies of popular and traditional forms of Spanish art, singling out "el género cómico" as 'el que mejor te permite acercarte a la realidad'. He is, moreover, a firm believer in the positive qualities of the comedies made in Spain throughout the fifties and sixties, a position which

has led him to proclaim that

Considero que lo más importante se ha llevado a cabo en el terreno directamente popular: comedias de consumo [...] Me refiero a aquellas películas de Forqué, Lazaga, etc.³⁵

Even if in many respects the Comedias Celtibéricas, in much the same way as the earlier comedias rosas, falsified or distorted the realities of the country by presenting social and moral issues in a limited, contradictory and ultimately regressive way, they nevertheless managed to introduce for the first time certain themes which would eventually be taken over and developed to a higher level of critical awareness by some of the major names in Spanish cinema. Most popular comedies of the sixties and early seventies in Spain were able to satisfy the demands of censorship because they steered clear of political and social issues and dwelt instead almost exclusively on sexual matters, a ploy which was acceptable to the administration, particularly at a time when it was stamping out political opposition. We must remember, for example, that in 1969 the government of the day declared a state of emergency, and that the last years of the dictatorship were marked by renewed repression of a kind not seen since the fifties. In fact, from 1968 to 1973, the State became entangled in fierce confrontations with the universities (some of which they closed), the trade unions, the Church (the Assembly of Bishops and Priests denounced Franco's regime for the first time in 1971), and the Basque

separatist organization, ETA, which dealt the biggest blow to Francoism by killing Admiral Carrero Blanco in 1973.

The directors of comedies avoided any major problem by sticking to a safer subject area, sexuality, and forestall suggestions that their works were subversive by adopting a position at the end of the films which was in compliance with the dominant ideology. They nevertheless prepared the way for other directors to take advantage of the situation: !Vivan los novios!, made by Berlanga in 1969, and Mi querida señorita, directed in 1971 by Jaime de Armiñán, are films which share the concerns — and even the same actor, José Luis López Vázquez — of some of the Comedias Celtibéricas but not their attitude of subservience to the regime. From the "Sexy Spanish Comedy" would eventually spring the comedies made in the late seventies and eighties, and which I shall have opportunity to study in a later chapter.

The above serves as a reminder that popular comedies were made throughout the whole period covered by this thesis, and that the genre underwent certain changes in style and direction in a continual effort to adjust to different circumstances in the country. As far as the representation of the family in Spanish cinema is concerned, the films produced from the sixties onwards are of greater interest than those made during the early years of the dictatorship, even if, given the commercial and administrative constraints

under which they were made, they only managed superficially to raise issues related to marriage and married life. But before embarking on an analysis of individual works, a few general observations on comedy will help to explain the contradictory status of this genre in Spain, where comedies enjoyed great popularity but were denigrated by large numbers of educated spectators and politically committed critics.

It is not an easy task to give a global account of comedy, comic form and laughter because, as Moelwyn Merchant has observed, while the comic is easily recognized,

comedy is profoundly difficult to define in the abstract and equally difficult to distinguish from other comic modes, the grotesque, the absurd, the ironic and the farcical.³⁶

Nevertheless, drawing on some observations made by a variety of writers of recent times it may be possible to identify comedy's most characteristic features.

Freud, for example, who devoted considerable attention to the meanings of jokes, dispelled the aura of inconsequentiality and superficiality which has often surrounded comedy by helping us to understand that besides serving as a form of entertainment, humour has the potential to subvert reality inasmuch as it is capable of penetrating to the unconscious source of fears and desires in every individual. Freud's connection of jokes to repressed areas of the unconscious has obliged many authors to revise the popularly held view of comedy as a minor art form

dealing with the follies and vices of men, a traditional attitude which encouraged the belief that tragedy, interested in important public matters and individuals who were better than average, was of greater significance.³⁷ This distinction between tragedy and comedy, which originated in Aristotle, has enjoyed widespread support throughout the ages, although it would be perhaps more accurate to say that comedy does not preclude tragedy, laughter having been one of man's cleverer devices for coping with personal tragedy. We can say in fact that the comic writer has used comedy as a mirror to reflect society's foolishness and short-comings in the hope that they might be mended, a corrective attitude taken up by the French philosopher Henri Bergson.³⁸ This point contradicts all those opinions which hold that comedy evades reality or that it avoids dealing with serious matters since, as John Ellis, writing on Ealing Comedy, correctly declares, comedy 'lets you do things that are too dangerous or that a certain audience can't accept'.³⁹ Essentially, we might say that this art form deals, as much as tragedy, with serious issues, that humour is frequently used to help people admit their own deficiencies, that laughter allows certain things to be exposed which would be out of bounds if presented in a serious vein, and that through comedy human beings give expression to their inner wishes and desires. Nevertheless, it must be acknowledged that popular art, in particular the cinema, is very often prevented from

developing a radical critique of social conditions, with the consequence that many comedies end up by reaffirming the values of the system they purport to attack.

V The "Comedias Celtibéricas": Male Rites of Passage into Marriage and Parenthood

In Spain, many of those involved in making comedies — film directors, script-writers, actors, producers, etc. — have often echoed the points just mentioned, in order to defend their works against critics who have dismissed the comedia as merely a form of entertainment. José María Forquè, who has produced comedies regularly from the fifties onwards, acknowledges that 'el mundo se ha reído siempre de sus propias tragedias', and evaluates the genre as 'un documento muy precioso de los ambientes, costumbres, y cambios sociales que se han producido en el país'.⁴⁰ Vicente Escrivà, an extremely prolific and commercially successful maker of comedies including an archetypal comedia celtibérica, Lo verde empieza en los Pirineos (1973), also defends the form on the grounds that 'te permite tratar los temas más serios, sin dejar por ello de entretener al público'.⁴¹ For his part, Roberto Bodegas, a director identified with the tercera vía, recognizes the double value of the comedias, as expressions of the themes and preoccupations of a given period and as means of entertainment: 'La comedia no es

sólo risa, es una forma de ver la realidad con un sentido crítico'.⁴² Comedy, moreover, was considered by many to be the most suitable vehicle for by-passing the strict censorship of the late sixties, as José Luis Dibildos, producer of comedietas in the fifties and promoter of the tercera vía in the seventies, says:

la forma más sutil de romper el esquema de la censura era hacer humor, ironizar sobre una serie de cosas, y no atacar frontalmente. Es un género, además, de superficie, donde no hay grandes afirmaciones.⁴²

It is one thing, nevertheless, to agree with these statements, and another to recognize that in fact the majority of the Comedias Celtibéricas escaped from socio-political reality into an artificially created world of false ideas and unfounded hopes. This in the end was the reason why the films were tolerated, even welcomed by the regime, because typically the dilemmas which the works presented remained unresolved in order to avoid alienating either the censor or the spectator. The principal defects of these popular comedies, as summarised by José Vanaclocha, eloquently testify to their distorting effects:

Nunca se intenta hacer un estudio serio sobre las relaciones de la pareja, sobre la situación pasiva y alienadora de la mujer en su condición de objeto erótico, sobre la crisis de la institución matrimonial, sobre el carácter regresivo y sublimador del noviazgo, sobre los celos como manifestación neurótica de la relación objetual y posesiva de la pareja, sobre el papel fundamental de la madre como pieza fundamental de la familia y del sistema en su función de enseñar a sus hijos unas normas represivas que ella ha asumido anteriormente.⁴⁴

The "Sexy Comedies", which were interested, allegedly, in investigating problems arising out of the relationships between couples both before and after marriage, left the majority of these issues untouched, and concentrated instead on other themes which producers and directors assumed would attract spectators to the cinemas at a time when the impact of television had caused a steady decline in the number of cinema goers. An examination of a film which most clearly typifies the comedia celtibérica, No desearàs al vecino del quinto (1970), will help to explain some of the reasons for the genre's huge public appeal. No desearàs is a film especially suited for this purpose, since it was the top box-office success in Spain for a lengthy period beginning in the early nineteen seventies, and was the mould in which similar works would eventually be cast. The popularity of No desearàs testifies to the strength of the needs and desires of a great number of Spaniards, who were excited by the promises of the new consumer society and the growing trend towards the depiction of eroticism, two areas of experience that were still a novelty in a country which for decades had suffered poverty and deprivation while it laboured under a rigid moral code drawn up by the reactionary and deeply conservative Catholic Church.

One of the accusations levelled against the comedies was that they remained firmly rooted in Francoist ideology, in so-far-as the characters ended up by accepting those very ideas and values which had

caused them originally to rebel. The return to normality after a topsy-turvy interlude, is of course an inherent characteristic of many forms of comedy, where comic resolution is generally achieved after the characters have succeeded in acquiring the wisdom, self-knowledge and understanding they lacked before the action began. The reason why the Comedias Celtibéricas, have been considered "regressive", is precisely because they failed to inquire into the social conditions which constrained individuals, and resolved characters' dilemmas by the simple expedient of mechanically reintegrating them into the status quo. Other aspects of the comedies, nevertheless, hold out the prospect for a re-evaluation of their critical potential.

I have on several occasions drawn attention to the importance of a subtext in any given work, and think this holds good for the Comedias Celtibéricas, many of which house more than one level of meaning, and show only a fraction of their total significance at a superficial level. The Marxist critic Pierre Macherey, who works roughly with the same critical tools as Louis Althusser, contends that there are whole areas of a text which are hidden from view but which are nonetheless indicative of its ideological motivations. Macherey therefore envisages approaching a text in search of silences, gaps, and absences which will paradoxically reveal traces of ideological conditioning, and urges critics to identify those areas of slippage which relate to the workings of

ideology.⁴⁵ In their practice, directors of "quality" cinema appear to follow Althusser's view that ideology is enforced and maintained by the ideological institutions of the State, which helps to explain their desire to expose the repressive nature of institutions like the family, the Church, the School, etc. In the comedias, on the other hand, we find an unwillingness on the part of their directors to question openly aspects of the dominant ideology, with the consequence that it is possible to detect running through them an unspoken discourse which contains important meanings. In this sense there are grounds for equating the comedias populares with the "quality" cinema of opposition to the regime, which also made use of ellipsis and metaphor to produce "unfinished" works, in the expectation that the spectator or the critic would fill the gaps. No less than those works, the comedies to which we are referring bear witness to the inconsistencies, ambiguities and contradictions within the social system which a patriarchal, Catholic and authoritarian State was constructing around the Spanish people.

According to Vanaclocha's analysis, the comedies neglected to cover three particular areas of interest, which entail, a) an investigation of the two institutions within which the relationships between couples are conducted, i.e. noviazgo and marriage; b) an examination of the role of women, either as novia, wife and mother, or as sexual initiator; and c) a

questioning of the mechanisms and motives of individual behaviour in intimate relationships. We must assume that, in the majority of cases the directors of the films concerned did not probe these sensitive issues because they would have come into conflict with the teachings of the Church or the official State doctrine. They would, in fact, have committed themselves to exploring the same problematical territory as the "quality" directors, and would have been limited by the same constraints.

We must also acknowledge that if the comedies neglected certain aspects of personal experience, it was partly because they focussed predominantly on men and on issues related to their lives. This was not the first time that Spanish cinema had systematically placed male characters at the centre of attention. In an earlier discussion of works made in the forties and fifties, I indicated the prevalence of films about heroic and adventurous males who displayed precisely those qualities which traditionally had typified the most masculine and virile men. The idealized vision of men who, as depicted in those films, epitomise honour and hidalguía, was eventually to be unmasked by works which demystified the Civil War, like La caza where Saura calls into question all those characteristics which supposedly defined the victorious Nationalists, and in many other films where the representatives of the repressive and ideological institutions of the State — the Army, the Church, the School, the Family —

are held responsible for the oppression and repression of Spain during the dictatorship. The comedias are no less prodigal in providing insights into the configuration of masculinity in the sixties and seventies, since, perhaps unintentionally, they uncovered the ways in which a confusing ideology engaged in producing powerful supermachos and potent studs actually delivered infantile and sexually repressed weaklings, a highly ironic product of a fascist culture dedicated to the cult of militarism, charismatic leaders and ideal virile men.

The "Sexy Comedies", in fact, portray the conflict of ordinary men caught in an ideological struggle, torn between two contradictory expectations: one arising out of their political and religious indoctrination, the other out of the ideals of manhood promoted by their society. Again it is interesting to contrast the popularity of these works with the historical and war films of the post-war years, and to remember that both types of cinema were designed to encourage spectators to identify with their themes and characters.

While in the earlier works directors made use of the galanes of Spanish cinema, such as Alfredo Mayo, Jorge Mistral, etc., in the comedies the link between the male character and the average spectator was established by using actors whose physical features matched those of the ordinary man in the audience. Actors like Alfredo Landa, José Luis López Vázquez and

José Sacristán are short in stature, no longer very young (in fact, some of them already display the signs of incipient middle age — they are balding and have the beginnings of a paunch), are not particularly intelligent and do not own flashy cars, hold down high-powered jobs, or live in luxurious homes. In short, they represent the plain man in the street. Of the several actors who fitted this description and who frequently appeared in comedies, Alfredo Landa is perhaps the most representative, inasmuch as his name gave origin to the term landelismo, virtually synonymous with the "Sexy Comedy". José Luis Guarner, who has analyzed the special characteristics of landelismo, remarks that these films

esvelan progresivamente al varón
hispánico como bestia traumatizada:
oprimido por una sociedad matriarcal,
impotente ante la necesidad de
demostrar en todo momento su
sexualidad sin conseguir nunca
gratificación, homosexual latente,
aplastado sistemáticamente
— tanto por la mujer como por la
Iglesia Católica'.⁴⁶

That is to say, the Alfredo Landa character invariably finds himself in a double bind: he must adhere to the religious teachings of his childhood and adolescence and be pure and chaste, but he must conform too to the image of the Don Juan and be rebellious and sexy. As we will see, there is no way of reconciling the image of a charming, detached, knowledgeable and sexually-experienced Casanova with that of a pure and considerate novio or husband destined to partner one

woman in a monogamous marriage, fathering ideal, lip-serving children for the rest of his life.

In No desearás al vecino del quinto, a film directed by Ramón Fernández, two images of masculinity are offered to the spectator, that of Pedro, played by Jean Sorel, and that of Antón, played by Alfredo Landa. Initially the work introduces them as opposing figures: Pedro is tall, dark and handsome, while Antón is short, fair and physically unattractive; Pedro is a conscientious professional — a gynecologist — devoted to his mother and faithful to his long-standing girlfriend, Jacinta; Antón owns a boutique, and though he appears at the beginning to be single — and homosexual — is in fact married and with three children and, far from observing his marital vows of fidelity to his wife beds the first consenting woman who crosses his path.

These differences aside, the two men are united by the fact that their professions affect their private lives and by their determination to satisfy their sexual urges which are kept under control only by the determined vigilance of the local busy-bodies. Pedro, unable to marry Jacinta because he lacks a steady pensión which would allow him the means to support a family, has been trapped in a long-term noviazgo, a situation that keeps him in continuing dependence on his mother and stops him from entering into a normal sexual relationship with his future wife. As for Antón, he is separated from his wife to give credibility to his

image as a homosexual couturier, a strategy which enables him both to lead the life of a bachelor and to engage in casual affairs with women who, like the call-girl cruising the bars of Madrid and the foreigner on the look out for a Spanish macho, seemingly never object to his advances.

Both men meet accidentally in Madrid, that is, away from the restrictive controls of a small provincial environment, and devote all their energies to the pursuit of sexual gratification to make up for their long periods of celibacy. Antón and Pedro are eventually found out, but are falsely assumed to be engaged in a homosexual relationship. The social ostracism they suffer as a result is beneficial to their private and professional lives, since both men are forgiven, by wife and novia respectively, and allowed the freedom of access to women which they had wanted all the time. Under this new arrangement, however, they will be supervised by their wives who agree to maintain the pretence of their husbands' homosexuality as a means of securing further economic advantage. Antón and Pedro thus appear to have overcome their original predicament which, as Jacinta tells a doctor at the beginning of the film, stemmed from the fact that in the course of their professional conduct both of them must treat women intimately, and run the risk of offending the old-fashioned views of the law-abiding, reactionary fuerzas vivas of the town.⁴⁷

The film, however, provides only a partial

resolution to individual male problems since, for example, it neglects to investigate the origins of the behaviour of fathers, brothers, novios and husbands who irrationally prevent their women from visiting the young professionals, on the grounds that the men will take advantage of the women and the women will all too easily succumb to their sexual advances. What is more, No desearàs confuses the whole issue by first of all denouncing, through Jacinta, the archaic function of Spanish men as guardians of the reputations of their women — mothers, sisters, wives or daughters —, but then portraying almost everybody either as an agent or as a willing victim of seduction, both sexes being equally guilty in betraying the trust of those near to them. Thus, even though No desearàs starts from the premise that men's personal problems originate in social phenomena — in this case, the exaggerated and anachronistic honour code of Spanish society which in preparing men for marriage and family life condones all sorts of excesses in male behaviour —, the film is content merely to mention these facts and then immediately to drop them in order to pursue different interests to do with the virility, sexual potency and sexual prowess of men.

In addition, No desearàs, like many other Comedias Celtibéricas whose male characters frequently dress-up or assume the disguise of a woman, plays with the idea of the deceptive nature of appearances. So, Antòn, who initially seemed inoffensive in his role as a

homosexual, is eventually revealed to be a lascivious woman-chaser who totally disregards any notion of morality, propriety and honesty. Pedro, for his part, though perceived by the inhabitants of the town as a don Juan, is in fact a chaste, serious-minded and faithful man — at least at the beginning of the film — more interested in testing his new theories about painless labour and in playing ludo with his girl-friend's relatives, than in making love to Jacinta, even though they have been novios for more than six years. Thus, Pedro and Antón, in the first part of the film, are portrayed as lacking virility; Antón because as an effeminate homosexual, as seen, for example in his long, wavy hair, trendy outfit, high pitched voice, various mannerisms, and love for his lap-dog Fiff — all of them characteristics of the typical mariquita, as his own children call him —, he does not even possess the vigour and sex-appeal of the other stereotype of the gay, the frequently promiscuous butch male;^{and} Pedro, because by showing too much respect for his girl-friend's virginity he exposes himself to doubts about his virility, an attitude examined by Paul Hock in reference to the American cinema where he found that, frequently

the masculinity of a sexually chaste hero is open to question ... It is often the villain rather than the hero who in the purely physical or sensual sense is considered most masculine.⁴⁸

In a society which values above all others those qualities traditionally associated with manliness —

strength, dominance, power, all of them related to men's sexuality — any suspicion of impotence or lack of virility leaves males too closely identified with women, driving them to adopt extreme poses of machismo, in order to reaffirm their dented virility.⁴⁹ Not that in the Comedias Celtibéricas there could be any confusion about the sexual identity of the two male characters, or that their sexual behaviour could at any time be considered threatening or subversive: all along the films rely on the complicity of the audience who with prior knowledge of the actors, are never in any doubt as to the true sexual inclinations of the characters they represent.

This is not to say that a concern about impotence and loss of virility, and fears about male libido or sexual performance should be dismissed out of hand because the films never properly investigated them or because the spectators would draw facile assumptions about these issues. Their prevalence in so many comedies — for example, in Lo verde empieza en los Pirineos (1973) or El reprimido (1974), whose male characters suffer from impotence and must travel to France (a sexually decadent country in their minds) to seek a cure — raises intriguing questions about the period's interest in issues related to masculinity. The obvious response by many critics was indignation about what they saw as

un cine represivo que alcanzó, en su impudicia y su puritanismo simultáneos, una dosis de cinismo que quizá ningún otro cine, ni el de los difíciles años cuarenta, lograra. Un cine "porno" "cochon", de particularidades auténticamente indignantes, de auténtico desprecio no ya del amor, sino de la dignidad humana, de indiscutible pisoteo no ya del erotismo sino del simple hecho de ser hombre o mujer.⁵⁰

Obviously, film writers were justified in criticizing directors who took advantage of loopholes in film legislation in order to depict characters behaving in the most offensively sexist ways — ogling women, lustling after them, treating them as sex objects — or to include as many sexually explicit scenes as the censors permitted at the time, particularly, of women in suggestive poses and wearing scant clothing. Leaving aside the exploitation of such scenes and behaviour, we still have to enquire why spectators flocked to see films in which those themes and characters appeared.

Recent feminist theorists have tried to account for the position of women in films which frequently denigrate them or reduce them to the role of chattel or plaything for the male.⁵¹ The lack of a conclusive explanation for the identification of women with both male and female characters in films prevents us from fully understanding the popularity of the comedias with a female audience, even though we can adduce the fact that they are comedies — and therefore of greater acceptability — and the fact that women's traditional up-bringing teaches them to identify all too easily

with a male point of view. In regard to men we need to enquire to what extent those images on the screen reflected male tastes and the reasons why male spectators identified with masculine cinematic projections frankly unflattering to them. In that case we might begin by asking how a male audience could sympathise with ugly, immature and insecure characters who revered and at the same time feared those women nearest to them, and who were so concerned with anything which had to do with their virility that, as John Hopewell has said, their

pan-sexualist brain[s] give almost everything a double entendre: froth from coffee, round objects, even dust ("polvo" in Spanish means not only "dust" but also "screw").⁵²

We can see elements of male fantasy in the fact that whatever their physical shortcomings, the male characters are always rewarded with the sexual attention, inside and outside marriage, of stunning attractive women who, as played very often by foreigners such as Ira de Furstemberg, Nadiuska, Ornella Muti, etc., exuded an aura of exoticism, sexual freedom and instant accessibility almost never found in Spanish actresses. Santos Fontenla writes in this respect,

En nuestro cine... el concepto de extranjera ha ido, por lo general, unido al de mujer de mala vida ... La censura tolera o hasta aconseja el que un film presente — o insinúe — la relación sexual entre un español y una extranjera, mientras prohíbe o desaconseja la que tiene por protagonista a dos súbditos nacionales.⁵³

Clearly it must have been very gratifying for those males in the audience to know that, no matter how ordinary their physique, they could always look forward to winning a beautiful siren. It would have been reassuring, too, to see how in film all sexual peccadillos were ignored or forgiven by the women in their lives - mother, novias and wives - either because women (so the works reason) are particularly attracted to ostentatiously virile men, i. e. those who boast the highest number of conquests, or because they have accepted as "natural" the ideological explanation, very often sanctioned by the Church, that men have greater sexual needs which compel them to seek out the services of that other kind of woman whose function in society is to pander to men's sexuality. The comedies, perhaps more than any other type of cinema made in Spain in recent decades, have presented the issue of love separately from that of sex, with the consequence that films have tended to differentiate between two categories of women: the novia, worthy of admiration and respect, the future mother of one's children in an ideal but conventional marriage and family structure, and the iniciadora, an outcast from family respectability, who though acceptable as a plaything eventually has to be discarded by the man as an unsuitable partner. This division continues after marriage, when men separate women into the mother/wife figure and the whore.

An element of wish-fulfilment has almost

certainly contributed to the success of the comedias celtibéricas. It is more difficult to understand the reaction of male audiences to men who were portrayed as infantile, immature and often utterly incompetent, an unflattering description which fits many of the characters played by Alfredo Landa, but which in No desearás extends too to Pedro, the bachelor who still lives with his mother. In that case we need to look at the structure of the family as introduced in these works to assess the degree of correspondence between its representation on the screen and the experience of the average spectator in the audience. A great number of comedies, in fact, centre on men who are only children in families where the fathers are already dead and where the mothers are ultimately the most important women in their sons' lives, a situation that coincides with the standard characterization of the family unit in machista societies where the father is largely absent and the male child enjoys a particularly close relationship with his mother. Castilla del Pino, in his Cuatro ensayos sobre la mujer, reviews current ideas about the function of the family in the social sphere ('la familia reproduce el conjunto de referencias y valores del sistema mismo en su totalidad'), drawing attention especially to the conditioning of women from early childhood to accept their future roles as agents and authors of social repression:

La mujer es reprimida, y asimila más o menos perfectamente su represión ... la represión de la mujer por el sistema es internalizada de tal forma que en su función, representa la represión por la mujer.⁵⁴

In such a society, the mother, above all, is the person selected to pass on to her own children the repression which she has absorbed as a child, because, as Castilla del Pino observes,

La internalización [of social values] por la madre tiene la eficacia de la obtenida a expensas de una vinculación afectivoemocional mucho más poderosa que la específica y abiertamente represiva del padre.⁵⁵

This is indeed what happens in the comedias, where the mother is a figure wholly devoted to the well-being of her son, protecting him to such an extent that he is suffocated by her love and ultimately disabled from acting as a free agent. In films like No desearás al vecino del quinto, ¡Vivan los novios!, El reprimido and many others made along the same lines, we have to see this maternal behaviour, however, as a consequence of the traditional education offered to young girls who, like Jacinta in No desearás, are encouraged to take an exaggerated interest in "womanly" tasks such as cooking, and who are then condescendingly referred to as 'nuestras pequeñas cocineras'. Bound by such limited social horizons, women think of nothing else but getting a husband with whom to form a family and, once they have established one, direct all their energies towards the children — a situation which frequently causes a break-down of relations between the

couple and results in a gradual smothering of the offspring, particularly of the sons, given the superior standing of men in our societies. The social pressures on women to fulfil their female potential by marrying and producing children, and the idealization of motherhood, are the main reasons behind the lower status of unmarried and separated women. In Spanish society in the early seventies, moreover, when divorce was almost unobtainable and women received no encouragement to earn their own living, they were forced to depend on men and to stay married, and very often forgiving a husband's infidelity was a small price to pay in order to continue to receive the social recognition which otherwise they would have forfeited by abandoning him.

In ne way or another all these remarks are relevant to No desearàs, a film which depicts Doña Socorro as a benevolent, naive but ultimately repressive mother who treats Pedro in an overprotective manner as if he were still a child. 'Eres tan crío', she exclaims when Pedro is packing his suit cases for his trip to Madrid, a depraved city in her mind where she imagines all women are waiting to take advantage of him: 'seguro que habrá mujeres, y tú eres tan tonto...'. Jacinta too shares Doña Socorro's lack of confidence in Pedro, remarking to Antón's wife when she proposes punishing them: 'A mi Pedro no, que no tiene voluntad'. Both these women eventually take over their husbands' lives, forcing them to behave sensibly,

reprimanding them when they have acted stupidly, and in one extreme case assuming ultimate responsibility for them: this is what happens when Pedro is beaten up by an aggrieved Sicilian with an even more exaggerated sense of honour than his own, and is carried almost unconscious by Jacinta to hospital where he lies unable to move or to speak for himself. But if men are portrayed in No desearàs as little children who need constant supervision and forgiveness for their silly mistakes, the women are often depicted in an unsympathetic light, as narrow-minded housewives who spend all their free time gossiping at the hairdresser's or trying on new clothes in Antòn's boutique. It is indeed not surprising that, with nothing more interesting to do, the women should relish the chance to spend their money on improving their appearance, to smear the name of friends, or to start an affair with the town's attractive young doctor.

If I have dwelt so long on these features of No desearàs it is because most of them are central to the sub-genre as a whole and re-appear in the other films which I have chosen to examine in this chapter. Luis Berlanga's !Vivan los novios!, a high-quality comedy made by a director who had already achieved acclaim both in Spain and abroad with Bienvenido Mr. Marshall and El verdugo, shares many of the typical interests of the Comedias Celtibéricas while being at the same time a personal and individualistic work. !Vivan los novios!, in fact, carries forward many of Berlanga's

previous formal and thematic preoccupations, such as his preference for the long shot and a complicated mise-en-scène, and a concern with characters who are compelled by their social milieu to act against their own wishes and desires.

In ¡Vivan los novios!, Berlanga lives up to his reputation as a shrewd and perceptive observer of the grotesque and absurd realities of Spain, exposing the hidden miseries and frustrations of Spanish people whose collective mentality lagged far behind the material development and modernization of the country. Thus, Berlanga's characters in this film exemplify the conflicting reaction of Spaniards to the influx of tourists, which, instead of helping to bring about positive changes in native habits and attitudes, in the majority of cases merely awakened corrupt, mercenary instincts quite ready to assimilate the materialism and decadence of foreign cultures. With wit and insight seasoned on certain occasions with cruelty and malice, Berlanga introduces to ¡Vivan los novios! a whole range of character types who are little more than caricatures, producing a film where, as so often in his work, as Florentino Soria says, 'El protagonista es coral; no hay arquetipos, sólo sujetos vulgares, antihéroes'.⁵⁶

¡Vivan los novios!, though made in accordance with the generic conventions of this type of cinema, successfully accommodates the kind of humour favoured by Berlanga, thanks in large part to the actor José

Luis López Vázquez who brings to the character of the macho celtibérico rather different qualities ' those we associate with the Alfredo Landa type. ¡Vivan los novios!, significantly co-scripted with Rafael Azcona, is one of the truest examples in Spain of a black comedy with esperpento elements, the esperpento adding a new dimension to the macabre in this film, creating an exaggerated and distorted reflection of the mores and customs of Spanish society in the sixties. The main difference between the typical comedia celtibérica and ¡Vivan los novios! is to be found in the fact that, while in the films of the first group the gags and situations were planned primarily for the pleasure and entertainment of the spectator, in the second the director and script-writer worked together to combine tragic and comic elements within each sequence, eliciting laughter and compassion in ways reminiscent of the plays of Valle-Inclán or some of the films of Fernán-Gómez. For a proper understanding of the relationship between ¡Vivan los novios! and the kind of cinema which this chapter examines, i.e. comedies dealing with the relationships of couples, it is important too to mention that both Azcona and Berlanga are well known for their misogynistic views, which for example find expression in another film they made together, Tamaño natural (1973).⁵⁷

With all these points in mind, we may proceed to examine some of the significant detail of this work. ¡Vivan los novios!, like No desearás, centres around

male characters, giving particular attention to Leo, a middle-aged bachelor in outlook and mentality if not in years, who travels with his mother from provincial and traditional Burgos to a small resort on the Mediterranean, to marry Loly, unprepossessing owner of a boutique. Leo, who had previously visited this tourist resort in the hope of meeting one of the many beautiful young foreign girls who, according to his male friends, are easy prey for Spanish men, becomes engaged instead to a local woman of mature years who displays none of the attractions he had expected to find in the foreigners. Having decided to settle into what we can only regard as an unpromising and lacklustre relationship, Leo still on the eve of his wedding is hopeful of enjoying a fling with any one of the tall, blond and scantily dressed nórdicas who populate the resort, a desire which leads him on a series of unsuccessful adventures throughout his stag night. Unwilling up to the very last moment to commit himself to the only woman who seemingly is glad to accept him as a marriage partner, Leo must be forced to go through with the wedding ceremony, even though his mother has drowned while he was desperately trying to bed one of the foreigners.

Florentino Soria has described the comic characteristics of José Luis López Vázquez, saying that 'La imagen del actor es muy cercana por su similitud facial a la de un Buster Keaton atormentado'.⁵⁸ This description certainly fits Leo in Vivan los novios a

sombre character eternally dressed in dark formal suits, whose rigidity and humourless facial expression are the outward signs of an individual perpetually ill at ease in any social or sexual context. Successful in alienating all those around him, Leo is moreover the typical image of the sexually frustrated male, always doing his best to ape those other men whom he sees successfully taking the most wonderfully alluring girls to bed. While others succeed in their attempts Leo is repeatedly defeated and rejected, his final humiliation coming at the hands of a male black tranvestite who, posing as an extremely well shaped woman, incites and attracts him, only to fill him with disappointment and dismay. Leo clearly lacks confidence, sex-appeal and even the minimal intuitive knowledge about how to attract women, characteristics not shared by the men played by Alfredo Landa who, even though not particularly successful, intelligent or handsome, displayed a facade of assertiveness, self-confidence and cockiness. A further difference between these types is that, while the males played by Landa are distinguished by their libidinous behaviour, obsessive preoccupation with women and their inexhaustible sexual appetite, the López Vázquez characters tend to be inexperienced and even virginal males, always dreaming of an ideal woman who never materializes, and so romantic in temperament that they propose marriage to the first beautiful girl who, they think, is attracted to them.

This romantic image is however misleading, because as we saw earlier, a typical attitude of the majority of the machos celtibéricos of these comedies is their conflicting perception of women as angels and monsters, a double perspective which causes them to feel both attraction and repulsion to the opposite sex. In !Vivan los novios!, Leo, who incessantly pursues the beautiful but inaccessible foreign Venuses, remarks at one stage '¡Qué tías más raras!', and decides to settle for Loly who his mother says is 'un ángel'. This "angel", ironically, is presented as a cold, calculating, unimaginative woman who lacks the feminine charms of the more appealing foreigners. Florentino Soria, who describes Berlanga as 'un observador irónico' alternatively 'tierno y condescendiente' with his characters, fails to notice the almost sadistic pleasure which the director takes in presenting men who are infantile and regressive, and women who are tantalising but egotistical and spider-like, an image that the film actually visualises in the last scenes, when the funeral procession forms into the shape of one of these black arac'ids.

Referring to the Comedias Celtibéricas, I remarked earlier on the men's infantilism and their dependence on mothers and wives. In !Vivan los novios!, these traits are exemplified not only in the Spanish males but in all masculine figures, as is shown in the case of a Swiss bank manager who is accompanied by two stunning lovers/nurses who pamper him and treat him

like a baby, giving him toys and even offering him a dummy when they put him to bed. Motherly figures who cater to his material and sexual needs, they are nevertheless later revealed to be lesbians who conspire to tease Leo and reject his advances. The prejudices of the director (and we could say of the script-writer) towards women, are also evident in the presentation of Loly, a female character with few feminine attractions, who does little to boost Leo's wounded ego, and of Leo's mother, a ridiculous and immature woman who suffers from vertigo to such an extent that even from the height of one step she becomes dizzy and hysterical. It could be argued, of course, that both sexes are depicted as distorted and caricatured stereotypes of masculinity and femininity, but this fails to take into account the participation of López Vázquez, an actor for whom the director, through reliance on the history of his screen persona as well as through the film's various rhetorical devices, expects the audience to feel some sympathy.

However limited Berlanga's ideas about manhood and womanhood, his film succeeds in exposing the different expectations of men and women in the Spain of the 60s and 70s, particularly regarding heterosexual relationships and marriage. Leo and Loly's decision to marry could justifiably be said to be more the result of sexual frustration than of sexual attraction, an observation that brings to mind Santos Fontenla's stricture that Spanish cinema in general, both the

"quality" and the popular varieties, recorded not stories of amor but of desamor. Ultimately the only explanation we can find for the unlikely marriage of Leo and Loly is that it is one of convenience, a reason which, it could be argued, is frequently encountered in real life where men all too frequently want someone to replace their mothers and to give them sexual comfort, and women have been led to believe that only in marriage can they find fulfilment. It is surely a sad reminder of the force of convention and tradition that even a financially independent woman like Loly, with strong personal views (which the film tends to ridicule) and no visible maternal longings, should feel obliged to comply with social pressure and take a husband, a decision which the film cannot but envisage as necessarily restrictive and disappointing for both partners.

While No desearás and ¡Vivan los novios! introduce characters who in the last analysis are unambiguously male or female — since independently of their physical attributes they cannot consider any deviation from traditional norms of femininity and masculinity — a film made in the wake of their successes challenges many of the assumptions on which the majority of the Comedias Celtibéricas — and regardless of its quality, Berlanga's film enters within this category — were created. Reacting against some of the commonplace and superficial features of those comedies, Mi querida señorita, a film directed by

Jaime de Armiñán in 1971 and co-scripted by him and José Luis Borau (who also produced the work), is, in John Hopewell's phrase, a 'parody of the "sexy Spanish comedy"'. With them, Mi querida señorita shares an interest in investigating the position of individuals in Spanish society, with particular regard to the restricted roles which they have to play in sexual relationships; this may explain the director's choice of José Luis López Vázquez who, by the time Armiñán made the film, was an actor already typecast as a macho celtibérico. In attitude, tone and purpose, however, Mi querida señorita differs greatly from the traditional comedia, primarily because of the predominant place of women in the structure of the film. This difference } other works of the genre is already evident at the beginning of Armiñán's film where the title sequences are superimposed over photographs of Adela from the time when "she" was a baby until her mature years as a middle-aged spinster. The element of nostalgia attendant on this recreation of the life of a plain, provincial woman is accentuated by the use of the well-known romantic melody 'Tristeza de amor', based on music by Chopin, which had been a popular song in the sixties. The use of photographs and/or songs is of course a well known recurso of Buñuel, Saura and Erice and other Spanish directors, because as Hopewell observes 'there are few better vehicles for a journey to the past than photographs backed by melodies from the period'.⁵⁹

The intentional identification of the spectator with a female character places Mi querida señorita within the Hollywood tradition of the "Woman's Picture", a sub-genre which focusses on women searching for independence and fulfilment in a world little predisposed towards them. However, the audience's expectations are immediately reversed by the discovery that the title role of "Mi querida señorita" has been allocated to José Luis López Vázquez. The first shots of Adela, looking at her reflection in a mirror while putting on a black peineta and mantilla and a red carnation tendered to her by her maid, throw the spectator off balance since the image is so completely at odds with our previous experience of this actor. Notwithstanding the impressive performance of López Vázquez in the role of a lonely spinster, spectators are left in no doubt that what they are seeing is a man impersonating a woman, a fact which makes all her actions doubly ambiguous. By the time that the sex change has taken place, and Adela has become a man (Juan), many features of the female remain, and this in turn inevitably colours the audience's perception of the character. Never wholly male or female, Adela/Juan combines characteristics of both sexes, even if in the early part of the film this only becomes apparent when the spectators recognize the man behind the mask and detect 'unfeminine' features, such as when she surprises her neighbours by kicking off a football friendly. As a man, however, even though Juan's

physical appearance corresponds to that of a male in both attire and looks, he lacks certain features which we have come to associate with men: assurance, determination, a degree of ambition and of aggression, etc. He retains, and will do so until the very end, aspects of a feminine self: he is considerate, gentle and softly-spoken, qualities which in fact endear him to the spectator. This is not to say that all the feminine qualities which distinguish him are positive, because his timidity, passiveness and dependence are too much a reminder of the subordinate position which women have been encouraged to adopt by a very often benign patriarchal society.

In the first part of the film, Adela who, as we observe from photographs, lacked even as a teenager the necessary physical attractions to persuade a man to marry her, has been left to vestir santos, a position which condemns her to a lonely and frustrating existence. Thus the fate of women who, like Isabel in a much earlier film, Calle Mayor, are denied the destiny for which they have been prepared since childhood — marriage and motherhood — is taken up again in Mi querida señorita where Adela, a solterona, is prevented from playing a positive and fulfilling social role because of her deficient education. Having been taught only the most rudimentary womanly subjects — sewing, music, French — and having accepted her religious upbringing which urges her to be patient, resigned and altruistic, Adela complies with society's expectations

of a vieja beata and acts as a helper of worthy causes such as raising money for charity. At a practical level, this middle-aged, middle-class spinster depends on her maid, Isabelita, to do the domestic chores and on different men — a friendly bank manager who looks after her financial situation, the priest who counsels her about her sexual uncertainties — to solve any problem which she in her ignorance is unable to tackle. Not only does Adela suffer in her private life the consequences of a traditional and narrow-minded upbringing, she also, like many other inhabitants of the small town where she lives, is unprepared for the changes which are already taking place in conservative Spain. Thus, not surprisingly, she objects to young girls wearing mini skirts, to priests removing their soutanes, and to the new generation's relaxed and overtly sexual behaviour. The young people for their part consider her a relic from a prehistoric era, a severe and matronly figure frequently clad in black or in somb colours, overscrupulous and unduly strict with regard to her good name and that of Isabelita who, though superficially modern, is submissive, servile and excessively deferential to her señorita.

Women's restricted position in society is manifested in this film through the depiction of other female characters including Isabelita, and Patricia, a generous, attractive and enterprising woman who has achieved a reasonable level of success in life only through exploiting her feminine charms — she works in a

night club and, we assume, goes to bed occasionally with her clients. In the second part of Mi querida señorita when Juan goes to Madrid to start a new life after his operation, he experiences with painful directness the humiliations and defeats which are normally reserved for women. His lack of formal training and professional experience are obstacles to his finding a white-collar or clerical job; his "feminine" characteristics — gentleness, unassuming behaviour and timidity — prevent him from gaining access to more "masculine" domains of employment, such as lorry-driving or brick laying. Eventually down to his last penny, Juan discovers a way of earning a living: he will use his skills at sewing and make clothes for a store.

By exposing the limitations on women's development in traditional Spanish society and the damaging effects of male hypocrisy and double standards on both sexes, Mi querida señorita draws attention to the psychological harm inflicted by a conservative mentality on whole sections of its people. This film which, we must remember, was made in 1971 when feminist ideas about gender-conditioning and sexual identity were still not fully formed, nevertheless sets in train, no matter how tentatively and slowly, considerations of many of the issues which in the eighties — as I hope to be able to show later — will dominate the Nueva Comedia Madrileña: role-reversal, homosexuality, transvestism and many other questions

related to sexual politics, all points of interest insofar as they challenge the conventional structure of marriage and the family. The directors of the Comedias Celtibéricas, for their part, in an often tangential and oblique manner resulting from either their own unconscious resistance to dealing with matters which for many of them, men from Catholic backgrounds with a traditional up-bringing, were all too frequently unresolved problems, or from the industry's impositions, managed to incorporate into their films features and considerations relevant to the family: the positioning of mothers in conventional families; the limited opportunities open to women, who could either marry or remain, as spinsters, on the fringes of society; men's unwillingness to enter into marriages which, leading to the formation of a family, they knew from experience would limit the freedom to which they were accustomed as bachelors; men's reluctance to assume fully the responsibilities and duties of married life, because of their awareness that a family implied domestication and compliance with social norms. To have dwelt openly on these issues would have involved criticizing an institution which coerced men's, not to say women's liberties; under the form of comedy, and without ever going into such areas in depth, the directors of the Comedias Celtibéricas projected male fears and anxieties about an institution from which few felt they could escape: the family.

CHAPTER THREE

CARLOS SAURA AND "THE CHILDREN OF FRANCO"¹

I The Conjunction of the Seventies

By 1970 the film industry in Spain was suffering its biggest crisis ever as a direct result of the grave financial deficit incurred by the State through its systematic award of grants to the directors of the nuevo cine. The inevitable consequence of this action was that at the beginning of the decade new directors who were graduating from the School of Cinematography were prevented from finding a rightful place in Spanish cinema, and only those film-makers prepared to make commercial films received practical encouragement and assistance from the existing productoras. A separate case was that of Carlos Saura who continued his career throughout these years, sometimes with more success abroad than in his native country. By 1973, however, a group of ex-students of the School who had come to full maturity during the sixties were able to make (in some cases through financing their own projects), what would be their most significant works — in terms of the acclaim they received from audiences and critics, and the prizes that they collected at International Festivals. What is more, for the purpose of my thesis, these films are particularly important since, centring on the family, they articulate the most pointed

criticism of that institution made at any time in the Spanish cinema during the Franco era, using it is as a starting point for conducting an incisive and damning review of the whole political structure of Francoism.

The relevance, to an analysis of the family, of a broadly-based investigation of the nature of structures of dominance and power, sexual repression, and the place of women in a society committed to their control and positioning, has already been demonstrated. While the fifties and sixties films studied so far were extremely critical of the institution of the family, none of them was able explicitly to expose the contradictions and aberrations implicit in the repressive and oppressive forms which that institution took in Franco's Spain; on the few occasions when they dared to do so — viz. the two sixties films by Fernán Gómez —, the works were prevented from being distributed.

Now in the seventies, the time was ripe for a more whole-same challenge to the authority of the State. The scene was set with the return of Luis Buñuel to Spain in 1970 to film Tristana, a work which mounted an unprecedented assault upon the represssive, i.e. patriarchal, family. Even though Buñuel's film does not introduce the family directly as the principal subject of his work, the depiction of a female character, Tristana, who is acknowledged by her guardian as being at one and the same time daughter and wife, and of Don Lope as a typical patriarch, benevolent but

nevertheless tyrannical, who is ready to exercise his prerogatives ('Soy tu padre y tu marido, y hago de uno o de otro según me convenga') to maintain her in a submissive social and sexual position, reflects fundamental concerns about the structure of the traditional family, which would soon be developed by directors such as Carlos Saura, Victor Erice, José Luis Borau and Manuel Gutiérrez Aragón.

No-one can deny the unerring relevance of Buñuel's film to conditions in Spain at the time. By modernizing the Galdós text on which the film is based, and setting the narrative in the early 30s, he cleverly endowed Tristana with a socio-political topicality, since the conditions in which women lived in Spain in the early 70s were virtually as they had been in the 1930s, and worse in fact if we consider that the Republic had passed a law on divorce which was even more advanced than the one which the Socialist government would grant in 1981. Nor is the fact of men's guardianship as far fetched as might appear, given that throughout most of the dictatorship women, either single or married, were forced to remain under a man's protection for most of their lives: daughters, for example, were not able to leave their father's house without his consent until they were 25 years old (unless they were to enter a convent or get married), a situation which lasted until 1972 when a new law revoked this male privilege.²

As would be the case with the depiction of some of the female characters in the works of the younger

directors, Tristana presents a woman who, as she tries to break through the barriers imposed by patriarchy, achieves autonomy and superiority only through her conversion into a monster figure. Tristana's unwillingness to sacrifice herself to men's interest makes her appear perverse, as is shown in the scene where she exhibits her amputated body to Saturno, and as a monster figure who, like Bernarda Alba in Lorca's play and other imaginary women invested with authority and power (Martina in Furtivos), has to pay a penalty for usurping the male prerogative. Tristana's punishment at the end of the film is not death - as in the case of Furtivos - but removal from the normal social order which her behaviour threatens to undermine. In complicity with patriarchal values, the film now depicts her in terms of incipient madness - witness her obsessive walking up and down the corridor while Don Lope and the priests have a snack - and criminality, since her final act of opening the window rather than calling a doctor contributes crucially to the death of Don Lope.

Tristana's most flagrant challenge to the existing sexual and social order occurs in the balcony scene, where she assumes at one and the same time characteristics of both virgin and whore, countering the notion that women can only be one or the other. Her supreme moment of triumph comes when she steps out onto the balcony, into a setting which evokes the Garden of Eden and where she becomes a latter-day Eve whose

mission is to tempt the male. Her image as temptress is complicated by the fact that she makes her appearance in an elevated place — the balcony — where she becomes the object of reverence and adoration by Saturno, who looks up at her ecstatically. She effectively resembles a holy figure, as the ironic cutting from a close-up of her to statues of the Virgin Mary in the church confirms. This parallel becomes all the more shocking when we remember the expression of malevolent satisfaction in Tristana's face as she exposes her body but without any intention of surrendering it to the young man. Having been constructed originally as a castrated woman, she became at the end a femme fatale who ruins men's lives with her alluring sexuality.

Innocent victims, like Tristana at the beginning of the film, who end up as monster figures, appear in abundance in Spanish films made throughout the decade of the seventies, with El nido by Jaime de Armiñán, made in 1980, continuing to exhibit many of the features of a nucleus of films made a few years earlier. These films, produced around the mid-seventies — all in fact were made between 1973 and 1977 — will form the core of my study in this chapter, supported whenever appropriate by reference to other works of the period. Of the directors chosen for study here, the most central is Carlos Saura, both in terms of his long-lasting concern with the theme of the family and because he, among all the other Spanish directors, has been the one most frequently regarded — in Spain and

abroad — as an auteur (a definition with which he personally agrees).³ With these points in mind I have decided to include one of his films, La prima Angélica, as the work of a director intent on projecting his most personal views onto film. Another, Cría cuervos, will form part of the group of works studied in the second part of this chapter as the expression of collective feelings and shared concerns. The decision to treat film directors both as authors and as catalysts for the creation of historically significant works at specific moments in the life of a nation, is taken in full recognition of the view of film theorists who had discredited the — now naive — politique des auteurs of the fifties, which, though relevant in its time, failed to take into consideration issues such as the collective nature of cinema — where many voices and not just the director's are included in a film —, pressures from administration — censorship, grants to certain products — and from the industry — financial support to only certain kinds of films. Roland Barthes' controversial essay on the death of the author further discredited the claims of authorial uniqueness, by drawing attention to outside influences which inevitably decrease the degree of personal control which a writer or, in this case, a film director exercises over his/her work, a claim also rejected by later theories which would emphasize the ideological entrapment of individuals and the unconscious motivation of artistic processes.

It is important to bear all these points in mind when analyzing single authors. They cannot however obscure the fact that throughout the history of Spanish cinema certain directors have consistently represented their own thematic preoccupations and have left the mark of their stylistic concerns in their films, and among them Carlos Saura is a clear example. Drawing on the same cultural influences which are also discernible in Buñuel (and in other Spanish film-makers, such as Francisco Regueiro) — the Siglo de Oro (particularly Gracián, Quevedo, Calderón and Cervantes), the picaresque tradition, Goya and the esperpento — this director dwells in his films on themes such as the link between love and death, desengaño, the false appearance of reality, the mingling of reality and fantasy, the grotesque deformation of the real world. These themes and others which I shall in due course mention, together with cinematic techniques such as the use of ellipsis, allusions and metaphors, will be constants of Saura's work throughout the greater part of his professional career.

In opposition to the auteuristic position adopted in the first part, my decision to examine El espíritu de la colmena, Cría cuervos, Furtivos and Camada negra from a structuralist perspective stems from the fact that structuralism allows for 'a way of objectively analysing a body of films, and of uncovering the thematic patterns which inform[s] them'.⁴ I will do this in spite of the fact that as Hopewell has said of

film directors such as Saura, Erice and Gutiérrez Aragón, 'all imbued their works with a sense of authorial personality'.⁵ While it is true that these directors - and of course Borau is a similar case - are uniquely personal, from the evidence of their films we encounter similar ideas, attitudes and preoccupations, a consequence of their sharing a common cultural legacy and of forming part of the same socio-political circumstances.

II Carlos Saura

La prima Angélica, which Saura directed in 1973, follows Ana y los lobos (1972) in his output and was filmed during the last years of the dictatorship. The political liberalization which had started tentatively some years before suffered a reversal at the beginning of the seventies, and the effects of los últimos coletazos del monstruo were felt with particular force. Both Saura and Querejeta have explained the circumstances under which La prima Angélica was eventually completed after months of persistent battles with government officials who censored parts of the script before filming and after its completion.⁶ It was not only at these stages of production that the film encountered opposition; as soon as it was released, it suffered some of the most vicious attacks to which a cultural event has ever been subject in Spain.

In his declarations to Enrique Brasó, Carlos Saura

points to the thematic continuity linking La prima Angélica with Ana y los lobos, and El jardín de las delicias (1970), three films united by 'la temática de la familia como microcosmos de marcado acento obsesivo, como zoológico monstruoso y aberrante'.⁷ In fact this is a theme which he was to take up again in his following film, Cría cuervos, which shares numerous other preoccupations already expressed in La prima Angélica, and present, to a greater or lesser extent, in the majority of his films made both before and after these two works: the vision of the past shaping the present, the problematic relationship of parents and children, the destructive force of the institutions of marriage and the family, the infantilization of individuals, the role of women in patriarchal society, the nature of memory.

La prima Angélica is a complex film, both from an ideological and a cinematographic point of view. In it Carlos Saura takes an autobiographical theme (his separation from his family during the Civil War) and transforms it into an exploration of individual and collective experience. The film then functions on different levels and for that reason introduces many of the main problems and concerns which dominated Spanish life during almost forty years of totalitarian rule. Above all, it investigates the hidden origins of behaviour in the representatives of 'las dos Españas', from the time of the collapse of the Republic until the beginning of the new era presaged by the imminent death

of the dictator. Life in Spain during those three decades was shaped by the institutions created by the Franco regime which not surprisingly, given the totalitarian orientation of the State, permeated all spheres of social life. Saura's film studies multiple aspects of this reality, embracing such questions as the interference of the Church in private and public affairs, the effects of a prevailing atmosphere of violence and death on the life of the family (both of the Fuentes household and on the family of Spain) and the dire consequences for the cultural life of the nation. These themes are not the immediate object of investigation here. They will however receive attention in so far as they are related to the study of the representation of the family in this film. But first, and given the complexity of the function of memory and the mechanisms and effects of repression in La prima Angélica, I will start with an examination of these two focal points around which all other psychological and ideological themes in the film revolve.

Memory in La prima Angélica is not merely a mental function concerned with bringing back images of the past; rather, it is an all-embracing principle which establishes a dialectical relation between the past and the present, at the same time as it conditions the perception of characters, and incorporates distortions and lies. In this film memory, in fact, alternately clarifies and obscures the nature of reality in a deliberately ambivalent manner reminiscent of some

statements made by Herbert Marcuse who, in Eros y civilización, restates the ideas about the nature of memory already established by Sigmund Freud. In the chapter entitled 'Bajo el dominio del principio de la realidad', Marcuse identifies the value of memory as follows:

Su verdadero valor yace en la
específica función de la memoria de
preservar promesas y potencialidades
que son traicionadas e inclusive
proscritas por el individuo maduro,
civilizado, pero que han sido
satisfechas alguna vez en su tenue pasado
y nunca son olvidadas [sic] por
completo.⁸

Elaborating further on this idea in 'Eros y Tanatos', Marcuse asserts that 'la capacidad de olvidar, la capacidad de recordar es un producto de la civilización'(p.214). In Marcuse's opinion it is unfortunate that society should force its members to devote their energies towards the remembrance of duties and not of pleasures, because, as a result, their memories retain only 'la infelicidad y la amenaza de castigo, no la felicidad y la promesa de libertad (p.215).

An appreciation of this point is necessary if we are to discern the ambiguous effects of memory and the systematic shifts of perspective encountered throughout La prima Angélica. According to Proust, whom Luis mentions explicitly by name in the course of the film, one of memory's apparent aims is to recover le temps perdu 'que era el tiempo de la gratificación y la realización' of Eros (p.215). However, as Luis attempts

in various ways to recover past illusions, he discovers that the happy moments lived in his childhood have remained imprisoned in time. Even though he can still recall them, they are no longer a source of gratification to him. This is because 'el tiempo retiene su poder sobre Eros' to such an extent that people retain no more than the impression of those happy moments which, transfigured in time become 'paraísos perdidos'.

But if Luis acknowledges the impossibility of recovering past happiness, he must at least try to exploit another function of memory which might be capable of providing an explanation for his present circumstances. By doing so, he may reach an understanding of the motives underlying the behaviour of a whole generation of victims and victors of the Civil War. This is so because, as Marcuse adds, memory is also associated with the conformity which society imposes on its members:

La capacidad de olvidar es también
facultad mental que sostiene la sumisión
y la renuncia ... Olvidar el sufrimiento
pasado es olvidar las fuerzas que lo
provocaron — sin derrotar esas
fuerzas (p.214).

Characteristically, in the film the only person who relives the past is Luis. The victorious Anselmo and the complacent father Sagún do not need to be reminded of the past since they have created a present indistinguishable from it. As Anselmo remarks with implicit irony:

Han pasado más de treinta años y
todavía hay quien se acuerde de la
guerra ... el tiempo todo lo borra, y
menos mal ... Aviados estábamos si
fuera de otra manera.⁹

The victims like Angélica or tía Pilar no longer possess the ability to re-experience the past, and instead have either created one based only on facts (as in the case of Angélica, whose memory is only stimulated by visual mementos such as her collection of photographs) or through the preservation of objects (as in the case of tía Pilar who stores things in alcanfor, rendering them useless, untouched, like pieces in a museum, which is exactly what Angélica calls her house).

The act of remembering is not a conscious but a fortuitous and inevitable act. Freud registers this in Beyond the Pleasure Principle, pointing out that 'only things we do not become conscious of make an imprint that may later be remembered'.¹⁰ Yet this is not the only characteristic of memory. Henri Bergson, whose influence on our twentieth century understanding of memory, time and related questions is seminal, extends the theories put forward by Plato in the Meno concerning the nature of knowledge based on reminiscence and brought to life by the power of memory. Bergson distinguishes two forms of memory: the memory of habit and the one he calls 'pure or spontaneous memory' which acts independently of our will and which

Occurs when a chance event disturbs the equilibrium established by habit and brings back the complete image of a past moment still stamped with a "date and a place".(143)

At the beginning of La prima Angélica Luis is an unwilling agent in the quest for the past. As he starts remembering quite unintentionally the traumatic time spent with his mother's family during the Civil War, he does so quite unintentionally out of a desire to honour his mother's dying request to be buried in the family pantheon. From the moment Luis collects Luisa's bones from the cemetery in Barcelona, he is in fact desenterrando, together with her remains, the past. Significantly, he performs this action in Barcelona, a city associated with a liberal tradition, to return to a reactionary part of Spain: Castile, cuna de la raza and heart of the old Spanish Empire. Beside some obvious autobiographical reasons for choosing these two separate areas of Spain as locations for La prima Angélica, the inclusion of these sets creates a series of resonances which help to give this work the complex intertextuality for which it is famous. Thus, the return of Luis to the 'Castilla miserable, ayer dominadora...' of Machado's Campos de Castilla is glossed by a series of references to that poet in the course of the film. The desolation which Luis encounters in the vast empty landscape finds an echo for us in the poem which Angélica recites and which we know is by Machado. Even though the poem 'Soñé que tú me llevabas ...' is not explicitly about Castile, the

very name of Machado calls to mind images of 'campos sin arados, regatos ni arboledas' which we remember from earlier readings of his poetry. For the same reason, when later on we hear the song 'Rocío' as Luis starts one of his journeys back into the past, the reference to a patio de Sevilla reminds us of another famous poem by Machado which begins 'Mi infancia son recuerdos de un patio de Sevilla, / y un huerto claro donde madura el limonero'. If to this we add Machado's constant preoccupation with recuerdos, sueños, el pasado, and so on, we can appreciate the multiple effects which just one name can produce in a work by Saura. At another level, the contrast presented in La prima Angélica between the sea in Barcelona, which Luis views as he collects his mother's remains, and the fields of the interior of Castile seem to presage defeat from the beginning. The spiritual journey he is about to start is made bleaker by the transition from the warm, blue setting near the sea to the arid, hostile, and deserted terrain of Castilla.¹¹

Luis then sets out on his journey, which is destined to lead him to re-discover his previous past experiences and, more importantly, to the discovery of his inner self. It is a journey, nevertheless, and like so many other journeys in the history of Western art, one which will involve much suffering, ^{many} set-backs and sacrifices. What is certain is that the more he remembers his past, the more he feels attracted to it, so much so that when, half way through the film, he

tries to leave the town, he is unable to do so and is compelled to return, this time into the midst of the people with whom he shared his past. From now on the pressure of the past becomes more acute, with an almost continuous reliving of past experiences and sensations. Luis is trapped in the process and even though he eventually decides to leave, and is even seen in the act of saying farewell to his relatives and stepping out of the house, he embarks on yet another journey into the past, from which in the film, he never returns.

We have to realize, however, that he becomes involved in a very complex emotional process and that his memory functions in a way which at the beginning he is unable to understand. The thirty years which separate him from the events he experienced as a child inevitably cloud his vision of the past. What is more, his knowledge as an adult of events and people, which as a child he lacked, distorts his image of past events. Lastly, memory is a poor guide, because it lies, quite unintentionally of course, and, in fact, knows more than we ourselves do since it tries to repress and conceal — as Freud has made us very aware — certain events which are nevertheless imprinted in our own unconscious. Memory also takes into consideration our frustrations, wishes, fears, and in that way reconstructs for us a past which perhaps never existed. The film thus presents us with a series of scenes which we are not absolutely sure ever happened in reality. This does not

mean that they are unimportant, because obviously they are for the main character. On the contrary they actually help us to reach a better understanding of Luis.

Not that Luis seems initially enthusiastic about the task which he must perform. The first time we see him, looking on quietly as his mother's remains are shovelled into a plastic bag, our impression is of a lonely, middle-aged man, totally removed from exterior reality, distant even from his father who is also witnessing the macabre exhumation from the back seat of their car. José Luis López Vázquez, who plays Luis in La prima Angélica, gives here a performance quite different from those in many Comedias Celtibéricas, and Carlos Saura himself gives the reasons for the choice of this actor:

Yo a José Luis le recordaba de
El pisito ... Y siempre creí que él
tenía esa cosa que yo necesitaba
entre imagen patética y hombre que
tiene sensibilidad, que tiene algo
dentro de sí, que no está vacío.¹²

This detachment, incapacity to react and inability to express his feelings characterizes Luis all through the first part of the film, both when he is alone, driving his car or shaving in the hotel room, and when he is in company, as in the initial moments of his visit to tia Pilar's house and when he returns with Anselmo to his old school. He maintains the same attitude when he meets up with his cousin Angélica, even if when alone with her he relaxes and is able to talk sympathetically

to her. Eventually this protective front, behind which we assume he is hiding, is removed and by the time he decides not to leave the town but to come and stay in tia Pilar's house, he has started to feel at ease and begins to enjoy being in other people's company, even if it is only that of his niece and the women. He becomes more human, smiles, and for the first time we see him react physically, through touches, kisses and embraces, to the persons with whom he is staying.

At one level, this change is due to a sudden and growing recollection of a part of himself that has lain buried in his head for a very long time. We are given the impression that not only has he not remembered anything since the time he was last in the house, but he has not even thought about events or people associated with that place. Looking out of his hotel window, however, Luis starts re-experiencing shapes and colours, forms and sounds, and from this moment on every detail acquires a special significance. Intensely absorbed, he looks at houses and trees, touches the knocker on tia Pilar's front door and hears the lovely tune his aunt played on the piano in the distant past. The sensations of the past become more acute as he climbs the stairs, sees the young Angélica and enters the house. A sense of overwhelming pleasure is patent in Luis's otherwise expressionless face as his aunt opens the bedroom door, and after a few seconds of darkness (when as in a dream he hears again Angélica's name), the light reveals to him the preserved room of

his childhood. We notice Luis's bewilderment at the strange sensations which assault him. We are almost sure he is going to recognize something of extreme importance. But somehow the moment passes, the impressions disappear and Luis reaffirms his decision not to get involved in his family's lives. His resistance — like that of psychoanalytical patients — to unlocking the door leading to his childhood events, testifies to their traumatic force even now. The past has for the time being eluded him.

Nevertheless, the impressions left by this involuntary return of past sensations, together with his imagined meeting with his parents in the road in an earlier scene, affect Luis's receptivity. The next time he encounters an old sensation — the melody of los romanos — he lets his unconscious take over and in an easy transition from the present to the past crosses the threshold into childhood: he is again the child who, dressed up as a Roman, is going to keep vigil beside the dead figure of Christ. The child-like expressions on Luis's adult face signal the importance that the present confers on the child's past experiences as he relives them.¹³ From now on the adult/child will combine past and present experiences in alternating visions of reality created by multiple perspectives. In the process Luis will invent, imagine, fantasize some aspects, imposing a unity which they lacked when he experienced them for the first time. He will even incorporate into the past recent information

which he obtains at the time when he is remembering, as, for example, when in a sudden and momentary return to the present he asks his aunt whether his father ever came up to the house.

As already indicated, the workings of memory are inseparable from the powers of repression in Luis's experience. The authoritarian attitude responsible for the repression of women and children is embodied in the film in the figures of the padres, who are also the only men to play a part and to have a say in the life of the Fuentes household. If we leave Luis's father aside — throughout the film he is an almost absent figure — since, like the women and the children, he is silenced with the defeat of the Republican Army, we note that Angélica's father and el padre Florentino combine forces in an attempt to impose order and discipline all around. The father exercises his authority in the house, and the priest both there and at school where he moulds a future generation of victims — like Luis, the lonely, repressed bachelor, ill at ease in the company of adults — and oppressors — like Felipe. Sagún, Luis's fellow school-boy, who inherits el padre Florentino's role of shaping human souls.

Children are malleable and particularly vulnerable to indoctrination by figures of authority who know that lessons imparted at an early age will condition their future lives. In my introduction I have already mentioned Althusser's observation about the predominant

ideological position of the School in our societies, and how the institutions of the Family and the School (together with the Church during the Franco era) were designed to maintain ideological conformity. In La prima Angélica, which reproduces the conditions of life in Spain from the 1930s to the beginning of the 1970s, these three institutions are closely connected, and the teachings of the one bolstered by the others in a reinforcement of ideas which are often imposed by violent means.

Violence is of a varied nature and takes different forms, but it serves mainly to underline the existence of a climate of violence which is part of society as a whole. In that sense, the violence which the padres in the film inflict on children derives from the violent atmosphere which is prevalent in the country, and is accepted as routine practice. The violence conveyed through language — 'Dice la abuela que cuando entren en Madrid [los nacionales] fusilarán a tu padre' — is matched by the violence which occurs in the war: bomb attacks on schools, wounds inflicted by machine-gun, and so on.

The deformation of moral character caused by the aggressive behaviour and intransigence of figures of authority is accentuated in La prima Angélica by the claustrophobic and depressing surroundings where the children are taught discipline, a sense of duty and, above all, the fear of death and eternal damnation. But where both fathers (the spiritual and the biological)

unite forces is in the repression of the natural instincts of children, in a fight against their normal sexual awakenings in puberty. Angélica's father keeps watch on the children's activities and abruptly intrudes with his shouting when the cousins are locked in an intimate embrace in the relative seclusion of the loft. The fear they suffer on that occasion eventually overshadows Luis's responses to his cousin, when as adults they unintentionally repeat the same scene. The guilt complex instilled in children is thus strong to act as censor of their actions later on in life.

Women are made to resemble children by virtue of their being weak members of a society which overvalues strength and violence and punishes any form of rebellion. This entails accepting the restrictions which figures of authority impose on them, and suffering the subordinate position allocated to them in a discriminating division of gender roles. Nowhere is this more evident than in the situation of women and children in the patriarchal family which implies the domination of men over women and of parents — mainly fathers — over children. By distinguishing the family as typically Francoist, and therefore patriarchal (not only in La prima Angélica, but also to a certain extent in Cría cuervos), and placing it within the bigger 'family' of Spain, Saura makes this point much more poignantly.

The microcosm to which Saura alludes in his interview with Brasó is orchestrated here around the

figure of the grandmother, the matriarch, who has assumed the role of the patriarch in her relationship with her daughters and also in that which ties her to Luis, her grandson. Despite her attempts to take control and impose discipline, she herself is made to accept a very precarious role, since the only man within the family, Angélica's father, younger than she is and in a sense an outsider — he is only an in-law — can nevertheless rudely tell her 'cállese'. Her age and her position are clearly insufficient because of her status as a woman.

For his part Luis, who to a certain degree is also no more than accessory to the nuclear family^o, first, to his position as a child and then to his inclusion, as an adult, among those whom Anselmo calls 'las ovejas negras de la familia', is relegated to a status similar to that of the women. For that reason throughout the film, at both stages of his life, he is generally seen in the company of the women in his mother's family, until his fate becomes inextricable from theirs. In an attempt to appreciate both the positive values they represent together and the real tragedy which their final defeat presupposes, it is imperative to examine their roles in the film.

In a world dominated by the ambitions and crushing authority of men, women stand as naively courageous — tía Pilar facing the unknown in the chaotic circumstances of the beginning of the Civil War — or as earth-bound figures who, like Angélica, enjoy the

delights of simple games in the healthy atmosphere of the countryside. They alone provide in the film the means of releasing tenderness and warmth and they generate the only moments of intimate companionship (as in the love scenes between Angélica and Luis when they are children and later as adults), or of solicitous care (tía Pilar consoling first her homesick nephew and then the isolated, frustrated adult).

In this respect Luis's mother is of outstanding significance to the film, even if, of all the characters who contribute to the shaping of Luis's life, she is the one delineated most ambiguously. To begin with, it is through her desenterramiento that Luis disinters the past. The deshumación of her bones, which are all that remain of her, enables Luis to start the journey back to the past and, in an unwilling act, to deshumar those memories which for thirty years have unconsciously haunted him. It is she who sets in motion a whole chain of traumatic experiences which Luis is going to relive, just as she was, at least in part, initially responsible for his childhood anguish when she left him with her family only a few days before the unforeseen start of the Civil War in July 1936.

It is important in this respect to remember that Luis enters the town where his relatives live in the company of his mother on the two occasions that he goes to Luisa's family house. As a child, after being comforted by his mother, he continues the journey that is going to separate him from the only people from whom

he expressly does not want to be parted. His request, 'Quiero estar siempre con vosotros', recurs when he travels a second time on the road to the same destination. On this occasion, some thirty years later, and carrying his dead mother with him, Luis is literally transported into the past and in fact encounters his parents again by the road side. The three members of the family continue the journey together, but, when they reach the town the father will not accompany Luis and Luisa to the house. As a later scene shows, he waits alone outside while his wife leaves the child with her sister.

Like Luisito at a later date, Luisa (and we must notice the coincidence in their names), his mother, is an outsider within her own family. She is the one who leaves the family house to marry against their wishes, and in so doing becomes an antagonist, as is made clear in the only scene which shows her with her family in the film. Her marked opposition to them is emphasized by visual images. For one thing, Luisa is dressed differently from the other women, in a style of elegance visibly absent from the provincialism which characterizes her mother and sisters. Her transient state is displayed partly through her reluctance to take off her hat and partly through her absence from the table where the rest of the family is sharing a meal.

Luisa, then, has escaped from the stifling atmosphere of the provincial town, with its backward

ideas about family life and the place of women in the home. She is married to a man of liberal tendencies who, we learn in the course of the film, was a supporter of the Republic. The couple, moreover, have rejected the impositions of conservative Spain not only in cultural and political matters but also in religious ones, as the grandmother's remarks about Luisito's failure to attend mass indicate. Within this pattern, Luisa is seen as a liberated woman who, however, partially betrays her independence through her request to be allowed back into the family once dead. In that sense whatever she may have achieved is finally undone by her dying wish to be buried amongst those whom she voluntarily abandoned. She seems to accept and be accepted by those she rejected in her youth. Not only is the family willing to recover the 'oveja perdida', but also the Church gives her its blessing and the political structure is reinforced, as is made clear by the participation in the scene of Anselmo, who works in the Francoist sindicato. Nevertheless, in the scenes with Luis she also gives the impression of possessing genuine maternal qualities. She of course takes care of Luis, but eventually (and even though no explanation is ever given, we can assume that it is a projection of Luis's anxiety as a child about being separated from his parents, particularly his mother) she leaves him, against his will, in the hands of those his father calls 'brujas'. Her promise that they will be separated for only a few days is broken when the Civil War

begins, and for three years she does not see him again. Before leaving, however, she places her child in the hands of one of her two (or is it three?) other sisters.

From the beginning tía Pilar functions more than Luisa as a solicitious mother figure, in a nurturing role that Nancy Chodorow has exposed for its ambivalent effects on children's education. By traditionally giving women the exclusive rights of mothering, society perpetuates a system whereby

Women, as mothers, produce daughters with mothering capacities and the desire to mother ... By contrast, women as mothers (and men as not-mothers) produce sons whose nurturant capacities and needs have been systematically curtailed and repressed. This prepares men for their less affective later family role, and for primary participation in the impersonal extra-familial world of work and public life.¹⁴

This situation stems from the positions and values attached to male and female roles in the family. The father represents authority, power and prestige; the mother, though often extremely important in the domestic sphere, symbolizes dependence and passivity, qualities which children of both genders would try to reject as they grow up. Girls, however, will be pre-destined to follow their mother's steps and become mothering figures themselves, while boys will be required to give up their identification with women and adjust to the masculine world of their father. In regard to the mother, it is important, moreover, to underline the significance of her customary, and almost

always sole, absolute control of her children in their early years, which explains many of the difficulties experienced by both adult men and women in the relationships with their mothers or mother-figures. By becoming over-protective or, on the contrary, by depriving children of the necessary love and comfort, the mother can easily be perceived as a monster (the bad witch of fairy tales) or as an "angel", both images equally damaging for children who will tend, through a process of projection, to create a negative or an idealized image of her, the second as destructive as the first since it will never satisfy their expectations and eventually breed disillusionment. This polarized vision of a female nurturing function and of a male distancing role, like the dual image projected by the mother, must be borne in mind not only in relation to La prima Angélica — where both Luis and Angélica are conditioned, as adults, by their childhood experiences with their real or surrogate parents — but also discussions in later chapters of films made during the seventies.

In La prima Angélica, tía Pilar is at all times protective towards Luis, the first action we see her perform being her intervention to spare Luis his grandmother's vicious remarks about his parents and their life. Later on she comforts him after his mother has left, rouses him when he is suffering from nightmares and eventually receives him back in the family when he returns all those years later to bury

his mother. She repeatedly calls him 'hijo mío', and we learn that she knew Luisito's father before his mother did, and should have married him herself: 'porque la tía Pilar conoció a tu padre antes que tu madre y tu madre se lo quitó', says Angélica. We are even given to understand that only she, Pilar, could have made the father change his radical ideas, 'la abuela le decía a mi madre que si tu padre se hubiera casado con la tía Pilar ahora sería distinto...', and so be made welcome within the family. Her defeat in love is however compensated for by having the boy at last for herself.

His aunt provokes mixed feelings in Luis, and the spectator is made to share his doubts. She gives the impression of being a generous, artistic and — when young — a sensual woman, who together with Luis's cousin Angélica arouses in him the first sexual stirrings. Nevertheless she cannot forget which side she is on, as her reaction to the events leading to the outbreak of the Civil War indicates: she shares in the general mood of happiness which the news of the town's alliance with the nacionalistas induces in the other members of her family, and she even adds to the elation provoked by the news by playing on the piano the Falangist hymn, Cara al sol.

For the same reason, and even though her domestic involvement is kept to a minimum (normally we see her playing the piano), she joins Angélica's mother in the shaping of the girl's notions of femininity by helping her to try on the new dress they are making for her.

(This is indeed just another occasion when tía Pilar fulfils a classic maternal role, since it is through the mother that patriarchy first teaches the small female her proper expectations). Therefore, when Luis comes back to the house, we are not surprised to see her existing in a domestic capacity which, together with the role of vieja beata solterona, explains the defeated position she has had to accept and the solitary existence she is leading. As she explains to Luis, when he tries to refuse her offer of hospitality on the basis that he will dar la lata: 'Pero qué lata ni que niño muerto... Al contrario me harás compañía'.

It is not surprising that Luisito should be drawn to this 'virginal mother' who, not being attached to any other men — she is a spinster —, can dedicate herself wholly to his well-being, an ideal situation that reverses that of his own mother, who left him to go with her husband. He nevertheless identifies tía Pilar with the monja crucificada, in the portrait which hung in the bedroom he shares with his young aunt. One of the most intriguing features of this film is the ambiguous presentation of this second virginal figure whom the child places squarely within the family. The monja crucificada may in fact be a fourth daughter, in an interesting pattern of symmetry between, on the one hand, two married sisters, one of whom remains in the family and follows its traditions while the other breaks with them and leaves, and, on the other, two unmarried sisters, one of whom is devoted to those

functions which the mother cannot fulfil and the other, consecrated to a life of penance in a convent. It is equally possible that the nun is a projection of Luis's sexual desires and fantasies about the hidden side which he obscurely relates to his sexually repressed aunt. He therefore transfers onto her religious sister all the ambivalent feelings which he senses in his aunt, just as he himself is able to express towards a non-biological mother, tía Pilar, his confused incestuous feelings which would have been totally unacceptable if directed to his mother. As complementary or opposing doubles, the four women serve to provide as complete a picture of women's roles and expected behaviour as it is possible to find in any Spanish film.

Tía Pilar, then, is benevolent and acts as a mediator in Luis's relationship with her family, mostly with her mother. But however much love and protection tía Pilar tries to impart to Luisito, her position of inferiority within the family places her in a situation where the help she can offer is very limited. She is eventually unable to rescue him from the corner of isolation to which he has been consigned by the vindictive Anselmo, who implicates him in the threats that 'ahora van a saber lo que es bueno tu padre y los de su ralea'. Much less is she able to stand against the two figures of authority in the family: her mother, oppressor in the name of the paterfamilias, and her fascist brother-in-law. In the film's penultimate

closing scene her plea, 'Es un niño, Anselmo, no sabe bien lo que hace', draws no response either from her mother, whose only comment is '¡Déjalo, que le dé un escarmiento!', or from Anselmo, who prepares himself to give Luis a beating.

The same sense of impotence can be found in Luis's cousin Angélica, both as a child and as an adult. Like tía Pilar, she responds to him and tries to intercede between his world of isolation and her family, and, given the closeness of their daily contact, it is not surprising that they should embark on the journey of discovery and the search for maturity together. Their attempts are always frustrated however by figures of authority who assume the duty of correcting their steps, guiding them along what they consider to be the right path and repressing them in the name of the patriarca. Angélica is restricted and shown her proper position primarily by her own mother, who always vigilantly prevents any likely misconduct, as in the scene in the church where she, like Luis, is told which posture she has to maintain. Angélica's mother, in fact, is a clear example of the type of woman observed by Castilla del Pino:

La mujer es reprimida, y asimila más o menos perfectamente su aprendizaje en la represión, para que, desde su función "excelsa" de madre ... se torne ella en el ejecutor primario de la represión del establishment.¹⁵

If her mother decides Angélica's attitudes and chooses a feminine role for her to play, her father and the

priest contain any sign of rebellion or impropriety. The intimacy she cultivates with Luisito is punished on every occasion by one of the men in connivance with the other. The family morality is backed by the Church in the figure of the priest, and the teachings of the Church are safeguarded by the head of the family who is bent on maintaining order and discipline. A third element of authority, namely the fascist soldiers, will eventually be called upon to intervene at the climax of the film to bring both children back to the repressive family fold.

The upbringing which Angélica receives from her own family is so formidable that she cannot escape the trap which her parents have set for her. In the end, as an adult, Angélica accepts the submissive role which her own submissive mother intended for her. She has remained in the same place as when she was a child; staying under the same roof, she imitates the conduct of her mother (who is of course played by the same actress, Lina Canalejas); and lastly, she marries a man closely similar to her authoritarian father, thus not only continuing her mother's traditional role but also showing a typical case of Oedipal attachment. Understandably, Luis confuses the two men, because

Padre y marido juegan un mismo papel, compuesto de autoritarismo, desprecio hacia la persona de la niña/mujer, y represión de sus apetencias'.¹⁶

As a middle-aged man Luis again feels an attraction for his cousin Angélica, the one he

remembers as the emblem of some moments of happiness in his childhood. As an adult Angélica has, however, lost the qualities of the child and has become a dissatisfied, neglected housewife who is unable to take any steps which may change the shape of her life for the future. She seems to have forgotten her dreams and desires because she has been deprived of a personal life of her own and is only living the one others have imposed on her. Luis's arrival is seen as one possible way for her to recover those magical moments which, despite outside interference, they managed to experience in their childhood. Yet, although the opportunity arises to relive a few brief moments of mutual attraction, Luis finds Angélica's suffering too pitiful to bear and, unable to overcome his spiritual handicap, is in no condition to offer her any help. Luis accordingly transfers his affection to his niece, Angélica's daughter, who seems to have survived the attempts of adults to force her into submission and appears to be the only one to escape the fate which her mother and all the other women in the family have suffered.¹⁷ Her absence from the scene of the family's farewell to Luis symbolizes this budding independence.

The scene which brings to a close Luis's stay in his aunt's house eventually highlights the experience of defeat which is common to all. Their attempts to raise some sparks of hope in their lives are thwarted by the shadow that the past casts over the Tía Pilar will remain enclosed, as she was at the beginning

of the film, in the museum she has created out of her memories of better times when there was still some hope of a better life. She will be left to continue the existence which Anselmo, with unkind irony, refers to as 'una vida padre'.

But the tragedy which their defeat implies is illustrated dramatically by the total collapse of Angélica and Luis's illusions. The impression of hopelessness which we perceive in their final separation as adults, is reaffirmed in the very last sequences of the film which transport those same characters back to the moment in 1936 when Angélica and Luis were caught trying to run away and summarily returned to the house.

The violence and aggression, which if not visually present are even so through a variety of ways felt throughout the film, still do not prepare us for the vicious attack which the future victors are ready to

act on their victims. The disproportion of the punishment which Anselmo inflicts on Luis is only realized by tía Pilar, who pleads that the latter is 'sólo un niño'. Anselmo, however, finds it impossible to forgive a transgression against the family which is an offence against his political convictions. For their running away is conceived not only as an escape from his personal influence but, as the spectator can appreciate, it is also an implicit rejection of the political ideology he represents, since their ultimate goal is Madrid and a reunion with Luis's liberal

father. Angélica and Luis will, of course, never reach Madrid, the other side, freedom. Instead, brought back by the soldiers, who are accomplices of the father, they are finally taught a lesson in submission: Luis, kneeling down on the floor, receives the blows (and even in the script the kicks) his merciless uncle rains on him; Angélica, conscious of her total inability to do anything in the circumstances, sits quietly, in an attitude of sad impassibility, while her unconcerned mother brushes and plaits her hair. This moment of total defeat is a prelude to the life of spiritual paralysis and frustration which the film has reconstructed with chilling precision.

III "The Children of Franco"

In the mid-seventies, amidst great political upheaval in Spain, four films were released which made an instant impression on the popular and critical imagination and have since come to be considered landmarks in Spanish cinema. Their impact at the box-office and the unanimous critical acclaim which they enjoyed both at home and abroad helped, in some cases, to consolidate the reputation of their directors and, in others, heralded the arrival of exciting new talents who have continued to make important contributions to the industry. The four films are: El espíritu de la colmena (1973), which was the first feature film by Victor Erice, a director whose only

practical contribution to the cinema after graduating from the IIEC in 1963 had been to direct one of three episodes in the film Los desafíos; Cría cuervos (1975), by a director who was already firmly established within Spanish cinema, Carlos Saura; Furtivos (1975), the unexpected success of José Luis Borau who, in spite of having devoted more than ten years to making films in Spain, had achieved little in the way of recognition; and Camada negra (1977), the controversial and hugely successful work of Manuel Gutiérrez Aragón who, with just one minor film — Habla mudita (1973) — to his name, was now acclaimed as one of the country's most promising new talents.

Made between the years 1973 and 1977, around the time of the death of General Franco and the disintegration of his regime, the films in question explore the psychological and political legacy of the Civil War, tracing the effects of the Nationalist victory over a period of forty years of authoritarian government and repression. Though different in many important respects, the films share a similar concern with contemporary political and social issues and are of particular interest to my thesis because of the ways in which they investigate family relationships, highlighting the structure of that institution by according a central role in the narrative to young children and adolescents. Together with this emphasis on childhood experience, the films confront important issues relating to the notion of parenting, as they

examine the abuse of power by fathers (El espíritu de la colmena and Cría cuervos), their inadequacy (El espíritu de la colmena) or absence (Furtivos and Camada negra), the submissive and passive roles of mothers, or the perverted tyranny exercised by domineering matriarchs. Innocent or monstrous figures, good mothers or bad witches, immature children or precocious criminals: these are the dramatis personae of all four films which through certain common themes and techniques also reformulate the pervasive motifs of myths and fairy tale, the world over.

A detailed analysis of these themes should be prefaced by a short resumé of the professional career of their directors, taking in the changes and advances made by Spanish cinema in the last years of the regime. This will provide a sharper focus for an understanding of the ways in which circumstances were gradually changing for directors interested in concentrating on problematic questions related to the family, sexuality, role and gender, etc. The first point to note is that the four directors mentioned were film enthusiasts who had passed through the Instituto de Investigaciones y Experiencias Cinematográficas (IIEC) and benefitted substantially from that experience. Saura had entered the IIEC in 1953 and graduated in 1957 with the film La tarde del domingo, after which he remained in the Institute as a teacher until 1964; Erice, entered it in 1960 and graduated in 1963 with the film Los días perdidos; Borau, who had been a student in the IIEC

from 1957 to 1960 when he graduated with the film En el río, would eventually work, like Saura, in the renamed Escuela Oficial de Cine. He was there at the time when Gutiérrez Aragón entered as a student in 1962, and supervised his studies which culminated in the making of Hansel y Gretel in 1970.

It is important to take note of this communal, shared experience, since the directors themselves have insisted on the positive role which first the IIEC and then the School played in their professional formation. Talking about the atmosphere of cordiality and professionalism within the School, José Luis Borau has remarked that

la Escuela de Madrid, luego que he viajado por el mundo y he visto otras, era una de las mejores. Había un ambiente muy excitante, éramos gente de una misma edad con el mismo amor por el cine y unas mismas preocupaciones.¹⁸

Even within the constraints of a Francoist institution, students interested in cinema during the repressive decades of the fifties and sixties found in the IIEC a privileged meeting-ground rich in opportunities which were denied to the majority of Spaniards. The apprentice directors had access to films which were banned in the country at large, studied and debated the different influences affecting cinema at the time and contributed, through the pages of film journals, to debates about Neorealism and Hollywood cinema, learnt about all aspects of film making, and were encouraged to use unlimited supplies of film material to produce

their own work.

Of course, the experience acquired in the School of Cinematography does not by itself explain the similarities in theme and technique found in the films of these four directors, but it is an important pointer to the historical significance of their work. And, even though two of the directors concerned, Victor Erice and Carlos Saura, have long been considered archetypal auteurs of the Spanish cinema, the films selected for study here, while expressing their inimitable personal visions, share a common orientation which should not be overlooked. The presence in both films of a child character played by Ana Torrent, with all her brooding internalisation of the regime's processes of victimization, is just one of a number of coincidences between the works. Another resides in the fact that both El espíritu de la colmena and Cría cuervos were produced by Elías Querejeta who, frequently associated in Spain with the work of Carlos Saura, was also the producer of Erice's film debut, Los desafíos. In his book, Out of the Past: Spanish Cinema after Franco, John Hopewell has documented Saura's earlier relationship with Querejeta, and suggests that the "Querejeta look" was the result of their collaboration. Hopewell describes some of the factors which made the Querejeta products so distinctive: the use of a fixed team of professionals of outstanding talent, such as Luis Cuadrado and his assistant and successor from 1975, Teo Escamilla; the editor, Pablo G. del Amo; the

composer, Luis de Pablo; the director of production, Primitivo Alvaro; and the art director, Emilio Sanz de Soto. After listing these names, Hopewell defines a Querejeta film as one characterized by

a combative anti-Francoist stance
challenging censorship thresholds; a
stress on sex, violence, jealousy,
questioning the superficial modernisation
of Spaniards (developed in other Querejeta
productions such as Los desafíos) [and] a
delight in elliptical editing for
insinuation, economy and wit.¹⁹

While not all of these elements are included in every film produced by Querejeta, they are certainly common to El espíritu de la colmena and Cría Cuervos. These films are the result of a highly successful cooperation between the members of a coherent group, and are works which include very specific references to Francoist Spain: in El espíritu de la colmena to the traumatized society of the immediate post-war years, and in Cría cuervos to the last moments of the Franco era. It is no accident that even though this last film includes no reference to the world outside the house, the death of the father was seen, by critics like Kinder, to allude to the death of Franco, an event which actually took place some months after Cría cuervos was made.

Equally important is the cooperative basis of the films made by Borau and Gutiérrez Aragón who had been friends since the time of their first meeting at the School of Cinematography. Borau, who has stressed the advantages of working with a small team of

professionals united by friendship and dedication to the cinema, acknowledges the benefits of his collaboration with Gutiérrez Aragón, saying that

Manolo y yo nos complementamos bien.
El aporta todo aquello de lo que carezco:
la libertad de invención, la poesía. Yo
intento aportar el rigor narrativo, la
construcción.²⁰

Gutiérrez Aragón, for his part, has declared his admiration for Borau's 'sentido muy pragmático e inmediato del cine', revealing that

En Furtivos hay tantas cosas más
como en Camada negra de Borau.
Evidentemente, el mundo de Furtivos
está más cerca de mí que de Borau,
porque es una historia del Norte,
basada en la realidad, con nombres y
apellidos.²¹

While agreeing in general terms with this account of their collaboration — he and Gutiérrez Aragón co-scripted Furtivos and Camada negra and Borau's production company, El Imán, financed both films — Borau nevertheless insists on the decisive part played by a director in the making of a film, remarking that

Sólo hasta cierto punto es un cine
colectivo. Lo que ocurre es que, por
ejemplo en el caso de Furtivos, que
hicimos el guión entre Manuel Gutiérrez
Aragón y yo, Manolo lo tenía muy claro,
y por si acaso yo se lo recordaba, de
quién era el director.²²

Gutiérrez Aragón and Borau's views together highlight the difficulties which confront film directors and critics alike, when attempting to distinguish between an auteur-based cinema and a collective one.

No less crucial to the configuration of our four films is the background of socio-political events

taking place in Spain at the time they were made. As contemporary historians Carr and Fusi point out, Spain in the early 70s was experiencing more social and political unrest than at any time since the 40s.²³ Significantly, 1973, the year when El espíritu de la colmena was released, coincided with the assassination by Basque terrorists of Franco's right-hand man and appointed successor, Luis Carrero Blanco, a daring political act designed to destabilize the regime. The new Prime Minister, Carlos Arias Navarro, in his inaugural speech of 12 February 1974, promised political changes and more freedom, but stopped short of preventing the death by garrote of the anarchist Salvador Puig Antich a few months later. It is true nevertheless that the two years leading up to the death of Franco in 1975 were characterized by a sense of the impending collapse of what for many had become a totally obsolete regime and by a slow but inevitable movement towards the democratization of Spanish society, exemplified by a more tolerant — although still ambiguous — attitude to press freedom and by a growing acceptance of moderate forms of political opposition. Spain in the mid-seventies was a developing nation interested primarily in gaining access to the — in some people's mind — progressive and developed order of the European Community. However, the last few years of Francoism and the period of the transition to democracy — November 1975 to December 1978 — were marked by an unusual return to repression,

intransigence and violence, as the Trials of Burgos, the sentencing to death of five Basque Nationalists, the deterioration in relations between State and Church, and the terrorist acts of right-wing organizations, culminating in the assassination of five labour lawyers in January 1977, clearly indicate. In this climate, Spanish film directors were presented with a formidable political challenge, and were forced to operate as well within the financial constraints of an industry debilitated by the nation's economic crisis.

It is to the credit of Erice, Borau, Saura and Gutiérrez Aragón that under these adverse conditions they succeeded in making films which, despite the political controversy surrounding their release and projection, achieved a status rare in the history of Spanish cinema to date. Furtivos, which came out in 1975, and Camada negra in 1977, became causes célèbres even before they were shown commercially, adding to the list of Spanish films such as El verdugo (1964), Viridiana (1961) and La prima Angélica (1973), which had caused embarrassment to the regime in recent years. The 'Furtivos Affair' originated in Borau's refusal to comply with the censors' demands that he remove from the film several scenes thought to be daring and offensive.²⁴ Borau preferred to present the authorities with a fait accompli, and sent his film without Government approval to the San Sebastian Film Festival, where it won the Grand Prix, a coup which obliged the

authorities to allow its release without any cuts. Camada negra was made two years after Furtivos in the more liberalized atmosphere of post-Franco Spain: in 1975 the Government had passed its New Norms of Censorship which as in previous instances permitted a high degree of freedom in sexual matters while restricting political criticism; a year later prior censorship was abolished. This did not prevent Camada negra from being banned initially and from becoming the object of repeated terrorist attacks and patriotic demonstrations by right-wingers enraged by the depiction of a fascist group disrupting the process of democratization which was already taking place in the country at large. Before the scandal had died down, Gutiérrez Aragón screened his film at the Berlin Film Festival where it won the Prize for Best Director, an award which assured his national and international reputation. In this way Borau and Gutiérrez Aragón became familiar names in cinematic circles both in Spain and abroad, joining Carlos Saura who with Cría cuervos had won the Jury Prize at Cannes in 1975, and Victor Erice who had received the Concha de Oro in the 1973 San Sebastián Festival for El espíritu de la colmena, as members of a privileged group of Spanish film directors accorded homages, awards and serious critical attention.

The four films under examination here have generated a substantial amount of commentary and analysis. Individual studies by Peter Evans on El

espíritu de la colmena and Cría cuervos, Vicente Molina Foix on El espíritu de la colmena, John Mortimer, Gavin Millar, Mario Vargas Llosa and Robin Fiddian on Furtivos, Stephen Arias on Camada negra, and general analyses by Marsha Kinder in 'The Children of Franco in the New Spanish Cinema', John Hopewell in his book Out of the Past Spanish: Cinema after Franco, and Virginia Higginbotham in a recent publication Spanish Film Under Franco, have considered the films from a variety of perspectives, discussing the relationships between Fascist ideologies, the structures of power and the configuration of Spanish society during the Franco era.²⁵ Evans and Kinder in particular have dwelt on the plight of women and children under a repressive authoritarian regime, and have related the creation of monstrous figures — murderous children and domineering matriarchs — to the conditions of oppression, fear and ignorance in the country. Touching on important aspects of the theme of my study, these interpretations may serve as a starting point for a further investigation which, incorporating other theoretical approaches to the subject of the family, will sometimes substantiate existing views and at others challenge notions that up until now have often been taken for granted.

Though not the first films to probe the realities of Spain under Franco — many films from the fifties onwards (Muerte de un ciclista, El verdugo and Nueve cartas a Berta, among others), had debunked the picture of a peaceful, harmonious and just society projected by

the propaganda-conscious regime —, the works under discussion here forcefully expose the ideological myths which the state utilised in an attempt to distort the historical reality of the country. Francoism became the dominant structure of power in Spain and remained so, almost unchallenged, for nearly forty years, because the regime, appealing to conservative instincts, based its ideology on fundamental ideals and values which were presented as eternal truths, inherent characteristics of a nation called to fulfil a glorious destiny. Thus, hiding behind a mask which disguised their true political intentions, Franco's ideologues projected a vision of the country which was accepted by the vast majority of Spaniards who, given its overwhelming and all-embracing character, did not doubt that it corresponded to a natural order of things. In Mythologies, Roland Barthes has examined the ways in which myth functions in contemporary Western cultures, referring in particular to the appropriation, by the Right, of myth with a view to 'giving an historical intention a natural justification, and making contingency appear eternal'. In particular, Barthes' observations that myth 'tak[es] hold of everything, all aspects of the law, of morality, of aesthetics, of diplomacy, of household equipment, of Literature, of entertainment' and that it 'retains its power by frequent recurrence', help us to understand the colonizing force of myths in Franco's Spain.²⁶ One of the aims of dissident film directors was to offer a

vision of Spain which would run counter to the official dogma of the regime. Saura, Erice and many other film-makers not directly associated with Elías Querejeta chose to 'satirize Francoist myths by playing off different versions of reality within their fiction', thus exposing the myths which underpinned Francoist ideology.²⁷ Radically at odds with the official view, the vision of reality that they presented was characterized by violence, political and sexual repression, material and spiritual deprivation and moral stagnation. Their alternative vision of reality was subsequently accepted as being an equally valid reflection of Spanish life, confirming Roland Barthes' proposition that 'the best weapon against myth is perhaps to mythify it in its turn, and to produce an artificial myth'.²⁸ Given the subversive nature of this enterprise, it is not surprising that Spanish film directors resorted to subtle and indirect forms of criticism, creating a style whose 'highly metaphorical and convoluted syntax, known as the estética franquista (Francoist aesthetic), was not immediately decipherable by censors'.²⁹

The estética franquista, or estética de la represión as it is also known, has been the trade-mark of a significant number of Spanish film directors under Franco and is especially evident in the four films discussed here, all of them brilliant examples of elliptical style and the power of metaphors and symbols to create ambiguities and contradictions which leave to

the spectator the imaginative task of constructing meaning out of hints and ciphers. Of particular importance to the formation of this style were the contributions of Luis Cuadrado and his assistant Teo Escamilla who, in El espíritu de la colmena and Furtivos, and Cría cuervos respectively, evoked the darkness at the core of the characters' lives and the overpowering presence of a harsh reality through a photographic style rich in contrasts between light and darkness. Marsha Kinder, apropos of Furtivos, writes that

Luis Cuadrado's cinematography is subdued but stunning, capturing the natural light and subtle shades of the forest in winter and creating interiors that are painterly in composition and lighting. The overall effect is one of somber dark beauty.³⁰

A similar effect is achieved in El espíritu de la colmena, where the photography captures the claustrophobic insularity and oppression of Spain in the post-war years by contrasting the brightly lit exteriors and the darkness of the interiors. These films, more than any others, shatter the notions of Spain as an orderly, prosperous and harmonious nation and of Spaniards as a good-natured, God-fearing, law-abiding people. In El espíritu de la colmena this is achieved by focussing on the 'sterility of life after the Civil War, the dismemberment of communities through war, the resurgence of order and discipline of a singularly authoritarian kind', and in Furtivos by opposing the propaganda myth of Spain as a peaceful

forest with Borau's vision of a country riven by incest, brutality and fratricidal strife.³¹ Violence, cruelty, moral and sexual repression and a death-wish are the regressive features which, according to these films, characterized Spanish society after decades of militaristic, authoritarian rule by a state apparatus which, while presenting itself as benevolent, paternalistic and just, relied on the cult of power and the collective submission of the population to achieve its ends.

A second myth exploited by the regime was the notion that Spain was una gran familia under the caring direction of a father-figure who generously allowed it to develop en paz y prosperidad. This fabrication — internalised by Delibes' Carmen in Cuando horas con Mario who believes that 'un país es como una familia' — was based in turn on the more general myth of the family as a perfect example of unity and devotion, a convenient idealization of that institution which was encouraged by the Catholic Church and ratified by Franco himself in his exaltation in Raza of family life as an embodiment of Christian values, parental care and fraternal love.³² The films examined here explode this myth of the family and, by extension, of Spain, by offering a picture of family life in different stages of disintegration, and by concentrating on individuals whose growth is stunted by immature fantasies, Oedipal guilt and matricidal or patricidal impulses.

The use of the family as a prism for analysing the

structure of Spanish society is found not only in films of the period under discussion but also in much of Spanish literature of the time. In 'Dictatorship and Literature: The Model of Francoist Spain', Paul Ilie documents the prevalence in post-war fiction of works centred on families, and discerns the following features: fathers who are absent or ineffectual, mothers who have unnatural powers and are tyrannical and omnipotent, innocent children who are 'often arbitrary victims of adult power', and disturbed adolescent males who, lacking positive father-figures for their role models, become criminals. Ilie gives examples from early works by Goytisolo (Juegos de manos is a case in point) and Camilo José Cela's La familia de Pascual Duarte, among others, to illustrate this trend, alluding, too, to the repeated presence in the poetry of the period of the figures of the wicked mother and the stepmother, and the prominence given to incestuous feelings and anxieties.

Ricardo Franco's adaptation of Cela's novel in 1975, the same year Furtivos was made, is one of a series of films, together with El amor del capitán Brando (Jaime de Armiñán, 1974), El desencanto (Jaime Chávarri, 1976), Retrato de familia (Antonio Giménez Rico, 1976) and Mi hija Hildegart (Fernando Fernán Gómez, 1977), devoted to the theme of family relationships and released at the same time as the works considered in this chapter. El desencanto, a 'testimonio documental de la familia del poeta Leopoldo

Panero en una diáfana alegoría sobre la agonía del franquismo'³³ and La familia de Pascual Duarte, which as a literary text, in Paul Ilie's words

ells very little about the father
while it thrusts the mother into a
central role of misused authority that
goads her son into rebellion and
senseless murder, including matricide,³⁴

are of particular relevance since they echo many of the concerns of Erice, Saura, Borau and Gutiérrez Aragón. Seeking to explain the prevalence of these themes, Ilie suggests that writers — or, for that matter, film directors — felt the need to interrogate the structures of domination and submission typical of an authoritarian state where absolute power is in the hands of a single father-figure whose paternalistic but strict and oppressive rule maintains all subjects in a child-like state of submission, dependency and helplessness.

Significantly El espíritu de la colmena, Cría cuervos, Furtivos and Camada negra all highlight experiences of childhood dependency, infantilism, lack of identity, perverse feelings, and unnatural powers, which are to be seen in conjunction with an inversion of normal patterns of behaviour as manifestations of a collective desire to explore the psychological characteristics of Spanish society of the time. The authors and directors in question were, of course, acutely aware of the need to side-step the strict norms of censorship which the regime applied to all forms of cultural expression including the cinema. In the

grotesque distortion of conventional images of family life they found a rhetorical device which was tailor-made for the purposes of subversion they envisaged.

All of these films reveal the detrimental consequences on children of oppressive and rigidly-stratified family environments designed to retard their development and stunt their personalities, a fact made especially evident in El desencanto, which analyses the 'gran familia de España' through the memories, recorded in interviews, of the widow and sons of the Francoist poet Leopoldo Panero. El desencanto makes explicit allusion not only to every family oppressed under the power of an authoritarian father but also to the family of Spain by drawing obvious parallels between the absent father in the film and the country — recently left fatherless by the death of Franco in 1975. As in other films of this period, such as Cría cuervos and Camada negra, the despotic and intransigent father even in his absence overshadows the lives of the family and devastates the lives of the children.

Interestingly, two of the works are built around father and daughter relationships, while the other two revolve around mothers and sons. El espíritu de la colmena and Cría cuervos investigate the position of young girls in a conventional family structure comprising mother, father and children (two daughters in the first instance, three in the second), and

conclude by denouncing the insidious nature of patriarchy. First Erice and then Saura expose systematic male abuse of women, children and other dependants, and lay bare society's complicity in upholding men's prerogatives (such as the right to adultery) and their machista behaviour. The four films also condemn the fathers' failure to discharge their paternal duties, and the alienating effect this has on their daughters who, as in the case of Ana in Cria cuervos, enter the stage of adulthood still traumatized by events which took place when they were children. Ana, as a grown-up, talking straight to the camera about her childhood and trying to explain the events of the past, reveals in her sad and subdued manner the scars left on her by her traumatizing early years as a child. While the effects of her father's authoritarian attitude explain her stunted personality and repression, her conformity and passivity can be traced not only to her aunt Paulina but more poignantly to her own mother. This identification between mother and daughter, highlighted in the film by having both characters played by the same actress, Geraldine Chaplin, indicates the devastating force of parental modelling which, in regard to the daughter, as Adrienne Rich observes, has to be traced to the mother's behaviour, because

a mother's victimization does not merely humiliate her, it mutilates her daughter who watches her for clues as to what it means to be a woman.³⁵

While Erice and Saura articulated a powerful critique of the authoritarian and militaristic foundations of Francoist society through the presentation of uncaring, insensitive and self-centred father-figures, other Spanish film directors scored a more direct hit on the establishment through the creation of characters who deviated spectacularly from the patriarchal norm. The domineering and tyrannical mothers of Furtivos and Camada negra are ideologically-charged figures who combine characteristics of the unnatural and the grotesque. In terms of their power and authority, they are categorised as usurpers who operate outside the bounds of normality, having acquired those very attributes which society vests in its legal representatives in the family: the patriarch and the paterfamilias. Interestingly, because they are equipped with typically male qualities of aggression, independence and strength, the matriarchs are perceived as unnatural females. On a political reading of the films, the presentation of these overbearing mothers who exercise a tyrannical influence over their sons can be read as constituting a subversive criticism of Spain and the power structure of Spanish society, as is evident in remarks made by some critics about Martina in Furtivos, whom they perceive as symbolizing the madre patria. According to Gavin Millar, Martina is a cruel matriarch, 'vicious, jealous and incestuous', who represents Spain at an allegorical level, recalling,

like Blanca in Camada negra, James Joyce's characterization of Ireland as 'an old sow that eats her own farrow'.³⁶ While this grotesque caricature of patriarchy conveyed a powerful message of subversion to many spectators when the films were released, viewed retrospectively from the stand-point of sexual politics the decision to replace 'el patriarcado confiado y estéril' by 'el matriarcado sórdido e intransigente' raises more questions than it answers.³⁷ For the depiction of old, unattractive and embittered women modelled on the stereotypes of the witch and the bitch (both Martina and Blanca have been compared with the witches of fairy tales; José Luis Borau comments that Lola Gaos 'tiene una cara, dicho entre nosotros, que da miedo, que impresiona, primitiva') betrays an innately suspect perception of the mother as an emasculating and devouring figure.³⁸

Martina (a character created for Lola Gaos after her impressive performance as Saturna in Buñuel's Tristana which had reminded Borau of the Goya painting of Saturn devouring his own sons), is portrayed as an unnatural mother who, alternating her behaviour between 'gently attentive "mothering" moods and murderous deviousness' controls and traps her son in an incestuous partnership which prevents him from developing to a natural stage of post-Oedipal independence.³⁹ Blanca in Camada negra also combines the function of the nurturing mother who attends to her sons' material needs, with the role of vigilant

carcelera who restricts their every movement and denies them the possibility of rebellion. Yet, for all their immense power over the lives of their offspring for all their fanaticism and brutality — Martina has no compunction in killing her son's wife when Milagros usurps her role as Angel's companion and sexual partner; Blanca imposes discipline in the home with an iron fist and sets Tatín on the path that will lead him to murder his girlfriend Rosa — these two matriarchs present many features which allow us to interpret them as projections of male fantasies about the mother. It is no coincidence that in both films the sexual aspect of the parent/child relationship is more fully developed than in El espíritu de la colmena and Cria cuervos, two films which hint at an Oedipal drama, through the girls' obsessive preoccupation and dependence on their fathers, but never express it overtly. Incest between fathers and daughters is rarely considered in Spanish cinema, whereas incest between mothers and sons, a less frequent relationship in most societies, is introduced quite unambiguously in Furtivos and insinuated in Camada negra where the eldest son, referred to as 'el vivo retrato' of Blanca's dead husband — 'an absent patriarch evoking shades of Franco' —, enjoys an ambivalent relationship with his mother which is based as much on sexual feelings as on a hunger for authority and power.⁴⁰

The idea that women, and not only mothers, are domineering figures who, like the she-dragon in Borau's

film La Sabina, castrate and devour their victims, is reinforced by several interpretations of the female characters in Furtivos and Camada negra. Payau and López in their book on Gutiérrez Aragón have remarked that

las mujeres de Gutiérrez Aragón son siempre más fuertes que sus correspondientes personajes masculinos, no tanto por estar mejor descritas como por tener una personalidad más desarrollada,⁴¹

while Miguel Marías observes apropos of Borau's cinema that

el núcleo de todas sus películas es una difícil y marginal relación amorosa, establecida siempre entre un hombre — joven o no — menos maduro y realista que la mujer de la que se enamora.⁴²

A consequence of the portrayal of powerful females who assert themselves over weaker or dependent males is that they have been perceived as a threat to men, since as Marsha Kinder points out, again 'it is the women who are the aggressors and who wield the sexual power'.⁴³ Not surprisingly, then, in Furtivos Milagros as well as Martina has struck more than one commentator as being an emasculating figure who traps Angel with her sexuality and who already boasts certain qualities that portend matriarchal power, including the ability to manipulate and control the sexual and social behaviour of a (child-like) adult. These interpretations clearly deny the positive role that Milagros has in the film, since it is precisely her sense of humour, playfulness and uninhibited sexuality that help Angel to develop

into a more rounded human being. But the ambiguity in the presentation of these female figures points to the ideological basis in which they are rooted, since however political in intention they reveal their director's own contradictions in regard to women and women's function in society.

The same could be said about Gutiérrez Aragón and his deployment of female characters in his films. Though intended as a compliment, Gutiérrez Aragón's opinion that the stories of his films

implican la dominación de lo femenino sobre lo masculino, de mujeres que arrollan con su superior personalidad o atractivo, a uno o varios hombres',⁴⁴

points to his fundamental misunderstanding about femininity, femaleness and the feminine principle. Far from representing a positive appraisal of women, Camada negra demonstrates the destructive consequences for society of a disproportionate weighting of the male principle in males and females. This confusion arises regardless of the fact that Camada negra purports to denounce the damaging effects that an authoritarian environment based on repression, subjugation and violence, has upon the individual, as is evident from Gutiérrez Aragón's insight that

a película en sí nació a partir del personaje del chico, es decir, del terrible deber que la sociedad te impone de hacerte un "hombre" que normalmente significa convertirse en un hijo de puta.⁴⁵

Counterpointed with this denunciation of male subordination to society's norms of masculinity and

men's social roles is the presentation of women as castrating individuals or teasers who unwittingly have only themselves to blame for their own victimization. Such is the case of Rosa, the young and sympathetic single mother, whose reaction to Tatín's attempted rape of the book-shop assistant is to laugh and taunt him but never to report it to the police.

In essence, Camada negra follows Tatín's crucial quest for manhood, a process which normally implies development to moral and sexual maturity and independence. However, within the domestic and ideological constraints of the film Tatín's quest is reduced to securing his acceptance as a fully-fledged member of the family clan and his acquisition of those male privileges which are considered desirable in his society. To achieve admission to the fascist group formed by his mother, brothers and male friends, Tatín has to fulfil the three conditions which according to Blanca the modern hero must satisfy: 'ayudar siempre al grupo, guardar el secreto y destruir aquello que más ama'.⁴⁶ The youngster, who has been raised in an abnormal environment of brutality and the repression of his feminine qualities, joins his peers in acts of destruction, and ends by killing his girlfriend, Rosa, who represents the "good" mother of fairy tales, in contrast to Blanca, who is an embodiment of the witch or "bad" mother of children's fantasies.⁴⁷ By transferring his filial emotions from his mother to Rosa, Tatín, like Angel before him in Furtivos, commits

matricide, even if this time only symbolically. This act of barbarism, which makes monsters out of innocent victims is, as Marsha Kinder points out, the terrible culmination of 'the chain of brutalization that passes from authority to subject, hunter to prey, and parent to child'.⁴⁸

Camada negra is the last of the films under review which recreates the different stages of a child's development prior to reaching an adult state. The prevalence of children in so many Spanish novels and films, and the central importance of the theme of growing-up, have been explained in many different ways. In the opinion of Paul Ilie, some of these authors chose to make young children and adolescents the protagonists of their works because

like a citizen without a voice, a child is free of responsibility, and he is entitled to misunderstand the rules and perhaps escape punishment. Yet children are often arbitrary victims of adult power.⁴⁹

For her part, Virginia Higginbotham agrees with Juan Goytisolo that the proliferation of children as narrators or central characters in post-war novels is due to the biographical circumstances of the authors who were children during the war. Marsha Kinder, in her seminal study of filmic representations of childhood under Franco, relates the recurrent portrayal of

precocious children who are both murderous monsters and poignant victims, and the stunted child-like adults who are obsessed with distorted visions of the past,⁵⁰

to the need felt by films directors of the time to express their own and many Spaniards' feelings of emasculation under Franco, because as she says

Whether male or female, the children of Franco must have felt impotent and repressed, identifying all forms of sexual expression with rebellion against the parental authorities in the family, church and State.⁵¹

In particular Kinder cites Borau and Saura as examples of directors who struggled to attain maturity and independence by rebelling against a repressive father — Franco — who kept his subjects in a child-like state of infantilism. But it was Victor Erice in El espíritu de la colmena who succeeded in giving the most accomplished cinematic expression to the impotence and frustration felt by generations of people in Spain, through his brilliantly intuitive adaptation of the story of Frankenstein, which

centr[ing] on an obsessive love/hate relationship between an austere father and a stunted child, is the perfect myth for the children of Franco.⁵²

Whatever each of the directors' original point of departure, childhood in these films fulfils a multiplicity of functions, not the least important of which is the presentation of children who, as Marsha Kinder says of Ana in Cría cuervos, demonstrate 'a dual capacity of being victim[s] of a hostile world and murderous monster[s] capable of patricide' and in some cases matricide.⁵³ These films also allowed their directors the chance to dispel certain naive views about childhood, such as the myth — already shattered

by Freud — that a child's first years are a period of innocence and happiness. Carlos Saura, talking about Cría cuervos, has commented that

I have never believed in the child's paradise. Childhood is a stage where nocturnal terror, fear of the unknown, loneliness, are present with at least the same intensity as the joy of living and that curiosity of which pedagogues talk so much.⁵⁴

In fact, as we have already observed, the children in these four films are imprisoned within a harsh and oppressive family environment and, in the case of the main characters in El espíritu de la colmena and Cría cuervos, deliberately close their eyes on an unbearable reality in order to escape into an alternative fantasy world. The four protagonists, moreover, are captured at transitional stages of their development, the two little girls at the moment of passage from infancy to adolescence and the two young boys when they are on the threshold to adulthood. Like many heroes and heroines in myths and fairy tales, they have embarked on a process of self-discovery, in which they are trying to make sense of their chaotic existences and struggling to find their identities.

K.K. Ruthven has reviewed existing definitions and interpretations of myth, and considered the different purposes that it has served to fulfil throughout the centuries. Essentially, Ruthven wonders whether myth is an

expression of our freedom to invent alternative realities, or is it merely an agent of those powerful forces (personal and traumatic, or racial and primordial) which determine our lives?⁵⁵

According to many authors, myths — like legends, folk and fairy tales — satisfy a primordial desire to make sense of the world and to understand and adapt to external reality. For Freud and Jung, myths have a more limited function which is to provide wish-fulfilment, in much the same manner as dreams, fantasies and other workings of the unconscious do. For the Freudian analyst Bruno Bettelheim, who has exhaustively studied the structure and meaning of fairy tales, these narratives 'sugges[t] a voyage into the interior of our mind, into the realm of unawareness and the unconscious', in search of a resolution for tensions and anxieties, after which the individual subject may attain self-knowledge and independence.⁵⁶

As already noted, myths and fairy tales are an important source of narrative material in El espíritu de la colmena, Cría cuervos, Furtivos and Camada negra. Furtivos is a loose adaptation of the Hansel and Gretel story (also chosen by Gutiérrez Aragón as the subject for his graduation project at the School of Cinematography). In the film we find a forest which, as Bruno Bettelheim writes, symbolizes 'the dark, hidden, near-impenetrable world of our unconscious', a witch — Martina —, a king — the governor, whom Martina in one instance calls "Mi rey" — and two lost children.⁵⁷ Camada negra also incorporates elements of the fairy

tale, relating the adventures of a character who, like the mythical hero or the prince of fairy tales, has to undergo several trials in order to prove his courage and win the hand of a princess. The unlikely heroine of the film is a young unmarried mother who behaves at times like Snow White (for example in the scene where she tries to guess where each of the brothers sleep) and at others like Goldilocks. Like these precursors, Rosa becomes the victim of her own curiosity which in her case leads to a violent and unjust death.

El espíritu de la colmena and Cría cuervos, imaginative recreations of the mysterious world of childhood, draw likewise on a number of features of the fairy tale. El espíritu de la colmena opens with the words 'Erase una vez...' and a series of drawings which, as in a children's story, prefigure the narrative of the film. Both El espíritu de la colmena and Cría cuervos include songs which derive from a long tradition of music for children; the sisters in the two films repeatedly tell stories, in the dual sense of narratives and lies, whilst in Cría cuervos, Ana's mother likes to tell her the story of Almendrita.

But the most important features which these films borrow from myth and fairy tale are those which coalesce around the central characters. As in most mythical quests, the protagonists of the films set out to discover themselves and to acquire greater knowledge about the world at large. Also, as in many fairy tales, the characters in these works are either only children

or the youngest members of a family, and they have to undergo their ordeals in solitude and with no external help. While by no means simple or stupid characters, as is often the case in fairy tales, the two girls in El espíritu de la colmena and Cría cuervos and Angel in Furtivos, are introverted and reserved, and their faces betray little if any emotion. They are indeed at a crucial stage of a personal rite of passage. However, whereas in the conventional fairy tale the characters see their quest through to a satisfactory conclusion summed up in the saying 'and they all lived happily ever after', here they search in darkness and, as John Hopewell notes 'unlike in fairy tales, there is no happy final marriage or miraculous resurrection'.⁵⁸ Locked in a situation of hopelessness and denied any meaningful future, they are paradigmatic examples of arrested development and the products of a perverted history which is at once that of the family and the state. The Children of Franco will retain the scars of their harmful upbringing for years to come.

CHAPTER FOUR

POST-FRANCO CINEMA AND THE REJECTION OF STEREOTYPES

I The Political Transition and Spanish Cinema

Within a few years of Franco's death in 1975, the Francoist system which had appeared until that time to be rock solid disintegrated, bringing the long decades of dictatorship to an unforeseen conclusion. Since then, changes in the political and social spheres of Spanish life have been plentiful and fast-moving. The initial period of uncertainty, generally known as la transición and covering the years 1976 - when Adolfo Suárez took over control of the government from Carlos Arias Navarro - to 1982, when the Socialists won the elections, was dominated by a composite sense of disenchantment - the political situation left people unsure of how they should react to the new realities of Spain -, insecurity - rising crime levels, high unemployment - and scepticism about the changes supposedly taking place in the country. After 1982, however, the Socialists consolidated their power, and democracy - still threatened even in 1981 with Tejero's attempted coup - took root in Spain for the first time since the short period of the Republic.

Spanish cinema, reacting to this political,

economic and social climate, has tended to reflect the changes and uncertainties of the life of the nation. For the film industry, the economic recession affecting not only Spain but the majority of the Western countries, has done little to relieve the almost permanent state of crisis in which it has always existed. The Miró Law of 1983 sought to solve the difficulties facing Spanish cinema by substantially increasing state funding of films (giving up to 50% of a film's budget in advance), and by establishing new quotas favouring the screening of Spanish films against foreign products, a measure designed above all to counterbalance the immense influence of American cinema in the country. Another measure taken to help the production of Spanish films was a series of agreements reached with Spanish Television to co-finance native products, which would allow Televisión Española to show the films on the pequeña pantalla after no more than a two-year interval. Lastly, the Instituto de Cine has keenly promoted Spanish cinema abroad through Film Festivals, seasons of Spanish films in different countries, etc.¹

One of the direct consequences of the economic crisis confronting the cinema and the financial support given it by the State, is the recent trend in literary adaptations of nineteenth and twentieth century works, chosen sometimes out of a desire to seek to explore specific areas of Spanish history but also as a guarantee of quality, with film directors and

administrators cashing in on the prestige of the authors concerned: La colmena (1982), based on the novel by Camilo José Cela, and Los santos inocentes (1983), an adaptation of Miguel Delibes' book, both directed by Mario Camús, and Martín Santos' Tiempo de silencio, made by Vicente Aranda in 1982, are just three examples of literary-based films.

The death of Franco, the desmembramiento of the Francoist State and the lifting of censorship in 1977 also marked the start of a series of films which have examined without restrictions the period prior to the Civil War, the confrontation itself and the post-war years, in an effort to review critically the past. Many directors with a long tradition of film-making have indeed wanted to explore the past — and, in many cases, their early lives — in this way, sometimes, as in the case of Berlanga, finally producing a film, La vaquilla (1984), conceived almost twenty years earlier. Mario Camús' Los días del pasado (1977), Erice's El sur (1983), Gutiérrez Aragón's Demonios en el jardín (1982), Chávarri's Las bicicletas son para el verano (1984) and Fernán Gómez's Viaje a ninguna parte (1987), testify to this interest which has continued well into the eighties.

Much more relevant to my thesis are three films made in the immediate post-Franco era, which combine a retrospective viewpoint with an examination of marriages, families and family life. I shall refer specifically to Retrato de familia made by Antonio

iménez Rico in 1976, La guerra de papá by Antonio Mercero in 1977, and Función de noche by Josefina Molina in 1981. As a complement to these films which in a sense can be considered typical case histories of traditional marriages and studies of the vicissitudes of the family, I intend to look at two films made by Pilar Miró, one of the few women directors in Spain to have achieved relative success in the post-Franco period, thanks mainly to the fact of making some of the most controversial films produced during the transición. Though not representing conventional types of families, Miró's films — like those of the other director also included in this chapter, Eloy de la Iglesia — discuss the collapse of the traditional family unit and the difficulties encountered by men and women as they try to find alternatives to marriage and the family. Both of these film-makers, together with the creators of the so-called Nueva Comedia Madrileña which will be the focus of the last part of this thesis, form part of a group of Spanish directors who, from completely different positions, aiming at different audiences and inspired by different goals, have done most to expose the contradictions inherent in post-Franco Spain through their critical examination of traditional patterns of family life, their questioning of gender identity and their subversive attitude towards pre-conceived notions of sexuality.

The New Comedies above all, in the hands of young directors and aiming at predominantly young audiences,

are films which could easily be renamed "comedies of the sexes", since they are centred on couples, married or not, whose concerns about personal relationships match those already indicated in my introduction where I highlighted the trend in Spanish society towards creating alternatives to traditional heterosexual monogamous families. The nuevas comedias madrileñas have included some of the most successful Spanish films of recent years, both in terms of awards and prizes given in Spain and abroad and in terms of popularity with audiences, a fact which in itself seems to confirm the evidence provided at the box-office that *d* are more interested in films dealing with the present than those set in the past. As John Hopewell argues:

The Spanish cinema is now faced with a generation gap. The average director is around forty-five and takes his inspiration from his childhood in the 40s and 50s and his experience of the 60s. The average Spanish filmgoer is some twenty years younger and takes his cultural models largely from America in the 80s.²

Personal and family relationships are an inevitable part of this new set of cultural relations.

II A Re-evaluation of Francoism

Retrato de familia, based on Delibes' novel Mi idolatrado hijo Sisí, is a significant work to include at this point. Set in the months prior to the start of the Civil War, it centres on a family which typifies the conventional, Catholic family that supported the

regime, sometimes out of conviction, at other times because of the benefits to be obtained from proximity to those in power. The family unit of this film comprises the father, Cecilio, an iconoclast of no definite political or religious ideas, who to ensure his livelihood as a successful businessman allies himself with the conservative section of the population — the army officers, the local capitalists, the falangistas. A sympathetic figure to some extent — for example, he voted for the Republic in the first elections, objects to the futility of war and rejects Nationalist propaganda proclaiming justice and order — he proves, under closer scrutiny, to be a typical machista and, even though benevolent, a patriarch.

Retrato de familia, very much a male-centred film, presents us with a range of mother figures, the most important of which are Adela, a devoutly religious woman, sexually frigid and subordinated to her husband — she is from a lower social class and has little education — who to compensate for the emptiness of her life overprotects and indulges her son, Sisi, and Paulina, Cecilio's mistress who ends up also as Sisi's own lover. Significantly, both these women are presented as opposite images to that of Cecilio's own mother, a domineering matriarch who imposes, or would like to impose, her social and moral ideas on her son and those around him. Adela and Paulina, in a dichotomy typical of nineteenth-century attitudes, represent the two different kinds of women men choose to share their

lives: a marriage partner to provide children, domestic care and social stability and a sexual companion to satisfy those physical needs wives are not expected to fulfil. The contrast between these two women is apparent throughout the film in terms of looks — one is fair, the other dark —, physical appearance — Adela, conforming to middle class taste, wears sober and pale colours, while Paulina has a preference for bright reds and yellows — and environment — the traditional bourgeois house of Adela, spacious, excessively tidy and neat, is the antithesis of Paulina's small but cosy apartment where she meets both Cecilio and Sisí, crammed with all sorts of mementos (photographs, little ornaments) from her past and adorned with pots of geraniums and a cage where she keeps a bird.

Cecilio's different attitude to Adela and Paulina is manifested primarily in some overtly explicit scenes of love making. Adela, whom at various moments in Retrato de familia we see rejecting her husband's sexual advances, is brutally forced to endure sexual intercourse with Cecilio when he decides they ought to have a child. Lying spread-eagled and naked on the floor, Adela submits passively to her impregnation, a humiliating experience which not surprisingly leaves her unwilling to tolerate her husband's proximity from then on and even leads her to implore Cecilio — as she experiences the trauma and agony of giving birth — to spare her having more children. Paulina, on the other hand, a sensual singer who has given up her career and

interests in order to await Cecilio's unpredictable visits, is the object of his tender endearment and receives the love he cannot offer his distant and unexpressive wife. By separating women in this manner, the film consciously reproduces a typical situation encountered in many conventional marriages, where wives and mistresses co-exist for the benefit of a peaceful and enduring married life. In Retrato de familia (and many other films made throughout the period under examination fall into this category), the other woman in a man's life — whether mistress, lover or prostitute — is presented as warmer, more loving, sympathetic and understanding than the lawful wife, a telling comment both on men's expectations of women and on the limitations inherent in the very structure of marriage.³

La guerra de papá, also loosely based on a Delibes novel, in this case El principe destronado, is a film which shares the interest of many other seventies works focussing on children and which try to look at the world of adult relationships through children's eyes. The peculiarity of La guerra de papá is that in almost documentary fashion it presents the adult world as seen by the endearing Quique, a bright and perceptive boy from a middle-class family, not yet four years old. The film, which starts with the caption 'Un día cualquiera del mes de marzo de 1964' in fact records a day (probably the day after an American plane accidentally dropped a bomb at Palomares) in the life

of Quique, from the moments when he first wakes up to the time when he goes to sleep, and it shows the ways in which a child, any child, is conditioned and formed by family ideas, attitudes and behaviour.

The director, who at all times reminds the spectator that he is telling the story from the point of view of the child — Antonio Mercero shoots fairly often from a low angle position (more or less from the height of Quique) and at one moment goes so far as to present the action through a glass ashtray which Quique puts in front of his eyes —, never allows the audience to know more than the child could know, and therefore interrupts conversations the moment he leaves the room where people are talking or cuts off the sound of voices and music on the radio when he moves to a different part of the house. In this way, like Quique, we experience life in bits and pieces, partially understanding certain things, misreading complex acts and conferring meanings on others which occasionally do not correspond with reality.

The indoctrination to which Quique is exposed reflects that expected from the average traditional family in Franco's Spain. From his father, Pablo, an ex-army man and Alferez Provisional, who is now a successful business man (played by Hector Alterio, whose physical presence here — as in Cría cuervos — is the very image of the Francoist, even down to the stylish moustache he sports) he learns to be arrogant, condescending and despotic towards women ('Qué

tonterías les cuentas a los niños,' is a typical reaction to the sometimes foolish comments which Pablo hears his children repeat like parrots, and 'A las mujeres les echas maíz y se van a picar a la mierda' sums up his attitude to women), authoritarian (in regard to the eldest boy, a teenager, he says: 'Sus ideas, si las tiene, serán las mías, digo yo'), and sympathetic to militaristic and fascist ideas (The Civil War 'fue una causa santa' according to Pablo who keeps his gun, together with a Spanish flag and pictures of José Antonio and Franco, in his study). From his mother — played by Teresa Gimpera, who took the part of Teresa in El espíritu de la colmena—, a contradictory figure who though conservative in her religious and moral ideas has a Republican past, Quique acquires a negative attitude to sexuality (she inculcates in the boys a fear of masturbation and ignores any question about their sexual organs) and an unhealthy obsession with sin, death and hell, all of them ideas which, if not actually taught him by his mother, she does nothing to dispel. Even though she is maternal, caring and more politically liberal-minded than her husband, Teresa can only project the image of a victim, being trapped in a loveless marriage whose duties she fulfils by producing yet another child long after she has ceased to care for her husband, and by bringing up their six children with virtually no support from Pablo who in typical male fashion only appears at meal times. A submissive and impotent woman,

her position of inferiority vis-à-vis men will be reinforced in the eyes of the child by her comparison with the other female characters in La guerra de papá: Vito, the warm-hearted but uneducated maid who is abandoned — if only temporarily — by her boyfriend when he leaves to do his military service in Africa, and Domi, the middle-aged nanny, an ignorant and superstitious woman who captivates the children's imagination with gruesome stories of violence and death.

Quique, caught, sometimes literally — as in the scene where seated between his parents he must hear them abusing each other — between two conflicting sides, will have to decide later on, as his eldest brother is already doing, which of the two role models to follow: the one proposed by his mother, based on love, tenderness, compassion and understanding, or the one offered by his father, inspired by ideas of total obedience, respect and subordination to figures of authority, and committed to the obliteration of feelings.

Many of the irreconcilable ideas about male/female positions fostered by society and inculcated so deeply as to appear law, are encountered in Función de noche, the first feature film Josefina Molina was able to direct in eleven years after making Vera, un cuento cruel in 1973. Función de noche is a multi-layered film which, mixing reality and fiction and projecting one fiction within another, presents the story of a

marriage through a character, Lola Herrera, who plays herself in the film, as well as playing, in a stage production within the film, the character of Carmen, the widow in Delibes' Cinco horas con Mario. According to Josefina Molina, her intention in making the film was not only to record Lola Herrera's own marriage crisis, but also to 'escribir un film sobre la mujer, sobre nuestra generación, sobre la realidad española'.⁴ Thus, taking as a triple starting point the actress's personal experiences (of Lola Herrera the director says, 'era víctima de una educación, de un sistema de vida'), her own desire to 'reflejar un punto de vista moral sobre mi generación',⁵ and the version of Cinco horas con Mario which she had already put on the stage, Josefina Molina offers in Función de noche a reflection on marriage and on married life, on the creation of families, on the problems of marital co-existence, on conjugal infidelity, and many other topics related to the couple.

In the film, Lola and her ex-husband, the actor Daniel Dicenta, meet and discuss their life together and their eventual separation, in the restricted space of the theatre dressing room where Lola is waiting for the performance of Cinco horas to start. Even though both of them at the beginning give out signals of mutual distrust — Lola, because her husband left her years previously to cope alone with their two children, and Daniel, because by escaping from a marriage which gave him no satisfaction he left himself open to her

recriminations —, as they review in ever greater detail and depth the various moments in their lives they learn that, however guilty each of them individually may have been, the ultimate reason for their failure is to be found in their education and up-bringing, in the ideas that were drilled into them as children and adolescents about the opposite sex, and sexuality and married life.

By the end of an exhausting and soul-searching evening which brings them closer than they ever felt in all the years they spent together, Lola and Daniel realize that both have been victims of a society which dictated for them their ideas and behaviour and which forced them to conform to roles and positions which in the last analysis have been detrimental to their adult lives. Thus Lola, educated within the restricted and narrow-minded milieu of provincial Valladolid, was brought up to consider her future functions as wife and mother in ignorance of male needs and desires, and her expectations of men's superiority and omniscience clashed with Daniel's limitations and short-comings, both on a sexual and a personal plane. Her feelings of shame over a lack of education for which she was not responsible, her concealment of her frigidity and her long-hidden bitterness over her husband's infidelity ('Yo siempre he sabido cuando me engañabas'), all conspired to pull her further apart from Daniel who for his part is devastated to learn that for years she faked her orgasms and never suspected the extent of his jealousy about her work and her social life: 'Yo, como

hombre, he estado tremendamente celoso de lo que te rodeaba'.

Not surprisingly, Lola and Daniel's marriage collapses, under the strain of these misunderstandings, suspicions and concealments, and now in middle age they must bear the knowledge that they have wasted their lives, and lost their hopes and dreams, in part, inevitably, because of their own limitations and defects, but to a greater extent because the society in which they lived still encouraged conformity to out-dated moral traditionss, a cult of guardar las apariencias (what better place than a theatre and a mirrored dressing room to criticize false appearances and preten es?), and a compliance with set ideas and values.

III Pilar Miró and the Exploration of Love Relationships

While Retrato de familia, La guerra de papá and Función de noche consciously raise issues previously discussed in relation to many other films mentioned in this thesis — e.g. the supremacy of men in a culture which automatically confers superiority on the males because of their social and economic value, the lack of trust and understanding between couples, the double standard applied to men, particularly with regard to their sexual behaviour, the assumed inferiority of women who, having internalized their own devalued

position, all too readily accept a secondary role in the family and in society — the films of Pilar Miró in addition to acknowledging that these facts have been the cause of previous failures in relationships between couples, also introduce characters who, in rejecting such relationships, nevertheless feel unable to find others with which to replace them.

Gary Cooper que estás en los cielos (1981) and Hablamos esta noche (1982) are thematically similar films which share a particular interest in characters who represent a generation of Spaniards who have grown up in the shadow of the old Dictator and assumed positions of responsibility in the new democracy. The two works, in fact, were conceived together as overlapping examinations of the public and private dilemmas of men and women in a country which had rapidly been transformed from an underdeveloped agricultural nation into a financial power with nuclear pretensions, the creation of a nuclear power station indeed being the pretext of the narrative of Hablamos esta noche.

Gary Cooper, a film which Pilar Miró made while under the threat of a prison sentence following the banning by the Civil Guard of her work El crimen de Cuenca (1979) for alleged denigration of that para-military force, is an introspective and semi-autobiographical film centred on a mature, independent and professional woman, Andrea Soriana, an alter ego of the director who like her is a television

producer. Gary Cooper which more than any other of Miró's works illustrates her view that 'escribir un libro, hacer una película es, de algún modo, confesarte, poner algo de ti', is a highly personal and reflective film, very much in the contemporary manner of women writers (like Kate Millet) and directors (like Margareta von Trotta) who have tended to produce fictional works based on their own experiences.⁶

The heroine of the film, Andrea, is unexpectedly shaken on the threshold of middle-age by the discovery that she has a malignant tumor, an intimation of her own mortality which prompts her to finish her work in progress — an adaptation of Jean Paul Sartre's Huis Clos — and to review her private affairs, looking back all the while for some clues in the past which might explain her present predicament. Throughout Gary Cooper, therefore, we observe Andrea in different circumstances, roles and moods as she tries to understand her position as career woman, lover, daughter and friend.

It is somehow a little simplistic to see Gary Cooper, as some critics have done, merely as an exploration of the traumatic last days of a solitary and uncompromising professional who, refusing to tell her family and friends about her imminent operation, nevertheless expects sympathy and understanding from all around her.⁷ It is certainly true that in several scenes the film is constructed with a view to exploiting the spectator's feelings of pity towards

Andrea, who is perceived consequently as a woman deprived of fulfilment: in the professional sphere, because she has been prevented from bringing to fruition a cherished project, an adaptation of Emilia Pardo Bazàn's Los pazos de Ulloa; emotionally, because of her failure to establish a lasting relationship based on trust and affection; and as a woman, because the operation to remove the cancer will forever deny her the opportunity to be a mother. The melodramatic light in which Andrea is depicted in those scenes when, alone at home after a difficult and frustrating day she prepares to take a bath or gazes nostalgically at a toy soldier and some Gary Cooper photographs — mementos which she keeps on her desk — or curls up in a foetal position in a rocking chair, are accentuated by the romantic music (particularly an aria from the opera Werther) and by the use of soft focus and close ups of her face. Those scenes, however, are contrasted with others in which Andrea sees herself, or is seen by others, in a critical light, when the director captures her coldness, rigidity and aloofness by shooting her from a distance, a solitary woman in jeans, without make-up, her hair collected in a pony tail, her face partially concealed by sun glasses and disfigured by a frown.

The final moments of the film when Andrea is visited by Bernardo, a former boy friend, in hospital, reinforce our critical response to her frequently edgy and self-defensive behaviour, which according to

Bernardo has always characterized her relationship with colleagues and friends. Bernardo himself in these scenes, the very image of the equanimity, self-possession and trustworthiness that Andrea has tried all along to find in men, identifies her contradictory nature most accurately: afraid to display any of those attributes especially associated with "feminine" women — passivity, dependency, sentimentality, desire for protection — Andrea, he suggests, has taken cover behind a facade of assuredness, determination and cold reasoning. This is not to say that Andrea, whose 'masculine' behaviour inescapably recalls the Greek origins of her name, is not portrayed on many occasions as a very feminine woman. Those moments, however, tend to be relegated to scenes when she is alone at home and can let her public mask slip without fear of appearing frightened, soft or insecure. Thus it is within the safe enclosure of her small but warm and comforting house that Andrea examines her naked body, lets her long hair down and wears gowns in bright oranges and blues.

The aggressiveness, competitive spirit and emotional detachment which she otherwise cultivates mirror that of many contemporary women who, faced with the dilemma of continuing to depend on their men or finding a life of their own, reject their femininity, throwing over-board not only old-fashioned ideas (passivity, dependence) but also positive feminine values (tenderness, demonstration of emotions) in order

to gain a toehold in a masculine world. Ultimately, therefore, Gary Cooper, like Miró's subsequent film Hablamos esta noche — a study of a male who adheres too rigidly to a masculine code of behaviour — examines the doubts, contradictions and ambiguities of men as well as women, caught at a transitional moment in history when social, political and sexual matters are still not clearly defined. Many scenes in Gary Cooper refer explicitly to contemporary life in Spain, drawing attention, among other things, to the political changes occurring in the country — in contrast to the secrecy practised during the Franco era, Andrea's journalist boy friend, Mario, has immediate access to Government information on security matters; to social instability — Andrea and Mario's final meeting takes place at the scene of a terrorist attack; and to the still precarious working conditions of women in traditional male institutions — Andrea has to deal mainly with men in her job and listen to their machista remarks, like that of a technician who identifies a female colleague simply by noting the fact that '¡Tiene un culo...!'.

In this sense Andrea is a character conditioned by her education and up-bringing and by the social pressures of her time, who rebels against the restrictions imposed on her by her family, her religion, her class and her gender but who is finally unable to resolve the contradictions within herself. She is a woman of modern ideas who lives on her own, enjoys financial independence and does not feel tied

down by legal or moral obligations (she is not married and has no qualms about having an abortion for an unwanted pregnancy). She is nevertheless still influenced by her family and class background — her small apartment reflects her continuing bourgeois concern for order, cleanliness, harmony and good taste, something that is perhaps readable in this context as a sign of her bourgeois indoctrination — and retains many of the ideas instilled in her as a young woman.

The greatest area of conflict in the film is in fact that which refers to Andrea's attitude towards men and her ideal relationship with them, where her attraction to new modes of behaviour clashes with her inability to discard traditional notions of male/female roles. This tension is above all evident in her affair with the trendy, hard-working and ambitious Mario who, as played by the English actor Jon Finch, is the antithesis of Andrea's fantasy image of a man. The film does not show any scene from their domestic life together since Andrea's plans to hold a private conversation with Mario always fail because of his professional commitments. However, another relationship, that of a couple who are their colleagues and friends, throws some light on the nature of their problems. Julio and Pilar, just like Andrea and Mario, are a young professional couple who share a house and are trying to reorganize their lives after Julio's separation from his wife. In a tense scene where Andrea visits Julio who has fallen out with Pilar, he

complains about the typical problems — lack of communication, disagreements, misunderstandings — which have always beset conventional couples, accusing Pilar of still behaving, in spite of her modern and liberated ideas, like a 'pequeña burguesa'. Praising Andrea for her successful transformation into a revolutionary "new woman", he is taken aback by her confession of uncertainty and confusion and disconcerted by her telling accusation 'Vosotros también sois pequeño-burgueses, exclusivistas y contradictorios'.

Acknowledging failure in open relationships with men of her own generation and ^{of} similar ideas, Andrea looks to the past and dreams of a more mature and, she thinks, more reliable man. Finding the box of mementos which she had kept at her mother's house, Andrea experiences again a longing for a more conventional virile type of man, symbolized in the toy soldier, the love letters from Bernardo and the old photographs of movie stars including Gary Cooper, Kirk Douglas, Burt Lancaster and William Holden, traditional models of masculinity as projected by Hollywood.

It is highly paradoxical that by the end of the film Andrea should prefer to the modern and youthful Mario a father-figure embodied in the person of the middle-aged Gary Cooper, whose role in High Noon is paradigmatic of her own predicament. Her attraction to a kind of masculinity we assume she rejected in the past — after all, she had hidden those items which reminded her of her father (a soldier under Franco),

her boy-friend and her fantasy heroes — is a pointed comment on the failure of new ideas to satisfy women's expectations. Andrea's choice of Bernardo to accompany her in the hours before her operation leaves a big question mark over the possibility of her ever achieving an intimate, fulfilling and understanding relationship with a member of the opposite sex. Bernardo as a character, and the actor, Fernando Delgado, who plays him, are too closely associated with the past to hold out great hope or promise for the future.

Hablamos esta noche, made the same year as the triumphal election of the Socialist Party, contains endless references to the political, social and economic situation of Spain at the beginning of the nineteen eighties, and touches on an issue which has sparked off much controversy in contemporary society, the creation of nuclear power stations. It is therefore a film which explores a world dominated largely by men and associated with advanced technology, high finance and business transactions. Even though Miró in Hablamos esta noche is interested in exposing the corrupt deals, public manipulation and cover-ups which characterize an industry capable of generating a tremendous amount of political and social power and economic benefits, her main concern is to investigate the behaviour of the main character of the film, Victor, the man in charge of building the power station.

In Hablamos esta noche it is significant that

Miró presents a male character who is perceived as a child of his time, a man conditioned by his past and unsettled by the contingencies of life in contemporary Spanish society. Of particular interest to the viewer are his relationships with women, in an age in which, as the director observes,

Me parece que ahora la mujer está más segura de lo que quiere. Y lo que quiere es buscar su propia identidad que nunca la ha tenido, pero lo sabe y busca el camino. Quizá esto repercute en el hombre en el sentido contrario, por eso está tan desconcertado. Antes estaba seguro de su rol, ahora no sabe muy bien cuál es su meta, eso hace que sea contradictorio.⁸

In the film, Victor, the aggressive and competitive director of the nuclear power station at Almonacil, emerges as a kind of male counterpart of Andrea in Gary Cooper, in as much as he too is a character moulded by the events and ideas of the past. For all his professional adaptability to the changes of his time, he remains tied to traditional patterns of masculine behaviour and is consequently unable to live up to the expectations of those individuals engaged in the creation of a new and progressive society. Self-centered and conceited, and lacking the humanizing qualities which redeemed Andrea, Victor remains an emotional cripple, like so many high achievers in competitive societies, whom Marilyn French characterizes thus:

The effect of maintaining these three qualities — control or its appearance in every situation; suppression or repression of emotion; and extreme competitiveness engendered by fear and mistrust — is to

cont./ isolate men in a solitary confinement of the emotions ... Some men become emotionally paralyzed, their emotional awareness having atrophied to the point where they can no longer feel their feelings.⁹

Both at work and in his personal life, Victor — an ironic name for such a flawed character — is, in the words of one of his friends, 'un hijo de puta', seemingly incapable of acting in a disinterested and generous manner, who has directed all his efforts to the pursuit of professional and public renown. Thus, we are led to believe that he was primarily responsible for the break-up of his marriage to María Rosa, a woman who not surprisingly has found in Hans, a young Dutchman with two daughters, all those qualities — companionship, dedication to his family, attentiveness — which Victor precisely lacked; Victor has no qualms about sexually cheating on Julia, his girlfriend of long standing; he hits the peace-loving chemistry teacher, who is his son's homosexual partner; and lies unashamedly to family, friends and colleagues, so as to appear always in the best light.

Miró's assertion that Hablamos esta noche eschews examination of the past is only partly true since, as in the case of Gary Cooper, the film makes implicit allusions to the Franco era by featuring a range of characters whose age and experience identify them unequivocally as the products of the Franco regime. One among many devices which Miró uses to link her characters with their past is to concentrate on

those relationships which, because of their intimacy and duration, elucidate the ideological determination of the protagonists' psychology and personalities. Such is the function of Luis María's friendship with Victor in the film. As a friend of Victor's since childhood, Luis María possesses privileged insight into his inner world and personal history; thus, it is through Luis María that we hear of Victor's confrontations with his father, of his juvenile rebellion against Francoist ideas — manifested in his readings of Sartre and Camus — and of the mysterious suicide of his sister, Charo.

Luis María too, whom Victor describes in one scene as 'un poeta frustrado', is presented in the film as the antithesis of Victor, a family man who drinks to drown the memory of three men who died because of his negligence. He is, moreover, communicative and open-minded and stands in a dual relation of comparison and contrast with Victor, of whose other self he is also a projection, hence his death at the end of the film. He is not, of course, the only man in the film to act as a foil for Victor, whose aggressive nature, emotional detachment and tactless insensibility exemplify some of the worst attributes of the macho man. Victor is also unfavourably compared with Claudio, his son, a tender, softly-spoken, music-loving youngster; with the chemistry teacher, who is the opposite of the stereotyped effeminate gay, being both strong and science orientated and an enthusiast,

Mirò herself, of opera; and with Hans, who is presented as a model "new man", understanding, open-minded and caring towards women and children.

In this sense, Hablamos esta noche is not simply an investigation of an individual representative of the male sex, but more to the point, a probing into the conditioning of masculinity and a warning about the damaging effects of a rigid adherence to a traditional male code of behaviour. Without in the least neglecting the position of women, either in their relationships with one another or with the men who share their lives as husbands or sons, lovers or friends, Hablamos esta noche gives prominence to its male figures in order to discuss crucial issues of masculinity which the Feminist debate has raised in recent decades. In the final analysis, the film reveals the existence of a crisis of masculinity at every level of human experience. Victor's personal inadequacies, which include a marked reluctance to face truths about himself, reflect his obstinate refusal to admit that there is a fault in the nuclear plant for which he is professionally responsible. Given his ultimate failure as a professional and private individual, an early scene in which Victor had met with his father after a lengthy separation acquires a relevance not discernible at the time. Their re-union in the cemetery, where they come to collect the remains of Charo — for whose unexplained suicide we are led to believe Victor was partly to blame — casts light on Victor's personality

and on the fate of all men who follow too rigidly traditional notions of masculinity. The image of the gentle but lonely elderly father — played by Alfredo Mayo, the virile and conformist male character of, among other films Raza and La caza — brings to mind previous images of an arrogant, authoritarian and self-righteous father who, as stated in Hablamos esta noche by Luis María, sought to impose on his son his own traditional and reactionary ideas. Victor, not so lucky as his son, who, with his mother's support and with the help of a new social ambience, has managed to reject the stereotype of the macho man — hence his acceptance of his homosexuality, which his father predictably views with horror and condemnation — has become a carbon-copy of the man whom he most hated when he was a younger and idealistic person. The identical isolation and rejection which the two fathers suffer by those nearest and dearest to them, is the price they must pay for their short-sightedness, intransigence and callousness.

IV Eloy de la Iglesia and the Rejection of Patriarchal Norms

In the context of Spanish cinema of the late seventies and early eighties, Eloy de la Iglesia has become an indispensable point of reference for a proper understanding of the development of the industry since the death of Franco, inasmuch as his work provides a

copy-book illustration of the changes which have taken place in Spanish society since the restoration of democracy. At the same time de la Iglesia's work serves as a yard-stick for measuring the extent of the evolution of Spanish cinema since the end of the dictatorship, and as a focal point in the debate about the respective functions of popular and quality cinema in Spain. It is unquestionably true that the films of de la Iglesia have normally been successful at the box-office, a fact which explains his almost non-stop production of at least one film per year for more than a decade, at a time when other directors have had to rely on state grants to make their films infrequently. Notwithstanding his popular appeal, critical reaction to this director has been unflaggingly negative, as the following statement taken from the pages of Dirigido por testifies:

No sé si Eloy de la Iglesia ha proporcionado alguno de los placeres más salvajes y desalmados del cine español, pero sin lugar a dudas, los más aberrantes y esperpénticos — a sensu contrario — se le deben a él.¹⁰

On the whole, critics have complained about serious flaws in his films, dismissing the majority as opportunistic, scandalous and facile works produced for mass consumption and addressed to people who are easily titillated by the depiction of drug abuse, sex and violence.

I propose to examine several of de la Iglesia's films which, though constituting only a small

proportion of his total output of some twenty films at the time of writing, are nevertheless representative of the style and preoccupations of this most individual and controversial of Spanish film directors; in addition, they are works which have a particular relevance to my thesis, focussing as they do on couples and families. The films selected are: La otra alcoba (1975), El diputado (1978), Navajeros (1980), Colegas (1982), El pico (1983) and El pico II (1984). A brief description of each work will draw attention to recurrent patterns of style and themes and help to place in perspective the three issues which consistently and only with small variations appear again and again in de la Iglesia's films, challenging accepted notions of sexual, political and social behaviour: the patriarchal family, heterosexual, monogamous relationships and social rebellion. In all of these issues, as we will see, Eloy de la Iglesia adopts an uncompromising and, from some points of view, unacceptable position. They are nevertheless the most damning denunciation in Spain to date of the institutions of the State — the Army, the Police, the Law, the Media — and the most radical indictment of the traditional structure of the family which relies on patterns of subordination and power, obedience to figures of authority (wives to husbands and children to parents), procreation, and the socialization of individuals for their future integration into a political system which, democratic or not, still divides people according to their class,

financial position, gender and sexuality.

La otra alcoba, the first of the films under examination, takes two couples of different social standing, one representing the upper middle class and the other the proletariat. Diana and Marcos are a rich husband and wife who enjoy all the comforts money can buy but who have been unable to have any children because of Marcos' sterility; Juan and his girlfriend Charo, two young people from a working-class background, are saving up money in order to marry and start a family. The lives of these two couples become intertwined when Diana chooses Juan — a mechanic at the local petrol station where she takes her car to be serviced — to be the lover who could give her the child she desperately wants. Her decision is the starting point for the disruption of both relationships, and the film reaches its climax when Diana, now pregnant by Juan, rejects him and persuades Marcos to accept the child for the implicit reason that it is a small price to pay to save a marriage which is both beneficial to his career and a source of financial security for her. Juan, the rejected lover, is pardoned by Charo, his girlfriend, who allows their relationship to resume at the point where it broke off. But this artificial harmony is shattered in a reversal of the expected happy ending when Juan is needlessly beaten up by a gang sent by Diana's husband to ensure his silence, and Diana loses the baby. The film ends with her renewed quest — this time with her husband's knowledge and

complicity — for a stud who might father the child that is lacking in her life.

El diputado moves from the world of finance to that of politics. Centring on a homosexual, Roberto, who is a prominent opposition figure, the film reproduces with great fidelity the political and social circumstances of Spain at the time of the transition to democracy, and includes references to real political figures and actual social events of recent Spanish history, like the day the Communist Party was legalized or the occasion when distinguished members of the opposition, amongst them the film director J.A. Bardem, were imprisoned for their political activities. The documentary style of the film first comes to our attention in the credit sequences, which are overlaid with images of ancient and modern historical personalities and events relevant to the political and sexual issues raised by the narrative. In El diputado this feature is further accentuated by the use of a first person narrator, Roberto, who, addressing the spectator directly, recounts his clandestine existence as a political dissident and a sexual marginado. The film's concern with the fate of an individual who, owing to his political or sexual preferences, is repressed or silenced by a conformist majority, allows de la Iglesia to explore the social, political and sexual repression which still obtains in the country. Like previous films, El diputado is interested in the presentation of different kinds of sexual behaviour, in

this case through references to Roberto's married life, his history of homosexual one-night stands and his eventual homosexual involvement with Juanito, an under-age youth from one of the barriadas, who is already a chapero (male prostitute) and whom the police use as a plant to trap Roberto.

Navajeros represents a break with the dominant mode of de la Iglesia's earlier films, to the extent that he now abandons the representation of privileged, mature, middle-class individuals stigmatized by their sexuality, in favour of the depiction of young male characters who lead a semi-criminal existence on the margins of society. Navajeros recounts the story of a young delinquent, 'El Jaro', a fictitious anti-hero who shares many of the characteristics of those mythical figures, e.g. 'El Lute', who began to attract public attention in Spain during the last years of the dictatorship and thereafter. Street-wise, charismatic and a mere 15 years of age, 'El Jaro' is the product of the same social conditions which have made his mother a prostitute and led his brother to occupy a prison cell. Like Juanito in El diputado, a fatherless youngster who began to fend for himself when he was hardly more than a child, 'El Jaro' breaks the norms imposed by a society which neglects his most immediate needs and ultimate aspirations, and becomes a daring social menace, equally sought after by the police, the indignant bourgeois from whom he steals, the drug traffickers and the representatives of institutions

designed to protect the complacent and law abiding citizens of Madrid. As in previous films, Navajeros again confronts the spectator with two different world views, even if on this occasion the director is not so much interested in depicting the antagonistic ideas and attitudes of different characters as in recording the struggle of a single individual against a whole social milieu. The film is also concerned with investigating the relationships between groups which form the underworld — prostitutes, pimps, drug addicts, small-time robbers, homosexuals —, and in particular pays attention to 'El Jaro's efforts to create an alternative family structure which he tries to achieve with the help of his young, drug-addicted girlfriend and a sympathetic Mexican whore.

Both El Pico and its sequel El Pico II, continue many of the issues raised in Navajeros and also in Colegas (1982), a film centred on two teenage friends (colegas), who have to act as camellos (transporters of drugs) in order to obtain money to terminate the pregnancy of the young girl who is the sister of one of them and the girlfriend of the other. In Colegas the friends are confronted not only by uncaring and dehumanized members of society but, most painfully, by individuals in their own families, who act as mouthpieces for the accepted laws and mores of society. The influence of the family on the behaviour of young delinquents comes under close scrutiny in El pico and El pico II, where the relation between the private and

public spheres of human life is analysed within a broader framework of social concerns. Departing from his traditional settings in Madrid, Eloy de la Iglesia, a Basque, chooses the decayed industrial wastelands around Bilbao to convey his feelings about social degeneration which manifests itself in the institutionalized corruption, political instability and terrorist attacks characteristic of this type of society.

From the descriptions given above, it is possible to divide the films into three categories: the first group includes La otra alcoba and El diputado, works which deal with the privileged professional middle-classes and are interested primarily in investigating matters of sexual politics; those of the second, Colegas and Navajeros, explore the social problems - violence, drug abuse, juvenile delinquency - typical of affluent societies; and the films in the third group, El pico and El pico II, reveal the intricate mechanisms of social repression as mediated through such institutions as the family. This does not mean that any one of these issues dominates individual films to the exclusion of the others, since all of de la Iglesia's works simultaneously challenge accepted notions of sexual, political and social behaviour.

An advantage of the working strategy adopted here is the possibility it offers of tracing a pattern of chronological development in the representation of specific themes. For we may detect a shift of emphasis

in de la Iglesia's films towards the portrayal of the ruling elite, social marginados and political oppressors; that trend is like a barometer which measures the intensity of the social and political preoccupations of Spain since the death of the old dictator and the end of the repressive political system that kept him in power. The references which the films make to major events of the decade of the transition — the restoration of democracy, the legalization of political parties (including the P.C.E.), the first democratic elections, and the accession to power of a socialist government —, bear witness to de la Iglesia's determination to create a cinema which, in his own words, would be 'un espejo donde se refleja la sociedad y al mismo tiempo se transforma con su visión'. In tenor his films evolve from an initial phase 'más violenta, cargada de humor negro, esperpéntica' when he was interested in portraying 'mantis devoradoras, asesinos que fabrican caldos con sus víctimas, o enfermeras piadosas que matan por amor' to a second stage after the political change when, as the director explains: 'mi cine ha perdido en mala leche y ha ganado en reflexión'.¹¹ The optimism of this period is very much in evidence in films like El diputado, or Placeres ocultos (1976), which denounce the mala fe of the members of privileged sectors of society while praising, perhaps rather naively, the efforts of minorities to raise political and sexual consciousness. The optimistic tone of these works, exemplified by

their open ending, has given way to a deep pessimism in recent films where characters are destroyed by the system. This bleakness of attitude is a common feature of all de la Iglesia's films since Navajeros up to his latest work, La estanquera de Vallecas (1986), his first for two years. Taken together, these films demonstrate de la Iglesia's unswerving commitment to a cinema of social, political and moral significance, at a time when, in the words of one film critic, certain aspects of Spanish life 'en aras de la "reconciliación", venían siendo escamoteados por el cine español'.¹²

A possible explanation for de la Iglesia's uncompromising stand vis-à-vis the new political realities in the country is to be found in his political affiliations and beliefs. A member of the P.C.E., a party which was held in great esteem by Spanish intellectuals for its struggle against repression during the Franco era but which has been in steady decline since the socialists' coming to power, Eloy de la Iglesia should have been recognized as the film director best suited to explore critically the changes brought about in Spanish society under a left-wing administration. The films he made in the late seventies, like El diputado, were certainly praised for their condemnation of the repressive nature of the previous authoritarian and militaristic regime and for their portrayal of the optimism experienced in the country's revitalized political and social

consciousness. But the same films were also criticized for their schematic presentation of characters and their ideals ('si buenos, excelsos; si malos, execrables') and for their rejection of traditional sexual mores and family values which, Eloy de la Iglesia complained, were still accepted in Spain because 'la izquierda ha heredado la ideología burguesa de la pareja como unidad reproductora'.¹³ By the mid-eighties, however, scarcely ten years after the restoration of democracy, de la Iglesia's films were denouncing the repressive and corrupt nature of the new society and eliciting strongly negative reactions from officials and film critics alike.

The repeated portrayal of the same kind of malaise and oppressions constraining individuals under both totalitarian and democratic governments, suggests that de la Iglesia's films are not merely vehicles for criticizing particular modes of socio-political repression, but more fundamentally are means for investigating the repressive foundations on which most Western nations rest. When Eloy de la Iglesia considers the abuse of power by privileged members of society in, for example La otra alcoba or La criatura (1977), where the oppressor is a neo-fascist, chauvinist member of the right-wing organization Fuerza Nueva, it is not because the individuals are representatives of an authoritarian regime but rather because their behaviour and attitudes typify all patriarchal and capitalist societies. Following this line of reasoning, elements which are

central to de la Iglesia's films, such as the questioning of monogamous relationships and the role of the family, the condoning of sexual deviations, the investigation of the subversive position of social and sexual marginados, the importance of drug-addiction and of criminal activities as means of rebellion, acquire a distinctive significance since they reformulate essential concerns treated by Sigmund Freud in his analysis of Western civilization and revised subsequently by Herbert Marcuse.

Freud's diagnosis that all civilizations depend for their survival on the very processes of repression, is one of the great cornerstones of the study of human behaviour. In many of his books, such as Totem and Taboo, Introductory Lectures on Psycho-analysis and Civilization and its Discontents, Freud develops at length the view that for a civilization to succeed it has to suppress the instinctual tendencies of individuals, because man's destructive nature threatens to impede the development of the group as a whole. The notion that human society and culture can only evolve by subordinating what Freud called the "pleasure principle" to the "reality principle" is the basis on which many of his theories rest, and the prime cause of neurosis, a condition characteristic of much adult life in civilized, industrial societies. That Freud saw the beginnings of neurosis in the conditions of repression is testimony to the difficulties experienced by individuals as they try to adjust to a situation where

the well-being of the community and the evolution of culture take precedence over individual happiness. Neurosis is symptomatic of the continuous conflict which takes place between, in Marcuse's words,

civilización y barbarie, progreso y sufrimiento, libertad e infelicidad — una conexión que se revela a sí misma finalmente como aquella existente entre Eros y Tanatos.¹⁴

Even though the price civilization must pay for its continuation is lack of freedom and control through prohibitions, Freud nevertheless insists on the fact that the pleasure principle continues to exist in the unconscious, where it continually strives to return to its original state, hence its precarious existence. Moreover, this struggle is a common feature of both individuals and societies, the individual coming to terms with it eventually by accepting the impositions of parents and educators, and the group by conforming to oppressive norms devised by institutions (e.g. the Church, the Police, the Family, etc.).

If Freud was aware of the tremendous sacrifice required of humanity renouncing pleasure it was left to Herbert Marcuse, in his book Eros y civilización, to explore the contradictions arising from Freud's theories, since he was able to develop further the notion that repression does not resolve the conflict between the two basic principles but, rather, leads to a situation where

la civilización se sumerge en una dialéctica destructiva: las perpetuas restricciones de Eros debilitan finalmente los instintos de la vida y así fortalecen y liberan a las mismas fuerzas contra las que fueron llamadas a luchar — las fuerzas de la destrucción (p.52).

Marcuse accepted the premise of Freud's theory of repression — namely, that humanity is engaged in an 'eterna, primordial lucha por la existencia' —, but nevertheless drew a crucial distinction between what he termed represión básica, that is, 'las "modificaciones" de los instintos necesarias para la perpetuación de la raza humana en la civilización', and represión excedente (Surplus-Repression), according to which

las instituciones históricas específicas del principio de la realidad y los intereses específicos de dominación introducen controles adicionales sobre y por encima de aquellos indispensables para la asociación humana civilizada (pp.47-48).

At one and the same time, Marcuse both accepts and revises Freud's original thoughts about society, for while he acknowledges the fact that man should sublimate his instinctual tendencies for the good of humanity, he criticizes the forms that repression takes in our civilization. As he set about formulating his views on the organization of society, Marcuse drew on the concept of a principio de actuación (Performance Principle), conceived as 'la forma histórica prevaleciente del principio de la realidad' (p.48), which he judged to be responsible, along with represión excedente, for channelling repression towards controlled forms of work and a limited monogamous

sexuality. With regard to the socially acceptable levels of control through work, Marcuse, not only in Eros and Civilization but also in One Dimensional Man, denounced the alienating effects of work in modern societies, where

Para una vasta mayoría de la población, la magnitud y la forma de satisfacción está determinada por su propio trabajo; pero su trabajo está al servicio de un aparato que ellos no controlan,

and insisted that

El irreconciliable conflicto no es entre el trabajo (principio de la realidad) y Eros (principio del placer), sino entre el trabajo enajenado (principio de actuación) y Eros (p.56).

Likewise, defining his theory of sexuality, Marcuse accepts the need for a subordination of libidinous tendencies to the reality principle through work, but questions the form which this requirement has taken in Western culture, where

la organización social de los instintos sexuales convierte en tabús como perversiones prácticamente todas sus manifestaciones que no sirven o preparan para la función procreativa (p.57).

According to Marcuse, this can only lead to the

"unificación" de los diversos objetos de los instintos parciales en un solo objeto libidinal del sexo opuesto y en el establecimiento de la supremacía genital' (p.57).

The theories of Freud and Marcuse, which were widespread in Spain from the late sixties onwards, are certainly relevant to an analysis of de la Iglesia's films which may be fruitfully examined in the light of their revolutionary ideas. The prevalent social and

political unrest in the Western world at the time, as exemplified in the events of May 1968 in France, encouraged people of all age groups, but especially the young, to question traditional attitudes to power, authority, sexuality and social roles. During the dictatorship, of course, censorship prohibited open treatment of these issues, but in the freer atmosphere of the transition to democracy in Spain Eloy de la Iglesia was able to translate this legacy into cinematic form, in films which challenge concepts and values which had traditionally defined 'normality': heterosexual romance — which of course still exists in his films but only in a debased form —, monogamous relationships, the family, the social/political/sexual status quo, the law of the father. It is in fact in some of his early films that de la Iglesia subverts social norms most directly through the depiction of alternative forms of sexuality, since as he declared:

en la sociedad en que vivimos la
perversion sexual es quizás la única
forma de rebelión a nuestro alcance
contra la sociedad opresiva y
establecida en que vivimos.¹⁵

Works such as La otra alcoba and El diputado confront patriarchal values, as we have already seen, through a subversion of the traditional, monogamous and heterosexual relationship which, according to the director, in its acceptance of conventional models of behaviour perpetuates the repression characteristic of such societies. De la Iglesia's use of sexuality to challenge social orthodoxy derives logically from his

view of sex 'como elemento liberador y como elemento revolucionario, siendo como es el sexo una razón absolutamente unipersonal'.¹⁶ While alternative sexual relationships are the subject of a great many of de la Iglesia's films, their most extreme treatment occurs in La criatura, a film which goes beyond the examination of sexual dominance and repression already featured in La otra alcoba. If La otra alcoba presented the typical situation of a woman subordinated to the authority and control of her husband, who uses her sexuality to challenge the law of the Father by bearing a child not conceived by him, La criatura reverses that position — the female protagonist here is powerful and financially independent— and intensifies the challenge to male supremacy residing in the phallus, by admitting sexual relations between the woman and a dog, which in de la Iglesia's provocative view 'no perpetúa el poder del falo'. Even though examples of bestiality are reported from time to time in the press, de la Iglesia's use of this perversion and its presentation in a political context has done little to abate critics' hostility to this director, who, as in the present case, is open to the accusation of just wanting to 'épater la bourgeoisie'.

Not that de la Iglesia envisages the wholesale disappearance of heterosexual relationships, since he admits also that 'A mí me parece bien la relación homosexual, pero no la entiendo jamás como alternativa a la relación heterosexual'.¹⁷ His objection is to the

perpetuation of a tradition which privileges the heterosexual, monogamous relationship over other forms of sexuality, on the grounds that heterosexuality, as normally conceived and practised, continues a form of domination based on role-playing and division of labour, which in the views of some analysts of developments of Western civilization — such as Marilyn French — has characterized all known patriarchal cultures. For this reason, de la Iglesia challenges those kinds of relationships which preclude other forms of contact, and encourages others which deny possessiveness and the rigid separation of roles, whether of a heterosexual or homosexual nature and without either one being considered superior to the other.

El diputado is the first of the films analysed here to propose positive alternatives to the traditional relationship constrained by a noviazgo or marriage, after earlier works, such as La otra alcoba and La criatura, had gone no further than exploring the limited potential of the ménage a trois, an arrangement only mildly threatening to the institution of the family. The presentation of sexual relationships which are not confined to two individuals but shared openly by several people, is a constant subversive element in de la Iglesia's cinema. Even those films not concerned primarily with exploring issues of sexual politics, for example El pico or Navajeros, include friendships between colegas which are based on the generous sharing

not only of joints or picos, but also of sexual partners, a practice which points to their rejection of the socially-engendered obsessions with ownership and private property.

Nevertheless, the most determined challenge to heterosexual monogamy in de la Iglesia's cinema comes through the representation of positive homosexual relationships, since homosexuality subverts patriarchy more than any other form of sexual behaviour, being a practice that

expres<a> la rebelión contra la
subyugación de la sexualidad al orden
de la procreación y contra las
instituciones que garantizan este
orden.¹⁸

The acceptance of some forms of sexual deviance is suggested both in La otra alcoba, which includes a scene in a transvestites' club where sophisticated and rich people pay to watch unusual practices, and above all in El diputado, Navajeros and El pico II, films which expose the wide-spread tolerance of homosexuality in such settings as the army and prisons; such an attitude

reveal<s> more clearly than anything
else the constant homosexual element
which can be expressed whenever need
arises or social restraints collapse.¹⁹

So, even though homosexuality is rejected in principle, these films lay bare the double standard whereby it is sometimes tolerated, even encouraged, by society. Especially disturbing is the connivance of figures of authority, in films like Navajeros or El pico II, in

the rape of young delinquents by older inmates in prison, a complicity which indicates clearly a general acceptance of relationships based on patterns of submission and domination, which are consequently open to abuse. The brutal scenes in prison depict the aggressive and humiliating behaviour typical of many heterosexual relationships in our culture, and dramatize the proposition that

whereas man can consider homosexuality in its "active" form as a means of asserting his power, in its "passive" form it is, on the contrary, a symbol of humiliation.²⁰

De la Iglesia's films criticize these practices in the context of both heterosexual and homosexual relationships, and present homosexuality not only as a normal activity but also as a deliberate challenge to accepted norms of social behaviour.

It is a matter of some consideration that even though de la Iglesia's films introduce controversial but extremely appealing alternative modes of existence, his characters are portrayed none the less in such a way as to prevent us from identifying too closely with them.²¹ Leaving aside for the moment the female characters, at least one of whom displays a disarming preference for the socially unacceptable practice of zoophilia, most of the male protagonists in de la Iglesia's films are uncommonly sympathetic, if at the same time deeply flawed, characters. Contrary to the prevalent critical view which sees de la Iglesia's characters as nothing more than schematic

representations of 'entes platónicos, incontaminados, opuestos; Oprimido y Opressor, Explotador y Explotado, Víctima y Verdugo', the films in fact leave us in some doubt about their supposed "rightness", as is evident in the presentation in Navajeros of the machista main character, 'El Jaro' — a popular and mythical figure who commands the admiration of countless youths — who is obsessed with proving his courage through repeated demonstrations of hombría.²² This lack of sensitivity towards female audiences is a strange quality to encounter in a director who is engaged above all in challenging preconceived ideas about social and sexual roles but who reveals an ignorance of feminist attitudes already prevalent in the country at the time the films were made.

The presentation of women in Eloy de la Iglesia's films reflects more than anything else the contradictions of a director engaged in a revolutionary reappraisal of society but who ^{nevertheless} fails to discard the reactionary values of a traditional culture. For this reason it is worth remembering that the majority of de la Iglesia's films centre on male characters whose subversive sexual, political or social attitudes threaten the very foundations on which society is based. Women, on the other hand, are normally portrayed in stereotyped situations where, as mothers, wives or sexual partners, they exist primarily to fulfil men's needs. This is even true of La otra alcoba, a film which at first sight appears to be interested primarily

in a female character, Diana, and women's issues — barrenness and female infidelity —, but which on careful examination betrays the same male bias found in other works by de la Iglesia. This impression is confirmed by the opening sequences of the film, which place Juan, the young working-class mechanic, in the foreground of the narrative as the principal object of the spectators' gaze. Eloy de la Iglesia's use of camera movements — a quick succession of shots of Juan riding his motorbike and arriving at the garage —, melodic music — a song composed and sung by Patxi Andión, the Basque singer and actor who portrays Juan in the film —, and frozen sequences of Juan as he undresses and puts on his dungarees, are all designed to create an interest usually reserved for pivotal characters. Diana's role in the film, for all its narrative and thematic importance, is subordinated to that of the two male leads, Juan and her husband Marcos, who are depicted as representing two different types of masculinity. For her part, Diana, a cool and beautiful modern goddess, is denied the privilege of a genuine life of her own, since she must depend for her material needs on her husband, and for her "spiritual" fulfilment — motherhood — on a succession of virile men whom the film depicts, rather simplistically, as uncomplicated, instinctual and quite primitive beings, supposedly typical of the working class.

Besides resembling a goddess — a male friend tells her: 'Tú juegas a ser una diosa' —, Diana is

identified throughout the film with the "Amazon", a type of woman much feared and despised in male culture for her alleged independence, but one who, in Adrienne Rich's view, is still subservient to men, since '<she> suggests too narrowly the warrior-maiden who has renounced all ties with men except procreation'.²³ Diana's obsessive longing to be a mother (a state which under the right circumstances valorizes and dignifies a woman), is a natural consequence of her society's insistence that motherhood and fertility are the supreme goals of a woman's life, and a reflection of the popular view of barrenness (cf. Yerma) — whether the husband or wife is at fault — as a gaping void in her existence. Maternal instincts are a common feature of the majority of de la Iglesia's female characters who, divided into the categories of mother/wives and whores, are nevertheless united by the same maternal needs and feelings. This maternal quality acquires special significance in the presentation of the two prostitutes — the mejicana of Navajeros and the Argentinian of El pico and El pico II —, who fulfil the function of protecting and mothering the male protagonists. The two women, who are throughout portrayed in a positive light, offer the young protagonists the opportunity not only to find in them the all-protecting mother of the pre-Oedipal phase, but also to act out the Oedipal fantasy of having sex with the mother, since in addition to behaving as surrogate mothers they also engage in sexual activities with

them.

Together with stereotyped images of whores with hearts of gold and self-sacrificing, understanding mothers, womanhood is represented in de la Iglesia's films by the figure of the wife, who is either forgiving and submissive — Diana in La otra alcoba and Carmen in El diputado — or, like Rosa in Placeres ocultos, a sexually frustrated woman who fills her empty hours seeking sexual satisfaction from teenage boys. A characteristic shared by Diana and Carmen is their status as wives of well-off individuals, who lead boring and colourless lives in their respective husbands' shadows, while complying dutifully with the social obligations expected of their successful husbands. Diana and Carmen thus conform in every way to the traditional roles expected from married women — as wives, hostesses, carers for the male —, to the extent of neglecting to take^{up} any interest of their own. They are solely concerned with domestic chores, and express their frustrated maternal longings — both are childless — either by mothering the men who share their lives or by relentlessly looking for a man to fulfil their maternal need.

An interesting case which reveals the contradictions in the presentation of female characters in de la Iglesia's films is that of Carmen in El diputado who despite her progressive ideas behaves like a conventional wife. Carmen, a politically committed woman (she participates in Communist party meetings and

demonstrations), who deserves praise for tolerating her husband's homosexuality and for the freedom of her own sexual conduct, nevertheless emerges as a traditional housewife who looks after the home and attends ^{to} her husband's needs. It is indeed paradoxical that a character like Carmen who adheres to advanced sexual and political ideas should be framed consistently in the home, patiently waiting for her husband to return, cooking his meals and dutifully watching his appearances on television. Carmen, moreover, is presented as an extension of her environment whose classical and tasteful decor matches the ideal picture of the middle-class dream-home, which so often contrasts very conspicuously with the progressive ideas of its owners. In opposition, too, to the casual clothes worn by her non-conformist husband (jeans and jumpers, open-necked shirts), Carmen is always dressed in neat and tasteful outfits (pale coloured blouses, plaited skirts, high heels) and wears her hair in elaborate styles, maintained by regular visits to the hairdresser's. Her good manners, elegant poise and, even more, her preference for jewels — particularly pearls, a symbol of sophistication and classical good taste — testify to a bourgeois mentality which is at variance with her attitudes and behaviour and which the film exposes at every available opportunity as a falsehood. Those scenes, especially, where she behaves unconventionally — smoking a joint with her husband's lover, making love to the young chapero, singing

Portuguese revolutionary songs, striking a policeman who breaks up a peaceful political meeting — appear all the more incongruous and contradictory when seen in conjunction with her elegant clothes and mien. More than any other of the female characters in de la Iglesia's films, Carmen reveals the failure of this Spanish film director to create women characters who are more than stereotypes of femininity, and demonstrates also a profound ignorance of those feminist ideas which in the last decades have confronted the traditional values of patriarchy.

De la Iglesia's films since Navajeros have ceased to dwell on the problems of middle-aged heterosexuals or homosexuals of middle-class background, focussing instead on characters representative of a new generation of Spaniards who, too young to remember the Civil War and the darkest years of Francoism, have grown up in a democratic society. Besides their interest in younger characters, films such as Navajeros, Colegas, El pico and El pico II are works designed primarily to attract young spectators, and for that reason they incorporate certain elements of style and presentation which set them apart from the films already examined. Concerned thematically with denouncing the foundations of a materialist society increasingly preoccupied with the acquisition of consumer goods and the attainment of a higher standard of living denied to a majority of its members, the films display certain characteristics which account for

their popular appeal. In them, a single protagonist usually acts as spokesperson for a variety of secondary characters; these are presented either as individuals identified with minority groups living on the fringe of society — drug addicts, navajeros, homosexuals, male and female prostitutes — or as representatives of institutions — fathers, judges, prison officers, civil guards — charged with punishing those who are unable or unwilling to fit into society; they are generally films packed with action which recall the classic genres of the American cinema, such as the Western, the melodrama, the musical, the comedy, and so on.²⁴

The films are accesible owing not only to the apparent simplicity of their presentation of ideas and characters, but also to the direct manner in which they are shot. Mistakenly regarded as crudely constructed works, the films simply tell stories without resorting to complicated techniques of narration or virtuoso camera movements. Eloy de la Iglesia nevertheless pays special attention to details of sound and image which constitute the unity of the films and establish a particular frame of reference for the spectators' response. Typical of these is the characteristic look of the films created by the presence of young and unsophisticated characters dressed in casual clothes, unattractive vistas of urban wastelands lying in the shadow of dilapidated blocks of flats and endless miles of motorway, and the predominance of cramped and vulgar interiors which lack the good taste and orderliness of

middle-class homes. In addition to these we must mention the director's use of popular-folkloric and contemporary pop music to enhance visual meanings and his habit of including shocking images of violence in his films, . . . shots of youngsters injecting themselves with heroin, explicit scenes of sexual abuse, and close-ups of wounds to the body.

The most striking aspect, however, which contributes to the success of de la Iglesia's films and accounts for their popular appeal, is the use of José Luis Manzano in all of the leading roles. An actor curiously devoid of any distinguishing physical features, José Luis Manzano portrays in one film after another a series of charismatic and lively individuals whose exuberance, energy and wit are clearly appreciated by those youngsters in the big cities whose discontent matches that of the hero of the films. As recent statistics published in Cambio 16 show, a majority of young people in Spain express their rejection of society by yielding to political apathy, transgressing social mores and engaging in outlawed activities such as drug-taking, muggings, house breakings and joy-riding in stolen vehicles.²⁵ Like the rebels portrayed by José Luis Manzano who resist assimilation into the new affluent society, they are rootless individuals, indifferent to the work ethic of law-abiding citizens, who chose to live beyond the pale as a way of demonstrating their rejection of an absurdly materialistic world. The dissatisfaction of

these young pasotas with established social modes of behaviour is exemplified above all in their severance of family ties.

As we have seen, Eloy de la Iglesia, explores the constraints implied in family life and highlights in particular the limitations of the nuclear family. His later films are specially relevant in this respect, since the family occupies a more prominent position than in earlier works, where he had examined the relationships of couples inside and outside marriage but without analysing other aspects of family life, ^{o'g} to the absence of children. Films like Colegas, where de la Iglesia denounces the oppressive nature of the family in instilling conformist attitudes in the children, and Navajeros, where the disintegration of family life explains, at least in part, 'El Jaro's' behaviour, are significant works for a study of this theme. But where de la Iglesia deals most directly with the role of the family as an instrument of socialization is in El pico and El pico II, where he also recapitulates ideas already encountered in his previous films: the corruption and repressiveness of institutions, the limitations of monogamous heterosexual relationships, the rebelliousness of young sectors of the population. Going beyond the mere condemnation of the family in situations such as that of Colegas, where the parents are seen as nothing more than authoritarian agents of social repression, or that of Navajeros, which can be read as a facile

denunciation of social maladjustment and delinquency caused by the disintegration of the family, El pico and El pico II expose the virtues of family life — unity, love, caring — as being, in John Hopewell's words, 'arguably a stronger force for oppression'.²⁶

Paco's family in El pico is depicted according to most people's notions of what constitutes an average and united family: the father, a hard-working man with a strong authoritarian streak (he is a civil guard); the mother, an understanding but ineffectual woman; and two daughters, who are innocuous and obey their parents' every command. Paco, the eldest child and only son, despite feelings of love and affection for his mother and the respect shown to his father, is already seen at the beginning of the film rejecting the paternal values and ideas which are intended to make of him an hombre de provecho. Thus, instead of devoting his time to studies which will prepare him for a top position in society, he dissipates his hours and energies taking drugs; also, contrary to his father's wish that he should become a manly figure able to command men's respect and women's admiration, Paco searches for tenderness in a friendship with a school mate — whose father ironically is a Basque parliamentarian —, and with a young prostitute. This clash of interests between father and son comes out into the open at Paco's eighteenth birthday party, a joyous occasion which, as Ignasi Bosch has shown, reveals the tensions underneath the facade of happiness

and cordiality in the family.²⁷ Eloy de la Iglesia's use of a long, static one-shot sequence ('una toma'), which captures the atmosphere of confusion created by conversations, a telephone call and the loud music which drowns out the voices of the members of the family, prepares the spectator for the following scene where the father, in a continuation of family tradition (his father had done the same to him) seeks to introduce his son, through rites of initiation, into the dominant order of masculine power. Paco, having been subdued up to this point by the authority of the father, is invited now to accede to a similar position when he is asked to wear the uniform of civil guard, in which profession his father assumes he will enrol. After dressing Paco up to look like a virile man — he gives him his uniform, three-cornered hat and a gun to wear and paints on a Tejero-type moustache — his father takes him to a brothel, where he is invited to demonstrate his manhood by going with a paid prostitute, an act clearly designed to ensure that Paco will thereafter treat all women merely as objects for his satisfaction. Apparently complying with his father's requests, Paco actually expresses his dissatisfaction by confessing to his mother his doubts about becoming a civil guard and by arranging for the Argentinian prostitute, who is his friend, to play the part of the unknown sexual initiator.

Rejecting in this way a masculine status as the powerful and domineering macho, Paco seeks an

alternative mode of behaviour through the development of his feminine self, something which he does by identifying with his mother and those associated with the feminine principle, i.e. his trustful and supportive colega Urco, the maternal and caring prostitute, the understanding and dedicated homosexual sculptor. Paco's disavowal of his masculine self in favour of a feminine one is underlined in the film by a constant identification with his mother, a woman committed to the well-being of her children, and who, terminally ill, is dependent on drugs to relieve excruciating pain. Paco, like his mother, tries to escape from an oppressive reality by becoming addicted to drugs — in his case heroin — and by running away from the house and placing himself — together with Urco — beyond the law, stealing, picándose and eventually killing a drug supplier. Sought after by their fathers, the civil guard and newspaper reporters on the trail of a sensational story, the two friends find a safe refuge in the Argentinian prostitute's house, where Urco dies from an intentional overdose. Urco, like many other male characters in de la Iglesia's latest films, understands that the only openings available to social outcasts are either to compromise, or to continue, against all the odds, in their opposition and probably die. Urco chooses the latter, while Paco, having heard of his mother's death, comes to attend her funeral and is pardoned by his father, who hushes up his son's crime and persuades him to return home, where, we

assume, he will lead once more an orderly and colourless existence. The final scene of the film, with father and son overlooking the sea from the top of a cliff after Paco throws what remains of ^{the} heroin into the water in the three-cornered hat, is not so much a reconciliation in the style of conventional melodramas with their predictable happy ending, as an image of the domestication of even the most rebellious instincts by, ironically, the force of love and family ties.

Eloy de la Iglesia, having denounced in his cinema the oppressive nature of social institutions, which guarantee the petrification of relations of power and submission in patriarchal societies,²⁸ proves in El pico (and will reaffirm in El pico II, where Paco, reinstated into society, forms his own family) that 'sobre la represión policial, triunfa la represión familiar'.²⁹ In the context of Spanish cinema since the fifties, Eloy de la Iglesia's films confirm the presence, even under a socialist administration, of archaic and repressive forces identified with Franco's Spain.

V The "tercera vía" and Asignatura pendiente

The Comedias Celtibéricas of the late sixties and early seventies paved the way for another kind of cinema which emerged in Spain roughly at the same time, that of the tercera vía, designed to bridge the gap between "quality" cinema, which in order to defeat

censorship had to be obscure, metaphorical and inevitably elitist, and popular and commercial cinema, which in its determination to attract large audiences, was simplistic, complacent and, in cinematic terms, hardly innovative at all. Some of the better known tercera vía films are Españolas en París (1970), Vida conyugal sana (1973) and Mi mujer es muy decente dentro de lo que cabe (1974), but the tercera vía achieved its greatest acclaim with Asignatura pendiente (1977), a work made after the death of Franco when the limitations imposed by censorship had all but been lifted. The new laws of 1973, which helped to solve the financial difficulties of Spanish cinema after the almost total collapse of the industry in the late sixties, the freedoms which the country eventually enjoyed when the dictatorship came to an end, and the eventual abolition of censorship during the early years of the transición — viz. the legislation of February 1975 and 1976 —, encouraged a more open treatment of social, political and sexual themes in Spanish cinema, and the various types of comedies, which had tentatively questioned the repression and oppression of men — very seldom women — in the constrained relationships of noviazgos and marriages, were at last able to expand their range of reference. The comedies of the late seventies and eighties, also called collectively Nueva Comedia Madrileña, while covering essentially the same ground as the early Comedia Celtibérica, i.e. monogamy, jealousy, honour,

infidelity, changed inasmuch as Spanish society has changed in the last decade, and so relationships are no longer confined to marriages — noviazgos having all but disappeared —, but also feature couples living together; at the same time, the themes treated now include adultery, divorce, homosexuality and other aspects of social reality. Also, with the rise of feminism and the new independence achieved by women both in the economic and the sexual spheres, female characters of substance have gradually taken over the centre stage in recent Spanish comedies, a situation markedly different from that of twenty years ago, when women tended to function in films as appendages to men or as sex objects.

While the Comedias Celtibéricas, like No desearás and Mi querida señorita concentrate in particular on the relationships of individuals engaged in noviazgos, José Luis Garci's film, Asignatura pendiente is concerned primarily with the institution of marriage and the negative consequences it has for couples in narrowly conventional relationships. The film moreover is able to treat the theme of adultery with unprecedented freedom, excluding any overt moralising or half-measures. Asignatura pendiente, which John Hopewell regards as 'the key film of the transition', owes its success and popularity to the fact that it is firmly rooted in contemporary historical circumstances at the same time as it exploits the vein of nostalgia in an entire generation of Spaniards who look back to

the material and spiritual deprivation of the worst years of the dictatorship. It reflects at the same time on the disenchantment which many people felt in the period of socio-political stagnation following Franco's death. In fact, many historical events are recorded in the film, such as the death of the dictator and Prime Minister Arias Navarro's televised speech to the nation, the police killings in Vitoria in 1976, the imprisonment of leaders of Comisiones Obreras and communist figures like Santiago Carrillo and Ramón Tamames, and many other events. This factual specificity, which Asignatura pendiente shares with other tercera vía films, has been seen by many critics as an opportunistic device, using "mitos de la progresía" in order to appeal to large numbers of spectators who were currently dissatisfied with the socio-political realities of the country. Thus, John Hopewell warns rightly that 'the keys for the film's interpretation are outside the text, and those who miss the references will miss out on the film's sense'.³⁰

To a greater extent than the other comedies analysed so far, Asignatura pendiente makes room for the point of view of the woman. It remains, however, like them a work whose primary interest lies in the male character, here called Jose [sic]. He is representative of middle-class professionals with leftish ideas who, though politically committed to the restoration of democracy in Spain, lagged behind in their personal behaviour owing to their traditional

mentality, particularly in regard to conduct with members of the opposite sex. José Sacristán, the actor who plays Jose is, in Hopewell's words, 'adept at embodying the ordinary brow-beaten Spanish petit bourgeois'³¹. While in the comedies of an earlier period, Alfredo Landa and José Luis López Vázquez brought to their characters peculiarities which served to distinguish the different kinds of machos celtibéricos that they portrayed, José Sacristán became associated from the start with the tercera vía in whose films he was frequently cast as the principal character. In those works Sacristán, rather short in stature, not very muscular and endowed with a long nose, embodies a prototype of masculinity where the man's personality is more important than his physical attributes. Like Landa, Sacristán portrays characters who possess a charismatic charm and are aware of their ability to attract people, especially women, who are drawn to them by their exuberance and vitality. They exploit their lack of traditional masculinity in order to arouse maternal feelings in those women who are tempted to mother the little boy who seems to hide behind the facade of self-confidence and cockiness that they present. Landa and Sacristán, much more than López Vázquez, play characters who often tend to be machistas of the worst kind, demonstrating little consideration for the feelings of the women with whom they share their lives.

In the film, Jose is a labour-lawyer who has spent

his mature years fighting the reactionary and authoritarian system of Franco's Spain, a political commitment which has even landed him in jail. Elena, his first sweetheart whom he meets after a long separation, is a traditional housewife now married to a well-to-do professional, who enjoys all the material comforts of a tranquil and happy existence. After her two daughters start school, however, Elena begins to feel the emptiness and lack of purpose experienced by so many women who, after years of apparent fulfilment, are suddenly reduced to being the mothers of absent children and the wives of increasingly distanced husbands. The routine of married life appears to be the root cause of Jose's own marital problems, a state of affairs which he finds difficult to overcome even though he has a young and attractive wife and an extrovert and intelligent son. Only thirty-three years old, Jose already feels the boredom and frustration which, as he tells Elena philosophically when they start the affair, is the inevitable result of marriage: 'Eso es lo que pasa siempre, se pierden las ilusiones'.

Garci, a director greatly influenced by American cinema, moulds Jose in the role of an up-dated Hollywood hero and, given the empathy which the director intends the spectator to feel towards him, it is somehow surprising that he should be such a contradictory character, a progressive left-wing militant who in his private life exhibits a reactionary and bourgeois mentality. Particularly in the choice of

a marriage partner, Jose matches the type of men described by Castilla del Pino in the following observation:

Muchos hombres, que incluso verbalmente pueden ser catalogados de progresistas, recaen una y otra vez, a la hora de su preferencia afectivoerótica, en el objeto tradicionalmente "femenino", buscando ellos la partenaire dependiente, única que en su inmadurez de varón inseguro, puede gratificarlos.³²

In effect, José Sacristán plays, as he would do one year later in El diputado by Eloy de la Iglesia, the role of a liberal-minded politician who nevertheless remains deeply conservative and traditional in his private life. Thus, he chooses for his wife a good-looking, refined but conventional woman, who is dedicated to the well-being of her husband and son, and whose political ideas are less overtly radical than those of her husband. She, like Carmen in El diputado, seems, in fact, quite well-adjusted to a bourgeois existence, conforming in mentality, behaviour and tastes to typical middle-class ideas. Conforming to a well-established pattern, her conservative values are reflected by her adherence to religious principles which she also imposes on her husband, whose political convictions are not strong enough to resist her demands that their son should receive a religious education. Leaving aside some physical differences between his lover and his wife —Elena is tall and dark, Ana petite and fair—, Jose on both occasions falls for women who can be described

as the typical products of the bourgeoisie, who, educated in convent schools (where they are primarily taught good manners and frequently acquired only the most rudimentary kind of knowledge), calmly accept their destinies as housewives and mothers because they lack the initiative and education which could make them independent.

Having chosen a domestic wife dedicated to house and family instead of a companion to share his political and social ideals, Jose becomes disenchanted with married life which he finds boring and frustrating. At least, as a man, Jose can take part in the historical transformation of his country at the crucial moment of its transition from dictatorship to democracy; among other things the film includes footage of General Franco's address to the mass of people who had gathered in the Plaza de Oriente to demonstrate their loyalty to him, and later also refers to his illness, protracted agony and death. Elena and the other women, on the other hand, are left to one side, excluded from action and events traditionally reserved for conformist men. Even acknowledging the fact that in some respects Asignatura pendiente reproduces quite faithfully the situation of contemporary women, still deprived of any kind of independence, whether economic, social or sexual, it is also true that the film shows no interest in investigating the reasons for their backward positions, neglecting even to consider the isolation and abandonment experienced by wives as a

result of their husbands' involvement in public life. Even more controversially, the film counterpoints images of men who are active, idealistic and politically committed — not only Jose but also his long time friend and colleague "Trotsky" —, with others of women characterised by passivity, dependence and a determination to trap and domesticate their men into traditional expectations of family life. Ana, Jose's wife, is not the only one to force her husband into compliance with the status quo; Elena, who is a carbon copy of her rival, unconsciously imitates her when she starts the affair with Jose. Thus, behaving more like a conventional wife than a lover, she enthusiastically sets out to furnish and decorate a flat where they can meet in secret, but ends up producing an almost exact replica of her own — and Jose's — house, where they soon settle into the kind of domestic routine from which they had originally sought release. In this way they effectively duplicate their official lives: she, bored and lonely in the empty house, he, tired and frustrated by the monotony of their daily encounters and the nagging to which she subjects him. But it is not only these conventional and rather frivolous women who adopt bourgeois and conservative attitudes. Even Pepa, the long-standing girl-friend of "Trotsky" who shares his commitment to socialism reneges on her ideals, giving in to her family's insistent wish that she formalize her relationship with "Trotsky" through marriage, something which he is reluctant to do.

1977, the year of Asignatura pendiente, is also the date of another film, Tigres de papel by Fernando Colomo, a work which inaugurated a new kind of cinema in Spain, the Nueva Comedia Madrileña. These two films, moreover, form part of a trilogy, which though totally different in fundamental respects, are united by a common desire to analyse the collective and personal consequences of the dictatorship. Tigres de papel, together with Asignatura pendiente and El desencanto are, as one critic writes,

tres formas distintas de abordar el peso del franquismo sobre una o varias generaciones. Garci lo hace por la vía del lagrimón menos pudoroso, Chávarri por la de la reflexión testimonial, y finalmente Colomo opta por el retrato en clave de comedia.³³

El desencanto, like other fictitious reconstructions of historical realities in Spain — viz. Canciones para después de una guerra (Basilio M. Patino, 1971) and Después de... (Cecilia y José J. Bartolomé, 1981) — constitutes a type of cinema which has few precedents and imitators. Once censorship ceased to be a major obstacle to the treatment of certain issues, the tercera vía forfeited the middle ground between a quality cinema and another of popular appeal but little aesthetic interest. Only the Nueva Comedia Madrileña, as exemplified by Tigres de papel and Colomo's subsequent works, ¿Qué hace una chica como tú en un sitio como éste? (1978) and Estoy en crisis (1982),

became a feasible alternative to the timid attempts of the tercera vía, at a time when freedom of expression allowed film directors to 'penetrar, sin inhibiciones, en muchos marginales, antes vedados'.³⁴

A point to note about the new comedies of the late seventies and early eighties is that they are the work of young, independent producers who, with limited means and boundless enthusiasm, set out to make films which, while deeply rooted in the Spanish tradition — particularly taking in elements of the sainete — reflected at the same time the influence of the classical American comedy. All these directors, moreover, wanted to examine the new pattern of relationships between couples which were emerging in their new society. Other features of the Nueva Comedia Madrileña are the close links between the characters of the films and the script-writers and the directors who made them, and the fact that

la mayor parte de sus protagonistas, a diferencia de sus precedentes en films de hace tan sólo tres o cuatro años, se hallan totalmente al margen de cualquier identificación política.³⁵

The protagonists of the comedies of the eighties are young — giving rise to the popular description of a 'cine de treintañeros' — a generation which reject the society in which they live but are unwilling to face up to the realities of their country and feel unable to change its circumstances. They represent a new generation of Spaniards who, scarcely influenced by the dictatorship, became disillusioned with the political and social

situation of Spain during the transition to democracy. Like the pasotas — very young people indifferent to politics and apathetic about life in general —, the tigres de papel of these films are 'treintañeros remolones y bastante reaccionarios bajo su apariencia moderna'.³⁶

The main difference between the Nueva Comedia Madrileña and the comedies studied so far resides in the fact that the films centre increasingly on both male and female characters and their relationships before and after marriage. The original interest in men, which was central to the Comedia Celtibérica and the tercera vía, is still maintained in the early Comedias Madrileñas, but female characters gradually acquired greater prominence in the films, no doubt reflecting the more important roles that women were playing in Spanish society at this time. Though male characters and male issues continue to be a prominent feature, the comedies of the eighties mark a significant turn-about inasmuch as they reverse the previous practice of giving insignificant parts to women, who until then had normally been presented as "la mujer de...", "la hermana de...", "la querida de..." etc. The Spanish actress María Luisa San José, who took the lead in several tercera vía films, has lamented the lack of proper roles for women, normally relegated to secondary positions and characterized as 'tontas, pasivas, con finales que nos perjudicaban'. She complains in particular about those films which,

though originally conceived with women in mind, inevitably ended up by focussing on men, as in the case of La mujer es cosa de hombres (José Luis Yagüe, 1975), a film which, according to María Luisa San José, was 'una película para una señora, una historia para una mujer, y a pesar de todo, predominaba el hombre, se narraba en función de tres personajes masculinos'.³⁷

The appearance during this period of some of the best comédiennes of Spanish cinema, such as Ana Belén, Veronica Forqué and especially Carmen Maura — the latter becoming known as la musa de la comedia madrileña —, offered film directors the opportunity to create works around female characters who for the first time were depicted as independent, strong and very much in control of their destinies, notwithstanding the inevitable conflicts that arose with members of the opposite sex. The films of Fernando Trueba, Fernando Colomo and, particularly, Pedro Almodóvar bear witness to the greater ability of modern women to accommodate themselves to the political, social and moral changes taking place in contemporary Spanish society, their ideas and attitudes shaking the more conservative and traditional males out of their complacency. This new emphasis was already evident in a film which became a landmark of Spanish cinema of the eighties, having a comparable impact to that of Asignatura pendiente a few years earlier: Opera prima (1980), the first film of Fernando Trueba, produced by Colomo and co-scripted by Trueba and Oscar Ladoire, and the prototype for future

Comedias Madrileñas.

Oscar Ladoire, who apart from collaborating in the script of Opera prima played the role of the main male character, acknowledges that Opera prima 'no era un film sobre la pareja en un sentido estricto, pues Matías era indudablemente el personaje que predominaba'.³⁸ Ladoire, a novice actor, contributed largely to Opera prima's success through his seemingly effortless portrayal of the lonely, disillusioned and alienated Matías, a man still dominated by the ideas of the sixties and now incapable of adjusting to the new values and demands of democratic Spain. Matías's disenchantment and isolation stem above all from his inability to understand a younger generation of Spaniards who are more concerned with passively rejecting society and with practicing an alternative life-style based on peaceful behaviour, ecological motivation and vegetarian principles, than with trying to overthrow forcibly those in power. Thus, the film faithfully captures the mood and attitudes which pervaded Spanish society only a few years after the dictatorship had ended, presenting the conflict between those who, educated in rebellion and political struggle, were becoming desencantados with the increasing materialism of Spain, and the young pasotas who did not remember Franco or care about Francoism and who, untraumatized by the past, lived the present without worrying unduly about the future. Esteve Rimbau, pointing out the links in this film between

characters and their creators — script-writers, directors, producers — makes the following assessment of Matías:

El protagonista de Opera prima [está] definitivamente distanciado de una nueva generación de la que le separan menos años que barreras conceptuales insuperables'.³⁹

Matías and his young cousin Violeta, whom he meets in the Opera metro station in Madrid, represent two different generations, with contrasting outlooks, codes of behaviour, and positions. Matías, who though near middle age has not reached maturity either in professional or emotional terms, is still tied to the past by his commitment to the — by now outdated — ideals of the 60s and by his obsession with his ex-wife with whom he had been unable to break totally and ^{on} whom he spies on through their son. For her part, Violeta is an independent and self-possessed young woman who lives alone, untroubled by domestic, social or sexual problems. In a reversal of conventional attitudes, Violeta takes charge of the relationship from its beginnings, initiating the love affair with Matías and offering her small flat as a place where initially they will meet and, later on, live together. Violeta's active role, however, develops no further than this, the film being more interested in the character of Matías whose confused state of mind and contradictory — and intrinsically conservative — behaviour it explores. Even though Opera prima's underlying concern is to reveal Matías' numerous

inadequacies as paterfamilias, friend and sexual partner, and working man, Oscar Ladoire infuses his character ^{with} an engaging mixture of idealism, pathos and charm clearly designed to make spectators sympathise with him. The image of candor and helplessness projected by Ladoire and his continuous verborrea — endless monologues which pretend to cover up his confusion and ineffectuality —, are peculiarities which are exploited in many films made by this actor with the aim of endearing his characters to women, who, as was the case with the men played by López Vázquez or Sacristán, want to protect and mother them. This even happens in A contratiempo, a film directed and acted by Ladoire, where a Lolita-equivalent falls in love with a man old enough to be her father but who is so utterly inept that she must take control of both their lives, a position which she frequently abuses to make fun of and humiliate him.

But by far the most striking feature of the films in which Ladoire has a major role, is his persistent and single-minded pursuit of one woman — normally his wife or, in Opera prima, his steady girl-friend — whom he chases relentlessly and finally wins over. Sal gorda (1984), another film scripted by Fernando Trueba and Oscar Ladoire and directed by Trueba, is a typical example of this attitude and one directly relevant to my thesis since it includes a wider range of characters, some of whom are married, others divorced and still a few more involved in unconventional love

affairs. Natalio Rodríguez Petrov, the character played by Ladoire, is by virtue of this actor's performance a continuation of the Matías of the previous film, a neurotic, angst-ridden, and monomaniacal male who, in the true spirit of many men in a large number of American "comedies of remarriage", determines to win back his ex-wife Palmira, a psychologist who after their separation lives with an American psychoanalyst called Dr. Peabody. A fast-moving comedy which pays tribute to Hollywood classics such as The Philadelphia Story, My Girl Friday, Design for Living and others, Sal gorda like those films relies for its humour on standard comic features: mistaken identities, double entendres, timely coincidences, and so on. In those films the women reject their boy-friends or husbands and turn to totally different types of men, in search of the happiness and fulfilment they were seemingly unable to achieve in the first instance. Like them, Palmira abandons Natalio — sexist, intransigent and blind to his wife's many positive qualities — in order to live with Peabody who gives the impression of being more liberal, understanding and supportive; Trueba and Ladoire's Peabody, however, like the character of the same name in Bringing up Baby, is a rather pompous and pedantic man lacking any sense of humour and divested of any romantic qualities. As in the American films, the charm, charisma and sex appeal of the first partner eventually become evident to the female character who returns to him to start a new life together.

Sal gorda is only one of several comedies made in the Spain of the eighties dealing with couples getting in and out of marriage, a situation which reflected the increasingly growing doubts of many people about the complexities surrounding long-term relationships. Another film by Trueba, Sé infiel y no mires con quién (1985), José Luis Cuerda's Pares y nones (1982), Colomo's La vida alegre (1986) are also examples of works which depict the efforts of men and women to adjust to the new freedoms of our modern societies where, much more than in the past, open relationships, infidelity, divorce and remarriage are allowed. What these films also reveal are the difficulties experienced by people coping with the confusion, jealousy and suspicion which arise from such situations, which very often are resolved by the reunion of couples at the end of the films, thus following the traditional impulse towards reconciliation typical of comedy. The happy ending is an expedient which implies not so much an optimistic view of individuals attaining ever-lasting happiness in long-term commitments, as an acceptance that individuals ought to try yet again to live with the person they had chosen, presumably out of love, in the first place.

As well as reflecting current preoccupations about sexual relationships, marriage, the creation of families, the films just mentioned demonstrate an interest in trends of behaviour and mentality, both

male and female. Thus, the men in the Comedias Madrileñas, regularly played by Oscar Ladoire or by Antonio Resines — a dark, slightly balding, moustachioed actor who successfully embodies the punctilious, distrustful and obstinate Spaniard —, tend to have jobs in fashionable professions — e.g. as pop composers, abstract painters, publishers of children's books —, live in sophisticated and modern houses and practise the latest fad in fashion — they have given up smoking, jog, play squash. But despite this air of progressiveness, the male characters are quite often very conventional in their outlook and ideas, still adhering to a sexual double standard, and expecting their wives or girlfriends to play merely supportive roles in their personal lives. Many of the problems they have to settle in the films stem in fact from disagreement with their female partners who, at least apparently, have managed to accept more easily the changes taking place in Spanish society. The first important aspect, as will have become obvious from references to the early Comedias Madrileñas, is the new assertiveness displayed by women, a logical consequence of their growing independence in the professional sphere, which has given them financial security, confidence in their own abilities, and the opportunity to engage in interests other than those associated with the family. With the increasing number of couples having few — if any — children, women moreover have been released from some of their domestic

responsibilities, but even in those cases where a woman has children, like Ana in La vida alegre, she insists — generally against her husband's wishes — on continuing her career, displaying to this purpose the wit, ingenuity and perseverance needed to disarm his objections.

Particularly in the more recent comedies women's more outspoken sexual behaviour, greater professional freedom and increasing disregard for traditional male prerogatives have become points of contention in the relationship between couples, with the peculiarity that the female characters have been given the lion's share in the films' narratives. This has happened partly as a result of the more active role that women have come to play in Spain during the last decade, when for the first time since the Republic they are gaining positions of power at all levels of the administration — there have been a Ministra de Cultura and a Directora General de Televisión Española and there are several Gobernadoras Civiles, a Portavoz del Gobierno, a Ministra de Relaciones Sociales. Some of these actresses, notably Ana Belén, Verónica Forquè, Carmen Maura and to a lesser degree Chus Lampreave or Ana Obregón, can be compared with some of the best known American actresses of the 30s and 40s (Miriam Hopkins, Katharine Hepburn, Merle Oberon), inasmuch as they too portray attractive, independent and intelligent women who invade the masculine world, causing havoc amongst the men. Carmen Maura above all, who started her career

in the early comedias madrileñas where she normally was 'the slightly dumb, trendy, leftish girl',⁴⁰ developed her acting qualities working for Pedro Almodóvar who, casting her against the grain in Pepi, Lucy, Bom y otras chicas del montón (1980), converted her into the prototype of the new woman: unconventional, rebellious, sexually liberated and wholly unconcerned about moral or social prejudices.

In ¿Qué he hecho yo para merecer esto? (1984), the actress was nevertheless condemned to the more typical role of victim and scapegoat by the constraints of the family melodrama. As Gloria, Carmen Maura plays the part of a down-trodden housewife epitomising the submissive, passive, sexually frustrated woman whose occasional acts of aggression are the only visible signs of her total alienation and solitude. After this incursion into the world of the housewife, which Almodóvar says 'amuses and horrifies me ... The housewife is a character who's absolutely tied up with the culture of our age', he proceeded to down-grade traditional family values by creating in his successive films an alternative world where gender distinction, sex difference and role division played no part.⁴¹ Oscillating between a masculine and a feminine principle, and avoiding the traps of fixed or pre-ordained male/female positions, the films convey Almodóvar's view that people can free themselves from the cultural legacy which until our own time has determined the place of individuals by arbitrary means.

In many of them Almodóvar, while not representing the family directly, has nevertheless found ways of exposing the negative and destructive features of restricted and narrow-minded family life, by introducing characters adversely affected by their education and upbringing: in Entre tinieblas (1983), Virginia's father was the cause of her boyfriend's suicide and the reason behind her decision to become a nun; in Matador (1986), Angel's overwhelming sense of guilt and lack of self-confidence stem from his mother's domineering behaviour and strict religious values and his father's unassertiveness and cowardice; and in La ley del deseo (1987), Tina and Pablo's adult lives are overshadowed by their father's incestuous involvement with one of his children and his subsequent abandonment of them.

Though critical of parents and the powerful influence they exercise over the lives of their children, and highly sceptical about traditional marriages which he has depicted satirically as breeding-grounds for sadistic and masochistic tendencies, Almodóvar has nevertheless sketched out in his films possible alternatives to the conventional institutions of the family and marriage. Tina and Pablo's surrogate roles as parent-figures for Ada — the little girl neglected by a mother still in search of an ideal man — is a case in point. But Almodóvar's most recent contribution to this theme is Mujeres al borde de un ataque de nervios (1988), where he rejects those

modes of behaviour based on male inflexibility and female dependency, as personified in the middle-aged couple Berta and Ivan, and looks forward to a society of tolerant and understanding men and women, responsive to one another's needs and united against hypocrisy and repression. Pepa, brave and independent, who is carrying Ivan's child although he is about to leave her for another woman, and Carlos, his mature son by Berta, who is sensitive and caring, are, together with a few other characters from recent comedies — particularly Ana in La vida alegre —, Almodóvar's ideal representations of the "new" woman and the "new" man who are destined to create a more humane world. In this respect Almodóvar is acting as mouthpiece for the opinions registered in recent surveys in Spain which, according to Pilar Díez, indicate a revival of monogamy but also an increase of 'familias monoparentales o incompletas, es decir, hombres y mujeres que viven solos con niños'; a preference for 'cohabitación, término con el que los sociólogos denominan a la pareja no legalizada, [que] suele terminar por legalizarse después de diez o más años de convivencia'; and a desire to change the purpose for which marriage, and the creation of the family, was originally intended:

Por primera vez, paternidad y maternidad son considerados como algo secundario. Es decir, la relación de la pareja se convierte en lo prioritario.⁴²

Thus, having explored in some of his previous films the full range of sexual identities and exploited the

ambiguities inherent in our gender and sexuality,
Almodóvar in Mujeres al borde de un ataque de nervios
opens up new vistas on the future of heterosexual love
in line with current trends in the relationships
between the sexes, which reveal

mayor tolerancia, más promiscuidad y
más conocimiento, pero todo ello
sustentado sobre la monogamia, aunque
en algunos casos sea monogamia sucesiva
con una nueva pareja.⁴³

CONCLUSION

When that fact is accepted that the family has passed through four successive forms and is now in a fifth, the question at once arises whether this form can be permanent in the future. The only answer that can be given is that it must advance as society advances, and change as society changes, even as it has done in the past. It is the creature of the social system, and will reflect its culture. As the monogamian family has improved greatly since the commencement of civilization, and very sensibly in modern times, it is at least supposable that it is capable of still further improvement until the equality of the sexes is attained. Should the monogamian family in the distant future fail to answer the requirements of society ... it is impossible to predict the nature of its successor.

(Lewis H. Morgan, Ancient Society, p.499.)¹

It is fitting to finish this thesis with a final reference to Pedro Almodóvar, the Spanish film director who after Buñuel and Saura has achieved greatest international recognition. It is a curious fact that Almodóvar's work which for the most part reflects new developments in Spanish society through its portrayal of the modern and youthful world of Madrid, should be so deeply rooted in the nation's cultural heritage, from the sainete and the zarzuela — particularly evident in Pepi, Luci y Bom y otras chicas del montón (1980) — to the esperpento and realismo social of the fifties. Criticism of the traditional family occurs throughout Almodóvar's films, and in almost all cases

criticism is directed against individuals who are linked in one way or another to the reactionary and fascist forces of pre-democratic Spain. Thus, the chauvinistic, sadistic and repressive husband in Pepi, Luci y Bom is a policeman who in the course of his duties resorts in typical authoritarian manner to violence and rape; several parents in other films are associated, directly or indirectly, with Francoism: Antonio, Gloria's unsupportive macho husband in ¿Qué he hecho yo para merecer esto? spent part of his youth in Germany and was the lover of a Nazi sympathiser; Angel's mother in Matador (1986) is a fanatical Opus Dei member, who instils guilt and fear in her son; and Antonio's mother in La ley del deseo (1987), equally oppressive, is moreover the German wife of a local politician.

The idea that family repression goes hand in hand with political repression is one which I have discussed frequently in my analysis of Spanish cinema over the last four decades. However unwittingly on some occasions, films made during the dictatorship with the aim of criticizing the repressive and oppressive nature of life in Spain incorporated also a criticism of the family, seen as an instrument for indoctrination and colonization of individuals, a political fact which, as I made clear in my introduction, is not only encountered in totalitarian states but is a feature of most patriarchal societies. In the specific case of Spain under Franco, the family was used by film

directors with two different purposes in mind: those who acquiesced in the ideology of Francoism made films which typically presented the family as a refuge of happiness, unity and love, while the directors who were concerned with censuring the authoritarian and regressive government inaugurated by Franco drew attention to the detrimental consequences for both adults and children of an institution based on the stratification of its members according to age and gender, relating this to the use of violence by those in power, and to the perpetuation of structures of domination and submission.

These issues were already present in many of the films of the fifties and sixties, but the most forceful attack on the traditional family came around the time of Franco's death, when conditions both in the industry and in the administration — *e.g.* the loosening of the grip of censorship — allowed more open treatment of such themes. Since then, Spanish directors, under better political and social circumstances and with the financial support of the Socialist administration, have managed to produce a wider range of films reflecting different views and perspectives. Not surprisingly, the representation of the family reflects the attitudes of the film-makers as well as mediating the contemporary realities of the country itself, which on many occasions are far from uniform. In spite of the important changes which have occurred in Spain during the last decade, the fact remains that there are still

large differences in mentality and customs between the various parts of the country, between the old and the new generations, between the urban and rural areas. That is the reason why now as much as in the past, Spanish cinema is still divided between the "quality" cinema and the commercial cinema, with the sole difference that in the eighties many of the so-called "quality" films have achieved as great a success as those made with the exclusive purpose of attracting big audiences. The comedies, above all, made principally by young new directors, have received acclaim and recognition precisely because of their accurate depiction of a society breaking many of the taboos and practices of the past, among them as I have suggested, those connected with marriage and the family.

However utopian it might appear in certain cases, the presentation in Spanish cinema of more flexible forms of family relationships than those which prevailed until recent times, reflects our societies' interest in alternatives to the traditional family structure, necessary not only for the good of the individual but, more important, for the welfare of society as a whole. Only a rejection of those relationships based on patterns of domination and submission, which the family in great measure has been responsible for perpetuating throughout the centuries, will allow the emergence of a safer, more peaceful, more caring, and harmonious world.

Notes to the Introduction

- 1.- D.H.J. Morgan, 'The Social Definition of the Family', in Sociology of the Family, ed. Michael Anderson, Harmondsworth, Penguin, 1980, p.344.
- 2.- Sylvia Truxa has studied family structures in her Die Frau in Spanischem Roman nach dem Bürgerkrieg: Camilo José Cela, Carmen Laforet, Ana Maria Matute, Juan Goytisolo, Frankfurt am Main: Verlag Klaus Dieter Vervuert, 1982, and observes that marriage in the novels of these writers is represented as an anachronistic institution.
- 3.- Marsha Kinder, 'The Children of Franco in the New Spanish Cinema', Quarterly Review of Film Studies, vol.8, num.2, Spring 1983, pp.57-76; Peter W. Evans, 'Cría cuervos and the Daughters of Fascism', Vida Hispánica, vol.XXXIII, num.2, Spring 1984, pp.17-25, and 'El espíritu de la colmena: The Monster, the Place of the Father and Growing-up in the Dictatorship', Vida Hispánica, vol. XXXI, num.3, Autumn 1982, pp.13-17.
- 4.- Manuel Gutiérrez Aragón's view to John Hopewell, in Out of the Past: Spanish Cinema After Franco, London, B.F.I, 1986, p.194.
- 5.- Peter W. Evans, 'El espíritu de la colmena: The Monster, the Place of the Father and Growing-up in the Dictatorship', p.14.

- 6.- Paul Ilie, 'Dictatorship and Literature: The Model of Francoist Spain', Ideologies and Literature, vol.4, num.17, 1983, p.252.
- 7.- John Hopewell, Out of the Past: Spanish Cinema After Franco, p.133.
- 8.- Raymond Carr and Juan Pablo Fusi, Spain. Dictatorship to Democracy, London, George Allen & Unwin, 1983, p.37.
- 9.- Ibid., p.150.
- 10.- Rafael López Pintor, 'La opinión pública y la transición: una mirada retrospectiva', Revista de Occidente, num.54, noviembre 1985, p.117.
- 11.- Ibid., pp.115-116.
- 12.- This by no means implies that Francoism had ceased to be a corrosive and tyrannical political system, because as Marilyn French points out 'It is far easier to arouse and maintain fear when one behaves inconsistently, erratically, than when one is consistent'. Beyond Power. On Women, Men and Morals, London, Abacus, 1986, p.336.
- 13.- Raymond Carr and Juan Pablo Fusi, Spain. Dictatorship to Democracy, p.48.
- 14.- Marilyn French, Beyond Power. On Women, Men and Morals, p.361.

- 15.- Many of my ideas about patriarchy originate in this writer's extensive investigation of the theme. See in particular chapter II, 'The Fall: Patriarchy', in Beyond Power. On Women, Men and Morals, pp.47-100.
- 16.- Frederick Engels, The Origin of the Family, Private Property and the State In the Light of Researches of Lewis H. Morgan, introd. Eleanor Burke Leacock, London, Lawrence & Wishart, 1981, p.121.
- 17.- John Hopewell, Out of the Past! Spanish Cinema After Franco, p.131.
- 18.- Eli Zaretsky, Capitalism, the Family and the Personal Life, London, Pluto Press, 1976, p.132
- 19.- Richard Wollheim, Freud, London, Fontana, 1982, pp.125-126.
- 20.- Juliet Mitchell, Woman's Estate, Harmondsworth, Penguin, 1981, p.146.
- 21.- D.H.J. Morgan, 'The Social Definition of the Family' in Sociology of the Family, p.331.
- 22.- Louis Althusser, 'Ideology and the State', in Lenin and Philosophy and Other Essays, trans. Ben Brewster, London, New Left Books, 1977, p.153.
- 23.- Ibid., p.147.
- 24.- Wilhelm Reich, The Mass Psychology of Fascism, trans. Vincent R. Carfagno, London, Penguin, 1983, p.94.

- 25.- Raymond Carr and Juan Pablo Fusi, Spain. Dictatorship to Democracy, p.97.
- 26.- Lidia Falcón, Mujer y sociedad. Análisis de un fenómeno reaccionario, Barcelona, Fontanella, 1973, and María Teresa Gallego Méndez, Mujer. Falange y Franquismo, Madrid, Taurus, 1983. Also Mercedes Formica de Careaga, 'Spain', in Women in the Modern World, ed. Raphael Patai, New York, The Free Press, 1967, pp.176-192.
- 27.- Frederick Engel, The Origin of the Family. Private Property and the State..., p.131.
- 28.- Peter Evans and Robin Fiddian, 'Victor Erice's El sur: A Narrative of Star-Cross'd Lovers', Bulletin of Hispanic Studies, LXIV, 1987, p.134
- 29.- María Telo, 'La evolución de los derechos de la mujer en España', in Concha Borreguero, Elena Catena, Consuelo de la Gándara and María Salas, La mujer española: de la tradición a la modernidad (1960-1980), Madrid, Tecnos, 1986, pp.89-93.
- 30.- Simone de Beauvoir, The Second Sex, trans. H.M. Parshley, Harmondsworth, Penguin, 1983, p.445.
- 31.- Juliet Mitchell, Woman's Estate, p.151
- 32.- Ann Dally, Inventing Motherhood. The Consequences of an Ideal, London, Burnett Books Ltd., 1982, p.18.
- 33.- See Shere Hite, The Hite Report. Women and Love. A Cultural Revolution in Progress, Harmondsworth, Penguin, 1987.

- 34.- Polly Toynbee, 'The Unequal Partnerships', The Guardian, 22 September 1986, p.12.
- 35.- Salustiano del Campo and Manuel Navarro, Análisis sociológico de la familia española, Barcelona, Ariel, 1985. Pilar Díez, 'El eclipse de la familia tradicional', Cambio 16, num.806, 11 marzo 1987, pp.100-101; 'Españolas 88. Cada vez mejores', Extra Cambio 16, num.855, 18 abril 1988; Ricardo Herren, 'La nueva sexualidad masculina', Cambio 16, num.853, 4 abril 1988, pp.16-22 and 'España quiere tolerar', Cambio 16, num.882, 24 octubre 1988, pp.126-135; and Miguel Bayón, 'Lo que dicen los hombres y lo que entienden las mujeres', Cambio 16, num.892, 2 enero 1989, pp.104-105.
- 36.- Almudena Díez and Pilar Díez, 'Minifaldas de protesta contra la discriminación de la mujer', Cambio 16, num.903, 20 marzo 1989, pp.14-19.
- 37.- Ibid., p.18.
- 38.- John Hooper, The Spaniards. A Portrait of the New Spain, Harmondsworth, Penguin, 1987, p.194.
- 39.- Emmanuel Reynaud, Holy Virility. The Social Construction of Masculinity, trans. Ros Schwartz, 1981, Pluto Press, p.114.
- 40.- Saint Paul, I Corinthians 7, 7-9.

Notes to Chapter One

- 1.- Fernando Méndez-Leite, Historia del cine español, Madrid, Rialp, 1965, 2 vols., I, p.393.
- 2.- J.M. Caparrós-Lera and Rafael de España, in their The Spanish Cinema. An Historical Approach, Barcelona, Centre for Cinematic Research "Film-Historia" (Spain), 1987, p.30, write: 'Thus in those first years of the "talkies" Spanish cinema was "colonized" by the Euro-American Cinema "spoken in Spanish", made in Hollywood and Paris (Joinville-le-Pont). Many writers, technicians, and performers emigrated to the Mecca of the movies to make films for the extensive Spanish-speaking audiences'.
- 3.- Carlos Fernández Cuenca, La guerra de España y el cine. Madrid, Editora National, 1972, 2 vols. I, p.539.
- 4.- John Hopewell, Out of the Past. Spanish Cinema After Franco. London, B.F.I, 1986, p.37.
- 5.- Emilio C. García Fernández, Historia ilustrada del cine español, Madrid, Planeta, 1985, p.201.
- 6.- Benito Perojo in his article 'Hacia la creación de una cinematografía nacional', Vértice: Revista Nacional de la Falange, num.1, Abril, 1937, points to the importance of the cinema of the Franco regime in the terms: 'He ahí la labor suprema de

6.- cont.

la cinematografía nacional: infundir en la conciencia colectiva la nobleza de tal misión; contribuir a dar a la paz un sentido laborioso, justiciero, fraternal y patriótico. Crear, en fin, un ideal: el ideal del trabajo con fines nacionales. Llevemos esta obra a los hogares españoles y la paz estará hinchada de cordialidad. Llevemos esta obra al extranjero, y daremos al mundo la impresión espléndida de que la España con que sueña el general Franco, y a que todos aspiramos, ha realizado sus ideales. Una España orientada sobre esas bases, será siempre Grande, Unida, Libre'.

7.- The conversion of Spain to a Monarchy following the referendum of 1947, reinforced the popular appeal of the theme of the monarchy and its role in history in films of this period and of subsequent years, like the two films Orduña made in 1951, La leona de Castilla and Alba de América, or Catalina de Inglaterra (1952) by Arturo Ruiz Castillo.

8.- Santos Sanz Villanueva, in his book Historia de la novela social española (1942-1975), Madrid, Alhambra, 1980, 2 vols., I, gives a detailed list of titles and names which become familiar at this time to Spanish writers and readers.

9.- Ibid., p.284.

- 10.- Vicente Molina-Foix, in Ivan Tubau, Crítica Cinematográfica (Bazin contra Aristarco: La gran controversia de los años 60), Edicions de la Universitat de Barcelona, 1983, p.225.
Santos Sanz Villanueva, Historia de la novela . . ., p.283.

It is not a coincidence that Sánchez Ferlosio and Fernández Santos studied at the Instituto de Investigaciones y Experiencias Cinematográficas, and that one of them — Fernández Santos — should become quite well known as a critic later on.

- 11.- Sanz Villanueva and Hipólito Esteban Soler, 'Narradores españoles del Medio Siglo', Miscellanea di studi de la Falange, Università di Pisa, 1971-73, pp.217-370, give extensive information about the influence of films in the writers of the generación del medio siglo.
12.- Felix Fanès, 'Al voltant d'una seqüència de Esa pareja feliz', Berlanga-2. Aportaciones, debates y testimonios, Ayuntamiento de Valencia, 1981, pp.29-32.

CIFESA was the studio which specialized in historical films in Spain during these decades. Orduña made with them in 1949 Locura de amor and Pequeñeces, in 1950 Agustina de Aragón and in 1951 Alba de América. Felix Fanès has studied the history of CIFESA in his book CIFESA. La antorcha de los éxitos, Valencia, Institución Alfonso el Magnánimo, 1982.

- 13.- Sanz Villanueva and Hipólito Esteban Soler,
'Narradores españoles del medio siglo', p.260.
- 14.- According to James Monaco typical features of
Neorealism include those of 'a cinema intimately
connected with the experience of living:
nonprofessional actors, rough technique, political
points, ideas rather than entertainment — all
these elements went directly counter to the
Hollywood esthetic of smooth, seamless
professionalism', in How to Read a Film. The
Art, Technology, Language, History and Theory of
Film and Media, New York and London, Oxford
University Press, 1981, p.253.
- 15.- Declarations made by Bardem to G. Dueñas y Olea
and cited in Sanz Villanueva, Historia de la
novela..., p.292.
- 16.- Luis G. Berlanga's ideas about Neorealism are
contained in his article 'De Ambrosio (sin
carabina) a la guapa bersagliera', Cinema
Universitario, num.3, Mayo 1956.
- 17.- Zavattini's interview of 1953 quoted in Realism
and the Cinema, ed. Christopher Williams.
London, Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1980, p.30.
- 18.- Interview of Rossellini with Mario Verdone, quoted
in ibid., p.31.
- 19.- José Monleón, in Ivan Tubau, Crítica
cinematográfica española, p.119.

- 20.- Ivan Tubau, in Crítica cinematográfica española, p.15, writing about Objetivo, a publication which came out from 1953 to 1955, says: 'El espíritu de Objetivo era polémico, acerbamente crítico, renovador y abierto y, sin perderse en elucubraciones teóricas, pretendía reanimar directa y vigorosamente el cine español'.
- 21.- José Monleón, in Ivan Tubau, Crítica cinematográfica española, p.118.
- 22.- In Laberintos by Jesús Fernández Santos a similar remark is made about styles of fiction. Apropos of an author of novelas sociales one of the characters complains that 'hoy abres uno de sus libros y te mueres de pena'.
- 23.- This theme has been treated extensively in literature. The Spanish tradition includes Carlos Arniches's La señorita de Trévez, on which the script of Calle Mayor was partly based. Another instance of provincial life is presented in Jesús Fernández Santos' Laberintos, where a group of city youngsters arrive in a small provincial town to spend the Easter break. Like the men in Calle Mayor, they form a 'grupo de jóvenes burgueses y apáticos' who live their lives in complete disregard of the social realities of the nation. In Carmen Martín Gaité's Entre visillos (1958) life in a provincial place is also described as constrictive, futile and tedious. Given that some

23.- cont.

critics have remarked on the influence on the novelists and script writers of this period of American literature — particularly of the Lost Generation — mention must be made of Sinclair Lewis' Main Street (1926), a work significant not only for its titles but also for its theme.

24.- Santos Sanz Villanueva, in his Historia de la novela..., p.103., comments that 'Muerte de un ciclista es el equivalente en el celuloide de las novelas antiburguesas de los hermanos Goytisolo y guarda cierto parecido con los libros de García Hortelano'.

25.- These conditions of life in the city are equally presented in some novels of this period, as for example in Cela's La colmena (1951), or in the ones that even though published in the decade of the sixties portrayed life in Madrid some years earlier, as is the case of Luis Martín Santos' Tiempo de silencio (1962). For its part, Sánchez Ferlosio's El Jarama (Premio Planeta in 1955), makes reference to life in both environments, the urban and the rural, and distinguishes between the values of the people living in one or the other.

26.- These remarks are reproduced by Jorge Torras in his prologue to Còmicos, Barcelona, AYMA, 1964, p.13.

- 27.- Ricardo Domènech, El teatro de Buero Vallejo. Una meditación española, Madrid, Gredos, 1973, p.70.
- 28.- It is worth mentioning in this respect the important role that the Communist party played in the organization of the Conversaciones de Salamanca and in the creation of the producing company UNINCI, responsible for financing some of the most important films in the fifties. UNINCI co-produced Luis Buñuel's film Viridiana in 1961, and after the scandal which followed its realease in Cannes UNINCI was liquidated by the government. Both events, Viridiana's banning in Spain and the disappearance of UNINCI, were disastrous for the Spanish film industry which lost the great director from Calanda — who would only return in 1970 to film Tristana — and the means to finance the work of the new film-makers.
- 29.- Román Gubern, 'La "presencia" de Bardem en los inicios de la obra de Berlanga', in Berlanga 2...., p.32.
- 30.- Román Gubern, in Ivan Tubau, Crítica cinematográfica española, p.194.
- 31.- Juan Antonio Bardem, Ramón Tamames and Eugenio Triana, Arte, política, sociedad, Madrid, Ayuso, 1976, p.18.
- 32.- Gran historia ilustrada del cine, Madrid, SARPE, 1984, vol.9, p.1424.

- 33.- Shalamith Firestone, The Dialectic of Sex. The Case for Feminist Revolution, London, Jonathan Cape, 1971, p.154.
- 34.- Raymond Carr and Juan Pablo Fusi, Spain. Dictatorship to Democracy, London, George Allen & Unwin, 1983, p.95.
- 35.- Hedillistas were the followers of Manuel Hedilla, leader of the Falange after José Antonio Primo de Rivera's execution in November 1936.
- 36.- John Hopewell in his introductory note for the film Surcos in the National Film Theatre.
- 37.- David Bordwell and Kristin Thompson, Film Art. An Introduction, Reading, Mass., Addison-Wesley Publishing Company, 1980, p.35.
- 38.- Mary Ellmann, Thinking About Women, New York, Harcourt, 1968, p.136.
- 39.- John Hopewell, Out of the Past. Spanish Cinema After Franco, p.61.
- 40.- Carlos F. Heredero, 'Berlanga: Cine comprometido (o el sentido biológico de la creación)'. Cinema 2002, num.21, noviembre 1976, p.58.
- 41.- Carlos and David Pérez Merinero, Cine español. algunos materiales por derribo, Madrid, Edicusa, 1973, p.21.
- 42.- The recent interest in Fernando Fernán Gómez is illustrated by Ramón Freixas, 'El eterno maldito. Fernando Fernán Gómez', in Dirigido por, num. 93, Mayo 1982, and by the series of critical reviews

42.- cont.

published in Contracampo, num.35, Primavera 1984.
Juan Tebar's book Fernando Fernán Gómez, escritor
(diálogo en tres actos), Madrid, Anjena, 1984,
based on talks with this director, gives extensive
information about his career and about the
reception of his films.

43.- The films of these three directors are also now
the object of renewed critical interest, and
Spanish Television is showing
their works for the first time.

44.- Francesc Llinàs, José Luis Tèllez and M. Vidal
Estévez, 'El viaje del comediante. (Conversación
con Fernando Fernán Gómez)', Contracampo,
num.35, primavera 1984, p.54.

45.- Ibid., p.60.

46.- Ibid., p.58. In these words Fernán Gómez divorced himself
from other directors who were concerned with political content.

47.- Fernando Fernán Gómez would continue writing
extensively for the cinema and the theatre in the
following decades, with the addition later on of
work done for the radio and television. His first
major success was achieved in 1977 when he was
awarded the Lope de Vega Prize for his comedy
Las bicicletas son para el verano. This play was
first staged in Madrid in 1982 and made into a
film by Jaime Chávarri a year later.

48.- Francesc Llinàs, José Luis Tèllez and M. Vidal
Estévez, 'El viaje del comediante. (Conversación
con Fernando Fernán Gómez)', p.62.

- 49.- This later film seems to pay homage to Hitchcock's film Psycho (1960). Many of the motifs in El extraño viaje are reminiscent of those in the British director's film: stuffed birds, gloomy houses, the mother figure, the young man who identifies with her.
- 50.- Carlos and David Pérez Merinero, Cine español, algunos materiales por derribo, p.22.
- 51.- Juan Tebar, Fernando Fernán Gómez, escritor (diálogo en tres actos), p.48. These films were considered innocuous only by their director, because he even admits later on in the interview that 'una comedia ligera como La vida alrededor en aquella época, para la censura estaba considerada de oposición, y su director quedaba clasificado como izquierdista clarísimo'.
- 52.- Significantly, all these films were made in collaboration with the actress Analía Gadé, an Argentine like Fernando Fernán Gómez, who was living with him at the time.
- 53.- César Santos Fontela in his 'Amor y desamor, sexo, antierotismo y represión en el cine español', in 7 trabajos de base sobre el cine español, Valencia, Fernando Torres, 1975, pp.111-138, has treated at length the theme of desamor, one of the most distinctive features of the Spanish cinema during the dictatorship.

- 54.- Juan Tebar, Fernando Fernán Gómez, escritor
(diálogo en tres actos), p.37.
- 55.- Cyrus C. DeCoster, 'The Theatrical Season in
Madrid. 1954-55'. Hispania, XXXIX, num.2, May
1956, p.184.
- 56.- Douglas R. McKay, Miguel Mihura, Boston, Twayne
Publishers, 1977, p.105.
- 57.- Sólo para hombres constitutes the first example
in Spain of what is normally called "the woman's
picture", i.e. those Hollywood films, mainly
melodramas, which place women and women's issues,
at the centre of the narrative. Prior to it there
had been in Spanish cinema a few films also
interested in the problems of women, including
some by J.A. Bardem, which have a woman as the
main character. I do not consider, however, Calle
Mayor or Cómicos as strictly women's pictures,
since the women normally function in relation to
men's problems, as in the case of Calle Mayor, or
she is just the starting point for a general
examination of some aspects of Spanish society, as
in Cómicos.
- 58.- Contracampo, num.35, primavera 1984, p. 14.
- 59.- Diego Galán and Fernando Lara, 18 españoles de
postguerra, Barcelona, Planeta, 1973, p.17.

- 60.- C. Blanco Aguinaga, J. Rodríguez Puértolas and Iris M. Zavala, Historia social de la literatura (en lengua castellana), Madrid, Castalia, 1984, III, pp.104-105.
- 61.- Fray Luis de Granada, Guía de pecadores, Libro I, parte 3a, cap.XXVIII.
- 62.- Andrea Dworkin, Pornography. Men Possessing Women. London, The Women's Press, 1981, p. 22.
- 63.- Raymond Carr and Juan Pablo Fusi, Spain: Dictatorship to Democracy, p.96.
- 64.- Fernando Fernán Gómez's projection of images of the father figure is most probably conditioned by the fact that he himself was an illegitimate child. The compensating qualities of his mother, an actress, impinge with equal force in his films.

Notes to Chapter Two

- 1.- Much valuable information about the Conversaciones of Salamanca and the sixties in Spain is provided by Vicente Molina-Foix, New Cinema in Spain, London, B.F.I, 1977, and Peter Besas, Behind the Spanish Lens. Spanish Cinema under Fascism and Democracy, Denver, Arden Press, 1985.
- 2.- Jorge Torras, in his prologue to Còmicos, Barcelona, Aymà, 1964, p.12.
- 3.- García Escudero had previously held a position in the administration as Director General de Cinematografía in 1952. He was dismissed, however, for his support of Nieves Conde's film, Surcos, and for his refusal to grant the status of 'National Interest' to Orduña's Alba de América. He would later become involved in the controversy surrounding the showing of Berlanga's El verdugo in the Venice Festival in 1965. The Spanish Ambassador in Rome at the time, Alfredo Sánchez Bella — a future Minister for Information — accused both Fraga Iribarne and García Escudero of giving Spanish cinema an excessively liberal orientation.
- 4.- Much criticism has been levelled at left-wing groups for their naivety when dealing with the Spanish authorities in film matters.

4.- cont.

David and Carlos Pérez Merinero are particularly scathing in Cine español, una reinterpretación, Barcelona, Anagrama, 1977.

5.- Román Gubern, quoted in 7 trabajos de base sobre el cine español, Valencia, Fernando Torres, 1975, p.251.

6.- José Vanaclocha, 'Normas e instituciones cinematográficas en España', in 7 trabajos de base..., pp.49-86.

7.- Cited by Vicente Molina-Foix, New Cinema in Spain, p.14.

8.- José Vanaclocha, 'Normas e instituciones cinematográficas en España', in 7 trabajos de base..., p.59.

9.- See García Escudero's declarations reproduced in 7 trabajos de base..., p.74.

10.- César Santos Fontela, mentioned in 7 trabajos de base..., p.71.

11.- Had Teresa Gimpera continued in the role of Ana/Elena in Pepermint Frappé, Saura's film would have developed into a completely different work from the one he made in the event. This is because she was already a well known actress in Spain, having appeared in a number of films of the School of Barcelona. A sophisticated and modern young model, Teresa Gimpera lacked the candour and naturalness which characterized Geraldine Chaplin.

- 12.- This is not to say that an examination of these works would not provide invaluable information about the anxieties, pressures and frustrations under which people laboured during this period.
- 13.- Fernando Méndez-Leite, 'Del amor y otras soledades de B. M. Patino', Film Ideal, nums. 217-218-219, 1970, p.410.
- 14.- Together with these divisions of the Spanish cinema in the sixties, we have to mention a further category, the cine maldito, consisting of works which were produced in Spain mainly during that decade and which, owing to economic, ideological or aesthetic reasons, lacked a proper channel of distribution within the film industry. The work of Fernando Fernán Gómez in this period is an obvious example. The authors of Cine maldito de los años sesenta, Valencia, Fernando Torres, 1984, give a detailed list of films and directors which enter this category and examine the reasons for their neglect.
- 15.- Carlos Durán, quoted by Vicente Molina-Foix, New Cinema in Spain, p.23.
- 16.- Jorge Grau had been asked to shoot extra material for Berlanga's Los jueves, milagro, in order to make the film more acceptable to the administration.

- 17.- Román Gubern's influence in this area is also evident in Jaime Camino's Mañana será otro día which he co-scripted with the director and Martha G. Frias. Martha G. Frias is the only woman I have discovered who participated in any of the films under consideration. However, Pilar Miró, who studied script-writing in the School of Cinematography, collaborated in Manuel Summers' black comedy La niña de luto, made in 1964.
- 18.- It is again ironic that while aspiring to be mainly realistic in its reflection of Spanish society, the New Spanish Cinema was confined mostly to cinemas of arte y ensayo which were created during the sixties to help "improve" the domestic film industry. Designed to show films in their original versions and, at least in principle, in full, these minority cinemas were only permitted in tourist areas or in cities of more than 50.000 inhabitants. According to Juan Antonio Pérez Millán cines de arte y ensayo are '[un] principio característico de los regímenes autoritarios, según el cual la cultura deja de ser peligrosa cuando se mantiene lejos del alcance de las masas, aunque se "conceda" como privilegio a unas minorías importantes'. See 'La provincia española y el cine', in 7 trabajos de base..., p.204.

- 19.- See Ramón Terenci Moix, 'La "Escuela de Barcelona" y el cine catalán', La estafeta literaria, 15 Diciembre 1969, p.27.
- 20.- El cine. Enciclopedia SALVAT del 7o arte. Madrid, SALVAT, vol VII, 1980, p.351.
- 21.- John Hopewell, Out of the Past: Spanish Cinema After Franco, London, B.F.I, 1986, pp.67-68.
Hopewell's description of Lorenzo applies equally to Pedro in Tiempo de silencio who clearly personifies the collective "bad faith" of his generation. Significantly, Patino pays homage to Martín Santos by using the phrase "Tiempo de silencio" as an introduction to the penultimate section of his film.
- 22.- Ramón del Valle-Inclán, Luces de Bohemia, Madrid, Espasa Calpe, 1968, pp.106-107.
- 23.- José María Palà and Marcelino Villegas, 'Nuevo cine español visto desde fuera'. Film Ideal, nums. 205-206-207, 1969, p.69.
- 24.- Wilhelm Reich, The Mass Psychology of Fascism, trans. Vincent R. Carfagno, Harmondsworth, Penguin, 1972, p.53.
- 25.- It must be said, nevertheless, that while Buñuel's films would have been familiar to film directors, script-writers, etc., to the general population as a whole the name of Buñuel was almost entirely unknown, given that his cinema was banned in Spain throughout most of the dictatorship.

- 26.- John Hopewell, Out of the Past : Spanish Cinema After Franco, p.179.
- 27.- Pedro Beltrán, in La comedia en el cine español, Madrid, Filmoteca de la Dirección General de Relaciones Culturales. Ministerio de Asuntos Exteriores, 1986, pp.36-37
- 28.- Florentino Soria, 'Panorama sobre la comedia cinematográfica española', in La comedia en el cine español, p.14.
- 29.- César Santos Fontenla, 'Amor y desamor, sexo, autoerotismo y represión en el cine español', in 7 trabajos de base..., p.131.
- 30.- Florentino Soria, 'Panorama sobre la comedia cinematográfica española', in La comedia en el cine español, p.10.
- 30 bis.- Marta Hernández, El aparato cinematográfico español, Barcelona, Akal, 1976, p.211.
- 31.- Carlos y David Pérez Merinero, in their work Cine español: algunos materiales por derribo, Madrid, Edicusa, 1973, reject the majority of the films which constituted the 'Nuevo cine español' on the grounds that they were the work of directors who accepted the conditions imposed by the administration in regard to censorship, economic assistance and related matters. In their opinion

31.- cont.

'Las películas del "NCE" fueron películas de pequeños burgueses, hechas desde presupuestos pequeño-burgueses, y para pequeños burgueses. El "NCE" fue un cine básicamente reaccionario' (p. 21).

32.- Mentioned in José Luis de Zarraga, 'La estructura económica del cine español', in 7 trabajos de base..., pp.13-46. Emilio C. García Fernández, in his Historia ilustrada del cine español, Madrid, Planeta, 1985, also comments on the financial and production difficulties of the early seventies, referring in particular to the problems which beset the "quality" directors. Thus, for example, Berlanga did not make a film in Spain from 1969 until 1977, when he made La escopeta nacional; Bardem, Fernán Gómez and Summers continued making films, but they accepted the conditions of the market and developed a cinema which was decidedly commercial; Patino, Picazo, and others had to wait until the end of the dictatorship to release a new film. Also many of the directors who finished their studies in the School of Cinematography, such as José Luis Borau, Victor Erice, Manuel Gutiérrez Aragón, to say nothing of the two women, Josefina Molina and Pilar Miró who also studied in the School, had to wait until the situation improved in 1973 with the re-introduction of norms to protect the cinema, to

32.- cont.

make their most important films. The only director not to be directly affected during this period was Carlos Saura, who continued making films with enviable regularity, e.g. in 1968 Stress es tres tres, in 1969 La madriguera, in 1970 El jardín de las delicias, in 1972 Ana y los lobos and in 1973 La prima Angélica.

33.- The film by Pedro Lazaga, Vente a Alemania, Pepe (1970), exploits both the theme of emigration, a social phenomenon of the sixties, and that of sexual liberation in other European countries. As in many of the comedias celtibéricas, the male protagonist of this film is originally presented as dissatisfied with his working and personal life, a situation which he tries to resolve by going to live in Germany where, he is told, work is plentiful and women liberated. After a series of unsuccessful adventures in Germany, Pepe returns to Spain and to his Spanish fiancée, thinking that life in Spain is not so bad after all.

34.- Luis Berlanga, in La comedia en el cine español, p.38.

35.- Pedro Almodóvar, *Ibid.*, p.34.

36.- Moelwyn Merchant, Comedy, London, Methuen, 1972, p.49

- 37.- Sigmund Freud, Jokes and their Relation to the Unconscious, trans. James Strachey, The Pelican Freud Library, Harmondsworth, Penguin, 1983.
- 38.- Henri Bergson, Laughter. An Essay on the Meaning of the Comic, trans. Cloudesley Brereton and Fred Rothwell, New York, The Macmillan Company, 1911.
- 39.- John Ellis, 'Made in Ealing', Screen, v 1.16, num.1, Spring 1975, pp.113-18
- 40.- José María Forquè, La comedia en el cine español, p.63.
- 41.- Vicente Escrivà, *ibid.*, p.55.
- 42.- Roberto Bodegas, *ibid.*, p.41.
- 43.- José Luis Dibildos, *ibid.*, p.49.
- 44.- José Vanaclocha in El cine. Enciclopedia SALVAT del 7o arte, p.211.
- 45.- See Pierre Macherey, A Theory of Literary Production, trans. Geoffrey Wall, London, Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1985 and Louis Althusser, 'Ideology and Ideological State Apparatuses', in Lenin and Philosophy and Other Essays, trans. Ben Brewster, London, N.L.B., 1971, pp.121-176
- 46.- Mentioned by Esteve Riambau, 'El cine español: La búsqueda de una identidad', in Gran historia ilustrada del cine, Madrid, SARPE, 1986, p.1429.
- 47.- A similar situation is encountered in Shampoo, an American comedy made under the direction of Hal Ashby in 1975, with Warren Beatty in the main role.

- 48.- Paul Hock, White Hero Black Beast. Racism, Sexism and the Mask of Masculinity, London, Pluto Press, 1979, pp.39-40.
- 49.- A machista attitude, typical of many Latin countries, was certainly prevalent in Spain during the dictatorship, as noted by John Hopewell who comments: 'Franco encouraged machismo: sexual chauvinism went hand in hand with political and national chauvinism'. In Out of The Past: Spanish Cinema After Franco, p.31.
- 50.- César Santos Fontenla, 'Amor, desamor, sexo, antierotismo y represión', in 7 trabajos de base..., p.133.
- 51.- See for example, Doanne Mary Anne, The Desire to Desire: The Woman's Film of the 1940s, Bloomington, Indiana University Press, 1987; Tania Modleski, The Women Who Knew Too Much. Hitchcock and Feminist Theory, London, Methuen, 1988; and Laura Mulvey, 'Visual Pleasure and Narrative Cinema', Screen, vol.16, no.3, Autumn 1975, pp.6-18 and 'Afterthoughts on "Visual Pleasure and Narrative Cinema"', Inspired by Duel in the Sun', Framework, 15/16/17, Summer 1981, pp.12-18
- 52.- John Hopewell, Out of the Past: Spanish Cinema After Franco, p.81.
- 53.- César Santos Fontenla, 'Amor, desamor, sexo, antierotismo y represión', in 7 trabajos de base..., pp.119-120.

- 54.- Carlos Castilla del Pino, Cuatro ensayos sobre la mujer, Madrid, Alianza, 1982, p.70.
- 55.- Ibid., p.70
- 56.- Florentino Soria, 'Panorama sobre la comedia cinematográfica española', in La comedia en el cine español, p.18.
- 57.- The misogynistic attitudes of both Berlanga and Azcona have repeatedly been commented upon by Spanish film directors and critics alike. It was, as John Hopewell acknowledges, one of the reasons for Saura's decision to cease collaborating with Azcona: 'The source of their disagreement was their different notions about women: Azcona's misogyny is notorious', Out of the Past: Spanish Cinema After Franco, p.257. Carlos F. Heredero, 'Berlanga: Cine comprometido (o el sentido biológico de la creación)', Cinema 2002, num.21, noviembre 1976, pp.58-59, observes that some of Berlanga's cinema is 'Filtrado por el esperpento ... Una forma de mirar, una concepción del mundo, un catalizador de reflexiones que dará pie a la cristalización de un nihilismo desesperanzado y escéptico, individualista y misógino ... La boutique, está impregnada hasta la médula de una misoginia feroz que no implica la ausencia de crítica al machismo'.

- 58.- N. Alcover and A. Pérez Gómez, Hallazgos. falacias y mixtificaciones del cine de los setenta, Bilbao, Mensajero, 1975, p.250.
- 59.- John Hopewell, Out of the Past: Spanish Cinema After Franco, p.127.

Notes to Chapter Three

- 1.- This title echoes that of Marsha Kinder's important essay on a similar topic: 'The Children of Franco in the New Spanish Cinema', Quarterly Review of Film Studies, vol, 8, num.2, Spring 1983, pp.57-76.
- 2.- Concha Borreguero, Elena Catena, Consuelo de la Gándara and María Salas, La mujer española: de la tradición a la modernidad (1960-1980), Madrid, Tecnos, 1986, pp.91-93.
- 3.- Carlos Saura in Enrique Brasó, Carlos Saura, Madrid, Taller J.B. Betancor, 1974, p.72, admits: 'Yo, como director de cine, me resisto de hacer una adaptación literaria. Es una forma de imponerme a mí mismo el que se me ocurra la idea matriz, es como una obligación para un director que se considera digamos "autor"'. José Luis Garci, for his part, disagrees with the politique des auteurs on the grounds that 'una película de autor era buena porque el guión era bueno, y resulta que el director que no lo había escrito'. Juan Carlos Rentero, 'Entrevista con José Luis Garci', Dirigido por, num.55, Junio 1978, p.54.
- 4.- Introduction to 'Auteur /Structuralism', in Theories of Authorship, ed. John Caughie, London, Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1987, p.127.

- 5.- John Hopewell, Out of the Past: Spanish Cinema After Franco, London, B.F.I., 1986, p.4.
- 6.- See for example 'Estructura y estilo en La prima Angélica', in Carlos Saura and Rafael Azcona, La prima Angélica, Madrid, Elías Querejeta ed., 1976, p.161.
- 7.- Enrique Brasó, Carlos Saura, p.294.
- 8.- Herbert Marcuse, Eros y civilización, trans. Juan García Ponce, Barcelona, Seix Barral, 1972, p.31. Subsequent page references to this edition are included in the text.
- 9.- Because of discrepancies between the film and the script quotations are taken from one or the other.
- 10.- This and subsequent references to Bergson and Plato are taken from Roger Shattuck, Proust. London, Fontana, 1974, p. 123.
- 11.- Saura may have been familiar with Pío Baroja's use of a similar pattern of imagery to contrast the interior and the periphery of Spain in another document of the '98 sensibility: Camino de perfección.
- 12.- Enrique Brasó, Carlos Saura, p.180.
- 13.- La prima Angélica starts the technique, later on continued in Cría cuervos, of using the same actor/actress for the portrayal of identical roles in different generations, although the original idea derives from the sequence in El jardín de las delicias where Antonio Cano — played by the same

13.- cont.

lead as in La prima Angélica, José Luis López Vázquez —, 'tiene una ensoñación en la que ve a su tía cuidándole de niño pero manteniendo él la apariencia física de un hombre maduro'. Fernando Lara, 'Estructura y estilo en La prima Angélica', in Carlos Saura and Rafael Azcona, La prima Angélica, p.151.

14.- Nancy Chodorow, The Reproduction of Mothering. Psychoanalysis and the Sociology of Gender, Berkeley, University of California Press, 1978, p.7.

15.- Carlos Castilla del Pino, Cuatro ensayos sobre la mujer. Madrid, Alianza, 1982, p.71.

16.- Fernando Lara, 'Estructura y estilo en La prima Angélica', in Carlos Saura and Rafael Azcona, La prima Angélica, p.158. Here, as on many other occasions in the film, Luis's unconscious plays a trick on him. He insists on Anselmo's being Angélica's father: 'Te estoy viendo cerrando ventanas el 18 de julio de 1936'. Anselmo of course dismisses the idea '¿qué me ves a mí?. ¿En el 36?, imposible chico. En 1936 yo estaba en Burgos con mis padres'. Even when Angélica shows Luis the photograph of her father in 1936 he still refuses the evidence and visualizes both men looking the same.

17.- The shift of attention from Angélica madre to her daughter starts quite early in the film. Luis's interest in the child is evident from the moment he climbs the stairs to tia Pilar's house on his return. The expression on his face indicates the strong emotion the girl evokes in him, and is particularly surprising since from the photographs we see of Angélica niña later on we deduce that she bears no more than a casual resemblance to her daughter. As happens with the perception of Anselmo, Luis has superimposed a private image onto the reality he sees. From this moment on, anyway, he is going to be more than usually interested in his niece: he is seen looking at her from the window even when he is talking about her mother; while he disappoints his cousin Angélica by admitting that Antonio Machado and not he was the author of a poem which he gave her as a child, he establishes a common interest in literature with the little girl. Angélica eventually will become more than an accessory, as in that scene in which Luis is engrossed looking down from the window at the child while she is tidying the room.

18.- Robin Fiddian and Carmen Méndez, 'Carrying Spanish films to Newcastle: José Luis Borau and Tata mía', Vida Hispánica, vol.XXXVII, num.3, Autumn 1988, p.15.

- 19.- John Hopewell, Out of the Past: Spanish Cinema After Franco, p.71.
- 20.- See the interview of José Luis Borau by José María Carreño in Casablanca, num.30, junio 1983, p.44.
- 21.- Carlos Boyero and Pachín Merinero, 'Mucho más que lo correcto, buscar la emoción', Casablanca, num. 10, octubre 1981, p.34.
- 22.- Robin Fiddian and Carmen Méndez, 'Carrying Spanish Films to Newcastle: José Luis Borau and Tata mía', Vida Hispánica, p.17.
- 23.- See Raymond Carr and Juan Pablo Fusi, Spain. Dictatorship to Democracy, London, George Allen & Unwin, 1981, chapter 9, 'The Regime in Crisis: Carrero Blanco and Arias Navarro, 1969-1975', pp.189-206.
- 24.- Borau's comments about Furtivos were made in an interview with the author in the Department of Spanish and Latin American Studies, the University of Newcastle Upon Tyne, on October 9, 1987.
- 25.- Peter W. Evans, 'Cría cuervos and the Daughters of Fascism', Vida Hispánica, vol.XXXIII, num.2, Spring 1984, pp.17-25 and 'El espíritu de la colmena: The Monster, the Place of the Father and Growing-up in the Dictatorship', Vida Hispánica, vol.XXXI, num.3, Autumn 1982, pp.13-17;
Vicente Molina Foix, 'La guerra detrás de la ventana. Notas de lectura de El espíritu de la colmena', Revista de Occidente, num.53, Octubre

25.- cont.

1985, pp.112-118; Roger Mortimer, Sight and Sound, Autumn 1974, p.15; Gavin Millar, 'Poachers' Game', The Listener, March 13, 1976, p.346; Mario Vargas Llosa, 'Furtivos', Quarterly Review of Film Studies, vol.8, num.2, Spring 1983, pp.77-84; Robin Fiddian, 'The Roles and Representations of Women in Two Films by José Luis Borau', in Essays on Hispanic Themes in Honour of Edward C. Riley, Edinburgh, 1989; Stephen Aris, 'The Hard Face of the Real Spain', The Sunday Times, May 8, 1977, p.39; and Virginia Higginbotham, Spanish Film Under Franco, Austin, University of Texas Press, 1988.

26.- Roland Barthes, 'Myth Today', Mythologies, trans. Annette Lavers, London, Paladin 1985, p.148.

27.- John Hopewell, Out of the Past: Spanish Cinema After Franco, p.48.

28.- Roland Barthes, 'Myth Today', Mythologies, p.135

29.- Virginia Higginbotham, Spanish Film Under Franco, preface, p.X.

30.- Marsha Kinder, 'The Children of Franco in the New Spanish Cinema', Quarterly Review of Film Studies, p.73.

31.- Peter Evans, 'El espíritu de la colmena: The Monster, the Place of the Father and Growing-up in the Dictatorship', in Vida Hispánica, p.13.

32.- Miguel Delibes, Cinco horas con Mario, Barcelona, Destino, 1976.

- 33.- Gran historia ilustrada del cine, vol.9, SARPE, 1984, p. 1432.
- 34.- Paul Ilie, 'Dictatorship and Literature: The Model of Francoist Spain', Ideologies and Literature, vol.4, num.17, 1983, p.252.
- 35.- Adrienne Rich, Of Woman Born. Motherhood as Experience and Institution, London, Virago, 1986, p.243.
- 36.- Gavin Millar, 'Poachers' Game', p.346.
- 37.- Miguel Juan Payau and José Luis López, Manuel Gutiérrez Aragón, Madrid, Ediciones J.C., Colección Directores de Cine, p.47.
- 38.- Jaime Millás, 'Somos Furtivos', Revista de Occidente, num.4, febrero 1976, p.48.
- 39.- Caroline Lewis, 'Poachers', Monthly Film Bulletin, num.507, vol.43, April 1976, pp.80-81.
- 40.- Marsha Kinder, 'The Children of Franco in the New Spanish Cinema', Quarterly Review of Film Studies, p.70.

Recent reports in the media about the Cleveland affair have highlighted the greater proportion of men — fathers, grandfathers, brothers — committing incest against children. Margaret Mead in Male and Female, Harmondsworth, Penguin, 1950, p.112, writes: 'Mother and son incest is the rarest form of incest in the world, and it takes fairly elaborate arrangements to make genuinely attractive any affairs between older women and men young enough to be their sons'

- 41.- Miguel Juan Payau and José Luis López, Manuel Gutiérrez Aragón, pp.26-27. A section of this book, entitled 'Maternalismo dominante y paternalismo ausente' is devoted to the figure of the mother in Gutiérrez Aragón's films.
- 42.- Miguel Marías, 'Borau en la frontera', Cine español 1975-1984, Ed. Aula de cine. Servicio de Publicaciones de la Universidad de Murcia, p.107.
- 43.- Marsha Kinder, 'The Children of Franco in the New Spanish Cinema', Quarterly Review of Film Studies, p.71.
- 44.- Miguel Juan Payau and José Luis López, Manuel Gutiérrez Aragón, p.26.
- 45.- See Pachín Marinero's interview with Manuel Gutiérrez Aragón in Casablanca, num.23, p.47.
- 46.- Miguel Juan Payau and José Luis López, Manuel Gutiérrez Aragón, p.48.
- 47.- According to Bruno Bettelheim in The Use of Enchantment: The Meaning and Importance of Fairy Tales, Harmondsworth, London, 1986, p.94 'The witch — more than the other creations of our imagination which we have invested with magic powers, the fairy and the sorcerer — in her opposite aspects is a reincarnation of the all-good mother of infancy and the all-bad mother of the oedipal crisis'.

- 48.- Marsha Kinder, 'The Children of Franco in the New Spanish Cinema', Quarterly Review of Film Studies, p.71.
- 49.- Paul Ilie, 'Dictatorship and Literature: The Model of Francoist Spain', Ideologies and Literature, p.245.
- 50.- Marsha Kinder, 'The Children of Franco in the New Spanish Cinema', Quarterly Review of Film Studies, p.59.
- 51.- Ibid., p.75.
- 52.- Ibid., p.61.
- 53.- Ibid., p.65.
- 54.- Angel S. Harguindey, 'Entrevista con Carlos Saura', in Carlos Saura, Cría cuervos, Madrid, Elías Querejeta Ed., 1975, p.125.
- 55.- K.K. Ruthven, Myth, London, Methuen, 1976, pp.24-25.
- 56.- Bruno Bettelheim, The Use of Enchantment: The Meaning and Importance of Fairy Tales, p.63.
- 57.- Ibid., p.94.
- 58.- John Hopewell, Out of the Past: Spanish Cinema After Franco, p.104.

Notes to Chapter Four

- 1.- For information about the problems facing the film industry in Spain during the last decade, see John Hopewell, Out of the Past 'Spanish Cinema After Franco, London, B.F.I., 1986, pp.225-226.

In the last few months the situation of Spanish cinema has again deteriorated as a result of changes in the administration. The new Minister for Culture, Jorge Semprún, has declared his intention to stop the generous State subsidies given to film directors since 1983 and instead is trying to encourage the productoras to raise the necessary money.

- 2.- Ibid., pp.231-232.
- 3.- Other films where prostitutes or "loose women" are presented in a sympathetic light are: Calle mayor, El sur, La colmena and ¿Qué he hecho yo para merecer esto?.
- 4.- Interview of Enrique Alberich with Josefina Molina, Dirigido por, num 87, noviembre 1981, p.22.
- 5.- Ibid., pp.22-23.
- 6.- Interview of Pilar Urbano with Pilar Miró, Epoca, num.24, 26 agosto-1 septiembre 1985, p.19.
- 7.- For example, John Hopewell, in an otherwise perceptive study of the film, appears perplexed by Andrea's 'rather bizarre behaviour' and assumes that 'the crux of Miró's film is

- 7.- cont.
- Andrea's seemingly masochistic silence about her illness'. Out of the Past; Spanish Cinema After Franco, p.184.
- 8.- Review of Hablamos esta noche. R.E. Fotogramas, num.1672, marzo 1982, n/p.
- 9.- Marilyn French, Beyond Power. On Women, Men and Morals, London, Abacus, 1986, p.342.
- 10.- See the review of La mujer del ministro, by "R.F." in Dirigido por, num.86, octubre 1981, p.65.
- 11.- Marcos Ordóñez 'Eloy de la Iglesia. Del esperpento a la dialéctica', Fotogramas, num.1550, octubre 1979, p.20.
- 12.- Ignasi Bosch, 'El Pico: Lo viejo y lo nuevo', Contracampo, num.34, invierno 1984, p.53.
- 13.- Tomás Delcros, 'Eloy de la Iglesia. Contra la Falocracia', Fotogramas, num.1514, diciembre 1977, p.6.
- 14.- Herbert Marcuse, Eros y civilización, trans. Juan García Ponce, Barcelona, Seix Barral, 1972, p.30. Subsequent page references to this edition are included in the text.
- 15.- See the text of an interview with Eloy de la Iglesia in Antonio Castro, Cine español en el banquillo, Valencia, Fernando Torres, 1974, p.229.

- 16.- Tomás Delcros, 'Eloy de la Iglesia. Contra la Falocracia', Fotogramas, p.6. Janet Gallop observes that infidelity 'is a feminist practice of undermining the Name-of-the-Father'. Feminism and Psychoanalysis. The Daughter's Seduction, London, Macmillan, 1986, p.48.
- 17.- Tomás Delcros, 'Eloy de la Iglesia. Contra la Falocracia', Fotogramas, p.6.
- 18.- Herbert Marcuse, Eros y civilización, p.5.
- 19.- Jeffrey Weeks, Coming Out. Homosexual Politics in Britain. From the Nineteenth Century to the Present, London, Quartet Book, 1977, p.35.
- 20.- Emmanuel Reynaud, Holy Virility. The Social Construction of Masculinity, trans. Ros Schwartz, London, Pluto Press, 1981, p.55.
- 21.- Perhaps the attraction to sexual perversions could be better understood if we also accept with Freud that 'Aquellos que se dan a sí mismos el nombre de homosexuales no son sino los invertidos conscientes y manifiestos y su número es insignificante al lado de los homosexuales latentes. De este modo nos encontramos obligados a ver en la homosexualidad una ramificación casi regular de la vida erótica'. Sigmund Freud, Introducción al psicoanálisis, trans. Luis López Ballesteros y de Torres, Madrid, Alianza, 1968, p.331.
- 22.- See the review of El diputado by José Luis Téllez in Contracampo, num.1, april 1979, p.52.

- 23.- Adrienne Rich, Of Woman Born. Motherhood as Experience and Institution, London, Virago, 1986, p.249.
- 24.- This is not to say that Eloy de la Iglesia's cinema does not reflect a strong influence of Spanish culture. Together with Pedro Almodóvar he is one of the film directors working at the moment in Spain who most clearly continues in the tradition of Luis Buñuel, Fernando Fernán Gómez and Francisco Regueiro. As already mentioned, the first period of de la Iglesia's cinema has been described as esperpéntico while the films of the eighties share many elements normally found in works associated with literary tremendismo and the sainete.
- 25.- Victor Steinberg, 'Los españoles cada vez más violentos', Cambio 16, num.827, 5 octubre 1987, pp.16-26.
- 26.- John Hopewell, Out of the Past: Spanish Cinema After Franco, p.222.
- 27.- Ignasi Bosch, 'El Pico: lo viejo y lo nuevo', Contracampo, pp.55-56.
- 28.- It is a curious fact that while de la Iglesia discredits the principal institutions of Spanish society, he hardly mentions the Church and spares it the barbs of his criticism.
- 29.- Ignasi Bosch, 'El Pico: lo viejo y lo nuevo', Contracampo, p.60.

- 30.- John Hopewell, Out of the Past: Spanish Cinema After Franco, pp.110-111.
- 31.- Ibid., p.82.
- 32.- Carlos Castilla del Pino, Cuatro ensayos sobre la mujer, Madrid, Alianza, 1982, p.63.
- 33.- Antonio Ribelles, 'Fernando Colomo. Tigres y dragones'. Fotogramas, num.1733, septiembre 1987, p.118.
- 34.- Juan Miguel Lamet, in La comedia en el cine español, p.20.
- 35.- Esteve Riambau, 'Cine español 78/80. Testimonios de una crisis', Dirigido por, num.77, noviembre 1980, p.33.
- 36.- Antonio Ribelles, 'Fernando Colomo. Tigres y dragones', Fotogramas, p.119.
- 37.- María Luisa San José, in La comedia en el cine español, p.111.
- 38.- Interview of Enrique Alberich with Oscar Ladoire, Dirigido por, num.93, mayo 1982, p.36.
- 39.- Esteve Riambau, 'Cine español 78/80. Testimonios de una crisis', Dirigido por, p.34.
- 40.- Nuria Vidal, The Films of Pedro Almodóvar, Instituto de la Cinematografía y las Artes Audio-visuales, Madrid, Ministerio de Cultura, 1988, p.108.
- 41.- Ibid., p.100.
- 42.- Pilar Díez, 'El eclipse de la familia tradicional', Cambio 16, num.806, 11 mayo 1987, pp.101-102.

43.- Dr. Juan José Vidal, 'La conducta sexual de los españoles'. Cambio 16, num.889, 12 diciembre 1988, p.222.

Notes to Conclusion

1.- Lewis H. Morgan, Ancient Society, or Researches in the Lines of Human Progress from Savagery, through Barbarism to Civilization, New York, World Publishing Company, 1963, p.499.

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