Sex, sadism and spain: the Spanish horror film, 1968-1977

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DEDICATION

I dedicate this work to:

My mother, Elizabeth Gray Schlegel

My father, Frederick William Schlegel (in memoriam)

My brother, Frederick William Schlegel Jr. (in memoriam)

My grandparents, Nicholas and Mary Gray (in memoriam)

And lastly, I dedicate this to Natalie.
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CHAPTER 1:

INTRODUCTION


"One might say that the true subject of the horror genre is the struggle for recognition of all that our civilization represses and oppresses."
- Robin Wood

"You do not let your eyes see nor your ears hear, and that which is outside your daily life is not of account to you."
- Professor Van Helsing, Dracula, 1897

This dissertation explores how a group of films produced, distributed and exhibited under the crumbling dictatorship of Francisco Franco's Spain can potentially lead us to a better understanding of the political, social and cultural conditions during this contentious period in Spain's long history. The genre of horror, banned under former dictator and head of state General Francisco Franco as a potential site of ideological subversion, ironically became one of the defining and most popular genres in Spain at the close of the 1960s¹ and dominated all other sectors of genre production in the 1970s. I offer, through close textual readings of representative samples, a history of the Spanish horror film, and in this regard, expose the buried strata – the cultural deposits – where I believe manifestations of Spanish national identity can be found. I also examine how these texts draw upon both the thematic and aesthetic characteristics of pre-existing films of this type released by The United States, England and Italy (among others) as well as analyze the marketing, distribution and exhibition strategies deployed by the Spanish in both their international co-productions and national productions. By performing aesthetic, thematic and industrial analyses, we access significant layers of cultural subtext and, in some ways, reveal the ways history can embed itself into narrative objects, especially in the wake of national trauma. This last point, as argued at the conclusion of this dissertation, is the case with
The Spanish Civil War (1936-1939) which left a nation economically troubled, politically polarized, and with a death toll of over half a million.

In like manner, post World War II Europe saw economic ruin visited upon many countries, among them Germany, England, Italy, and France. The project of slowly reconstructing their dormant, essentially non-operational motion picture industries would prove to be a complicated political, economic and cultural project. The U.S. involvement, though distanced, was nonetheless crucial to this reconstruction. In Ghouls, Gimmicks, and Gold: Horror Films and the American Movie Business, 1953–1968 (2004), Kevin Heffernan presents an economic and industrial analysis of the marketing, distribution and exhibition strategies of the mid-twentieth century horror film. He explains, "American co-productions with the studios of Europe began shortly after World War II as a result of the efforts of war-ravaged countries, including Italy and England, to block theater receipts from the major U.S. studios in an effort to prevent large amounts of currency from leaving their decimated economies" (Heffernan 136). American companies, such as American International, were eager to secure negative pickup deals (the outright purchasing of a motion picture and its distribution rights) for importation as well as to co-finance international co-productions.

Heffernan's use of the phrase "war-ravaged" is significant; the horrors and atrocities of World War II provided ammunition through which screenwriters, directors, producers, cinematographers, and so on, could visually tell stories that acknowledged the dismal and gruesome realities of a continent left weary from post-war trauma. As such, the films of this era, horror and otherwise, tend to possess a fractured narrative logic (associated broadly with European cinema) coupled with surreal, haunting and sometimes powerfully disturbing imagery. Operating under a conspicuous sense of post-war disillusionment, these leading characteristics
began the dominant mode of expression for, in particular, a genre that came to be known simply and collectively as Euro-horror. Euro-horror is, among other things, recognized for “its assault upon traditional narrative models, its deconstruction of normative gender, sexual and racial identities at the level of character, and its emphasis on spectacle and visual excess” (Olney ii). Simultaneously, as production and distribution companies quickly realized that one of the most camera ready and potentially profitable genres was horror, a synthesis between content/product, outlet, and demand occurred and by the late 1950s and early 1960s, Euro-horror and its continental and international co-productions were flourishing.

Initially however, Spain remained non-cooperative and non-competitive within this sector of filmmaking. Franco's solution to the national problems of post Civil War Spain and to post World War II global issues was to implement a rigid autarky based on models of European fascism and Nazism; this closed economic system later proved disastrous for Spain. Moreover, even if Spain had considered joining the European market in this respect, hindrance from The Catholic Church and Spanish Government in the form of a Board of Censorship, which rigidly controlled or restricted all manner of motion picture content made it difficult, if not impossible (these points are more fully developed in chapter two). Spain therefore preferred to sanction tame and light-hearted domestic product that tended to reinforce Francoist hegemony rather than contradict or subvert it. It was not until the late 1960s when Spain would enter the Euro-horror arena; however, once initiated, the Spanish became competitively prodigious. Over the span of these historically significant ten years (1968-1977), Spain's total output reached into the hundreds of these types of films. This statistic is remarkable when compared to the output of all the studios and production companies operating in the free market industry of The United States over the same period. The below table (which adds an additional two years for context)
illustrates the bulge in production where numbers begin to double and triple during the most productive years. The yield for this span of years is 203 films.

![Spanish Horror Movie Production Chart](chart.png)

Table 1-1. Spanish horror movie production totals between 1967 and 1978.

Now, within the considerable multi-national environment of Euro-horror, the *Spanish* horror film offers a fascinating and almost entirely ignored discursive body. As part of a general research rationale, I want to briefly address the ways in which this era of the Spanish horror film has been overlooked and unjustly maligned. Indeed, despite the existence of several works dedicated to the very subject of *Spanish* cinema, many of which are concentrated under the Francoist regime, most notably Marsha Kinder's misleadingly titled *Blood Cinema* (1993), there is an almost suspicious vacuum of silence surrounding the Spanish horror film. Kinder, for example, writes:

> Just as the Spanish Civil War of 1936-9 has frequently been called a rehearsal for the Second World War, so Spain's surprisingly rapid transition from Francoism to democracy can be seen as prefiguring the sudden collapse of the Cold War paradigm which followed in 1945. Spanish cinema played an important role in figuring Spain's move to democracy, not only after Franco's death in 1975, but in the years preceding it. From the 1950s onwards a hermetically sealed Spain began to be opened to foreign influence and a new Spanish cinema emerged on the world scene. (Kinder 596)
The problem that quickly develops here is the fact that the "new Spanish cinema" to which Kinder refers is indeed saturated with the blood of her book's title, but it is principally the blood of the genre most associated with gut-level, visceral reactions to rituals of blood-letting, blood-spilling and blood ingestion. And yet, in what is common to books on Spanish cinema, Kinder's scholarship completely ignores any mention of what, fueled by The Ministry of Culture's "Plan of Stabilization," would be collectively known as "La Edad de Oro del Fantaterror Español" or "The Golden Age of Spanish Horror." Let me be clear, Kinder's Blood Cinema along with many other scholarly books that examine Spanish cinema are undeniably valuable, insightful and necessary to advancing the agenda of global cinema studies. My bewilderment quite logically stems from works that examine the exact same era as this dissertation and fail to mention (in passing, or otherwise), or simply present a rationale for not addressing, the swell in horror movie production that began in 1967 and lasted well into the early 1980s.

Because of their extensive history with the genre, American, British and most recently Italian horror films have received greater scholarly and critical attention. In a recent example of popular criticism (as opposed to Kinder's more scholarly publication), New York Times film critic Dave Kehr acknowledges the traditions, longevity and growing popularity of Euro-horror. Kehr however, employs the more pejorative term "Eurotrash" throughout his review of these releases.

Beyond first-run films and television series, one of the fastest-growing segments in the DVD marketplace consists of the wide group of horror movies, crime films and soft-core pornography with a sadistic edge that has come to be known collectively as Eurotrash, imports without quite the cachet of Vuitton handbags and Hermès scarves. There are now several companies catering to discerning fans of antique gore who snap up new releases of obscure Italian horror movies, forgotten French porn films and the baroque German crime thrillers known as krimi. …The heroes of this school — Lucio Fulci, Jess Franco, Max Pecas and
countless others — are instinctive rebels, yet their revolt, possibly subconsciously, takes the form of a blanket rejection of the high-art notions of quality, consistency, intelligence, beauty and so on. (Kehr, www.nytimes.com, emphasis mine)

Let me briefly indicate here that the social reception of these films is an important part of this dissertation and the above citation establishes significant points that require further elaboration for both mainstream and more scholarly audiences. This citation aids in priming and framing certain concerns of this dissertation. To begin with, in the case of Spain (which became a prodigious supplier of these types of films), I agree with the assertion of a "blanket rejection" but disagree with what specifically is being rejected. Kehr assumes a homogeneous mode of cultural production, akin to a Pan-European identity (hence, "Eurotrash"). This is problematic for at least several reasons; chief among them, for me, is Spain's form of government at the time of this "Eurotrash" boom - which was not a constitutional democracy or even a monarchy, but a military dictatorship. Kehr's romanticized "instinctive rebels" and their "revolt" (of which, Spanish filmmaker Jess Franco is the unrivaled emperor) would have unquestionably been imprisoned, or worse, executed for treasonable crimes against the state. This helps to explain Jess Franco's self-imposed professional exile from Spain during the majority of its inhospitable and strict 1960s.

The author of this piece, the respected and admired Dave Kehr, overlooks the significant output of Spain, preferring to highlight the "low" cinemas of Italy, France, and Germany. This disregard is arguably offset by his rather casual acknowledgment of the abovementioned Jess Franco. However, Kehr fails to establish a connection between Franco and his nationality or country of origin. In fact, Spain is not mentioned once in the entirety of this article, titled, "Eurotrash Roundup."

When Kehr does pause to discuss Spain's Jess Franco, his comments are apparently informed by notions of taste rather than on the genuine creative impulses of a fascinating director
like Jess Franco. Kehr wryly summarizes Jess Franco's career below.

Mr. Franco, a filmmaker with somewhere between 150 and 300 films to his credit (no one seems to know for sure), has no discernible talent beyond an eye for attractive young women willing to have simulated sex with various actors and objects. What 'meaning' his work possesses lies, as his many academic defenders have claimed, in its inherent rebuke to outdated bourgeois notions of narrative intelligibility and dramatic coherence. (Kehr, www.nytimes.com)

While curious and problematic, it is perhaps mostly ironic that Kehr engages in supercilious value judgments, sensational turns of phrase, and the policing of taste in an article exactly about the artistic reactions to, and rejections of, the politics of taste distinctions through dominant class configurations.

Kehr's review, however, is sufficiently paradigmatic regarding the aggregate view on the Spanish horror film in both popular and academic circles: it is not discussed or well known. The challenge of canonizing Spain's body of work and, as Kehr states, the "heroes" of these "movements" remains unclaimed.

This dissertation proposes to redress the silence surrounding the Spanish horror film and perhaps elevate the status of some of its key figures, such as Jess Franco, from that of "having no discernable talent" to that of "architects of a major cinematic movement."

In the pages that follow then, I present a series of questions that interrogate the Spanish horror film and the culture that produced this cinematic movement. These questions, I believe, cover the major and most common concerns of an historical inquiry. To begin to cogently explain the horror boom Spain experienced from roughly 1968 to 1977 one must consider the complex factors that led to the "official" sanctioning of horror films where they had previously been banned and the ways (content, aesthetic) they differed from other current popular genres that were sanctioned and subsidized by the government. What were the strategies employed in financing, producing and exhibiting these films? In producing these films, what tropes,
conventions, iconography and thematic treatments were consistently used and in what ways are these films similar and simultaneously different from their competition? Certainly, box office earnings and reception must be considered. How were these films received with audiences and critics, both in Spain and abroad? And lastly, why is there a very rapid decline in production in the late 1970s and early 80s? What factors led to this economic shift?

If, as shown, academics and film critics are blasé, misinformed, or worse, ignorant regarding the Spanish horror film, at least one scholar has addressed this oversight. Peter Hutchings recognizes the above marginalization in his comprehensive survey on the evolution of the genre. In *The Horror Film* (2005), Hutchings observes and comments on an “overly streamlined picture of generic development, one which does not always take enough account of the range of different horror films available in any given period” (Hutchings 28). The horror movie as a hub for multicultural discourse is, in many ways, a completely new branch of studies. The dismantling of national boundaries through late twentieth and twenty-first century global media technologies and the rise of “boutique” DVD distribution labels such as Criterion, Casa Negra, Synapse, Blue Underground, Panik House, Image and Tokyo Shock have made the rescuing of and access to (notoriously rare) films from around the world possible and, for that matter, simple. This essentially unrestricted admittance has facilitated recent trends in horror cinema research, scholarship, and mainstream appreciation. For decades however, American and British horror almost exclusively dominated all discourse. On this subject, Hutchings elaborates:

In (historically) locating the development of horror along an American-British axis, it also marginalizes other significant areas of horror production, for instance Italian horror, Spanish horror, and Mexican horror. A tendency to see horror films in terms primarily of American and British production, with European production only acknowledged so far as its 'art' or 'avant-garde' sectors were concerned, was especially evident in writings about the horror film from the 1960s and 1970s. […] By contrast, recent critical work on Italian horror cinema in particular has assumed a prominence in writings about horror that reflects not
only the sheer volume of horror production in Italy but also the quality and distinctiveness of many of these films. (Hutchings 28)

It is precisely the volume, quality and distinctiveness that Hutchings ascribes to the Italian horror film (and its critical representations) that this dissertation seeks to similarly attribute to the Spanish horror film. The preceding examples, then, provide the fundamental justification for this study. Little to nothing exists on the subject of the Spanish horror film in the English language, and what is in print is either underdeveloped (as the following review of the literature shows) or engages in a form of elitism that minimizes the legitimatization of these films as an important part of Spanish history. In terms of addressing past or current academic literature on the Spanish horror film, this introduction presents all of the current findings.

Hutchings' book, a very recent survey of the genre (2005), presents the perfect launch point from which we may review the relevant literature to this dissertation. There have been enough critical works on the subject of horror to warrant reflection and, to a large degree, this is Hutchings' principal undertaking with The Horror Film. Hutchings reviews the major theories and academic approaches to writing about the horror film, citing what he considers to be occasional flaws in these bodies of work, for example the "uses (and abuses) of psychoanalytic theory in horror analysis" (vii). However, Hutchings does more than reflect on other scholarly work; he contributes substantive theorizing of his own which results in a fresh and new look at common readings. Hutchings also examines specific aspects of the horror film which he considers previously underdeveloped. This is particularly evident in his chapter "The Sound of Horror" which examines "horror's use of sound and the reliance of the genre on particular types of performance" (viii). Throughout his book, Hutchings suggests that earlier works might need reevaluation; similarly it would benefit this project to revisit the trajectory horror scholarship has taken since it first became an object of legitimate study. Horror is a particularly slippery genre
when it comes to definition, and this may be, as Hutchings notes in his introduction by way of quoting *Frankenstein* (1931), because "It's Alive! It's Alive!"

The following review is broken into roughly three chronological sections. The first of these focuses on the early scholarship from the late 1960s and early 1970s, the second on the refinement stage where theory is introduced and becomes an important part of the critical agenda, and lastly, I review the relevant literature available on the global horror film.

Through single-authored volumes and edited anthologies, many academics have thoroughly engaged and embraced the horror film in efforts to elevate its status from what filmmaker Wes Craven aggregately described as "One notch above pornography" to that of a force that needs to be acknowledged in art, and hence society, while further allowing people simple and primal access to experiencing their own humanity. And, while horror film scholarship initially struggled to find a suitable niche, it wasn't long before major works began to see publication. During the initial waves of film criticism, the first "serious" work to address the horror genre was Carlos Clarens' *Horror Movies: An Illustrated Survey* (1968). Clarens, a film critic and historian, presents a chronological portrait of the horror film, from the Weimar Republic through the late "golden age" of Hollywood studio production, roughly 1948. Clarens' book offered some synthesis and context but could best be considered an articulate "appreciation" of a genre that was laboring to find acceptance as a site for legitimate discourse. As an historical investigation, Clarens' book shows remarkable durability and has recently seen a chapter reprinted in Stephen Prince's edited volume, *The Horror Film* (2005).

Clarens' only comparative equivalent at that time was William K. Everson's *Classics of the Horror Film* (1974). Everson, (then a professor of cinema studies at New York University) covers essentially the same terrain as Clarens. He analyzes lost or neglected films from the
identical pool as Clarens; his insight is astute and intelligent, but he more or less opts for "capsules" directed at each specific film he analyzes instead of weaving a more "grand narrative."

This is not the case with the next two major entries of this period, David Pirie's *A Heritage of Horror: The English Gothic Cinema 1946-1972* (1973) and Lotte Eisner's *The Haunted Screen: Expressionism in the German Cinema and the Influence of Max Reinhardt* (1973). With these two publications, horror studies began to look at specific cultures in relation to eras and cycles of production (as does this dissertation). For example, Pirie writes that "It certainly seems to be arguable that on commercial, historical and artistic grounds that the horror genre, as it has been developed in this country by Hammer and its rivals, remains the only staple cinematic myth which Britain can properly claim as its own… in the same way as the western relates to America" (Pirie 9). And this is Pirie's principal thesis despite having almost no critical analogues and a relatively small canon of films to analyze. For this reason alone, Pirie's work was particularly welcomed. His excavation and archaeology of the English Gothic as a transmitter of national identity through the apparatus of cinema was, and remains, a compelling study of national character. Similarly, Lotte Eisner surveys and discusses aspects of Germanic culture in relation to post World War I war trauma. She writes:

> Mysticism and magic, the dark forces to which Germans have always been more than willing to commit themselves, had flourished in the face of death on the battlefields. The hecatombs of young men fallen in the flower of their youth seemed to nourish the grim nostalgia of the survivors. And the ghosts which had haunted the German Romantics revived like the shades of Hades after draughts of blood. (Eisner 9)

Eisner examines, in depth, Germany’s alleged predisposition with these “dark forces” and the links created between Romanticist art and the later Expressionist movement with the emerging cinematic media of 1920’s Berlin. The work is influential for its scope, depth and national spirit.
Eisner’s efforts to "bind" a national identity to a cinema produced a valuable reference point where we can, if we like, easily trace the cross-cultural influence German Expressionism held over The Universal cycle of horror movies and the subsequent RKO - Val Lewton produced films of the 1940s. Eisner, a close friend to many German filmmakers, among them, Fritz Lang, has been criticized for being biased in reference to the common and aggregate opinions held by her famously opinionated friends. There is the possibility that "influence" was exerted on her by figures like Lang and Pabst. This purported bias does not, in my opinion, damage the validity of her overall arguments, claims, or findings. In my estimation, Eisner's work may be guilty of lionizing certain aspects of her stated goals, and like Kracauer, conflating Expressionism with the more mainstream genre cinema of 1920s Berlin (especially comedies), but the value of The Haunted Screen together with A Heritage of Horror: The English Gothic Cinema 1946-1972 cannot be overstated. Eisner and Pirie provided a new stimulus for film scholarship precisely when it was most needed, thus inaugurating, in the decades that followed, a methodology that many historians and scholars have followed.

Pirie and Eisner present cultural histories of cinema that are, in many ways, analogues to Siegfried Krakauer's From Caligari to Hitler (1947), which should be briefly acknowledged. This viewing of cinema in a nationalistic framework originates with Kracauer, although Pirie and to a lesser degree Eisner are the first to frame this sort of critical attention within the genre of horror. And while Eisner is more concerned with, more or less, an art history, Krakauer presents a psychological (hence ideological) history of the German cinema from Weimar Republic to the rise of the Nazi Party Congress. From Caligari to Hitler is an influential and systematic work and certainly the first to view cinema in direct relation to the culture producing it. Fellow Frankfurt School colleague Max Horkeimer wrote to Kracauer in 1937, requesting that he
consider evaluating a nearly complete collection of films, recently acquired by The Museum of Modern Art in New York. This collection was a nearly complete record of the entire German film industry, especially the works created under the Weimar Republic. The commission would call for a "studying, on the basis of the available materials, the relationship between social development and cinema in Germany" (Quaresima xix). Kracauer undertook this massive assignment and labored obsessively, in exile, for nearly a decade, ultimately delivering what has become a standard text. As shown, generations of film historians (Eisner, Pirie, and many others) owe a debt to this work, from 1947 through today and presumably into the future.

However, there were many criticisms leveled at Kracauer's work. Scholars have complained of: a priori assumptions about the middle class, rapid movement from levels of analysis – from individual or small groups to aggregate views, a pushing of an agenda at the expense of certain analyzed texts, excessive favor of narrative over aesthetics, and a lack of objectivity but not of oversimplification. There have been advances made to the methods for writing cultural histories since the late 1930s; many scholars have used Kracauer's template as a source for structuring inquiry while simultaneously addressing the perceived flaws of his methodology and embracing intersubjectivity.

Pirie and Eisner published their works at the end of this first wave of scholarship at approximately the same time secondary approaches in evaluating the horror film were also emerging. Like other burgeoning schools (for example, early feminist scholarship), these efforts were comprised of image studies and reflection pieces. Works like Ivan Butler's Horror in the Cinema (1970) or Les Daniels' Living in Fear: A History of Horror in the Mass Media (1974) are similar in scope and approach to Molly Haskell’s From Reverence to Rape: The Treatment of Women in the Movies (1974) or Marjorie Rosen’s Popcorn Venus: Women, Movies & the
American Dream (1973). The promising dawn of film studies, then, which saw a major turn towards historical scholarship, observes little theoretical development or interdisciplinary broadening until 1975.

It would seem that at this critical point in Anglo-American film studies, these primary and secondary approaches to reading the horror film (surveys, histories, and appreciations), while important, stimulating and certainly catalysts for further scholarship, were considered by many to be limited in their application for lack of a theoretical grounding. Notwithstanding the enormity of the contributions made by Eisenstein, Pudovkin, Bazin and the contributors to Cahiers du Cinema, and so on, the central question and/or problem of the mid-1970s appeared to be "what has been written lately with a theoretical grounding?" Despite film theory and criticism's developments in refining new vocabularies for film and new ways of thinking about film, as colleges and universities adopted formal film curriculums – the body of current literature only addressed film insofar as a field to be appreciated (film appreciation) or excavated (film history). In effect, Anglo-American film studies and by extension, horror scholarship, basically stagnates until the arrival of the provocative works of figures like Christian Metz, Roland Barthes and Laura Mulvey for her famous "Visual Pleasure and Narrative Cinema " (1975).

Most of the works outlined above struggled to graph theory into their narratives. Moreover, scholars in general were laboring to find more sophisticated theoretical frameworks that could help explain and amplify the complex ways in which film may be understood as a culturally significant object of study. Just beyond these histories, critical appreciations and auteur debates, the force that exploded all manner of investigation turned out to be Psychoanalytic. Laura Mulvey's essay "Visual Pleasure and Narrative Cinema" (1975), certainly the most quoted in all of film criticism, stimulated endless debate and incited authors to make
further "political use" of leading psychoanalytic theories in relation to film, particularly horror. Prior to Mulvey's piece, purely psychoanalytic methods were not favored or encouraged as a tool for ideological analysis, feminist or otherwise, because of a perceived essentialist focus and heavily encoded rituals regarding gendered hierarchies.

Laura Mulvey challenged this stance by penning a manifesto that would prove to be controversial, pessimistic, oversimplified, and completely groundbreaking simultaneously. And, while my intent is not to elaborate on Mulvey's well-known arguments, I do wish to discuss their gradual impact on horror scholarship.

Although derived as a clinical method, psychoanalysis is used broadly for its explanatory utility regarding the human unconscious and for its interrelation in the arts. Film studies' appropriation of Psychoanalysis was primarily employed to link desire to ideology and hence large-scale culture. Psychoanalytic theory is a dense and broad branch of psychology, however Mulvey smartly maneuvered this by stating her objective was to make “political use” of leading psychoanalytic theories. She does this primarily through a convincing argument that there are several modes of cinematic spectatorship and that each of them is masculine. The gaze of the narrative, the gaze of the camera, and the gaze of the theater spectator, amount to a system of often privileged, narcissistic, fetishistic and/or sadistic "looking relations," which would later become a significant function of the technology of cinematic gender. That cinema should have a solely male and heterosexual gaze was a bold argument worthy of debate. And with this in mind, it was perhaps inevitable that the then current epidemic of slasher and rape revenge films, which cyclically dominated the 1970s and 80s, would be read in this light.

In particular, the "sadistic" component of Mulvey's male gaze theory lent considerable gravitas to subsequent scholarship that targeted the 1970s and 80s exploitation/horror catalog.
Indeed, misogynist readings dominated both scholarly works and mainstream criticism. The most palpable "bandwagon" account of the mainstreaming of these concerns was popularized by film critics Roger Ebert and Gene Siskel, who devoted gratuitous ink and a televised special to the public denouncing of these films as vile, misogynistic trash. Ebert's well-known review of the legendary rape-revenge "classic" *I Spit on Your Grave* (1978) preached that this was a "film for vicarious sex criminals" that "makes rapists of us all" (Clover 228-229).

In 1979, in a series of essays on the horror film, English scholar and author Robin Wood laid out the first serious post-Mulvey critical agenda. His "An Introduction to the American Horror Film" (1979) was the first to lay the substantial groundwork that later became not only part of the theoretical lexicon of horror scholarship, but in many ways, its foundation. Lending a political valence to his classification of the horror genre, Wood's approach was structural in nature and conflated both Marx and Freud. Here, for example, furthering some of Mulvey's observations on the oppression of women, Wood comments on structures of power and repressed femininity:

> In a male dominated culture, where power, money, law, social institutions are controlled by past, present, and future patriarchs, woman as the Other assumes particular significance. The dominant images of women in our culture are entirely male-created and male-controlled. Women’s autonomy and independence are denied; on to women men project their own innate, repressed femininity in order to disown it as inferior. (Wood 7)

Wood factors psychoanalytic theory down to a systematic list of what he considers to be repressed in a Anglo-American society, especially sexual energies: female sexuality (both of the aggressive variety and with attribution to the female of passivity), bisexuality, and the sexuality of children (from repression to oppression). Wood then links these repressions to the Freudian concept of the "Other" which he thus defines as “that which bourgeois ideology cannot recognize or accept, but must deal with" (Wood 4). Wood categorizes the process of “Othering” again into
a concise list with corresponding filmic examples: Other people, Other women - *Rabid* (1977), *The Brood* (1979); children *Rosemary’s Baby* (1968), *The Exorcist* (1973), *The Omen* (1976); the proletariat - *Frankenstein* (1931), *The Texas Chain Saw Massacre* (1973); other cultures - *The Island of Lost Souls* (1933), *The Manitou* (1978); ethnic groups operating within a culture - *The Possession of Joel Delaney* (1972); alternate ideologies (the 1950s science fiction/horror cycle of “invasion movies”), et al. Wood's taxonomy, then, provides “a beginning from which one might proceed to interpret specific horror films in detail as well as further explore the genre’s social significance, the insights it offers into our culture” (27). His prediction was proven correct. Wood's successful fusion of both political and psychoanalytic schools of thought advanced the state of horror film scholarship considerably; he is cited in nearly every publication on the horror film since the publishing of "An Introduction to the American Horror Film."

Mulvey and Wood’s utilization of Freud and Marx as a means of theoretical combustion inevitably caused a chain-reaction in horror scholarship. Indeed, works proliferated in the 1980s and 90s almost as quickly as the films themselves. However, true to a genre's cyclical nature, the climate of horror sequels, remakes, prequels, and cycles began to wane, eventually evolving into parodies, and scholars also began to show signs of critical exhaustion. However, these fertile years saw the development of impressive projects, both in numbers and capacity. Numerous works altered the ways in which the horror film is perceived and understood: for example, the historical surveys of Andrew Tudor - *Monsters and Mad Scientists: A Cultural History of the Horror Movie* (1989); David Skal *The Monster Show* (2000) and Mark Jancovich *American Horror from 1951 to the Present*; the philosophical investigations of Noel Carroll - *The Philosophy of Horror: Or, Paradoxes of the Heart* (1990) and Cynthia Freeland *The Naked and the Undead* (1999); the psychoanalytic and gender studies of Carol Clover - *Men, Women, and
Chain Saws (1993); Barbara Creed The Monstrous Feminine: Film, Feminism, and Psychoanalysis (1993), and Barry Keith Grant The Dread of Difference: Gender and the Horror Film (1996); the Cultural analyses of Joan Hawkins - Cutting Edge: Art Horror and the Horrific Avant-Garde (2000); and the broad anthologies or "catch all's" of Mark Jancovich and Barry Keith Grant can be understood as having radically changed (particularly Clover) the ways in which the horror film is perceived and understood. The moral and intellectual strength displayed during these years elevated the status of horror and expanded the breadth of films deemed "worthy" of critical attention.

Of the works outlined above, Carol J. Clover’s Men, Women and Chain Saws (1992), deserves particular mention as a second-wave re-evaluation of Mulvey. Clover addresses the relational complexities between the horror film and the concept of spectatorship while simultaneously challenging (and partially accepting) Mulvey’s arguments. By analyzing the “gendered gaze” of slasher and rape revenge films, Clover found incongruence, or more appropriately, a paradox, in that these types of films, according to Mulvey's paradigm, did not provide strong (if any) identification cues for male audiences. Clover argues that the identification "reversal" from a male protagonist to the female/victim/hero (the resourceful “final girl” protagonist of Clover's argument) assumes a pleasurable submission from a male audience. This argument runs counter to Mulvey’s inflexible claims in “Visual Pleasure and Narrative Cinema." Moreover, Clover successfully re-structures a genre that had been thought of historically as phallocentric (or at the very least male driven and appreciated) into a feminist framework. Clover claims that heroines from various horror films in various sub-genres, from the "slasher" film - Halloween (1978), Friday the 13th (1980) - to the "rape-revenge" film - I Spit on Your Grave (1978) and Ms. 45 (1981) - are strong, pro-feminist characters tackling feminist
themes and making powerful statements about society. And, while highly significant, the misogyny that permeates many of these films is predominantly of the surface variety, concealing more subtle layers of ideological posturing. Along these lines, she addresses the politics of the American slasher film; the construction of a female heroine who abstains from sexual promiscuity, does not do drugs, is cunning and resourceful, and does not succumb to peer pressure would then appear to conform to the dominant conservative ideologies of the 1980s. Clover's compelling rhetoric and ideal timing profoundly reshaped the ways in which audiences and critics thought (and think) about plausible (if not probable) misconceptions regarding slasher, or more generically, horror films.

The final portion of this literature review addresses the recent trends towards a discourse on the global horror film and what, if any, scholarship is available on the Spanish horror film. Most of the important and exciting literature on horror cinema in recent years has been aimed sharply at the global horror film beyond the cinematic collections of England and Italy. As Dave Kehr has already demonstrated, Germany, Italy and France (among other nations, especially in Asia) have gotten their fair share of publicity in the press and this is due, in large part, to several publications that are available.

As already discussed, a popular strategy for conducting cultural histories has been to periodize and/or canonize eras of filmmaking and/or specific genre output from various times and places. Although largely atheoretical, and focused entirely on domestic product, John Brunas, Michael Brunas and Tom Weaver's Universal Horrors: The Studio's Classic Films, 1931-1946 (1980) offers a prime example of this undertaking. Brunas and Weaver's book offers, in a sense, a narrow scope and application, but this is clearly by design. The authors focus on the era, genre and studio of the book's title and present an encyclopedic source of lost or obscure
data surrounding these films. Exhaustively researched, this resource is the indispensable reference for Universal scholars - especially where the minutiae of the day-to-day, production-to-production operations of the studio were concerned. For me, the book was an early graduate school tool for developing archival research strategies and methodologies. The similar and more corresponding models are, for me, Pete Tombs and Cathil Tohill’s Immoral Tales: European Sex and Horror Movies 1956-1984 (1995), Tombs’ Mondo Macabro: Weird and Wonderful Cinema around the World (1998), and the anthologies Fear Without Frontiers (2003) and Horror International (2005).

As the title suggests, Immoral Tales: European Sex and Horror Movies 1956-1984 is a critical history of the often conflated themes of sex and horror that dominated continental Europe between the 1950s and 1980s (including a chapter devoted to the Spanish horror film). The films discussed in this volume were popular in mainstream exhibition, second-run and drive-in theaters and the art house cinemas of Europe and the United States. Tombs and Tohill focus on the German, French, British, Italian and Spanish cinemas of these decades. Immoral Tales' greatest achievement was that it acted as a catalyst for further inquiry into Euro-horror and global horror arenas. Intuitively, Tombs’ next project cast its net outwards from his native Europe to points north, south, east and west. Mondo Macabro: Weird and Wonderful Cinema around the World was Tombs’ sole-author sophomore effort. Hong Kong, Indonesia, India, Turkey, Japan, the Philippines, Argentina, Mexico, Brazil – are just some of the cultures and countries represented and examined. Mondo Macabro is comprised mainly of summary/critical essays, much in the same spirit as Clarens or Everson's pioneering work of the first wave of horror scholarship. The essays are well researched, informative and filled with historical and technical details that shed light on the cultures and films that are analyzed.
With Tombs’ books laying the international groundwork, other efforts began to slowly take shape. Steven Schneider’s *Fear Without Frontiers* (2003) continues the dismantling of national barriers with three hundred pages devoted to global horror cinema. It is the most comprehensive survey of global horror films in print today with a scholarly approach. Schneider is a doctoral candidate in cinema studies at New York University and also the editor of *Horror International*, the most recent publication in the field. *Horror International* is Schneider’s second effort at gathering discourse on international horror cinema and is, essentially, a double for *Fear Without Frontiers*. *Fear Without Frontiers* was published by "Fab Press" and was given the “coffee table book” treatment with color plates and impressive graphics throughout. Alternately, *Horror International* is a university press document featuring primarily text. The two books are identical in terms of content and purpose, apart from their aesthetic differentiation. Between these two volumes, the horror cinemas of Mexico, Brazil, Spain, Japan, Korea, Cuba, Germany, Thailand, Turkey, The Philippines, and many other countries are thoroughly discussed. There is a growing interest in foreign transgressive cinema that is being acknowledged among scholars and is reflected in these two volumes; Schneider makes a plea for scholars to continue research in the area of international and cross-cultural cinema.

Before drawing this review to a close by addressing the available literature on the Spanish horror film, I wish to devote generous attention to Doyle Greene's *Mexploitation Cinema: A Critical History of Mexican Vampire, Wrestler, Ape-Man and Similar Films, 1957–1977* (2005). Published in September 2005, it is precisely the proper blend of focused historical investigation, cultural study and textual analysis that not only serves as a compelling model for this project, but also very closely aligns in terms of subject matter and argument. Greene places these films in a cultural and historical context, attempting to explain their very existence and
shedding much needed light on Mexican sub-culture in film. He cumulatively identifies this body of films as "Mexploitation," a particular form of counter-cinema that is "highly reliant on familiar Hollywood genres (in most cases, the horror film)," while simultaneously "is also utterly indifferent to the codes and conventions of classical Hollywood cinema" (Greene 16). Greene, who also has designs on elevating the status of the films he analyzes, defines them on their own terms, as valid, exciting, and valuable historical documents. He supplies close textual readings of these films and places them into a larger cultural framework that helps to enlighten these dark fantasies. I cite a lengthy passage from Greene's first chapter to illustrate our similar approaches, points of concordance, and parallel lines of reasoning.

While all horror films certainly share common generic elements, horror films are constantly evolving products of a specific time and place and producers of specific social messages. In this context, one could briefly consider the wealth of films constituting the category of the international horror film contemporary to the Mexploitation era. Each subgroup represents a tremendous variety of films that possess their own unique forms and influences, as well as distinct social-historical contexts and concerns: the stagy Hammer Studios horror films from England; the Japanese Godzilla film series; Jean Rollin's vampire film cycle from France (ca. 1968-71); the consistently brilliant work of Mario Bava and other Italian giallo directors; the almost anachronistic Spanish horror films starring Jacinto Molina (better known in America as 'Paul Naschy'); the 'Coffin Joe' films of Brazilian Jose Mojica Marins, to name but a few. (Greene 14)

Greene goes on to contextualize some of these subgroups in relation to their cultural specificity. For example, he links the works of Jean Rollin to the events of May 1968 in Rollin's native France (the largest Western general strike ever, spanning two weeks and eleven million workers) and the inexorable shift in political principles that followed in its wake. Greene's scholarship was made possible, in part, by the pioneering works of Tombs and Schneider and, by extension, their progenitors - Pirie and Eisner, among others. In like manner, this dissertation continues the tradition of revealing national character through the apparatus of cinema.
As already mentioned, the Spanish horror film has been conspicuously absent from traditional horror scholarship save for a few brief, and in the following cases, helpful efforts. Tatjana Pavlovic's *Despotic Bodies and Transgressive Bodies: Spanish Culture from Francisco Franco to Jesús Franco* (2002) “…traverses a variety of disciplines: literature, film studies, cultural studies, feminist theory, and history, to examine crucial moments of cultural transition" (Pavlovic 6). And while Pavlovic’s work provides thorough and acute insight into Spain’s transition from despotic ruler to constitutional democracy, her brief engagement with Spanish horror leaves many unanswered questions. In a very short and final chapter, Pavlovic bravely assesses the works of Jess Franco. On this decision she elaborates:

I incorporate unconventional and unsettling figures such as Jess Franco, who has made low-budget horror, science-fiction, thriller, muscle-man epic, and porno films since 1959. His presence among other, more canonical texts and figures complicates neat readings and problematizes notions of sexuality, gender, and the nation. (Pavlovic 23)

Pavlovic is correct in her assertion that Franco problematizes "neat readings." Franco presents a challenge to the schema of this dissertation as well. Jess Franco deserted his native Spain in a declarative act of individual liberty, creative and intellectual freedom and to make the types of films that interested him. These films almost always conflated (in grand Euro-horror tradition) sex and horror and, moreover, challenged normative assumptions about how a film should look and sound. In addition, Jess Franco's existence on dual-planes, that of Spain's outsider collaborating with other country's motion picture industries and that of expatriate who frequently returned to work under the inflexible demands of the Spanish Government, complicates the categorizing of Franco's body of work. Perhaps Pavlovic summarizes this enigmatic personality best, by stating, "In multiple ways, he appears as almost the inverted, ironic figure of his namesake, Generalísimo Francisco Franco" (2). And, although Pavlovic's
reading of Franco's particularly fascinating Miss Muerte (1966) in her final chapter is exceptional, she ends her inquiry into Spain's horror films (by examining one) and has not said any more on the matter since.\footnote{This is particularly curious since 2009 saw the release of her 100 Years of Spanish Cinema (2009), which is clearly marketed as a thorough classroom text and claims to offer a "...comprehensive study of Spanish film, from the silent era to its contemporary phase" (Pavlovic ii). I find this neglect significant, as Pavlovic would be the most suited American scholar to tackle the films, directors, and studios of the Spanish horror era in a comprehensive textbook. In sharp contrast to this notion, 100 Years of Spanish Cinema makes no mention or reference to Spain's history with this genre.}

The only other scholarly attempt at providing discourse on the Spanish horror film was in Joan Hawkins' Cutting Edge: Art Horror and the Horrific Avant-Garde (2000). Hawkins book is largely about the politics of taste between high and low culture and their points of intersection and curious concordance. Proceeding with this postmodern framework, the milieu in which Hawkins targets her discourse is the pan-European arena of "Sleaze-Mania, Euro-trash, and High Art: The Place of European Art Films in American Low Culture" (her title to chapter one). Hawkins provides cinematic readings of texts that exist simultaneously on both "high" and "low" planes of culture. She structures her inquiry around this unique designation and points to the fifties and sixties as a time when European art films were imported and exhibited in trashy art-house cinemas where low-budget exploitation programming co-existed with the high-concept avant-garde cinema of Rossellini, Bergman, and Fellini. This was due, in part, to the simple fact that Euro-horror imports had notorious difficulty in passing censorship codes, and were often then dumped to small exhibitors. Hawkins argues that these multi-faceted exhibitions and their subsequent readings:
…challenged the formally constructed notion of mainstream good taste. Most of the films and film movements discussed are drawn from the post-World War II era, not because that is the only historic period marked by such a shared interest in trash culture but because it is the era when many of the cultural debates that have traditionally peppered elite publications such as film journals have found their way into the popular press, and because it is an era when the political and social stakes involved in the regulation of culture have become 'less subtle,' 'more direct'. (Hawkins 31)

Hawkins along with Tatjana Pavlovic are the only scholars who have spent any significant time critiquing the works of Jess Franco, Spain's, indeed, the world's most prolific director.9 The themes and arguments in Pavlovic and Hawkins' respective work correlate, in some ways, with this dissertation. However, while each scholar tangentially addresses my target for analysis, each only very partially hits it.

Pavlovic and Hawkins insert their discourse on the Spanish horror film into much larger cultural projects, with each author only devoting short chapters to the matter. Pavlovic is more concerned with Jess Franco than the actual era of the Spanish horror film. And, while Hawkins addresses the horror boom, she does so only in relation to the overarching themes of her inquest into taste and, like Pavlovic, focuses mostly on the works of Jess Franco. This lack of historical and textual specificity concerns me. For example, Hawkins inaccurately states that "Spanish horror production began to decline after 1972" (95), while in fact, this is when production swells most rapidly (see horror movie production chart), not waning until 1977 and later. And, while I appreciate Hawkins and Pavlovic's readings of Jess Franco, there is, clearly, much more work to be done. In summary, while Pavlovic and Hawkins offer balanced readings and some scholarly validation, this dissertation prefers to measure the entire narrative.

The preceding authors, then, and their respective works, comprise the bulk of the major approaches to horror film scholarship both in the United States and abroad from the late 1960s and into the twenty-first century.
In an effort to grant the Spanish horror film the historical context and specificity it requires, chapter two of this dissertation covers a substantial amount of ground. In this chapter, I situate the context and conditions under which these films were made by examining Spain's political and cultural state. Comprehensive analysis of the political-economic, industrial, cultural and social is neither attempted nor possible within the space limitations of this dissertation. What is possible, however, is an examination of these apparatuses in direct relation to their effects, both direct and indirect, on Spain's motion picture industry.

Chapter three presents the first collection of extensive film analyses in this dissertation. I look at films of commercial and/or critical significance and divide them into two chapters. In this way, we observe the manner in which creative impulses were constrained by the complex dictates of the Spanish government for their national cinemas and also the political-economic practices and considerations involved for mounting international co-productions. Chapter three is devoted solely to the latter, which presents a sampling of international co-productions between the years 1968 and 1977. As each entry, in both chapters, requires a brief synopsis, some production/industry history, textual analysis and a measurement of social reception, this necessarily restricts the number of films examined. Nevertheless, within the space at my disposal, the films discussed are completely representative of this co-production period and its defining characteristics.

Chapter four shifts the focus from international co-productions to solely Spanish made motion pictures. Principally, this meant exclusive Spanish financing (with incentives through Government-backed tax breaks and subsidy), a Spanish production company, and Spanish personnel (in front of and behind the camera). I intend to show that there was more of a national "flavor" or Hispanidad (Spanishness), embedded in these national productions. This was a
smooth but gradual progression, less mimetic of British, Italian, and U.S. productions, and more prone to discuss in an abstract (and occasionally direct) manner, themes of significant social relevancy.

Chapter five looks at the decline of the Spanish horror film and its corollary sister genres, notably the spaghetti western and the "S" (soft-core) film, of which the destape was the most popular and profitable.\textsuperscript{10} There are many contributing factors that led to the gradual disappearance of these once abundant genres - not the least of which are political in nature. The controversial so-called Miró Law\textsuperscript{11} ushered Spain into an era of protectionist practices that stifled once vibrant genres - genres that had brought Spain the long-sought economic stability it had hunted for decades. It is often said that another sort of post-Franco nationalism had emerged at the close of the 1970s. To employ the analogy of an Inquisitional torture device – perhaps as is often the case, the pendulum swung too far to the other end. Undoubtedly, other factors contributed to the eventual decline of the Spanish horror film, and chapter five presents these findings while also addressing the further work that needs to be done.

And lastly, I relate my own personal experiences throughout this dissertation. Having had the benefit of consulting with well-known directors from this movement (Jorge Grau, Eugenio Martín), an important historian (Carlos Aguilar), and a member of the Ministry of Culture in Madrid (Margarita Lobo), my knowledge and understanding of these events was vastly broadened and my research was enriched immeasurably.
1. The most popular genre in Spain for the majority of the 1960s was the spaghetti western.

2. Although U.S. involvement was initially "distanced", a compatible economic system was already very much in place in many European countries. Additionally, it could be easily argued that the political and cultural hegemony of the United States and its consumer-driven economy, culture and media served as a model for economic rebirth in post-war Europe.

3. The Spanish Civil War amassed 500,000 fatalities during its four years. In the years following, 200,000 died of hunger and 100,000 were later executed under Franco.

4. "Boutique" refers to independently owned labels that license the rights to foreign and domestic motion pictures for (usually) North American distribution rights. They typically operate outside of, or partner in a limited means with, major motion picture studios and their parent conglomerates.

5. Wes Craven is quoted from the documentary *Going To Pieces: The Rise and Fall of the Slasher Film*, Dir. Adam Rockoff, 2006. DVD.

6. "The Universal Cycle" refers to a period at *Universal Studios* (roughly 1931-1948) where production was dominated by canonical horror texts, which proved both extremely popular and profitable. Examples include: *Dracula* (1931), *Frankenstein* (1931), *The Mummy* (1932), *The Old Dark House* (1932), *The Bride of Frankenstein*, *The Wolfman* (1941) et al. Val Lewton is best remembered as the legendary "producer as auteur" at RKO where he "produced" eight highly regarded and influential shockers, among them, *The Cat People* (1942), *I Walked With a Zombie* (1943), and *The Body Snatcher* (1945). Both sets of films from both studios owe a
strong debt to the German Expressionists as, of course, does the American film noir movement.

Many of these films were made, in part, by filmmakers in exile from Germany

7 Indeed, Eisner quotes and otherwise uses Krakauer as a source of attribution throughout The Haunted Screen.

8 Pavlovic did however slightly modify this chapter, renaming it "Gender and The Spanish Horror Film" for the anthology Gender and Spanish Cinema, Berg 2004. S. Marsh and P. Nair 's (eds.).

9 This data is according to the Guinness Book of World Records.

10 The new "S" rating was created in 1977 (post-Franco) for current and retro-active content, and as scholar Daniel Kowalski notes "was attached to products that 'due to their theme or content might offend the sensibility of the spectator" (Kowalski 188). The "destape" or Spanish sex comedy is defined and discussed in chapter two.

11 The law was named after filmmaker and Director General of Cinematography Pilar Miró.
CHAPTER 2
"THE HIDDEN STEPS"
FROM "REPRESSION" TO "POSSESSION"

"I am responsible only to God and history."
- General Francisco Franco

In this chapter, I situate and place into context several related apparatuses that when amassed illuminate a clear path to, and rationale for, the Spanish horror film. They are the political-economic (which in the case of Spain includes the industrial), the cultural, and the social. I argue that by looking at each of these sites in relation to their nature and function—i.e., Franco's military dictatorship and autarky (the political-economic); the motion-picture industry (an apparatus of socio-cultural production, governed by, and operating under, the political-economic); the traditions, values, and uniqueness of Spain (the cultural); and the consumption of, and reception to, these texts (the social)—the analyses of the following chapters are appropriately contextualized and aid in coalescing these systems into a cohesive cultural history. Moreover, I find General Franco's above quote fascinating, particularly his conflation of "God and history" to roughly that of judge and jury. I should like to hold Franco "responsible" to history, precisely because the very project of historicizing decades of Francoist rule lies at the center of this dissertation, and in particular, this chapter.

These are large apparatuses, but with a focused agenda, observations and commentaries from several leading authorities, including the directors of these films and the scholars and historians of The Ministry of Culture in Madrid, the dots that compose this puzzle of events visibly begin to connect. Comprehensive analysis of the political-economic, industrial, cultural and social is neither attempted nor remotely possible within the space limitations of this chapter. What is possible, however, is an examination of these apparatuses in relation to their
effects, both direct and indirect, on Spain's motion picture industry. In essence, I argue that a historical domino effect of actions and policies shaped and produced the conditions under which these films were birthed.

The rise of the Spanish horror film, its bulge in production, and its radical politics must be viewed in relation to, and as a culmination of, the small, incremental and often "hidden" steps taken by the Spanish government, its collective citizens, and to a lesser degree The United States. I therefore must stray away from the immediate topic of the Spanish horror film in order to contextualize the historical events and the particular social reality that produced them.

This chapter, then, devotes generous attention and analysis to the political and cultural events of Spain during the post-Civil War era up to the mid 1970s. However, before examining the abovementioned apparatuses, it would be useful to this discussion to briefly consider Frederic Jameson's The Political Unconscious (1982) – above all for its commitment to historical criticism and the ways in which Jameson argues that history shapes and forms narrative artifacts. For Jameson, this amounts to "an opening up of the text to the winds of history" (Mohanty 99-100). This dissertation, and in particular this chapter, looks to these tranquil breezes, stiff gusts, and hurricane gales where history was written in Spain. This is, I believe, the best path forward in contextualizing the Spanish horror film in the chapters that follow.

This inquiry presents more of a cultural history through textual and industrial analysis than a formal theoretical mapping. However, my strategy for reading these films in relation to their social reality is informed, in part, by Frederic Jameson's The Political Unconscious. Jameson is certainly not at the forefront of this dissertation, but he is, in a sense, framed around it. And in this framing, I believe we can better illuminate the ways in which, decade by decade,
historical events motivated and fashioned the content and form of Spain's cinema (and in particular, the horror film).

Nearly all neo-Marxist thinkers have battled with the economic determinism of Marx's base and superstructure formulation. Along these lines, the employment of a so-called vulgar Marxist reading—where the economic infrastructure determines all aspects of culture—would surely color them with a singular palette and brush. By eschewing Marx's economically over-determined explanation of culture in favor of the more utilitarian Jamesonian approach, I can look at the ways in which history may provide the "absent cause", or missing link that answers, in some detail, many of the questions submitted in my Introduction. In particular, my first question, "What complex factors led to the 'official' sanctioning of horror films where they had previously been banned" benefits from the launching of this type of an historical epistemology.

Jameson's The Political Unconscious is a dense and notoriously difficult work. Nowhere will the reader find a working definition of exactly what is meant by 'the political unconscious" or for that matter, any guiding thesis statement. Jameson is meticulous in his rhetorical labors; layer-by-layer, chapter-by-chapter he slowly builds a forceful argument that has been influential to projects such as the one you are presently reading. All told however, when broken down to its constituent parts, it is a useful, precise, and undeniably powerful lens that proclaims that history is the mill through which any molten text is ultimately forged. Both Marx and Freud occupy privileged places in Jameson's work and also my discussion of these events. Indeed, one of Jameson's goals was to combine Marxism and Freudianism into, at the least, a semi-cohesive harmony throughout The Political Unconscious.

On Jameson's incorporation of the latter, Freud has indeed been criticized for his teleological sweeps from the subconscious of the individual to the collective experiential
phenomena at the level of society. However, by investigating these sites of production in both a societal paradigm and in Jamesonian terms, especially the political-economic, we can examine in some detail a Spanish web of history and the reverberations enacted upon its strands by the actions of the political-economic, industrial, cultural, and social apparatuses. We gain privileged access to the ways in which history can manifest itself into narrative forms such as literature and film. Frederic Jameson scholar Adam Roberts shares Jameson's view on this matter.

Freud intended the notion of the 'unconscious' to apply to individuals, not to society as a whole. But there are several parallels that suggest themselves. [...] A therapist looks into the conscious mind and tries to read the hidden and coded manifestations of the unconscious that has shaped the ego in order to bring them to the surface where they can be rationally dealt with. Jameson proposes looking into aspects of the superstructure - his job is to look at cultural texts such as books and films - and to try and read the hidden and coded manifestations of the economic and political base that has shaped them. These economic and political features are often hidden in literature, but they are still there, and they can be recovered by concentrating on literary and cultural analogues… (Roberts, 58)

In like manner, I look into the films of the Spanish horror boom era to observe the economic and political forces that shaped them and also to gently tease out the articulations of national character which are occasionally manifest but more often are lurking latently below the surface. The films discussed in the next two chapters call for readings in this light.

Lastly, one of Jameson's key points in The Political Unconscious is that the form where content is placed and where the forces that shaped it are articulated, is very significant. This is precisely why Jameson subtitles his book, "Narrative as Socially Symbolic Act". The form to which Jameson is gesturing is primarily narrative, and by association, genre. "Genre is essentially a socio-symbolic message, or in other terms… form is immanently and intrinsically an ideology in its own right" (Jameson 141). Adam Roberts elaborates, "A critic needs to be
aware of the ways in which the substance and the form of a given text relate to their socio-economic determinants, to the historical circumstances that shaped them in the first place" (Roberts 89). For Jameson, this process whereby the public can express experience through form is simply mediation. For Jameson, this amounts to the idea that "...human existence is not apprehended directly, but is mediated or accessed via some middle mechanism or concept" (78). Simple and common examples include reading a translated text, watching the evening news, attending a Sunday sermon, or for Marx—the ultimate mediator between "subject and object, people and things, with various damaging consequences" is money (78). The subject of literature as mediator is crucial to Jameson's case; he argues that individual experience can be transcoded into accepted codes, specifically those of narrative and genre. This construct of narrative is where and how Jameson moves from an individual's experiences—through the process of mediation—to larger systemic structures.

How then, and to what, do we ascribe the "official" sanctioning of a genre that was once considered reprehensible and banned outright? What factors account for the genre's subsequent popularity and success, its considerable numbers as well its eventual decline? And moreover, what do they have to say? Do these films indeed mediate experience? The answer, as argued in this chapter, is essentially a function of Spain's history.

Before I can begin textual analysis of key films from this genre and era, we must look at Spain's apparatuses of cultural production. The following section presents a snapshot of the major political, economic and industrial moments that ultimately account for the rise and fall of the Spanish horror film.
The Political, Economic & The Industrial

The primary colors in this prism of historical events are the political, economic and industrial. I stress that while the economic clearly plays an important role in catalyzing and more importantly—sustaining this movement—an economic whitewashing of these events as an all-encompassing explanatory device does not adequately begin to cover the complex and intertwining dynamics at play.

An historical overview of the years preceding the Spanish horror boom finds many crucial developments relevant to this project. This section focuses on the political, economic, and industrial apparatuses of Spain from the 1940s to the 1970s. These systems are daisy-chained together, which problematizes individual probes. Therefore, I partition political, economic and industrial eras into sub-sectioned decades, the 1940s, the 1950s, and so on, to facilitate navigational ease in tracing these key historical developments.

Only through a careful charting of the increasingly progressive industrial developments does a clear rationale for the boom in Spanish horror, from extinction to explosion, begin to reveal itself. The formative decades in question for this chapter, as already highlighted in the above section, are the post-Spanish Civil War years—or roughly the 1940s through the late 1970s. Several scholars and historians have already completed comprehensive studies on Spain's cinematic evolution from the early 1900s through to the end of their Civil War (1939). In summary, among the cinema producing nations of Europe, Spain's standing and overall narrative for the twentieth century is complicated. What had begun as a promising industry with a vigorous film culture collapsed during wartime hardships—shifting to an industry dominated by political maneuvering, corruption, self-censorship, and a commitment to
transmitting the values of Franco's regime. These developments launch in the immediate post-
Civil War years of Franco's first decade of rule, the 1940s.

The 1940s

Franco's ill-conceived autarky (1939-1950) sank Spain's economy into the arena of so-
called third-world or developing nation status. Because it was a former super-power, this was a
particularly brutal psychic blow to the Spaniards. The economic despair of Franco's first
decade of rule cannot be overstated. In his book, Spanish Politics (2008), Omar Encarnación
paints a visually grim portrait of Spanish life.

By the 1950s, the mythical pursuit of economic autarky had combined with a
disregard for market realities and rampant economic mismanagement had
conspired to create an economic environment dominated by 'favoritism,
corruption, the emergence of a black market, galloping inflation and crucial
shortages of basic foodstuffs, raw materials and capital goods' (Harrison 1993:
19). This bleak economic picture forced millions of Spaniards into abject
poverty and made the postwar years seem more devastating than the civil war
itself. Los años del hambre (the years of hunger) is the phrase used by the
Spaniards to describe the first decade of Francoist rule. According to a
journalistic account of the era 'In the cities, cats and dogs disappeared from the
streets having either starved to death or from being eaten. In the countryside, the
poorest peasants lived off boiled grass and weeds' (Hopper 1986: 24).

(Encarnación 27)

All told, more than half a million people vanished from Spain in these post-Civil War years.
200,000 died of starvation and 300,000 fled to various Latin American countries, including
Argentina (which had an established, liberal immigration policy and under the Peron regime
had sent relief to Spain in the form of much needed grain and beef). At the close of the 1940s,
Franco's regime was faced with the incontrovertible fact that the autarky had failed and failed
disastrously. Immediate action was required to ensure gross domestic growth annually and, in
general, some degree of future economic prosperity.
Stagnancy crept into the motion industry during the years of Franco's autarky (1939-1950) where special emphasis was given first and foremost to comedies and secondly to historical epics and war films. If Spain's economic prosperity grossly mirrored the state of its decomposing, starvation-ridden citizens, then Franco's cinema rejected this reality in favor of one built on past glories and momentary laughs. So, like the Russian revolutionaries or The Nazi Party Congress, Franco understood and capitalized on the potential of this medium to transmit the values of his regime and believed his citizens highly susceptible to this type of ideological reinforcement. "There was a conscious attempt to root the formation of this new forcefully homogeneous nation in a glorious and imaginary past. Since there was no possibility of territorial greatness and expansion, Franco's political mission was spiritual rather than territorial" (Pavlovic 23). Franco's strategy for spiritual reform often came in the form of cinema – the historical epics offered strong nationalistic glories of Spain's past (whether real or imagined) and the lionization of its heroes, while the war films presented inflated and propagandistic rhetoric designed to sublimate subversive energies. The historical epic and the war film rounded out a collection of generically tame productions (overwhelmingly dominated by comedies – of all varieties). The continental turmoil of two World Wars and the devastating economic ruin visited in their wake necessitated a re-tooling of the motion picture industries in France, Great Britain, Italy, and Germany, among others. These focused efforts fabricated successful rebirths of many European studios where a variety of genres began to flourish. This success was neither accessible nor sought by Spain for political reasons. In his study of Franco's autarky (1939-1950), Jose Enrique Monterde totals a narrow, safe, and controlled list of genre productions during this moribund decade to: "55 comedies, 66 dramatic comedies, 83 sentimental comedies, 19 contemporary comedies, 20 historical films, 22 musicals, 58 dramas,
13 melodramas, 31 police flicks, 7 religious films, 15 adventure films, 6 bullfighting films and 3 children's films" (Monterde 230). If some of these genres are clearly underrepresented, conspicuously absent then, is the genre of the horror film in any or all of its slippery incarnations (shouldn't this pique academic curiosity?). One should query: why would a ghost or an old dark house be more unsettling or threatening than, say, the bloodbaths encountered in a bullfight or warfare with The Moors? The answer lies in the very foundation of the genre itself—and more of this will be discussed in this chapter under the section heading, "The Social." Moreover, any discussion of Spanish cinema in a national framework, or in a comprehensive textbook, could and should address the regime's repression of the horror genre and its subsequent elevation to the status of having a "Golden Age" by the Spanish people.

This autarky period, then, saw little development cinematically—indeed this era represents a marked step backwards from the lively and dynamic motion picture industry of pre-Civil War Spain. "Francoist cinematographic politics reflected a more general climate of political repression… film production in 1940s Spain was controlled by two mechanisms: repressive measures and protectionist measures; the former consisted of censorship and obligatory dubbing while the latter offered state subsidies for film production" (Pavlovic 62). This political tag-team resulted in the ethically questionable but profitable practice of requiring import/export and dubbing licenses and the implementation of a rigorous Board of Censorship. Virtually all motion pictures passed through, and were heavily filtered by, this arm of the Spanish government. Staffed mainly with Catholic priests and civil servants of limited education, the phrase "¡Corta!" (or "Cut!") became the collective mantra of a workforce dedicated to repressive and protectionist policies. The typical itinerary for a proposed film consisted of the submission of shooting scripts to be "corrected" and then approved (or denied)
for production, only to then have the finished film be called again for more cuts or possibly confiscation. Of these submissions, the "...films that upheld fascist values were awarded the title of 'national interest' and their producers were rewarded with lucrative licenses for the distribution of foreign films" (Stone 38). This often meant that producers would willingly capitulate to these demands simply to acquire importation licenses for films like *Gilda* (1946) or *The Bicycle Thief* (1948), which were then, of course, censored. With World War II substantially minimizing European motion picture production, Hollywood seized an opportunity to colonize and saturate foreign markets with exports. In 1944 for example, of the forty-four censored films imported by Spain, twenty-eight were from The United States, seven were French, four were German, two were British, two were Italian, and one was from Mexico. Outright banning was common too, a representative sampling of banned films includes "*The Scarlet Pimpernel* (1934), *Sanders of the River*, (1935), *The Great Ziegfield* (1936), *A Star is Born* (1937), *The Wolf Man* (1941), and *Yankee Doodle Dandy* (1942)" (Bowen 161).

By the end of the decade, Franco's autarky reached its inevitable end game – economic and cultural exhaustion necessitated drastic measures. The unveiling of Spain's monumental "Plan of Stabilization" which generated the "economic miracle" of the 1960s was still a decade away. Immediate economic progress and reform was needed and the 1950s proved to be a decade of considerable improvement.

**The 1950s**

In sharp contrast to *Los Años del Hambre*, 1950s Spain began to see more dramatic and favorable developments politically and economically. As Marsha Kinder has noted, "From the 1950s onwards a hermetically sealed Spain began to be opened to foreign influence and a new Spanish cinema emerged on the world scene" (596). To the Eisenhower era of 1953-1961,
Spain offered strategic value. Spain had, not surprisingly, failed in its efforts to receive reparations or reconstruction funds from the Marshall Plan—having mortgaged its reputation during the war by allying with Germany and Italy. Following their devastating "years of hunger" and as recompense, Spain sought military conciliation with the United States by offering to host U.S. military bases and by allying with the United States in its hard-lined anti-communist stance and rhetoric.

This "opening up" of Spain sees its formative roots in the 1940s. Perhaps the most pivotal moment came in 1946, when The United Nations passed a resolution condemning Spain, urging all member nations to cut off diplomatic relations and remove their ambassadors. This was a brutal wake-up call to Franco's cabinet and ministry leaders (both military and civilian) that their dictatorship and autarky had failed on domestic and international fronts. Further, diplomacy was simply unattainable under Franco's plotted course. Consequently, Spain slowly began to alter its international negotiations to reach agreements of mutual interest. This was aided by the incessant propaganda that Franco was not a dictator with despotic powers but the architect of an "organic popular democracy" – a phrase that continued to be utilized in various incarnations until his death in 1975. Franco's Spain, especially in the 1940s, was anything but a popular democracy; although not totalitarian (pluralism existed within narrow constraints), it was completely authoritarian.

Above all, Franco endeavored to remove all vestiges of parliamentary democracy, which he perceived to be alien to Spanish political traditions. He outlawed political parties, blaming them for the chaotic conditions that had preceded the Civil War. He eliminated universal suffrage and severely limited the freedoms of expression and association; he viewed criticism of the regime as treason. (Solsten and Meditz, U.S. Library of Congress)

In the following year of 1947, the US Joint Chiefs of Staff recommended that it was time to change American foreign policy towards Spain and to initiate cordial military relations
with Franco. This culminated with the commission of the feasibility study "Drumbeat" in August. "Drumbeat" was not the first study commissioned to evaluate diplomatic relations with Spain, but:

[… ] it was the clearest indication of US military interests in Spain. It concluded that from a military point of view, the United States should furnish economic aid to Spain as soon as feasible. Shortly afterwards, and on the basis of military recommendations, the Policy Planning Staff, headed by George Kennan, decided that it was in the national interest to modify US policy towards Spain. (Balfour and Preston 233)

"Drumbeat" was finalized six years later in 1953 with the Franco–Eisenhower "Pact of Madrid" which provided for:

American economic and military aid to be given to Spain in exchange for the use by American military forces of three new air bases and a new naval base to be constructed in Spain… A secret agreement allowed the United States to determine unilaterally when its forces could use such bases to counter 'evident Communist Aggression'. The Pact allowed the United States to keep on such bases military aircraft armed with nuclear weapons. (Lieberman 41)

Moreover, Franco emerged from his self-imposed isolationist politics boasting apparent "validation" of his "old" autarky in the form of support from The United States (which he quickly put to use in other foreign diplomatic relations). The political, economic, and military ambitions between Spain and The United States were not especially clandestine. On the contrary, negotiations and operations went surprisingly smooth. What was surreptitious ("Top Secret" in fact) was Franco's hidden cultural agenda for this new decade following the economic disaster of his failed autarky. This massive initiative was given the strikingly original title of Operación Propaganda Exterior or "Operation Exterior Propaganda." This imperative was designed to stimulate conspicuous consumption, tourism and the import of foreign culture— but exclusively on Franco's own terms. By exploiting Spain's inherent beauty, temperate climate, plentiful beaches and distinct culture, Franco opened Spain's doors to massive tourism
incentives, and put very simply, the plan worked.


In the early 1950s, the Franco regime was in the midst of implementing a program to promote American tourism to Spain as a central element of the regime's efforts after World War II to improve Spain's economic and diplomatic/political circumstances. The Spanish government's overarching goal was to 'sell' Franco Spain's image abroad and particularly to the United States." (Rosendorf 80)

The figure below charts this rapid growth in Spanish tourism once Franco's initiative was firmly in place.

![Table 2-1. Tourism figures for Spain, 1955-1964.](image)

With tourism soaring, Franco decided that cinema should also play a major part in this economic rehabilitation. Franco’s strategy allotted for a peculiar type of *counter* media imperialism. By this, I maintain that Franco envisioned a Spain hosting large-scale productions of superior craftsmanship that could push nationalistic and historical agendas via outside industrial forces while still retaining a homogenous affect. Rosendorf explains "Operación
Propaganda Exterior's" objective thusly:

As it became obvious to the Franco regime that Hollywood-produced films about Spain, or films simply made in Spain, had a cachet and credibility with overseas audiences that domestically made movies didn’t, the dictatorship eventually codified its policy of welcoming international film producers as 'Operación Propaganda Exterior.' The top-secret plan demanded that films: 'a foreigner produces in Spain, about any facet of the national life, present to the foreign public a character of objectivity and dispassion that is not always conceded to nationals. . . . Co-production means . . . for the most part the guarantee of a world-wide distribution of the film, leaving the public unaware of the actual origin, obviating all possible suspicion of propaganda.' (Rosendorf 80)

This was fortuitous timing for Franco’s cinematic agenda. In Hollywood, the aftermath of the Paramount Antitrust Decision, expenditures on new technologies, the ever-increasing competition from television, and aggregate poor box-office earnings necessitated new industrial strategies for turning a profit in an aggressive and frequently unreceptive free market. One such strategy was to rely increasingly on independent producers to bring pictures of quality and marketability in on time and under budget—this occasionally meant exploiting foreign soil to keep production costs down by leveraging exchange rates, taking advantage of tax incentives and employing a cheaper labor force. Spain courted Hollywood for this very purpose and vice versa. And, although U.S.—Spanish tensions existed cinematically, the partnership was generally one of commensurate equity. Hollywood tapped the hidden potential in Spanish locations and labor while capitalizing on government incentives and Spain hosted prestige pictures that often transmitted the values of Franco's dictatorship. Moreover, another step towards Spain's cinematic liberation had been taken and a Spanish labor force received more progressive training. American producer Samuel Bronston set the precedent as well as the tone for Hollywood—Spain collaborations, bringing millions of dollars into Spain, massive publicity, and a cachet of newfound respectability. Rosendorf explains:
The key figure in establishing 'Hollywood in Madrid' was Samuel Bronston. A relatively minor figure on the Hollywood scene when he arrived in Spain in 1958 to film *John Paul Jones* (1959), Bronston had used his preternatural selling skills to gain the financial backing of a deep-pocketed partner, Pierre du Pont III. Like the U.S. producers who preceded him, Bronston initially assumed that he would make one film in Spain and then move on. But he soon recognized that the Franco regime, if handled correctly, could be a very congenial host for a permanent Hollywood studio, and his partnership with du Pont gave him the means to keep a constant pipeline of films in production. (Rosendorf, The American Interest)

The release of *John Paul Jones* (1959) and the emergence of Hollywood—Spain collaborations coincided with the birth of the "economic miracle" or "Spanish miracle" era situated between 1959 and the world oil crisis of 1973. Spain's technocrat-authored\(^2\) "Plan of Stabilization" (1959) was reluctantly accepted by Franco as his endorsement, he felt, was an acknowledgment of the failures of Spain to industrialize under his autarky. However, the "Plan of Stabilization" did not represent in any way a shift in ideological thought, on the contrary, Franco remained a dictator, but one who could not ignore the manifest failure of a closed economy and a zip-locked culture sealed off from the rest of the world. And as a result, a decade of unparalleled growth was about to begin.

**The 1960s**

On June 30 1959, Spain rolled out its "Plan of Stabilization." "The plan's objectives were twofold: to take the necessary fiscal and monetary measures required to restrict demand and to contain inflation, while, at the same time, liberalizing foreign trade and encouraging foreign investment" (Solsten and Meditz, U.S. Library of Congress). Underpinning this decade of remarkable growth (an annual growth rate second only to that of Japan's economy) was Spain's ever-increasing import of foreign culture and the more progressive attitudes that often accompanied these millions of tourists. With the responsibility of hosting millions of tourists
also comes the liability of providing them with first-rate accommodations, a wide array of consumer goods (ranging from *haute couture* to cheap souvenirs), leisure activities, and entertainment – which often came in the form of cinema. By the late 1960s, this import of, and overall exposure to, foreign culture coupled with an international market bloodthirsty for horror would inevitably and proportionally drive the official sanctioning of horror as a viable and profitable genre for motion picture production. With more than twenty million visitors per year by the mid-to-late 1960s—clear indicators that social attitudes were evolving were on display. Franco's plan to stabilize Spain's economy had succeeded and backfired simultaneously. The "miracle" of Spain's economic growth came at a cost: importing visitors meant importing culture. History tells us that under an absolute authoritarian rule, this is a dangerous undertaking. These drastic economic measures yielded unprecedented growth and success for 1960s Spain. Fueled by this injection of tourism, Spain's economy rapidly grew – with booms in the automotive, chemical, agricultural, and textile industries leading the way. Moreover, the efficacy of Franco's new political rhetoric was considerably more substantive when compared to the abject failure of his autarky.

Spain's industrial rebirth, massive growth in tourism, and renewed trade agreements are indeed the causal agents that catalyzed the cinematic boom of the 1960s. Additionally, The Spain—Hollywood union that resulted from 1953's "Pact of Madrid" (and *Operation Propaganda Exterior*) was producing successful runs of releases. Again, Rosendorf explains:

Between 1958 and 1964, the Estudios Samuel Bronston in Madrid turned out a series of ultra-lavish, highly publicized motion pictures featuring top international movie stars like Charlton Heston, Sophia Loren, David Niven and John Wayne. Bronston’s studio trained a generation of highly skilled Spanish film technicians and became the driving force in turning Spain into one of the top international movie production venues of the 1960s. The Franco regime loved Bronston, showering him with medals, citations and lots of financial support, most of it covert. The greatest of Bronston’s epics, in both critical and
In this decade, Franco was now *playing host* to the historical epics that had flourished during his autarky—now, however, they came with superb production values, international stars, and "ultra-lavish" treatments. Furthermore, through *Operation Propaganda Exterior*, manifest traces of propaganda were laundered through international channels, specifically those of Hollywood and Italy. For example, *El Cid* (1961), the epic biopic of El Cid Campeador, told the story of the eleventh century military leader, diplomat, and nobleman who united Spain against Moorish occupation and is *the* unmatched example of 1960s Francoist cinematic politics. Here was a way, which delighted Franco, to preserve Spanish hegemony at the literal expense of others. And for some time it appeared to work; audiences in the early 1960s were generally entertained and appeased. Franco could not anticipate, however, that the long-term cultural impact of transnational media exposure coupled with the massive visibility of foreign culture would have macro-sociological effects—especially during the most rebellious, non-conformist, and volatile decade of the global twentieth century.

The question of locating Spanish identity under a despotic rule, which as previously indicated, is a target of some concern for this dissertation, reasserts itself and presents a difficulty when examining this second stage of cinematic reform (1961-1967), where international co-productions tend to dominate. This second stage sets crucial precedents that shape and contour the explosion and eventual saturation of the Spanish horror film. Spanish historian Carlos Aguilar explains:

> The industrial-political event that marks this period lies with the enactment in 1964 of the 'New Rules for the Development of Film', especially those that favored the 'Co-production' and came under the shelter of the First Economic Development Plan, with which the Franco dictatorship aimed to improve the image of Spain in all respects both at home and abroad. (*Cinefantastico y de Terror Espanol*, Aguilar 20, Trans. Author)
With an edict issuing forth from Franco's Government to shake cinematic hands with other willing European countries (apart from the already established partnerships with Italy and The United States) a die was cast for the era when horror would prosper as a part of the Spanish National Cinema. Other countries, notably Great Britain, Italy, Germany and France, had thoroughly embraced and simultaneously redefined aspects of the horror genre, molding them into a sleazy, post-war confluence of sex and violence. Spain was new to this milieu but once initiated, it became competitively prodigious. For Spain, the catalyst for this cinematic chain reaction in the horror genre was a film that had been the life-long dream of a Spanish weightlifter turned actor, Jacinto Molina, better known to international audiences as Paul Naschy. Naschy's international co-production, La Marca del Hombre Lobo (1968) also known as The Mark of the Werewolf is the inaugural film in Spain's "Golden Age" of fantastic cinema and is discussed, at length, in chapter four. This film merits principal focus as it launches a new national genre, a specific type or paradigm for Spanish horror ("Naschy horror"), and provides—through its cursed protagonist, Polish nobleman Waldemar Daninsky—a run of over twelve films that span four decades.

And yet, despite their impressive profits and favorable reviews, these international co-productions, those of and prior to the horror boom, were still operating under a military dictatorship, which often resulted in "disagreements." The Spanish government's control over the motion picture industry often created a climate that was protectionist and inhospitable. The actual process of making these films could be a politically charged tug-of-war that led to notoriously difficult conditions for producers. In his memoir Hollywood Exile (1999), Bernard Gordon recounts his experiences and tribulations in dealing with the demanding dictates of Francoist Spain. Gordon, who was a successful Hollywood screenwriter (Flesh and Fury
[1952] with Tony Curtis, and The Lawless Breed [1953] with Rock Hudson), ultimately found himself "blacklisted" for his so-called political activism and was also named in the House Un-American Activities Committee (HUAC) proceedings. Gordon subsequently received under-the-table work, especially from legendary independent producer Sam Katzman, who made a habit of employing "blacklisted" screenwriters. Gordon was kept busy by Katzman, penning William Castle’s The Law vs. Billy The Kid (1954) as “John D. Williams,” as well as Fred Sears’ Earth vs. The Flying Saucers (1956), Edward L. Cahn’s Zombies of Mora Tau (1957), Leslie Kardos’ The Man Who Turned to Stone (1957), and Sears’ Escape from San Quentin (1957) as “Raymond T. Marcus.” However, writing under a pseudonym ultimately provided Gordon with income, but little else. He left the United States and found success in the thriving motion picture industry of 1960s Madrid where his screenwriting credits expanded to take on the role of producer in several productions. His first assignment while living in Madrid was to draft a screenplay for The Day of the Triffids (1962). On the decision to move to Madrid, Gordon elaborates:

Life there was deluxe - Hollywood in Madrid. After only a few days on the job, a man came around from the studio and handed me a bundle of Spanish pesetas worth $200 - my weekly expense allowance. I really didn't need them for anything more than the Paris Herlad Tribune. The fine dining room was at our disposal for three excellent meals a day, or as many more as we might like - all we did was write in the tip and sign the check. It was summertime, and they served meals in a great central garden courtyard with a good musical combo. Even the harpist was pretty. (Gordon 113)

Clearly, the creature comforts afforded to Gordon made for a contented and productive working atmosphere; his writing credits went on to include several Samuel Bronston epics: 55 Days at Peking (1963), Cry of Battle (1963), The Thin Red Line (1964), Circus World (1964), Custer of the West (1967), and Krakatoa: East of Java (1969). However, it was his role as producer on the horror film Horror Express (1972) (aka Pánico en el Transiberiano, discussed in the next
chapter), and two Westerns Pancho Villa (1972) and Bad Man's River (1971) – all directed by Eugenio Martín – that Gordon learned first-hand not only the thankless job of film producer but the thankless job of film producer in Madrid. The normally difficult leap from the writing of screenplays to producing them was significantly exacerbated by the constraints of Franco's Spain. Gordon frequently laments throughout his memoir that not only did government complications frequently arise, but that they were practically everyday occurrences. Co-productions typically required that certain mandates regarding the employment of Spanish personnel and the return of motion picture export profits be strictly adhered to. However, Franco's government did not facilitate easy navigation of these directives. Gordon recounts a frequent problem with meeting payroll deadlines for Spanish personnel, in particular with the Euro-horror mid-era entry Horror Express (1973):

Because of a variety of obstacles in London, including the disappointing performance of the earlier Westerns, it was increasingly difficult to carve out funds for my production. At the end of each week I had to have money to pay salaries; excuses were not accepted. The fascist Franco government did not permit unions or any kind of worker organization; but it did have a 'corporate' structure that was supposed to protect workers' rights. In practice, this kept wages low, but an absolutely rigid rule was that wages due must be paid on the dot. If I let a payday pass without payout, I would be shut down the next day. (275)

Indeed, fiscal responsibility and accountability could be taken to extremes as Gordon found out later during the production of Horror Express, he remembers:

Creating a truly Spanish production company to produce Horror Express and subsequent Spanish nationality films was even more complicated. The same nominees who 'owned' the studio became officers and shareholders, plus Eugenio Martín and me. Amused, I gave my consent to become one of the minor corporate officers, with a share or two of meaningless stock. There were no assets and the stock had no value. Since I was strictly a minority shareholder, there was no conflict with Spanish law. (268)
However, as production on *Horror Express* neared completion, Gordon was informed that the Spanish fiscal inspectors had been "snooping around" trying to determine if there was any fraudulent activity on this production.

'You have to understand Bernie,' he (Francisco Lizarza, the company's attorney) said, so earnestly that I could see sweat on his brow… 'the fiscal inspectors here are the most highly educated and trained officials in the whole country. Something like the people they send to the *The École Normale Supérieure* in France.' I was familiar with that setup. 'You have to understand he emphasized again, 'in Spain maybe you can get away with murder if you have the right connections. But you don't get away with violating the currency laws. You'd be surprised at the people they send to prison for that.' He paused to let that sink in. 'It doesn't matter who you are or who you know.' (268)

Gordon's account of his years as a screenwriter and producer in Madrid reveal much in the way of how business operations and negotiations were conducted in a gradually more tolerant, yet nonetheless fascist, Spain. Despite these many difficulties, *Horror Express* has earned a reputation as an elegant, almost textbook example of what is commonly referred to as the Euro-horror tradition.

Five years prior to *Horror Express*, with the abovementioned *La Marca Del Hombre Lobo* (1968), Spain suddenly entered into this Euro-horror tradition without the benefit of a cinematic or literary library from which to draw genre models or successful antecedents. Surprisingly however, this lack of experience did not impede the progress, gradual confidence, or fluidity displayed by the writers and directors of these films. Spain quickly learned to take its cues from the broad sphere of Euro-horror productions where visual excessiveness was privileged over narrative congruity. Visual transgressions during the 1960s, particularly in The United States, were "…symptomatic of a new explicitness in the visual arts generally. The underground and exploitation film-makers led the way, looking for loopholes in the law and riding in on the back of constitutional guarantees of freedom of expression. What had
previously been suggested was now to be shown and the commercial cinema followed suit" (Tombs 27). Spain needed to address this "broader picture" or risk both financial failure and the loss of the continued approval to compete in this sector of the market.

More to the point, despite the lack of a commercial history with the genre, there was no shortage of thematic material that could be cultivated from Spain's recent or distant past. The past thirty years alone consisted of devastating civil war, starvation, the forced implementation of a fascist government, the systematic imprisonment or execution of dissidents, and the burden of the heavy psychological toll of these events.

And so, in relation to the events laid out before you, the Spanish horror film arrived as an economically viable and officially sanctioned genre in 1968. Carlos Aguilar names these early, formative years between 1968 and 1970, the years of "eclosion" (the stage of an insect's life where it emerges from its pupal case—from the French: eclore, to open).

The industrial eruption, in effect, begins following two commercial successes—La Residencia (1969) by Narciso Ibáñez Serrador, and La noche de Walpurgis (1970) by León Klimovsky—and one critical success, El bosque del lobo (1970) by Pedro Olea. The multiple echo that arises as a consequence of this phenomenon determines that the Spanish film industry, as a whole is interested in cultivating the horror genre. Basically, to temper an economic crisis that threatened the future of their own productions, a crisis whose roots were hidden from the media and which are no longer a secret: because of the fraudulent “Matesa Case”, the state intervened against the partner bank, “Banco de Crédito Industrial”, blocking their activities until they resolved this very serious problem. Since the cinematographic protection fund depended on this same bank, payment of subsidies on top of box office earnings was paralyzed, year after year, with the subsequent despair of the producers. (Aguilar 24-25)

The "Matesa case" concerned the negligent appropriation of massive public funds resulting in a very public scandal. Also indicted were corporate officers from The Industrial Credit Bank, which was a major financer of Spain's motion picture industry. A crisis of legal
issues as well as confidence halted productions, save for two emerging, extremely viable subjects that historically had served as grist for many cinematic grind mills: sex and violence.

**The 1970s**

Turning now more specifically to the years of concern in this dissertation (1968-1977), the 1970s saw television, the new market of home video, the conglomeration of Hollywood studios, and the blossoming era of the Hollywood blockbuster competitively encroaching on the status-quo practices of the industrialized world. In particular, the Spanish film industry, according to Pavlovic's *100 Years of Spanish Cinema*, entered into a period of "crisis" at this time. She writes, "The world economic crisis of the 1970s further impacted Spanish film production negatively. As a result of these problems, the Spanish film industry entered a period of severe crisis that was especially noticeable between 1969 and 1977" (Pavlovic 111). There is a problem here that concerns me. The years mentioned above basically mirror those covered in this dissertation, and yet, I have found no shortage of product to critique or problems inherent to their analysis (indeed, I've eliminated texts in accordance to space limitations). The only problem I've encountered is a fundamental lack of scholarly attention regarding the horror film (or, the *destape*) that I may draw from. Again, it is perplexing to find omissions of this magnitude in so-called comprehensive texts on Spanish cinema. Why do nearly all mainstream texts on Spanish cinema continue to be decidedly phobic concerning horror, exploitation and sex comedies? As to her point of a "crisis", while it is true that the economic squall of the 1970s impacted cinemas on a global scale, Spain smartly found ways to occupy its film industry with its "low-brow" horror films and the similarly popular *destapes* (translated as "topless", literally meaning "taking the lid off"). I do not disagree with the above statement, but I find an important piece of the puzzle is missing from the box. The omission of these films is surprising
considering their popularity and success. Carlos Aguilar acknowledges their success by reporting on the crisis differently:

In this situation (the "crisis"), the horror film guaranteed immediate demand and returns, which was indispensable. Given its low production costs, for one, and, for another, its ease of export both in Spain and beyond, the genre was, theoretically, indistinguishable from movies produced in other countries currently in vogue worldwide. (Aguilar 24)

Modern European history scholar Daniel Kowalski traces the evolution of Spain's low genres in his "Rated S: Softcore Pornography and the Spanish Transition to Democracy, 1977-82." The abovementioned destapes, much like their genre cousins the horror film, flourished during this crisis of economic confidence—particularly in "an era when the bare-breasted female gradually became a fixture in print media, stage plays and cinema. The development of the destapes film genre was a strong indication that the Franquista moral order was breaking down. Films of the destape are best described as light Iberian sex comedies, usually concerned with a middle-aged man afflicted with satyriasis." and are "concerned primarily with displaying naked breasts; nonetheless, after four decades of censorship, the Spanish appetite for this limited variety of visual stimulation could not be contained" (Kowalsky 190). In other words, while it is true that a "severe crisis" threatened the Spanish Miracle, this crisis of uncertainty is hardly felt by the low genres of Spain. They proliferated by simply keeping costs low and flirting with transgression boundaries. Núria Triana-Toribio addresses the economic viability of these films during the Spanish Transition (Transición Española) in her Spanish National Cinema (2003), "The most viable films in the Spanish box office were those which catered for audiences' growing interest in foreign hard and softcore pornography or simply films which depicted sexuality beyond the narrow parameters of Catholic dogma" (Triana-Toribio 99). Spain's unique brand of Euro-horror and its destapes, then, catered to the prurient interests of a
growing and diverse audience. What is categorically apparent is that much like the exploitation boom experienced in the United States of the 1950s, 60s, and 70s, Spain too eventually found audiences and profits in blood and breasts. Nevertheless, any discussion of 1970s Spanish cinematographic politics is incomplete without special attention merited to the horror film (and the destape) for their provision of a lifeboat to an otherwise sinking industry.

While I cannot conclusively account for the general academic neglect enacted upon these Spanish films (horror and to a lesser extent – the destape), I can see a parallel between the aggregate struggle for low-culture genres to gain acceptance and legitimacy in Anglo-American film studies that is basically commensurate to the lack of critical support surrounding these similar Spanish offerings. The considerable lag time in meriting attention may also be attributed to Spain's very late arrival to this type of genre production.

Nevertheless, and late arrival or not, the 1970s is the decade where the Spanish horror film found flight. Productions doubled in numbers between 1968 and 1970 and then doubled again by 1973. Box office was strong as citizens flocked to get a taste of the forbidden fruits the rest of the continent was apparently enjoying.

During these last years of Franco's "liberal" dictatorship, a fecund period for low-culture cinema, the emergence of, exposure to, and success of the horror film (and its unclothed counterpart the destape) paralleled the gradual shift from an authoritarian government to one of ordered liberty and democracy. Spain's horror film is emblematic of this transition. Thirty-five years of political, economic, and industrial discord had found consonance with the death of Franco in 1975 and the subsequent ascendancy of King Juan Carlos and the return of The House of Bourbon to the throne of Spain.
However, Franco's death was not a guarantee for instant, radical change. The Spanish Transition (1975-1982), from "an authoritarian Catholic regime to a secular social democracy" (Kowalsky 188) was slow, deliberate, and quite divided with reaching consensus for Spain's new direction politically. Spanish director Eugenio Martín elaborated on this very point in an interview with the author.

Eugenio Martín: …while you are living under a dictatorship—you are the first one to censor yourself because, you say no I cannot do this, I cannot write that because they (the censors) are going to say 'no, no, no.' So, everything was limited, you did so many horror films because these films were not prohibited by this time. Violence was not considered something immoral, you know, so then if you make a comedy or a sort of psychological comedy where you are studying people around you—now that was dangerous—because maybe the censorship would say 'no, no, no.' It happened to me, it happened to many directors at this time. Then, the moment that he (Franco) died, not everything changed because it was impossible no? Maybe you read something about we call the Transition? The Spanish Transition was smooth, was slow, was very careful, so we (as directors, screenwriters) were at the same time doing the same thing. We were careful, we were smooth and were trying to advance another step, another step, trying to get into a free situation - and actually the censorship was then cancelled, I don't remember when exactly—

Carlos Aguilar: (Interjecting) 1977.

EM: So, a couple of years after he died.

Nicholas Schlegel: Yes, my understanding at this time was that financing and distribution were being more actively encouraged and that barriers had been opened up for more domestic product across various genres.

EM: Actually, there was something peculiar - when you had the censorship, you had to be concentrating on genre films, horror or maybe adventure, or maybe science fiction up to a certain point. We were able to make very easily co-productions with some other European countries because they were looking more or less for the same thing. The Italian industry—apart from the big and interesting pictures, they were making many, many horror films, and adventure films and this sort of thing. So, a lot of films were made in this period. Now, when we had no censorship, those pictures were not made so often - because they didn't want to do things that weren't authentic and so when you try to make an "authentic" film, it's not so easy to get a co-production with Italy or France because they have different problems, different human problems.
Perhaps most significant here is Martín's reference to the Miró Law which although not officially passed as law until 1983, was to some degree, a de-facto regulation as the decade drew to a close. The Miró Law, named for its legislator, Spanish filmmaker and then Director General of Cinematography, Pilar Miró, decreed that only serious films possessing "quality" and an "artistic" nature would be worthy of state funding. Fiscal subsidies and tax breaks for "commercial" (including a 15 per cent matching federal subsidy) cinema were abruptly cancelled. With this cry for more characteristically "national" and "authentic" films came the premature burial of the profitable horror film, the Western, and the destape. International co-productions also began to decrease in numbers; the financing of a project with nationalistic themes, biases, and flavors represents a risky venture to another country that rightly harbors doubts as to the commercial viability of this product in their own country and other foreign regions.

In 1977, to replace the apparatus of outright censorship, the Spanish government implemented a four-tiered rating system not unlike that of the MPAA in The United States. (1) all audiences; (2) over 14 years of age; (3) over 18; and (4) S. The S rating was primarily reserved for horror films, the destape and softcore (which bordered on hardcore) films. "Most important, S films like all other Spanish features were eligible for a 15 per cent matching federal subsidy during the five years following each film's premiere. Apart from the warning label, the S film was in every way a mainstream film product" (Kowalsky 191).

The S film became in a sense, its own sub-genre in Spain, consistently accounting for a quarter to one third of total film production in Spain during the Transition. Although the shift was gradual, it soon became inevitable; "low-culture" genre production, which had kept Spain's
motion picture industry afloat during a major period of crisis, ceased to exist. Kowalski laments the treatment of these films following the explosion of these genres:

In the nearly two decades since the Miró Law was introduced, the most conspicuous aspect of Spanish Film production is not only the disappearance of low-budget, shot-on-film pornography, but the steady contraction and homogenization of the national film industry. All of the sub-genres that flourished in Spain from the late 1960s to the early 1980s (the western, horror, sex comedies and softcore porn) have either vanished entirely or survive only in a mainstream variation. The successor product to the varied Spanish sub-genres is the new Iberian art film: well-funded, nicely shot projects that have by and large garnered only lukewarm reviews in either the domestic or foreign markets. (Kowalsky 203)

Moreover, it is comforting to learn that the fundamental lack of scholarship surrounding Spain's "low" genres has apparently troubled and puzzled more scholars than just myself. Here, Kowalsky faults academics that dismiss the genres as unworthy and disreputable.

Who will mourn the passing of Spain's S rated experiment? Certainly not the current crop of Spanish film critics and historians, nearly all of whom reject the genre out of hand, without qualification. Consider two major scholarly accounts of the transition cinema, those of Ramiro Gomez de Castro and Jose Enrique Monterde… Gomez de Castro devotes just a page and a half out of nearly 300 to S films. According to the author, 'the very titles of the genre themselves speak for the complete decadence and absence of quality in each and every production' (Gomez de Castro, 1988: 79). This disdain is echoed in the account of Monterde, who is sufficiently embarrassed by S film titles that his review of the genre is a single paragraph long… The genre's trajectory marked an important staging period during which Spaniards tested the limits of their new freedoms. Moreover… the S films featured moments of genuine political and artistic revelation… Thus ironically, the culmination of Spain's political and cultural liberalization was marked by the abolition of an enormously popular explicit sub-genre. (Kowalsky 203)

Kowalsky, who is more interested in the macro-classification of the S film than in the horror film itself (he sees it as part of the S film's aggregate), nonetheless explains, rather tidily, the fate that befell these crucial but transitional genres. The doors opened under Franco's fascist regime with the sanctioning of horror film production and distribution in 1968 and oddly closed under a new secular democracy fifteen years later.
Lastly, before examining "The Cultural" in the following section, it must be stressed that all of the events and actions discussed in the above sections are crucial to our understanding of the development of the horror genre in Spain. Should we subtract an element, however minor, the outcome might have been substantially different.

**The Cultural**

Chapter three of this dissertation examines the international co-productions between Spain and other European countries where cross-cultural marketability assumes priority while chapter four tries to identify the cultural fingerprints imprinted on the solely financed national productions of Spain during the same era. The common denominator between the two chapters is, of course, the examination of the cultural product of Spain, one arguably diluted and the other perhaps distilled. The imperative question regarding cultural context, however, still remains. What, if any, essence of Spain is brought to the sphere of Euro-horror and are the national productions somehow more *national* in character? In *Immoral Tales: European Sex and Horror Movies 1956-1984* (1995), author Pete Tombs comments on this question of *Hispanidad* or "Spanishness" in these films.

There was not really a Spanish literary tradition in horror to match the English and American forms and, for political as well as commercial reasons, the traditional folklore of the country was not considered a suitable model. But, there is a Spanish flavour – almost *Goyaesque* – which is unmistakable in the best films of the period. They are cruder, more violent and visceral, and with a definite flavour of the grotesque. (Tohill and Tombs, 66)

Here, I generally concur with Tombs. It is difficult to pinpoint *exactly* what it is about these films that transmits aspects of national character, but Tombs is certainly close with his suggestion of a "cruder, more violent, and visceral" aesthetic and in his highlighting of the grotesque (the grotesque, in short, denotes a somber mixture of empathy and disgust). I would add that the most effective films of this era and genre possess, if not boast, the general aesthetic
(the color palette, lighting and theme) found in the Spanish masterworks of Jose de Ribera, Juan de Valdés Leal, and Francisco de Goya. Of Spain's twentieth century painters, the most represented is José Gutiérrez Solana, a painter and writer firmly rooted in the grotesque school and famous for his treatments of death, prostitution and alcoholism. Spanish actor, director, and producer Paul Naschy (born Jacinto Molina and discussed in chapter four) recounts a story whereby his efforts to secure a sinister location for his film *El Huerto del Frances* (1977), which concerned the serial murderer Juan Andres Aldije, were unsuccessful. Eventually, through the help of the town's priest, Naschy was able to shoot on the actual Andalucian locations where the murders took place and in the garden of the murderer. Naschy was overjoyed, "I felt as if I'd been transported back to the deepest, darkest Spain depicted in José Gutiérrez' paintings!" (Naschy 143).

The school of Spanish horror also relies upon and utilizes a culturally distinct artistic movement known as *feismo* (or "ugliness"). *Feismo* denotes an artistic value added to the affect of ugliness and can be found in many of the films of this era. Paying homage to the dark and disturbing works of Spanish Master Painter Francisco de Goya, filmmakers frequently operationalized this aesthetic mode to great effect, especially when resurrecting dormant periods of Spanish history as with *Inquisition!* (1976), *Horror Rises from the Tomb* (1973), and Amando de Ossorio's "Blind Dead" series: *Tombs of the Blind Dead* (1971), *Return of the Evil Dead* (1973), *The Ghost Galleon* (1974), and *Night of The Seagulls* (1975). On other occasions, when grotesqueries and disfigurements were to be featured prominently in a film, *feismo* was emphasized—1973's *The Hunchback of the Morgue* offers a prime example here. *Feismo* has also been explicitly evident in the Spanish horror resurgence of the last decade and is discussed in the last chapter as an expressly national characteristic.
Spain also possessed what it called its "literatura de miedo" or "literatura fantástica" which essentially mirrored the tropes and conventions of the literary Gothic genre, even though the Spaniards did not call this genre "Gothic" per se. The archetypal atmospheric flourishes of death, suspense, and gloom united with the conflation of fear and romance (or fearful romances) are present. So, while it is true that Spain did not have a horror tradition to match that of England or the United States, it did have culturally endemic qualities. The resultant treatments of feísmo combined with Spain's penchant towards the grotesque and their own brand of the Gothic charge the Spanish horror film with an energy or spark that is unique and significant among its contemporaries.

Paul Ilie, the leading critic of the grotesque in Spanish literature has stated, "Social reality has always been transformed by the artist, but only in modern times has it been systematically disfigured. This is why we must place so much importance on the Spanish grotesque within the European concert of discords" (Ilie 317). Indeed, the grotesque as a form of artistic expression in contemporary Spain has served as a powerful conduit for social critique. Peter Podol has also written about Spain's longstanding tradition with the grotesque in the arts, he observes, "The subjective vision of the artist utilizing the grotesque mode functions typically to magnify the element of deformation already present in the subject which inspired it" (Podol 194), and "The resultant grotesque images serve to align the Church and State as culprits for the horror perpetrated in Spain" (Podol 204). In this case, the Spanish horror film tended to emphasize "The grotesque," as "...actually a new realism, the only suitable mode of expression for dealing with a world that produced the Holocaust and the possibility of nuclear genocide" (195).

Podol also notes that in 20th century Spain, the grotesque "...constituted, in part, a response to the political chaos of the first quarter of the century, the horror of the civil war, and
the repression of the Franco regime" (Podol). I wish to stress here that Podol's phrase "horror of the civil war and the repression of Franco's regime" contains, essentially the lynch pin that guides the central argument of this dissertation. This is a major point that I return to in the upcoming section of this chapter, "The Social."

Historically, Spain had simultaneously accepted and differentiated itself from popular trends in literature, music, painting, sculpture, and architecture. Given this, while Spain was reliant on the traditional codes and conventions of Hollywood horror and the variances found in the Euro-horror arena, it also, as it had done in the past, diverged from mere efforts at aesthetic replication to a slow but confident point of fluidity with the genre; both camera and mise-en-scène created atmosphere that transcended imitation. The Spanish horror film, although initially mimetic, progressively begins to display moments of lyrical horror, and, in some instances, delivers more accomplished effects than many of its European contemporaries.

In summary, Spanish horror drew from the Spanish Masters and their rich traditions on the canvas and easel while thematically plumbing their own national histories. This strategy, in arrangement with the standardized tropes, conventions, and ready-made templates of the horror genre provided Spain with the raw material to successfully enter the genre and eventually claim a significant territory all its own: Spanish horror.

The Social

As the literature review shows, the horror genre, like any major genre, is a complex system of codes and conventions caught in a never-ending, contemporaneous, social feedback loop. I had asked earlier why a "ghost" or an "old dark house" would be somehow more threatening or disturbing than the inhuman carnage of war or the blood orgies of a bullfight.
Author Stephen King offers an opening contextual wedge concerning this matter by elaborating on one of the central tenets of horror:

Begin by assuming that the tale of horror, no matter how primitive is allegorical by its very nature; that it is symbolic. Assume that it is talking to us, like a patient on a psychoanalyst's couch, about one thing while it means another. The element of allegory is there only because it is built-in, a given, impossible to escape. Horror appeals to us because it says, in a symbolic way, things we would be afraid to say right out straight, with the bark still on; it offers us a chance to exercise (that's right; not exorcise but exercise) emotions which society demands we keep closely in hand. (King 31)

When read in this light, the horror genre's "built-in" propensity to exercise emotions which "society demands we keep closely in hand" clearly designates itself as unfit for consumption in Franco's Spain, to put it mildly. A common, rather uninformed, opinion regarding the genesis of Spain's horror "boom" is that it was simply generated from economic factors. Apart from being an over determined, unsophisticated, and one-dimensional explanation, this posture fails to explain, or even acknowledge, why these types of films were "banned" in the first place. King is quite correct; Franco's Spain was not the sort of place where citizens were encouraged to exercise repressed thoughts or emotions.

The horror film's allegorical and symbolic nature offered precisely the sort of "perceived" threat that Franco's regime rigidly guarded. Even at the level of intuition, Franco's government somehow knew that horror movies were not suitable for public consumption. But what is it about the horror genre (as opposed to other genres) that somehow transmits a sense of "danger" or "threat?" Certainly, horror's primacy as an original motion picture genre (with a long history of literary antecedents) is acknowledged by its durability and resiliency with the public and its appeal to academics. Indeed, in the United States, when the collective output of musicals, Westerns, and gangster films trickled to a mere handful of productions per year and their waning popularity put them on the verge of extinction, the horror film endured. Why is this? Stephen
Prince measures the tenor of horror's universal anxieties by stating, "The anxiety at the heart of the genre is, indeed, the nature of human being." He continues:

Like other genre movies, any given horror film will convey synchronic associations, ideological and social messages that are part of a certain period of historical moment. One can analyze horror films in terms of these periods or moments, just as one can do with Westerns or gangster movies. But, unlike those other genres, horror also goes deeper, to explore more fundamental questions about the nature of human existence, questions that, in some profound ways, go beyond culture and society as these are organized in any given period or form. Here lies the special significance of horror, the factors that truly differentiate it from the other genres and that make it conform most deeply with our contemporary sense of the world. (Prince 2)

"Our contemporary sense of the world" is mostly determined by cultural context and specificity. Therefore, let us assume what seems to be obvious; the horror film is out to universally horrify, terrify and deeply unsettle us. But, what does this really amount to? Human beings fundamentally share some common fears, for example, the unknown, or a particularly grizzly and violent death. But it is beyond these primitive, basically automatic responses, where horror's "special significance" is more profoundly experienced. Horror raises fundamental questions about what it means to be human and how we can access, or indeed measure, our own humanity. Horror never shies away from exposing our capacity for evil, but its purpose in doing so is not to cause despair, but rather, reinforce our capacity for good. Bodies in revolt, bodies in decay, bodies mutating into the "other," bodies betraying their owner, bodies being mutilated and tortured: these scenarios are the province of horror and their cumulative effect can, and often is, of therapeutic value to anxieties about the nature of human existence. In other words: death is what gives life its very meaning and sweetness.

Problematizing this formulation are the polysemous reactions of horror texts from both scholars and mainstream audiences, that is to say that a particular text's reception typically varies
from individual to individual, town to town, city to city, culture to culture and so on. Peter Hutchings elaborates:

One way of denigrating the horror genre is to denigrate its audiences. With this aim in mind, anti-horror critics have often addressed the question of the likely pleasures afforded by horror by arguing that the only people who could actually enjoy this sort of thing are either sick or stupid (or sick and stupid). (Hutchings 83)

This popular view disregards notions of cultural hierarchies, ideology, and borders on ethical inappropriateness. Non-condemnatory approaches were largely ignored until, more or less, the last twenty years. However, remarkably, as early as the 1950s, even-handed accounts existed. For example, in psychiatrist Dr. Martin Grotjahn's 1958 article, "Horror – Yes, it can do you good", he states: "…there is, perhaps, a healthy function in the fascination of horror. It keeps us on the task to face our anxieties and to work on them" (Grotjahn 9). Grotjahn's remark brings us back to Stephen King's; there is a sense, or tone, or attitude of a doctor/patient relationship present.

So, while it is always in vogue to denigrate horror audiences (or worse, lay blame upon them and their films for society's ills), this limited worldview does not take into account horror's *therapeutic* value. Earlier I had stated that Peter Podol's framing of the grotesque around the "horror of the civil war and the repression of Franco's regime" held the lynch pin that guides a central argument of this dissertation: namely, that horror has great potential for therapy and catharsis. Consider the key words in Podol's phrase: war—repression—horror. The Spanish horror boom experienced between the late 1960s and the late 1970s is a function of war, the horrors of war, and their cumulative repression.

Yes, for all of its protective measures, Spain's Board of Censorship, which desperately tried to preserve (or enforce) a Francoist hegemony through the dominant social order, especially
through pervasive cultural documents like film, failed. This repressive and harmful apparatus failed to consider (like those who similarly denigrate horror audiences) or even acknowledge the ways in which creators and consumers of horror can exploit "film's radical potential to subvert social hierarchies and decompose relations of power" (Shaviro 64). I argue that the Spanish government motivated, if not unintentionally reinforced the "ability of audiences to generate their own texts and thus to become intenders, mappers and owners in their own right" (Altman 212). The 60s and 70s youth sub-culture movements in Spain are prime locations for this sort of polysemic activity. Or, as Ian Olney puts it, that "...although (the horror film) has often been a critically ignored or maligned genre, seen simply as the province of revolting bodies, horror has the capacity to become the home of bodies in revolt" (Olney 12). The youth market would be the creators and architects of King Juan Carlos' new Spain.

Summary

I have throughout this chapter highlighted and contextualized the key events—beginning with Spain's Civil War to the current reign of King Juan Carlos—that shaped and formed the conditions under which Spain's motion picture industry became primed for entering into a broader sphere of cinematographic politics. The horror film, with its conflation of sex and violence, provided not only a conduit through which contained energies could be channeled, but, as I have argued, catharsis to a society coming to terms with forty years of a repressive dictatorship.
1 Paradoxically, the genre most suited to acknowledging these harsh realities, the horror film, was strictly forbidden.

2 The Encyclopedia of Spanish Contemporary Culture defines technocrat as “…the name given to the new breed of professional economists and other university trained people brought into the government by Franco in 1957 to tackle the disastrous economic situation to which earlier policies of autarky, protectionism and stifling state interventionism had brought the country. The arrival of the technocrats into positions of influence marked a turning point in Franco’s regime. Considerably younger, more pragmatic and less politically blinkered than their predecessors, the new ministers and their advisers set about tackling the problems of inflation, balance of payments deficit and trade disincentives.” (Rogers 506)

3 The precedent for this cinematic dye was cast when Italy also saw the benefits of mounting productions in Spain. Together with the U.S. productions, Spain was hosting productions of special significance; the first non-Hollywood westerns to gain critical and commercial success were being made in Spain.
CHAPTER 3

THE INTERNATIONAL CO-PRODUCTIONS

"There is work, wild work, to be done..."
- Professor Van Helsing: Dracula, 1897.

This chapter examines the international co-productions made between Spain and other participating countries. The co-production, while historically underutilized in Hollywood, has a vital post-World War II history in Europe. In his History of the American Cinema - The Fifties, Peter Lev defines a co-production as:

A film made by companies from two or more nations and governed by specific, government-to-government agreements between those nations. In Europe, co-productions is a commonly used means for achieving higher budgets, higher subsidies, and greater potential audiences for films. (Co-productions now exist in other parts of the world, but in the 1950s they were a primarily a European phenomenon). (Lev, 154)

Under this definition, the European co-production's roots actually date back to 1920's Berlin and Europe's most prosperous and major studio at that time, Universum Film Aktiengesellschaft or Ufa. Bilateral agreements between Ufa and other countries existed to capitalize on the silent era's cross-cultural marketability. Due to their visual nature, silent films found easy distributive flow to foreign markets being that language barriers were not a factor. Thirty years later, during the next major era of co-productions—the post-war 1950s—the pooling of resources (funds, studios, locations, stars, crews, etc.) became an even more attractive undertaking to producers across Europe. The economic aftermath of World War II made these lateral efforts the natural choice for many producers. By spreading investment (and thereby reducing risk), producers were eager to saturate markets, including the United States, often through negative pick up deals.
Spanish Co-Productions 1968-1977

By 1968\(^1\), Spanish horror was an officially sanctioned and viable form of cinematic expression, eligible for government-backed tax incentives and subsidies. The common denominator for a Spanish co-production was, quite rationally, cross-cultural marketability. Multinational investments called for a broad narrative spectrum and a wide margin in the creation of commercial interest. For example, in 1968, co-productions in this new genre for Spain wisely featured iconic and legendary characters known to generate cross-market interest, such as Sax Rohmer's criminal mastermind "Dr. Fu-Manchu" and Bram Stoker's legendary vampire, "Count Dracula." The films discussed in this chapter (all of which are paradigmatic of the co-production era), *El Conde Dracula* (1969), *La Noche del Terror Ciego* (1971), *Panico en el Transiberiano* (1972) and *No Profanar el Sueño de los Muertos* (1974), represent such cross-market interests. Centering these films around commercially proven subject matter (vampires, zombies, exotic criminal masterminds) with reputable male leads (Christopher Lee, Peter Cushing, Klaus Kinski, Herbert Lom, Telly Savalas) and talented European actresses also known for their sex-appeal (Anita Ekberg, Helga Line, Shirley Eaton, Soledad Miranda, Rosanna Yanni, and Maria Rohm) facilitated a successful and profitable launch for the Spanish horror co-production. When placed within this light, I argue that these films, while perhaps not as explicitly political as some of Spain's purely national productions nevertheless mined similar themes and allowed for the perfection of business practices within the co-production sphere.

The first key film discussed, *El Conde Dracula* (*Count Dracula*, 1969), illustrates precisely the vital elements required for a successful co-production between two or more countries: recognizable stars of various nationalities, appealing subject matter (if not universal appeal), and lastly, competent (if not skilled), technicians. The second film analyzed, *La Noche*
del Terror Ciego (Tombs of the Blind Dead, 1971) spawned the wildly popular and successful "Blind Dead" franchise, which featured Templar zombies spreading rape and murder across an Iberian landscape. Eugenio Martín's elegant Spanish-English co-production, Panico en el Transiberiano (Horror Express, 1972), was Spain's most Hammer-like entry during this era, undoubtedly because of the teaming of Hammer stars Christopher Lee and Peter Cushing. Despite this Hammer-like mimicry in tone and style, I argue that the film still manages to offer subtle, but pointed commentary on Franco's military regime. And lastly, I bring into focus one of Spain's most iconic co-productions, Jorge Grau's zombie spectacle, No Profanar el Sueño de los Muertos (The Living Dead at the Manchester Morgue, 1974). Although the project's inception was born of a desire to imitate Night of the Living Dead's worldwide box office performance, the film easily transcended this common motive and delivered a multi-award winning and powerful horror film.
In 1969, yet another adaptation of Bram Stoker's immortal 1897 novel *Dracula* was released. This time it was a co-production between Spain, West Germany, Italy and England with Spain's notorious Jess Franco directing. Above all, this was an effort generated to capitalize on the success of England's Hammer franchise of Dracula films, particularly those starring Christopher Lee, which up until that time were *Horror of Dracula* (1958), *Dracula Prince of Darkness* (1966), and *Dracula Has Risen From His Grave* (1968). However, before Lee would reluctantly go on to make four additional films for Hammer as the eponymous Count Dracula, (Scars of Dracula [1970], Taste the Blood of Dracula [1970], Dracula A.D. 1972 [1972], and The Satanic Rites of Dracula [1973]), he eagerly accepted Jess Franco's offer to do a more "faithful" adaptation of Stoker's seminal work. The proposition was especially tempting considering that the Hammer franchise was by then, in the opinion of some, progressively limping by on tired
legs. Predictable formulas, clichéd thematic treatments and a blatant disregard for Stoker's source material led to the series' gradual decline and had troubled the actor on more than one occasion. Lee frequently commented on this matter decades later, both in his own writings and in interviews, such as in the following discussion at a Fanex Monster Rally:

I turned down all of the subsequent (Dracula) films, after I had made the first two. I said 'No, no, no.' You've got a great character here, heroic, erotic, romantic. I read these scripts and said, 'No, this is a deterioration of the character.' And so, I said 'No, no, no.' I then used to get these hysterical phone calls from Jimmy Carreras, who was the boss of Hammer, a brilliant promoter, great entrepreneur – we need more men like that today. And the same conversation took place every time. 'You got to do this movie, you got to do this movie, I'm on my knees begging you, I'm sixty-two years old and I'm begging you, I can't stand the stress and uncertainty (audience laughter). You've got to do it!' And I said 'I haven't got to do it and he replied 'Yes you have', I asked why and he said 'I've already sold it with you in the film to the distributors' (laughter). Point one. Point two – 'and think of the people you'll put out of work if you don't do it (more laughter).' There's a word for that—blackmail. And that is the reason why I did the subsequent films. I'm not attacking the movies, there's some very fine performances with some very fine actors, but it wasn't Bram Stoker (Fanex Files: Hammer Films DVD, 2002).

Of the four sequential follow-ups to 1958's Horror of Dracula, Lee starred in three, only refusing the immediate sequel, 1960's Brides of Dracula. Weary of the tragic fate that befell Bela Lugosi, the last actor to successfully portray Dracula on screen, Lee initially distanced himself from potential career typecasting by waiting nearly eight years to reprise the role in 1966's Dracula, Prince of Darkness.

And so, with the assurance that fidelity to Bram Stoker's work was a priority, Lee accepted Franco's offer and production began on El Conde Dracula in 1969 with Barcelona as the primary shooting location. Second unit exteriors were shot in France with studio pick-ups (almost exclusively Klaus Kinski's asylum interiors) in Tirrenia Studios in Pisa, Italy. El Conde Dracula also marked another collaboration between Jess Franco and the English rogue writer-producer Harry Alan Towers. The collaborations with Towers often granted the director larger
budgets, broader distribution channels and access to a wide range of European talent. For Jess Franco, the Towers years were ones of heavy international exposure with his films reaching broad and diverse audiences on several continents.

Stoker's novel is famous throughout the world for its timeless themes and rich characterizations and currently exists in over fifty translations. Dracula is one of the most filmed characters in all of literature and this fact invariably casts all of his cinematic representations into an adaptation framework leveled at comparison between the novel and its filmed versions. The novel's enduring popularity and universal appeal also derived from the simplicity of its story and plot. In the spring of 1893, a young real estate solicitor, Jonathan Harker, sets off for Transylvania to settle a real estate transaction with the nobleman Count Dracula. Dracula, a four hundred year old vampire, holds his benefactor hostage and travels to England to spread his unholy cult of vampirism. Harker manages to escape the castle, but at considerable risk to his life, he eventually returns to England where, in the meantime, a team of vampire hunters has been assembled by the wise Professor Van Helsing to battle the dangerous intruder, Count Dracula. After the murder of Ms. Mina Murray's (Harker’s fiancée) friend, Lucy Westerna, who has been "kissed" by Dracula and shall surely return as one of his undead, the vampire hunters: Van Helsing, Dr. John Seward, Arthur Holmwood, Quincey Morris and Harker assemble and destroy Lucy by driving a stake through her heart. The men subsequently chase Count Dracula back to his native Transylvanian soil where he is killed and his tortured soul finds release.

I now discuss where the film varies from, as well as observes, general fidelity to Stoker's work. Franco promised Lee a close adaptation, observing accuracy with plot, story and dialogue. As to the question of whether Franco delivered this promise is a matter of debate. In short, he did and he did not, and it is here where we must acknowledge an old, heated and perhaps
tiresome debate that has existed for nearly a century. Does a faithful translation of Stoker's novel exist as a motion picture, and if it does, who rightfully claims it? To begin this brief discussion, some of the "major" differences between novel and Franco's screen adaptation are summarized briefly below.

The plot and story in the early stages of the film are commensurate to that of the novel. The film begins in traditional fashion with the arrival of Mina Murray's fiancé, Jonathan Harker (Fred Williams), at Castle Dracula. The first major deviation occurs after Harker's escape from Castle Dracula; he is admitted to an asylum, which is run by Abraham Van Helsing (Herbert Lom) and receives treatment from Dr. John Seward (Paul Müller). The novel, however, has only the character of delusional and bug-hungry R. M. Renfield (Klaus Kinski) admitted to an asylum, which is run by Dr. John Seward and not Dr. Van Helsing. The film also reduces Lucy Westerna's (Soledad Miranda) three marriage proposals (from Dr. John Seward, Arthur Holmwood and American Quincey Morris) to one. In doing so, Arthur Holmwood's character is deleted altogether—some of his character traits are combined into the role of Quincey Morris (Jack Taylor). Dr. Seward, a minor character in this film, shows no predilection towards Lucy Westerna, romantic or otherwise. Late in the film, Van Helsing suffers a stroke which leaves him confined to a wheelchair; no such occurrence happens in Stoker's novel and its inclusion is altogether quite puzzling. At the climax of the film, Harker and Morris set fire to Dracula's coffin whereas in the novel, Dracula is stabbed in the heart with a Bowie knife and has his throat slit. This preceding list accounts for the "major" deviations; there are, however, other minute discrepancies that are endemic to the translation process in general.

When measured against other cinematic adaptations, Franco's variations listed above are relatively harmless and minor in scope. There have been far more egregious tampers to Stoker's
work than Jess Franco's, including, for that matter, Universal's inaugural sound version from 1931, which understandably, but perhaps unfortunately, derived from Irish actor, producer and playwright Hamilton Deane's 1924 stage adaptation. Deane's interpretation (which took a great many liberties with plot and story) essentially became the cinematic "master" template for Bram Stoker's novel and would go on to influence nearly all of its subsequent filmed versions. Hence, the propagation of a feedback loop that originates with an arguably mismanaged or flawed adaptation for the screen in 1931 and supposedly terminates with Francis Ford Coppola's 1992 interpretation, which boldly trumpets this fidelity in its title: Bram Stoker's Dracula. While in fact, both Franco's El Conde Dracula and Philip Saville's BBC produced, three-part miniseries Count Dracula (1977), often observe closer and more accurate readings, particularly Saville's work.

If, as Dudley Andrew has claimed, adaptation is best characterized by the following three modes of, "Borrowing, Intersecting, and Transforming Sources", then Deane's theatrical interpretation (which, as stated, Universal had cinematically Xeroxed) would appear to fall into the first category of "borrowing", while historically, filmmakers and cinéasts have longed for a more "transformative" rendering of Dracula (Jess Franco, Christopher Lee, Harry Alan Towers and Francis Ford Coppola being just a few examples discussed here). As Andrew writes, in the "borrowing" mode, "the artist employs, more or less extensively, the material, idea, or form of an earlier, generally successful text" while in the transformative mode, there is a "clear-cut case of film trying to measure up to a literary work, or of an audience expecting to make such a comparison" (Andrew 375). I agree with Andrew's designation of this latter endeavor as "tiresome," particularly where Stoker's Dracula is concerned. It is not my intent to settle or even moderate these debates; careful not to fall into another tedious discussion, yet acknowledging its
prescience, I offer that Franco's *El Conde Dracula* took some cinematic liberties with Stoker's novel while simultaneously revering its essence to a degree that was uncommon at that time, or since.

It is difficult to eliminate Jess Franco from any discussion of his films. As Tim Lucas has observed, the films of Jess Franco "Are a kind of universe unto themselves" (Lucas 49). Franco is, in terms of number of films directed, the world's most prodigious filmmaker and I therefore acknowledge and frame some analysis around this sense of authorship. Issues of adaptation aside, the screenplay and the ensuing film are typical of Franco's enormous body of work. *El Conde Dracula* contains moments of occasional lyricism combined with moments of occasional amateurism. Added to this, at times, loose adaptation and odd Barcelona shooting location was Franco's staging of a peculiar and occasionally static tableau (strangely, the same major criticism attributed to Tod Browning's 1931 adaptation of *Dracula* nearly forty years earlier). Some scenes are presented (and therefore, one presumes were shot) in fixed long shots which lack basic coverage while others contain an abundance of exaggerated, zoomed close-ups. In one such scene, early in the film, Van Helsing dispatches a coachman (played by Franco himself) to greet and retrieve Lucy Westerna (Soledad Miranda) and Mina Murray (Maria Rohm) from the nearby train station. They arrive at Professor Van Helsing's clinic and assemble in the large foyer. This scene is delivered entirely in a wide master for no discernable reason that I can detect. Camera angle, movement and position are unremarkable and therefore provide (again, one presumes) the editor with nothing to assemble apart from a single master shot. The scene is short in duration, but it is also nonetheless disruptive: the absence of two-shots, over the shoulder shots, cutaways and other forms of coverage, blockade the flow of the scene simply
because a static long shot presented in this milieu and with this material is not what audiences have been traditionally trained for.

Franco's wide master shot – fixed and static.

Franco appears to compensate for these long and static shots by speckling the film with intense and intimate close ups. Often these close ups move from loose to tight framing to presumably convey isolation or enclosure, or to intimately linger on an actor's face, prompting expressive and affective responses. Other times, they seem to exist for no apparent reason other than to utilize the lens currently mounted on the camera. Franco is notorious for this use (or overuse) of zoom lenses. It has become one of his many authorial "signatures," precisely for his mixture of genuine utility with this lens as well as for his abuses of it. However, in the case of Franco's collaborations with Harry Alan Towers, John Exshaw explains Franco's excessive zooming as a function of Towers' rather frugal ethos as a producer.

Towers’ penny-pinching approach meant that while Franco’s movies were indeed widely distributed, they were usually received with howls of derision. The principal responsibility of a producer is to produce an adequate budget, but Towers’ penchant for complex co-production deals (which involved basing his company in Liechtenstein for tax purposes) resulted in erratic cash flow and the need for Franco to make do as best as he could. It is no coincidence that Franco’s reputation as an incorrigible zoom-hound can be traced back to the Towers partnership; if one doesn’t have the time or money for basic camera set-ups, then zooming is a cheap (in both senses of the word) way of cutting costs.
This account may be of some explanatory utility in my puzzlement over the lack of coverage in the master foyer scene described in figure 3-1. Many such "zoom-hound" examples are prevalent in the film, but what may be lost or overlooked is Franco's talent for composition within tight framing. Not unlike the Italian spaghetti western master Sergio Leone, Franco loved to linger on and examine an actor's face in extreme and highly intimate close ups. The difference between the close ups of these two considerable directors is typically how we arrived at them. Franco, rather than cut to a close up, often zips us there in something less than a second. Two zoomed close ups that specifically demonstrate this lens dichotomy (often a long shot to an extreme close up) occur early in scenes with Klaus Kinski's "Renfield" and Herbert Lom's "Dr. Van Helsing." The former finds the incarcerated Renfield throwing his bowl of reddish-orange soup (perhaps goulash), which nicely approximates blood, on his padded cell wall where he begins to finger-paint with it. In this rather interesting stroke, Franco has transformed the austere, white padded cell into a canvas for Renfield's abstract expressions (or abstract expressionism). The scene ends on a very slow zoom to an extreme close-up of the always-fascinating Kinski's face, bisected by the iron gate of his window, emphasizing his isolation, imprisonment and most significantly, his newly emerged split personality.

3-2. The always intense and interesting face of Klaus Kinski (Renfield).
In sharp contrast, Franco punctuates Dr. Van Helsing's introductory scene by quickly zooming in on Herbert Lom's face at the mention of the surname "Dracula" by Dr. Seward. This is a somewhat clichéd deployment; at the utterance of the ominous word "Dracula?" a fast zoom to a close-up is performed that more or less silently declares "Dracula? Hmm, that's fascinating, I think we should all be worried." These two examples, the extremely slow push-in and the lightning quick zoom, are ubiquitous in El Conde Dracula, and, in general, Franco's filmography. Often, the speed of his zoom is appropriate for the tone of the scene and the requirement of the shot, and sometimes, it is not.

However, when Franco is on point, the film benefits from several striking set pieces, one such sequence depicts Lucy Westerna (portrayed by Franco's "muse" Soledad Miranda) being lured away from Van Helsing's clinic by Dracula. Provocative and hypnotic, this sequence is one of the more skillfully crafted moments in the film. We begin in Lucy's bedchamber as she is beckoned by Dracula's sheer will; the Count is unseen, only a vague, hinted at, proximity is sensed. Lucy's bedroom is striking; two windows approximating a pair of peeping eyes, as though designed by Spanish architect Antonio Gaudi (perhaps a nod to the Barcelona locations), lend an uneasy, voyeuristic affect to the scene. The sound design here is particularly effective; off screen, Dracula unrelentingly repeats Lucy's name; intense atmospherics such as frogs,
crickets, bats and other night creatures create a cacophony of sounds that enhance Lucy's trance-like state; and Bruno Nicolai's hypnotic score, featuring an ominous, hypnotic cymbalom (a folk hammered dulcimer commonly used in Gypsy bands and caravans) all serve to enhance a sense of queasy ambiguity. Rather than simply have the camera prowl along with Lucy's footfalls, Franco complements this queasy ambiguity by having Mina (Maria Rohm) quietly spy on Lucy, carrying the voyeurism theme outdoors and lending it a more scopophilic implication, as we the audience watch a curious Mina watch a lured Lucy.

3-4. A hypnotized Lucy (Soledad Miranda) is beckoned to Count Dracula.

3-5. Maria Rohm follows closely behind the entranced Lucy (Soledad Miranda).
Jess Franco's *El Conde Dracula* is, in the end, a curious and at times gripping re-telling of Stoker's classic tale made all the more mesmerizing by Soledad Miranda's presence. Her death the following year left an international film community grieving. Her beauty, which Franco captured in life (in five films) and ironically, in this film, in death, is preserved by Franco's penchant for intimate close-ups. The film should be recognized for its overall fidelity to Stoker's novel, appreciated for its singularity, but most importantly, it announces the arrival of the international co-production era; the period when the Spanish government showed an interest in creating an environment in which these films could prosper and grow.

Reception of Jess Franco's *El Conde Dracula* was generally favorable. Critics in Spain neither condemned nor praised it, but did cast a condescending tone towards it (Aguilar). It did, however, remarkable box office. Carlos Aguilar warns, however, that the official data may be distorted, he writes: "With respect to the data, although these are official numbers, they are thought to be false. That is to say that the exhibitors cheated the distributors, the distributors cheated the producers, and the producers cheated the government. Thus was cinema!" (personal correspondence). Therefore, I withhold official data until it can be more substantially verified. Investors, however, were thrilled with their return of investment (Aguilar).
Little can be yielded from attempts to politicize the film in connection to the cultural turmoil and tensions in Spain at that time or to the broader assertions of this project. This was an adaptation of Bram Stoker's *Dracula*, written by an Irishman over forty years prior to Spain's Civil War and adapted into a film intended for international distribution.

Throughout this dissertation, where available and for illustrative purposes, I have included various marketing ephemera and/or business materials from the films I have discussed. The following two figures demonstrate the type of ballyhoo that became common to the successful exploitation of a horror film made in whole, or in part, in Spain.
3-7. A sell sheet that promotes exploitation and marketing material for *El Conde Dracula.*
(Source: *Filmoteca Española*)
“EL CONDE DRACULA“

FICHA ARTISTICA
CHISTOPHER LEE
HERBERT LOM
KLAUS KINSKY
SOLEDAD MIRANDA
MARIA RHOM
FRED WILLIAMS

FICHA TECNICA
Director . JESUS FRANCO
Fotografía . MANUEL MERINO
Música . BRUNO NICOLAI

Una Coproducción
C. FENIX FILM de MADRID
CORONA FILM de MUNICH
FILMAR de ROMA

Adaptación Cinematográfica de la Obra Original de Bram Stoker. Sobre: “EL CONDE DRACULA“

FRASES PUBLICITARIAS
¡Vuelve el Conde Drácula, el personaje más truculento y sanguinario!

¡Un fantástico relato en Eastmancolor y Panavisión, que produce escalofríos de auténtico terror!

¡Pánico, escalofríos y terror! Un espectáculo fantástico y alucinante que pondrá a prueba la resistencia de sus nervios.

Una película estremecedora que sumerge al espectador en el mundo del pánico y el terror.

Un viejo castillo... una banda de murciélagos volando en la noche... Y Drácula transformado en un espeluznante murciélago buscando la cálida sangre que necesita para vivir.

La obra cumbre del cine de terror y suspense...

(Source: Filmoteca Española)
Spanish director and writer Amando De Ossorio's "Blind Dead" series (Tombs of the Blind Dead [1971], Return of the Evil Dead [1973], The Ghost Galleon [1974], and Night of The Seagulls [1975]) launched in 1971 with the release of the Spanish-Portuguese La Noche del Terror Ciego (Tombs of the Blind Dead). The film was a hit and three sequels were commissioned to exploit this commercial success. More importantly, the success of La Noche del Terror Ciego, made it possible for all of its sequels to be financed solely as Spanish productions. Consequently, what had initially begun as a co-production between Spain and Portugal became a Spanish franchise and an icon for Iberian horror in general. The series produced one of the horror film's more creative and culturally endemic icons, The Blind Dead.

The Blind Dead films owe a considerable debt to George A. Romero's Night of the Living Dead (1968), a film that sent massive shockwaves throughout the foundations and corridors of the motion picture industry (both domestic and foreign). The complex history and
legacy of *Night of the Living Dead* have been exhaustively documented in numerous books, articles and documentaries and it is not my purpose to review them here. However, it might help our understanding and situating of the Blind Dead series as well as this chapter's later discussion of *No Profanar el Sueño de los Muertos* (1974) to remember that producers were eager to cash in on the film's popularity by quickly establishing and distinguishing themselves in the zombie sub-genre.

Eclectically combining elements from the horror sub-genres of the zombie film, the mummy film, the vampire film, and the police procedural film, Amando de Ossorio's *La Noche del Terror Ciego* delights in mimetic displays of classic genre clichés. From the doom-laden warnings of locals, creaky doors and ominous stairwells, a red herring drug smuggling sub-plot, to spooky post-mortems of victims who will surely rise as undead, *La Noche del Terror Ciego* offers up the typical tropes and conventions associated with the genre, but also adds a considerable amount of originality which consequently advanced the zombie sub-genre a full ten years. *La Noche del Terror Ciego* occupies a significant place in Spain's horror film history. Indeed, Carlos Aguilar's edited volume *El Cine Fantástico y de Terror Español. 1900-1983* devotes a chapter to Amando de Ossorio and his undead Templar Knights.

*La Noche Del Terror Ciego* represents one of the biggest commercial successes of its time, and far from being forgotten, remains today as well as then a classic example of Spanish horror. No wonder the film, written and directed by Amando de Ossorio as a co-production with Portugal, opens, again, the third Iberian myth, with the skeletal Templars, who devour their victims terrified at the sound of Gregorian chants; his [Ossorio's] inspiration, of course, comes from the homonymous sect, founded in the XII century in order to defend Jerusalem (of Muslims in particular but all kinds of pagans in general), and related, therefore, to a particular brand of Islamic esotericism. (Aguilar 33)

*La Noche del Terror Ciego* begins with a young Spanish couple, Virginia (María Elena Arpón) and Roger (César Burner), embarking towards the Portuguese countryside on an
extended weekend holiday. An invitation to Virginia's friend Betty (Lone Fleming)—an old friend and former lover (flashbacks reveal bi-sexual encounters between the two) from her school years—is extended and a clichéd imbroglio is initiated shortly thereafter. When Roger, however, begins to show a little too much interest in Betty, a frustrated Virginia jumps off of the passenger train—quite literally leaving her past behind her—and strides towards Berzano, a ruined Medieval monastery. She soon finds shelter and beds down; upon nightfall however, the undead Knights Templar rise from their graves, track her down and kill her. When Roger and Betty decide to go back to locate Virginia the next morning, they discover that her body has already been found by the local authorities, covered in bite marks. They are told of the legend of the Knights, a story that the police insist is merely a fabrication used to keep the curious away from a smuggling ring operating in the area. Not convinced, especially after an enlightening conversation with a professor of medieval history, Roger invites head smuggler Pedro and his girlfriend Nina to investigate the monastery, which leads to the film's open-ended (the perfect set-up for three sequels) and bloody conclusion.

The earliest sound-era horror offerings from the United States (I refer notably here to 1931's Dracula and Frankenstein) often addressed a desirable "foreign" stance when situating monsters. Faraway places and monstrous "others" were narrative devices often employed in the genre's classical stage. Stephen Prince writes, "This sense of faraway places and things, and the story convention that good will prevail, helped transform the induction of horror in to a reassuring experience for the audience. Monsters were 'over there' and were not really very threatening anyway" (Prince, 3). Spain's censorship apparatus often dictated that at no time could the story of a film (horror or otherwise) center on politically germane issues. This meant that monsters were unequivocally to be "over there" and not overtly relevant to Spanish customs.
or culture. If horror films were to exist in Spain, then they would do so, in effect, as stateless commodities.

Yet, this is not remotely the case with the Blind Dead series, which seemingly demolished this dictate in one fell swoop. Attenuating the often messy and complicated issues of "foreign" otherness, the series locates the time and place very concretely in the here and now (in other words, the present day of Spain in 1971) while simultaneously acknowledging medieval histories and concurrently presenting apprehension about the present and uncertain future. My assertion as to why the film was able to dismantle censorship mandates is rooted in the polysemous nature of film as a medium. In the pages that follow, I explore the nature of this film, its unusual antagonists and what designates it as unique within the more traditional zombie corpus.

Cinematic representations of the Templar Knights have ranged from the saintly and devout (Indiana Jones and The Last Crusade [1989], The Da Vinci Code [2006]), to the demonic and bloodthirsty (The Blind Dead Films or The Church [1989], which featured Teutonic Knights, an Italian model of the Templars, but less powerful and influential). Similarly, from a literary standpoint, the Knights Templar received various thematic treatments over the centuries, from Sir Walter Scott's Ivanhoe (1819) to Umberto Eco's Foucault's Pendulum (1988). However, Ossorio was the first dramatist to fully realize their potential as monstrous. Given the Pope's excommunication of the order and their ensuing mass slaughter as blasphemous heretics on Friday, October 13th, 1307 (reportedly, the origin of "Friday the 13th"), it was perhaps merely a matter of time before a tale of wicked, ritual revenge would be penned. Scholar June Pulliam nicely summarizes—according to the legend and myth of La Noche del Terror Ciego's diegesis—the Templar's history.
Tombs of the Blind Dead takes as its subject medieval Knights Templar, who brought back from their last crusade eastern necromantic secrets of life and death. The order drank the blood of a virgin to make a pact with Satan that permitted them to live eternally, provided they drink more blood and consume human flesh. Soon the outside world learns of their crimes, and the knights are excommunicated and executed, but too late--they can continue their existence beyond death through the consumption of female flesh. The knights thrive well into the twentieth century, and at the end of the film they have escaped their confines of their monastery completely to consume more human flesh for three more sequels. (Pulliam 740)

Thus, the first consideration with the employment of the iconic Knights Templar was determining what sort of monster classification would best suit their history. As the resurrected dead, they would surely belong to the genus of zombie—on the surface, anyway—but Ossorio, in a bit of playfulness modified this classification. The Templars did not rise from the dead as a result of radioactive fallout, as is the case with George A. Romero’s Night of the Living Dead (1968), the series' most obvious and direct antecedent, or from government-sponsored agricultural pesticides, as in Jorge Grau's No Profanar el Sueño de los Muertos (1974), or for that matter, from the pesticide-tainted vineyard of Jean Rollin's French zombie film Les Raisins de la Mort (The Grapes of Death, 1978). Rather, they resurrect when an emancipated and liberal young woman, the ironically named Virginia, has the misfortune of trespassing and "defiling" their former dwelling. Awakened by this apparent "decadence" surrounding their tombs, they rise and stalk the Iberian Peninsula as they once had: raping, plundering, murdering, and perverting their holy crusade into a ritual of wicked revenge.

The Templar Knights were the most powerful medieval monastic sect. Their fate, as tortured and slain heretics, during the last years of the Crusades by decree of King Phillip IV of France virtually all but guaranteed their immortality. That Ossorio should resurrect these Iberian icons at a time when political ideologies, religious doctrines and sexual taboos were being seriously questioned is not surprising. English film critic Nigel J. Burrell notes that:
The shroud of mystery around the Templars and their exploits and subsequent survival, has led to a plethora of legends, folk-tales and romanticized versions of their story being told over the years. Historians and occultists alike have been drawn to the Knights Templar like moths to a flame. It was only a matter of time before filmmakers discovered the possibilities in the Templar mythology, and this was indeed the case with Ossorio, who made unlikely movie stars out of the mysterious knights in his highly entertaining horror films. (Burrell 7)

Ossorio's deployment of the Templar zombies across the Iberian landscape challenged genre assumptions about what zombies could and should look like, particularly in the wake of the influential Night of the Living Dead. Moreover, and of measurable significance to the genre, Ossorio changed the way zombies behaved; these are not the liminal, meandering undead that typically populated zombie films up to that time. By disregarding many of the pre-established tropes of generic zombie cinema, Ossorio eschewed the "zombies must be stripped of all free will and volition" convention, which had been faithfully observed for decades. Consequently, the typical undead attack *modus operandi* is transformed into something completely different (and quite innovative) within the sub-genre; we are presented with a Templar collective consciousness, or *herd*. A defining evolutionary characteristic that would not be attempted by the genre's most recent visionary (and arguably, creator) George A. Romero for nearly thirty years with his long-awaited sequel to 1978's *Dawn of the Dead*, *Land of the Dead* (2005). Indeed, classic herd mentality in the sociological sense (which deals with group intelligence) is dramatized with increasing intensity in all four films. The "Blind Dead" are so-named because crows pecked out and devoured their eyes centuries before. When Virginia unknowingly unleashes the blinded Knights, they now use their highly attuned sense of hearing, like Templar sonar, to simultaneously converge upon, rape and savagely murder her. This collective intelligence characteristic is significant and is what separates *La Noche del Terror Ciego* from essentially all other zombie films at that time. The undead Templar Knight "zombies" and the
films to which they belong represent an evolutionary step in the advancement of the sub-genre writ large.

The Templar's resurrection and subsequent attack of Virginia is sinister and brutal and showcases Ossorio's talent for pure visual storytelling. The gradual, steady and intense build up to this sequence begins while still on the train as we flashback, via clever use of a "choo-choo" sound effect and the locomotive's white steam as a de-facto transitional wipe, to what could be described as a mockery of heteronormative courtship rituals. Virginia and Betty coquettishly flirt to generic, cocktail-lounge jazz underneath a large crucifix which adorns an otherwise austere white wall in what one presumes is a dormitory room; a sexual situation soon develops. One also might say that a sexual situation soon develops in present day as well, which causes tempers and accusations to flare. The imbroglio crescendos and Virginia decides she's had enough. She unexpectedly and abruptly exits the train in mid-trip; unknown to her however is the fact that this land is uninhabited and thought to be cursed/haunted. After her emancipatory break from Roger and Betty (for which, among other transgressions, she is about to be punished), Virginia decides to enter the Templar Knight's former fortress and bed down for the night.

3-9. Virginia builds a fire and strips, apparently provoking the dead (or merely dormant?) Knights.
In *La Noche del Terror Ciego*, negotiating time and space is a complicated issue. The Monastery of Berzano exists as a palimpsest; this former Templar fortress is a locus for temporal and spatial shifts. These shifts begin when a modern, emancipated, bi-sexual liberal enters the fortress seeking shelter. She brings with her not only contemporary technologies but progressive sensibilities, her radio, mass-market paperback, cigarettes, the comfort of a fire she builds and her modern liberal thought appear to be motive enough for the debased, hooded, and eyeless Christian sect to rise from their tombs to savagely defile and brutally murder Virginia, thereby punishing her for the array of transgressions she has committed. It is likely that these scenes passed through the board of censorship with zero resistance. Violence was always acceptable, if not encouraged, by the Censorship offices. As laid out in chapter two, much more contentious were the filming of sexually intimate scenes and/or the inclusion of possibly politically subversive stories and themes. Carlos Aguilar explains that this dictate could, indeed be taken entirely too far: director Pedro Olea was told that an intimate love scene shot for his film *El Bosque del Lobo* (1971) was objectionable and going to be cut. When he responded that the scene was not only integral to the film's story, but shot tenderly and with care, the censors responded by pointing out that this was exactly the problem, he could therefore substitute a rape scene, which would be fine, but any lovemaking was to be between a husband and wife and not for the public cinemas (personal correspondence).
There has been some debate regarding the film's politics. For example, Paul Naschy authority and Spanish horror movie critic Mirek Lipinski chooses not to recognize the political valence that Ossorio described as being intrinsic to the series.

In interviews given after the General Franco period, de Ossorio would claim a political texture to the Blind Dead series. According to him, the undead Templars represented the fascist rule that Spain had been under for decades while their victims were the general masses and, in particular, the young. I don't necessarily buy this, as I think de Ossorio was more interested in pure horror exploitation than anything else--anything else besides having a success on his hands, but the Templars can certainly represent stern authority figures if one so chooses (Lipinksi, Castilian Crimson).

If one so chooses to view the series as a single, cohesive cinematic text, it reveals interesting parallels to the contemporaneous political milieu. There is allegorical specificity that is hard to dismiss; a group of nationalist, over-determined, holy crusaders (whom are incidentally sponsored by the Catholic church) spread death and decay across a Spanish landscape. This premise reads as much a summary of Ossorio's film as it does an account of Franco's campaign during the Spanish Civil War. A Spanish film that features a bloody re-deployment of a holy-military crusade at precisely the time when General Franco's vice-like grip was loosening should provoke some debate.

I argue that diverse readings of this film may consequently help to explain the popularity of the franchise at the time of its release and its resiliency today. My assertion is simple: depending on your political affiliation (which, at that time, correlated somewhat to your age) the film reads as a condemnation of the fascist military regime, its crimes against humanity and the pervasive feelings of social impotency surrounding Franco's rule—which would echo Romero's anger expressed in his Night of the Living Dead. Or, conversely, the film might've been celebrated as a document of "old" Nationalist splendor. Citizens entrenched in the rapidly
outdated political body of the Franco regime might've valorized the knights in the name of "God and nation" for hunting down and destroying cultural dissidents.

In either of these positions of reception (or for that matter, any reception scenario), the films luxuriate in their portrayal of myth and legend and in real and imaginary pasts. *La Noche del Terror Ciego* and its sequels are documents that clearly reveal the anxiety and tensions associated with a major structural shift in self-government. The lingering images of historical structures impart a sense of "lived history" and of "a" past. A bracketing of truth and meaning and of how history is formed by political, religious, and military apparatures is interrogated by Ossorio and his undead Knights. An accurate representation of history, based on what was actually said and written during these periods, is jettisoned in favor of cinema story and plot; but perhaps, and of some significance, this leads to an absence of historical continuity (a central tenant of Franco's rule) in favor of discursive formations of myth and legend.

The *Blind Dead* series, and the cycle to which they belong, simultaneously challenge and enhance the genre to which they belong and are, in the final analysis, objects for negotiation between the past and the present, which proved both popular and profitable.
Eugenio Martín's *Panico en el Transiberiano* (Horror Express, 1972) was Spain's most Hammer-like entry during this era. As a co-production between Spain and the U.K., the film has often been conflated as a product of England's Hammer Studios for numerous reasons, not the least of which is the double billing of two of Hammer's most famous actors—Christopher Lee and Peter Cushing (who made twenty-two films together). Moreover, pre-sales were essentially guaranteed with these two major box-office draws, particularly when paired within the horror genre. Of their collaboration in *Panico en el Transiberiano*, film historian Mark Miller offers that "No other Lee/Cushing film of the 1970s showcases the interplay of Lee’s and Cushing’s characters as prominently and advantageously as Horror Express" (Miller 132). Undeniably, *Panico en el Transiberiano* is an elegant, almost textbook example of a Euro-horror production.
It "benefits from a sophisticated, surprisingly complex and witty script that offers appropriate doses of humor with its horror, and the film is enhanced by tight, fast-paced, and exciting direction and editing and by stunning photography and art direction—all provided on a low budget of approximately $350,000 and a twenty-eight-day shooting schedule" (133).

*Panico en el Transiberiano* wastes no time in establishing its "stunning photography and art direction," beginning with an impressive opening credit sequence. The stylistic flourishes found here, both visual and aural were uncommon in modestly budgeted productions, particularly in this genre, and were typically reserved for more ambitious projects. "The totally black opening frame pulsates with the steady, rhythmic clatter of a train’s wheels on its tracks, until suddenly auditory and visual explosions of the train’s screaming whistle and orange, flashing headlamp introduce the film’s credits" (134).

![Panico en el Transiberiano](image)

**3-11.** Lens flares approximating a train’s headlamp, atmospheric music, train whistles and a stylish font provide for a memorable credit sequence in 1972's *Panico en el Transiberiano*.

Accompanying this credit sequence is American composer John Cacavas' haunting, turn of the century score. Here, music functions on an affective level as much as it does a signifier of ethnicity, class and locale. Cacavas (a protégé of one of the actors in the film, Telly Savalas) layers the score with charming Viennese chamber music, locomotive sounds, whistling and harmonicas, Chinese instrumentation and modalities and clever sound effects. The score (out of print and long sought after until a release in 2010) reflects the film's highly intricate structure in
its fusion of classical, modern and contemporary styles and is a component of *Panico en el Transiberiano*'s enduring popularity.

After this opening credit sequence, Professor Alexander Saxton's (Christopher Lee) voice over offers us an epilogue as a prologue. He states:

> The following report to the Royal Geological Society by the undersigned, Alexander Saxton, is a true and faithful account of events that befell the society's expedition in Manchuria. As the leader of the expedition, I must accept responsibility for its ending in disaster. But I will leave to the judgment of the honorable members, the decision as to where the blame for the catastrophe lies.

The "honorable members" (we, the audience) are thus invited to participate in a more proactive level of engagement, not quite along the lines of the more traditional and often intricate games of detection found in the Sherlock Holmes or Agatha Christie canon of films (especially *Murder on the Orient Express*, [1974]) given its parallel train-tableau), but perhaps more importantly, we are invited to morally construe where to assign blame for the disaster. This clever narrative tactic invokes the classic conventions of the traditional detective story, which is merely one component of this film's highly baroque structure.

After this voice-over narration, *Panico en el Transiberiano* opens in 1906 with a preliminary setting in Manchuria where we find Professor and anthropologist Alexander Saxton unearthing a rare archaeological find in the Province of Szechwan. Moments later, in Shanghai,
we board the Trans-Siberian Express with the remains of this find securely pad-locked in a large crate. A Rasputin-like mad Monk, Pjardov (Alberto De Mendoza), who is actually the spiritual advisor to passenger Count Petrovski (Georges Rigaud) and his young wife, Countess Irina (Silvia Tortosa), warns that the crate is evil and when his chalk fails to mark the crate with the sign of the cross, he intones "Satan is evil, and where evil lives, there is no place for the cross."
The monk's foreboding warning, like all warnings in horror films, goes unheeded and the crate is loaded aboard and the train as we journey West.

3-13. Patterned after Rasputin, Argentinean actor Alberto De Mendoza made for a convincing mad monk.

This significant archaeological find is a primitive humanoid creature that Saxton believes to be the "missing link" in the evolutionary chain. Saxton highlights the secular polemic of science and religion in a somewhat poisonously penned and invectively delivered fashion (hardly surprising considering the Catholic dogma in Spain) in the following exchange:

Countess Irina: You're in bad humor because you've lost your box of bones, hmm?
Professor Saxton: That box of bones, madam, could have solved many of the riddles of science. If the theory of evolution is confirmed, if the science of biology is revolutionized, if the very origin of man is determined-
Countess Irina: I have heard of evolution. It's... it's immoral!
Professor Saxton: It's a fact. And there's no morality in a fact.
When the train is safely under way, a beautiful and secretive woman, Natasha (Euro-horror regular, Helga Liné) visits Dr. Wells' cabin where we learn that Saxton and Wells are discontented bunkmates. Natasha, sans ticket, cons her way into sharing the cabin. Meanwhile, the thawed-out "missing-link" has already managed to kill a baggage clerk and cunningly escape from his crate by picking the outer-door lock (from inside the crate) with a nail that it bends. It locks the baggage clerk back in the crate and moves, surreptitiously through other compartments, the threat no longer contained. Upon discovery of the baggage clerk, the central characters are assembled for a run-of-the-mill detective's inquiry. Dr. Wells, it turns out, is culpable for the baggage handler's death; motivated by competitive jealousy he slipped the clerk a little money to take a peak inside Saxton's mysterious crate. He is, however, utterly baffled by the results of his request, "Are you telling me that an ape that lived two million years ago, got out of that crate, killed the baggage man and put him in there, then locked everything up neat and tidy and got away?" The audience knows the truth of the matter, and the answer is, of course, yes.

![Image 3-14](image-url)

Notwithstanding the implausibility of this scenario, a local Police Inspector, Mirov (Alberto de Mendoza), orders the train searched from top to bottom. Shortly thereafter, a policeman is killed, and a confrontation between the creature and Inspector Mirov ensues. Several gunshots
later, the creature is believed to have jumped off the train, fatally wounded, and an autopsy is being performed on the dead policeman. During this autopsy several matters gain some clarity:

While learning all it can through its mental vampirism, the creature must also protect itself against discovery by the rival British anthropologists Saxton and Dr. Wells (Peter Cushing). After the the missing link revives and escapes from its crate and the police inspector shoots it to death (causing the creature to inhabit his body), Wells and Saxton extract fluid from the missing link’s eye. Under a microscope they see images of, among other things, dinosaurs and the Earth as it once appeared from outer space. They deduce that some alien creature had inhabited the missing link’s body and that its memory center must have been located in its eye. (Miller 137)

Also during this autopsy it is curiously revealed that the policeman's brain is conspicuously absent of any wrinkles, as if it had been washed, steamed, and boiled free of any memory—a clean slate. Many violent deaths later, as we reach the film's climax, the creature calls upon its victims to rise like zombies and attack the few remaining survivors. Meanwhile, a nearby train operator gets an urgent message from Moscow telling him to switch the train track path to a desolate unused section that leads ends at a deadly cliff. Saxton and the Countess manage to unhinge their car sending the remaining cars, which contain the creature and its horde of zombies, plummeting to their death.

*Panico en el Transiberiano*'s genre associations are numerous. It is a murder mystery aboard a train; it is a monster movie; it is a prehistoric film; it is a zombie film; it is a possession film and it is an isolated, haunted house tale (it even boasts an industrial espionage sub-plot with the character of Natasha, who we learn is an international spy!). The fusion of these elements into a sturdy and cohesive whole is impressive. But mostly, I am inclined to think that *Panico en el Transiberiano* is clever. What interests me about *Panico en el Transiberiano* is that it can be read as a powerful, albeit allegorical, statement about Franco's ascension to power in 1939. The specter of his absolute authority is what stalks this train.
Which begs the fundamental question of what exactly what has possessed and killed these passengers? The rather canned explanation of an unseen "force" from outer space that gains the knowledge and skills of hosts through possession is clichéd and has cinematic analogues that date back to *The Thing From Another World* (1951). Moreover, this type of explanation was often an overly simplified "code" for allegory. I argue, and this is a point that I will re-visit with other films, particularly in the next chapter, that *history* is what has possessed this train and its passengers. On a surface level, *human* history has come to haunt the train in the form of a primitive, bipedal ancestor, but this is merely the host that the alien has inhabited from when it was unexpectedly frozen. "The alien is the sum of all the intelligence and memory it absorbs from its victims and hosts" (Miller, 134). I believe that the paranoid, violent and class destroying events that transpire aboard the train parallel those of Spain's Civil War. The train slowly becomes a microcosm of activity and behavior that closely resembles Spanish life during, and after, their Civil War. This creature, with the power to "sap the knowledge and life experiences from its victims' brains, leaving them mindless zombies with the effectively horrific sight of bleeding, boiled-white eyeballs" (Greaves, 151) is of particular interest to me and to the broader concerns of this dissertation. The fundamental question of trust is dramatized with increasing intensity in *Panico en el Transiberiano*. Supposedly trustworthy authority figures are, in fact, the first to fall victim to the creature's psychic attacks. From the train guards to the militia to inevitably hosting the body of the ultimate authority aboard the train, Inspector Mirov, the alien targets those with power and influence. Paranoia festers and suspicion grows until passengers turn against one another. The Spanish Civil War unfolded in similar fashion, pitting brother against brother, sister against sister, family against family, church against congregation, government against its people.
Should we risk an even bolder point of view, I would argue that the creature is actually allegory for Franco himself. Franco, much like our helpless, caged and frozen alien, rose to supreme military and political power during a long and bloody campaign from Morocco to Madrid. The director of this film commented to me that Franco was "never more than a soldier, not very intelligent, but very cunning to stay in power" (Martín, personal correspondence). We have seen the cunningness of this creature: how it bends a nail to pick its lock of imprisonment, how it systematically removes or controls all threats to its survival, how it destroys individual liberty and free will and how it brainwashes in the figurative as well as the literal sense (laundering the brain, as "Miss Jones offhandedly observes, 'Smooth as a baby’s bottom') (Miller, 141). History has judged these people and wrought their death and destruction.

Fortunately for director Eugenio Martín, I don't believe any of my suggested allegory was sensed by the Spanish government, for while science fiction, fantasy and horror may be excellent venues to grind political axes in a democracy, in Franco's Spain it was a foolish and risky endeavor. In light of this reading, which if accurate, would be a bold gamble, I had asked the director for his thoughts on the efficacy of the Spanish censors as an apparatus of control and it's ability to ferret out "subversive" elements.

Nicholas Schlegel: Do you think that the members of the censorship board were smart enough to pick up on subversive elements in a script?

Eugenio Martín: No, they were lower medium-class people, some were priests - that was terrible because they were very fanatic, some of them. And the others were just civil servants, so they were not very educated people with a background in criticism. (You) could never find a critic in this profession because they didn't like this at all - a discredit - no critic, no writers, nobody with a conscience. So they were just civil servants and that's all.

NS: It was easier to make films that weren't obviously "subversive" or could be read as subversive.
EM: Yes, because you have to live your life! You cannot stop and say I'm trying to do this in two years, three years, four years - this would be impossible. You have to do at least one picture every year more or less, so you had to do what the censorship would permit.

NS: I'm reminded of James Whales' battles with the Hays commission over *Bride of Frankenstein* (1935). The obvious things he agreed to take out. But, then he got more subversive by putting in images of Frankenstein as Christ, for example. He thought they were not intelligent enough to see that he was getting away with even more subversive images and themes.

EM: They used to think: (imitating a member of the censorship board) 'This director is trying to cheat me, he says that, but maybe he what he wants to say is this or that… So, I better just cut!!' This was a very normal attitude.

_Panico en el Transiberiano_ did very strong box-office and critics responded favorably almost entirely across the board. When "American Film" magazine asked editors to select horror films for its October Halloween issue, filmmaker Joe Dante included *Horror Express* among his recommendations: “Cossacks, countesses, and mad monks abound, the plotting achieves astonishing complexity for a film of this type, and the level of humor is surprisingly sophisticated. Cushing and Lee are especially amusing in a sort of Basil Radford–Naunton Wayne relationship. In short, it’s a real treat." (Quoted in Miller, 150).
BREVE RESUMEN ARGUMENTAL

A principios de siglo, Saxton, antropólogo inglés, se encuentra en la provincia de Harbin, buscando un fósil de características muy especiales, conocido como "esqueleto perdido", el cual constituiría la gran sensación del mundo científico de aquellos años. Consigue encontrar el fósil, un extraño ser humanoide, preservado en un glaciar. Se cuenta, al que se le calcularon dos millones de años, se encuen-
tra en precarias condiciones, a pasar de la protección que le ha dado el hielo du-
eglo con otros restos fósiles. Echa la orden de hacer con los antropólogos dudan de su hallazgo, durante el viaje comienzan a sucederse una serie de muertes extrañas, a bordo del tren. Estudia un cráneo, por las características anatómicas, que rodean a to-
das las muertes, realiza la autopsia de los cadáveres y descubre que los huesos de las manos de todos los muertos, ha desaparecido. Todas las víctimas son personas que poseen determinados conocimientos científicos, A. L. L. L. se va descubriendo la inosencia. El ser prehistórico, cual autor de las muertes, desconocemos su aspecto, que el mencionado ser carece de personalidad propia. Hace dos millones de años, unos seres de otra galaxia visitaron la tierra. Su constitución de tipo cristalino, les exigía la estructura biológica de un animal terrestre, para existir sobre este planeta, y por esto se poseionaron de algunos humanoides. Uno de esos quedó aprisiona-
do en un gigantesco glaciar, cuando la nave partió en viaje de regreso a su galaxia. Este ser, que lo único que pretendía es regresar a su planeta, necesita usar toda la teoría científica que los humanos de hoy puedan darle. Cuando Saxton lo descubre en el corazón de la muerte, el ser, le propone un pacto. Si la permite vivir y es capaz, puede ofrecerle un inmenso depósito de información que sería muy útil a la humanidad. A cambio, Saxton y los demás supervivientes del tren, deben perder su personalidad, para cedérsela al ser. El antropólogo sabe que la humanidad no puede ba-
sar su progreso en la pérdida de los valores individuales, los que le permitieron -
levarla desde su estado animal a su actual situación, y se niega a la proposición. Una lucha sin cuartel lleva a la historia a su final, mientras el tren desaparece -
en las llanuras nevadas de Siberia.

(Source: Filmoteca Española)
UNIESPAÑA
SINDICATO NAL. DEL ESPECTACULO
Castelló, 18
MADRID

Muy Sres. nuestros:

Atendiendo su petición, les mandamos los detalles de la película titulada "PÁNICO EN EL TRANSIBERIANO" corregidos como sigue:

Música: JOHN CAVACAS
Director: EUGENIO MARTIN
Decorador: RAMIRO GOMEZ
Operador: ALEJANDRO ULLOA
Guionistas: EUGENIO MARTIN - ARNAUD D'USSEAU
Color: EASTMANGCOLOR
Actores principales: CHRISTOPHER LEE, SILVIA TORTOSA, ALBERTO DE MENDOZA, PETER CUSHING, ANGEL DEL POZO, JULIO PEÑA, GEORG RIGAUD y TELLY SAVALLAS.

Les adjuntamos glosario argumental y fotografías de la película.

Sin otro particular, les saludamos muy atentamente,

ZURBANO FILMS, S.L.

[Signature]

Gregorio Sacristán.

TELEFONOS: 401 56 55 * 401 56 55
TELEGRAMAS: "ZURBANO FILMS" MADRID

3-16. Technical details are laid out in this official memo to Uniespaña, the Spanish film-promotion organization of the time (Source: Filmoteca Española).
By 1974, Spain had already ventured into "zombie" territory with the release of *La Noche del Terror Ciego*, and its three sequels. I have already discussed the impact and influence of *Night of the Living Dead* on the modern horror film and zombie cinema and indeed its fingerprints are also found on Jorge Grau's widely admired and unbearably tense *No Profanar el Sueño de los Muertos* (*The Living Dead at the Manchester Morgue*, 1974). *Night of the Living Dead*'s commercial success and acute social commentary motivated filmmakers and producers to not only duplicate the film's box-office but to perhaps strike a chord that might produce some cultural resonance. Just as Romero had wanted to transgress familiar and acceptable boundaries, Grau too wanted to push the limits of his predecessors. Consequently, the early 1970s witnessed an inundation of *Night of the Living Dead* clones, including *The Omega Man* (1971), *Children Shouldn't Play with Dead Things* (1973), *Messiah of Evil* (1973) and *Deathdream* (1974) to merely name a handful. And so, this was the over-saturated market and general horror climate in
which *No Profanar el Sueño de los Muertos* was born—principally as a direct result of *Night of the Living Dead* 's critical and cultural significance. Or, put another way, the producers simply wanted to do the same thing, but in color.

Director Jorge Grau admitted in an interview that his producers simply wanted a *Night of the Living Dead* (1968) knockoff, but one filmed in color. Grau did his best to add more realism to the fantastical story and even studied autopsy photographs to mimic the look of real cadavers. His hard work paid off, making this film the most effective and disturbing Spanish production of the period. (Kay 95)

Grau's efforts were, by all measurable criteria, very successful. The film was well received, both critically and financially upon its release, winning many awards and performing very well with audiences. English historian Jamie Russell offers the following comments in his exhaustively researched *Book of the Dead: The Complete History of Zombie Cinema* (2005).

The true successor to Romero's crown wasn't an American, but a European. In 1974, Spanish director Jorge Grau made *The Living Dead at the Manchester Morgue* (orig. *No Profanar el sueño de los Muertos*), a UK-shot living dead outing that followed directly in the footsteps of Romero's masterpiece. Escaping from his native Spain – which was under the influence of General Franco's fascist regime – into the wet and windy countryside of the Lake District, Grau succeeded in producing one of the finest zombie movies of the 1970s. It was a film that bridged the gap between Romero's *Night of the Living Dead* and his later *Dawn of the Dead* (1978), reaffirming the savage nihilism of the first while prefiguring the comic book 'splatter' of the latter. (Russell 81)

*No Profanar El Sueño de los Muertos* opens in England with a credit montage featuring its protagonist, art dealer George (Ray Lovelock), exiting the industrial city of Manchester on motorcycle. In this montage, the film sets up a dialectic of environmental concerns: a series of shots expose the machinations and by-products of industry encroaching harmfully upon civilization. "Grau's vision of Manchester is that of a city of the dead… a dreary vision of a choking, dying populace" (Burrell, 7).
3-17. Manchester citizens wear surgical masks to filter out industrial waste and pollution.

3-18. George (Ray Lovelocke) protectively wraps his scarf around his mouth and nose. Garbage strewn streets.

3-19. One of many smokestacks in the film's opening montage juxtaposed against industrial waste and wildlife death

Despite George's escape from Manchester to the English motorway and its verdant view and setting, he will soon face another form of encroachment, one that resonated powerfully with audiences in 1974—that of a provincial, bigoted, authority-figure whose power is ruthlessly abused. Thus, this Lake District setting, although picturesque and quaint will offer no relief from industrial/ecological problems. Nevertheless, once settled on the expansive motorway, George stops to fill his gas tank only to have his motorcycle damaged by Edna (Cristina Galbó), who is traveling to see her sister Katie (Jeannine Mestre). In haste, a deal is struck whereby George
reluctantly drives Edna to her sister's home and then will borrow her car to continue his weekend plans.

This solution, however, quickly deteriorates. Along the way they stop to ask for directions and two major plot points immediately occur. Edna informs George that a man that the local residents claim died recently accosted her, and when George and Edna arrive at their destination, they find that Edna's sister Katie has apparently murdered her photographer-husband, claiming that a man identical to the one Edna described earlier was responsible for his death.

The local and extremely unpleasant Inspector (Arthur Kennedy) arrives on the scene and quickly dismisses any reasonable explanations other than cold-blooded murder, steadfastly and stubbornly believing that Edna's sister and her husband are immoral, hippie Satanists (an opinion bolstered by the uncovering of some nude photographs in the couple's home). Matters grow from grim to worse upon the discovery of heroin on the premises.

Later, after George narrowly escapes a truly terrifying resurrection of the recently dead in a crypt at a local cemetery, he makes the connection that that the government has developed a sonic pesticide that eliminates agricultural threats using a field of ultrasonic waves. "Here the origin of the zombification process is an experimental device, designed to foster greater agricultural productivity by emitting ultra-sonic radiation that causes crop-damaging insects to kill each other" (Petley 55). It is this technology that has caused the recent dead to leave their graves.

Ultimately, No Profanar el Sueño de los Muertos tells the story of a man who helplessly tried, in vain, to get local authorities (or any authority) to understand and see what was going on around them. While No Profanar el Sueño de los Muertos indeed contained extremely graphic
violence and taut, almost unbearable scenes (in grand Hitchcock tradition) of narrow escape, perhaps the most nauseatingly difficult material for the viewer to withstand was the willful blindness, deafness and prejudice of its public officials.

None of the traditional institutions – from the church to the state to the scientific establishment – are able to offer any guidance since their authority has collapsed. It's something Grau makes desperately apparent in his depiction of the Manchester police force in general and Sergeant McCormick in particular. The blinkered, reactionary conservatism of the forces of law and order seems to be the only thing that's propping up the rotten system. McCormick's cantankerous nastiness (wonderfully played by Arthur Kennedy) eventually makes us desire rather than fear the liberatory destruction that the zombies represent. (Russell 82)

As the recent dead continually rise (particularly problematic at hospitals, morgues and funeral homes), George and Edna continually battle against the dual fronts of the ever-renewable zombie hordes (when one is killed, it rises from the sonic pesticide machine adding to the zombies numbers) and the constant threat from the local authorities in general, and in particular, Arthur Kennedy's evil police inspector. In the end, the film makes antagonists more out of the political establishment (the police, captains of industry and the scientific community) than it does out of the recently risen dead.

The Barcelona-born director, writer, producer, playwright, and painter Jorge Grau was a natural choice for the producers. George A. Romero had layered Night of the Living Dead with sharp political and social valences that are stressed, in particular, through powerful moments of social impotency and atrophy. In like manner, Jorge Grau's origins were rooted in social realism and his first feature-length credit, Noche de Verano (Summer Night, 1962) showcased this talent and proclivity towards social issues and themes. In his Guide to the Cinema of Spain, Marvin D'Lugo explains:

Grau's first feature-length film for which he received director's credit was his
Noche de Verano (Summer Night, 1962), a film that reflected the influence of Antonioni's narrative style. Grau received the first award for new directors for this film, through Jose Maria Garcia Escudero's New Spanish Cinema subsidy plan. ...During the early 1970s, in an effort to make more commercial fare, Grau made a trilogy of horror films, Ceremonia Sangrienta, [Bloody Ceremony] (1972), Pena de Muerte [Death Sentence] (1973), and No Profanar el Sueno de los Muertos [Don't Profane the Dreams of the Dead] (1974). (D'Lugo, 165)

The marriage of Grau's social sensibilities, talent for mimicry and baroque eye as an artist to this material yielded a powerful entry in the Spanish horror canon (arguably Spain's most widely circulated and recognized horror film). Producers acknowledged Grau's true Renaissance background; his immense love of art and his painterly eye are apparent to anyone familiar with his filmography. Grau also has a natural talent for illustration and mimicry, which I can attest to after having admired many of the paintings in his Madrid home.

If replication of Night of the Living Dead's attributes and qualities (value, box office, reception, and so on) was the priority for this film, then Grau was the ideal candidate to direct; it is often the foreigner, immigrant, prodigal son or expatriate who captures familiar terrain with a fresh eye and original point of view. No Profanar el Sueño de los Muertos is generally considered to be a more accomplished and terrifying movie than its more famous progenitor. The film went on to win three major awards at the 7th Festival of Sitges (Europe's most prestigious
film festival devoted to science fiction, fantasy and horror) including the grand jury award, the award for best actress (Cristina Galbó) and the award for special effects.

*No Profanar el Sueño de los Muertos* is first and foremost a co-production and its attributes fit accordingly. It possesses traits common to British, Italian and Spanish films in similar budgets and genres. However, Grau certainly levels distrust at the dominant political establishment and highlights the generational conflict between our longhaired, motorcycle riding hero George and the bigoted, pugnacious and reprehensible police Inspector. These are certainly themes common to his daily life in Spain, where at that time, the production of an Eco-horror film, especially one that overtly criticizes dominant political and agricultural practices was expressly forbidden. All told, *No Profanar el Sueño de los Muertos* is a clever re-working of *Night of the Living Dead's* zombie aesthetic and anti status quo politics; it went on to gain the difficult status of mainstream and cult appreciation and remains today as one of the masterpieces of the genre.²

Spain's initiation into the more cosmopolitan world of filmmaking and distribution was fueled tremendously by the popularity of its "low" genres, especially the horror film and the spaghetti western. This smooth transition into the arena of international co-productions allowed the Spanish to work in a profitable genre that was not previously sanctioned in Spain. The perfection of these business practices and models enabled Spain to comfortably launch solely financed, and consequently less mimetic, national productions during this dynamic period of political and cultural rebirth.
NO PROFANAR EL SUEÑO DE LOS MUERTOS

FICHA TECNICA

Argumento y guión: Juan Cobos, Miguel Rubio, Marcelo Coscia y Sandro Continenza

Director: Jorge Grau

Director de fotografía: Francisco Sempere

Decorador: Carlo Lova

Ambientador: Rafael Ferri

Maquillador: Gianetto de Rossi

Músico: Giuliano Saguri

Efectos especiales: Luciano Berd

Montador: Domingo García

Una coproducción STAR FILMS, S. A.-P. C. FLAMINIA

COLOR

FICHA ARTISTICA

Edna: Cristina Galbó

George: Raymond Lovelock

McComb: Arthur Kennedy

Katie: Fernando Hilbeck

Martin: José Ruiz Ufante

Craig: Georgio Trestini

Dr. Duffield: Vicente Vega

Agent: Wood: Paul Benson

Juez: Paco Sanz

Benson: Ado Massasso

Bennon: V. Posse

Marilyn: Keith

Hombre: Joaquín Hinojosa

Viejo: Víctor Salier

Clavel y Medalla de Plata a los mejores efectos especiales

Medalla de Bronce a la mejor película del C. E. C.

en el VII FESTIVAL INTERNACIONAL DE CINE FANTÁSTICO Y DE TERROR DE SITGES

SINOPSIS

A causa de un estúpido accidente que ha inutilizado su bicicleta, George, un alegre muchacho que hace un viaje de vacaciones, se ha quedado en el camino. Tiene suerte, porque le rescata una bonita muchacha, Edna Symond, que viaja hacia España para reunirse con su hermana Katie, que está en apuros por drogadicción.

Edna refiere a George sus problemas, y éste se ofrece para cooperar a resolverlos. Tanto le da seguir uno como otro camino.

Cuando llegan a su destino, Katie ha logrado escapar del alcance de un desconocido, que, empeñado en agua, ha asesinado salvajemente a su marido y ha pretendido hacer lo mismo con ella.

Al día siguiente, el sargento McCormick abre la investigación. No cree ni una palabra de la declaración de Katie, a la que sabe drogadicta. Y por su actitud llega a pensar que el espejo (George) podría haber sido su cómplice.

George descubre de sus vecinos. Se quedaría allí, para ayudar a Edna, lo necesita. Y para dar en la catalúa al desamparado sargento, que le ha tomado una huida anticipada...

Investigando por su cuenta, George descubierta un tal Guthrie, un vagabundo de aquel condado. Los dos jóvenes le buscan, pero descubren que Guthrie ha muerto, asfixiado, dos días antes.

George es tan terco como McCormick. Ve con Edna al cementerio, para comprobar su suposición. Y allí descubre, con espanto, que no sólo Guthrie, sino varios cadáveres más han abandonado sus tumbas. De este ataque atacante pueden escapar inútilmente, gracias a que, por casualidad, el muchacho comprendera que el fuego puede paralizar a los espejos. Naturalmente, cuando acuden al sargento McCormick, éste no ve nada una parabia. Y su reacio hacia el espejo aumenta.

Sin amilanarse, George lleva a Edna al hospital, que ha sido helada en el ataque. Y sigue investigando por su cuenta... hasta que consigue localizar la tienda científica de la vuelta a su vida de los recreativos... Contra el riesgo, pretende hacer un trato, pero está cada día más lejos de que el sargento McCormick le admita la inversión de tierra...

Cuando McCormick descubre que el muchacho tenía razón, será ya tarde, demasiado tarde... para todos.

FRASES PUBLICITARIAS

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• ¡En algunas escenas le retamos a que mantenga la vista fija en la pantalla!

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• El sargento McCormick decía que no... Pero cuando descubrió su error era ya demasiado tarde. Para todos, incluso para el sargento McCormick.

3-21. Marketing material for Jorge Grau's No Profanar el Sueño de los Muertos. (Source: Filmoteca Española)
Two matters require brief clarification. First, although it has been widely written (and accepted) that *La Marca del Hombre Lobo* (1968) was a co-production between Spain and West Germany and should hence be the first film mentioned (if not discussed) in this chapter, this is inaccurate. Many sources, claim that "Hi Fi Stereo 70" was not just the process in which the film was shot and recorded, but actually the name of the West German company that co-produced the project. Historian Carlos Aguilar assures me that this is incorrect, he states, "The only producer of 'The Mark of the Werewolf' is Maxpo PC. 'Hi Fi Stereo 70' is the technical definition (Hi-Fi, High Fidelity, Stereo, sound in two bands, 70, celluloid, 70 mm) of the film, not the name of any producer/production company associated with the film" (personal correspondence). And second, the very first horror co-production for Spain (in this case with France) was Jess Franco's *Gritos en la Noche* (The Awful Dr. Orlof, 1962). The film, *Gritos en la Noche* and its sadistic, skin-grafting, surgeon antagonist, Dr. Orloff, proved so successful that it spawned a series of "Dr. Orloff" sequels (sometimes in name only and with an extra "f" consonant), beginning with the Spanish-French co-production of 1964's *El Secreto del Doctor Orloff*, the non-Spanish backed *Orloff and the Invisible Man* (1970) and another Spanish-French outing, *Revenge in the House of Usher* (1982). In addition to these two Spanish co-financed and Jess Franco directed pictures (*Gritos en la Noche* and *El Segreto de Doctor Orloff*) the Spanish/French *Miss Muerte* (1965), Spanish-Italian *Malenka* (1968), and the Spanish-German *Los Monstruos del Terror* (1969) round out the complete spectrum of mid-to-late 1960s co-productions. So, while it is true that Spain experienced a petite flirtation (a small handful of "experiments") with the horror genre prior to 1968, these films were considered stateless, not culturally endemic to Spain in any way and clearly designed for distribution in foreign markets.
2 There are, of course, a number of other notable international co-productions that were not discussed in this chapter due to space limitations. Of these, some of the more significant releases not explored in detail are Amando de Ossorio's *Malenka* (Fangs of the Living Dead, 1969), Jess Franco's *Fu Manchu* entries, *Fu Manchu y el Beso de la Muerte* (The Blood of Fu Manchu 1967) and *El Castillo de Fu-Manchu* (The Castle of Fu Manchu 1969), Claudio Guérin's *La Campana del Infierno* (A Bell From Hell 1973), Mario Bava's *Un Hacha para la luna de miel* (A Hatchet for the Honeymoon, 1970), and Carlos Aured's *Los Ojos Azules de la Muñeca Rota* (Blue Eyes of the Broken Doll 1973).
CHAPTER 4
THE NATIONAL PRODUCTIONS

"If I understand you correctly, what you want is to follow the hidden steps of the people who could not say this - and were sideways trying to say this through the telling of stories."
- Eugenio Martín

This chapter shifts the focus from the international co-productions of chapter three to the solely Spanish-made motion pictures of this era. Principally, this meant films that had exclusively Spanish financing (with incentives through Government-backed tax breaks and subsidy), a Spanish production company, and Spanish personnel (in front of and behind the camera). I argue that there was more of a national "flavor" or Hispanidad (Spanishness) embedded in these national productions than their multi-national counterparts. However, this was a gradual progression towards less imitative work; the British, Italian, and U.S. productions eventually served less as models and ultimately simply became competition. These more "national" efforts were prone to discuss themes of significant social relevancy, in both direct and abstract manners.

Spanish National Productions 1968-1977

Both the Spanish international co-production and national production initiated at approximately the same time. The years 1968 and 1969 saw the release of major horror co-productions such as El Conde Dracula (1969) and El Castillo de Fu-Manchu (1969) as well as the first Spanish national efforts in the genre, La Marca del Hombre Lobo (1968), Malenka (1969) and La Residencia (1969). The surprisingly strong box office performance of these titles, especially the national productions of La Marca del Hombre Lobo and La Residencia, prompted more of these types of films into production and with increasing frequency. Indeed, the horror genre had grown fertile for production in Spain; its consistent popularity, low production cost...
and great export potential made it an attractive business investment on all fronts. Both the co-productions and national productions accelerate in a centripetal curvature with Spanish culture and history as the center mass.

Internationally, by the late 1960s horror was in a cyclical waning; in the United States, although *Rosemary's Baby* (1968) and *Night of the Living Dead* (1968) were successes, the genre was in a predictable mini-slump. In Great Britain, although Hammer was still making interesting contributions to the genre, the studio had begun its gradual decline. In Italy, although a transitional period had begun which saw new emerging talent (Lucio Fulci and Dario Argento) the seasoned veterans of the genre branched out into other genres or retired altogether (Mario Bava and Riccardo Freda, respectively). Spain, however, breathed considerable new life and enthusiasm into a seemingly exhausted genre and helped to bridge a stagnancy gap.

Through the case studies of this chapter, I argue that we begin to see strong articulations of identity surface in this genre; the films, stateless at onset, begin to "zero in" on Spanish attitudes, values and behavior. This circular relationship of genre, text and audience affords us a unique vantage point into a historically specific period of Spanish culture and politics. If, as Jameson has argued, narrative can function as a socially symbolic act, then the national productions of this era gradually transcend the mimesis employed as a strategy for safe activation in favor of a more authentic Spanish horror thematic and aesthetic. The first key film discussed, Enrique López Eguiluz's *La Marca del Hombre Lobo* (*The Mark of the Werewolf*, 1968) is almost a mirror image of chapter three's first entry, Jess Franco's *El Conde Dracula* (1969). Both films capitalized on popular, pre-established characters in the genre and are "stateless" enough to appeal to broad audiences without treading too heavily on national concerns. The second film discussed, Narciso Ibáñez Serrador's *La Residencia* (*The House that Screamed*, 1969),
1969) while smartly set in France (with incongruous Spanish landmark locations) nonetheless interrogated corruption, authoritarianism and sexual repression. These first two solely Spanish financed films performed remarkably well, justifying and sustaining further investment and interest over the next ten years, which brings us to the last two films discussed, Eugenio Martín's *Una Vela para el Diablo* (A Candle for the Devil, 1973) and Narciso Ibáñez Serrador's *Quién Puede Matar a un Niño?* (Who Can Kill a Child?, 1976). Fascinatingly, both of these films are thematically linked as part of a mini-trend in Spanish horror targeted at tourism and tourist culture. And so, at this point, we clearly begin to see horror films that are Spanish in their themes, style and flavor.

*LA MARCA DEL HOMBRE LOBO – (1968)*
(The Mark of the Wolfman)

La Marca del Hombre Lobo (The Mark of the Werewolf, 1968) was the first fully Spanish-financed horror film backed by Spain's government and, as such, occupies a special place in the Euro-horror canon. Moreover, the film's significance goes well beyond this
achievement as it also inaugurated the horror film career of Spain's most famous actor in this genre, Paul Naschy. Much like Jess Franco's *El Conde Dracula* (*Count Dracula*, 1969), discussed in the previous chapter, *La Marca del Hombre Lobo* is not an explicitly political film; rather the film's political substance resides in its very existence and not in any consciously socially symbolic narrative that I can discern.

As argued in this chapter, overtly political themes in Spanish horror would later emerge, but the key creative forces and executive personnel involved with *La Marca del Hombre Lobo* were astute enough to not rock the boat as it set sail from harbor. To be clear and without question, the screenplay was pre-censored heavily to downplay any uniquely "Spanish" attributes and/or any transgressions committed against the church or with explicit eroticism. Naschy himself describes the first major setback encountered; apparently the initially negligible issue of a surname had grown quite serious. "Then the first problem arose: The werewolf couldn't be Spanish (as I had written it, he was a native of Asturias), and we had to cut down on the religious and erotic content as well as the graphic violence. I complied with the dictates of the censors and the Polish nobleman Waldemar Daninsky was born" (Naschy, 92). Interestingly, the horror icon Paul Naschy was also "born" with this film as there was, in the end, something a little too uniquely Spanish about *La Marca del Hombre Lobo*: its protagonist's name. It was agreed that Jacinto Molina was too Spanish a name to draw audiences in the global market and so Jacinto became the Anglicanized "Paul Naschy," and Spain began production on its first officially sanctioned horror film

*La Marca del Hombre Lobo* tells the story of Waldemar Daninsky, a Polish nobleman who becomes tragically afflicted with the curse of lycanthropy. We are introduced to the physically imposing (Naschy was a world champion weightlifter) yet charismatic Daninsky at a
masked ball that celebrates the engagement of a Countess von Aarenberg (Dianik Zurakowska) to a Rudolph Weismann (Manuel Manzaneque).

![Title card to Spain's first horror film. A costumed Daninsky and Aarenberg flirt at her engagement party.](image)

The next day Daninsky runs into the Countess at an antique shop, (also present are elderly gossipmongers who complain about Daninsky's eternal womanizing, the hem of the Countess' skirt and in a line of foreshadowing dialogue quip that he is "drooling") which serves to escalate sexual tension between the two of them. Later, a chance meeting of the three on the grounds of Wolfstein Castle sets up what will later become a rather nuanced a love triangle (the Countess eventually falls for Daninsky while Rudolph becomes indebted to him for saving his life). While on the grounds, Daninsky recounts the history of the Castle and the family's curse. The local folklore claims that Imre Wolfstein was also a victim of the curse of lycanthropy and (in a nod to Curt Siodmak's screenplay for *The Wolfman*, 1941) could only be truly killed with silver, in this case a silver bullet shot from the hand of a woman who truly loves him. As Wolfstein was stabbed through the heart with a silver dagger, he is not truly dead, only lying dormant in his tomb. Rudolph doubts Daninsky's fable and he and the Countess depart in haste, carelessly forcing a gypsy wagon into a ditch as they speed off.

Daninsky aids the gypsies (a husband and wife team), but with a storm brewing, the gypsies need to seek shelter and settle in for the night. Daninsky suggests they bed down near the castle bridge, but upon arriving they gypsies prefer to break into the castle for shelter.
4-2. Approaching the castle and later the removal of the silver dagger.

Once inside, the gypsies help themselves to the rare and valuable vintages in the cellars and proceed to get drunk. They eventually stumble upon the family tomb where Imre Wolfstein's remains are interred and, estimating its worth, pull the silver dagger from his heart. Wolfstein returns to life, kills the gypsies and satiates his bloodlust by killing several local peasants. Soon after these deaths, a hunt is organized that Daninsky participates in; Wolfstein (in werewolf form) attacks Rudolph, but Daninsky is able to overpower and kill Wolfstein. He saves Rudolph but not before he himself sustains a bite from Wolfstein. Daninsky's distinctive pentagram-shaped wound from the bite, known as the titular "mark of the werewolf" ensures that the curse and bloodlust will continue. Daninsky, the morally ambiguous and financially enfeebled playboy has assumed the position of the tragic and reluctant hero.

Out of gratitude to Daninsky for saving his life, Rudolph agrees to help him with his sickness and to also keep it secret from the Countess. Rudolph mines the Wolfstein archives and discovers a forty-year-old letter that contains correspondence between Imre Wolfstein and a Doctor Janos Mikhelov (Julián Ugarte), where it is hinted that Mikhelov might have found a cure. Before long however, the Countess discovers the truth and with no secrets between them, the trio decide to contact Mikhelov (or rather, his "son"). Mikhelov agrees to assist Daninsky and arrives with his wife, the darkly beautiful Wandesa (Aurora de Alba).
It is soon revealed that Janos Mikhelov and his wife Wandesa are in fact vampires and intent on controlling and enslaving Daninsky for dark purposes and deeds. The vampires seduce and dominate the Countess (seduced by Janos) and Rudolph (seduced by Wandesa); Wandesa revives the twice-murdered Imre Wolfstein and has the two werewolves battle to the death. Daninsky once again destroys Imre only to be slain with a silver bullet by the woman who has fallen in love with him, the Countess. Regardless of whether or not sequels were envisioned by Naschy, we are presented with a typical ending for this type of horror film: the downbeat death of the tragic hero is balanced with the restoration of good over evil, order presides over chaos and the reformation of the heteronormative couple (the Countess and Rudolph) gives an nod to the church. The ending is thus neither of a really open or closed form; it is principally, a safe ending.
Much like the doomed protagonist Larry Talbot in 1941's *The Wolfman* and Naschy's own Waldemar Daninsky in *La Marca del Hombre Lobo*, it would appear that the young Paul Naschy too had been indelibly marked, not by a pentagram, but by the horror films of Universal Studios. In his autobiography, Naschy recounts his first impressions of Universal horror, specifically *Frankenstein Meets the Wolfman* (1943).

The film *Frankenstein Meets the Wolfman* opened at Madrid's Capital Cinema, but since children weren't allowed in to see it, all I could do was to stand outside the cinema and stare. It held an irresistible attraction for me. My chance to see the film came when it was re-released on a double bill at a cinema near my home. The lights went out and the magic began. Suddenly, I was immersed in the spellbinding story which led up to the amazing, spectacular and quasi-surreal scenes in which the tormented lycanthrope slugs it out with Dr. Frankenstein's monstrous creature. After the film had finished I went out in to the street in a trance. I didn't even remember to thank my good friend the usher for letting me in and running the risk of getting into trouble with the inspectors, who in those days were pretty strict. (Naschy 49)

From an early age Naschy proudly declared that he was "hooked on celluloid" and his obsession with horror facilitated a thorough knowledge of the German silent masterworks, particularly the Expressionistic films; the entire Universal canon; and the horror films of Hammer Studios. Twenty-five years later, Naschy would pick up the torch where Universal had left off and in 1967 he began to write the screenplay for *La Marca del Hombre Lobo* and "So began filming of *La Marca del Hombre Lobo*, which ushered in the golden age of Spanish horror fantasy films" (Naschy 92). Although set in present day, the film benefits greatly from its stately locations which lend the film a distinct "period piece" aura. The producers secured access to certain production locations and this served as a major coup. These locations included the former Madrid estate of the Marquis of Cerralbo (known today as the Cerralbo Museum) and the Castle of San Martin de Valdeiglesias (also in greater Madrid). The extravagance and
authenticity of these locations impart a distinctly Spanish aura (in hindsight, I am sure unintentionally) and are well known to any person from, or living, in Spain.

In the same manner that Universal and Hammer leveraged character franchises (Dracula, Frankenstein, The Wolf Man, The Mummy, etc.), Naschy would go on to mine and extract from the character of Waldemar Daninsky a run of twelve lucrative sequels that spanned four decades. In addition to this impressive franchise, Naschy also went on to write, produce, direct and act in dozens of horror films in Spain and other countries. La Marca del Hombre Lobo however, was Naschy's and Spain's first "real" horror film. Pete Tombs submits this handy and uncomplicated framework to understand these early Spanish productions and the cycle that they launched:

The first real Spanish horror film came in 1967 [sic] with Frankenstein's Bloody Terror/Hell's Creatures, written by and starring Paul Naschy in the first of his many appearances as the werewolf Waldemar Daninsky. The film was a big budget effort for the time, shot in 3D and 70mm Widescreen. It had some local success and was distributed abroad—a rare event for any Spanish picture in those days. But the horror 'boom' really began with the success of The House That Screamed (La Residencia) in 1969, and was consolidated by Werewolf versus the Vampire Women the following year. Then the floodgates opened and for the next four years or so films appeared at the rate of one or two a month. (Tohill and Tombs 65)

La Marca del Hombre Lobo was a first not only for Spain, but also for the author of its screenplay, Paul Naschy. As such, it bears the trademarks of a screenwriter enamored with the films of his youth, it is an interesting amalgamation of the conventions, tropes and general aesthetic associated with both the Universal and Hammer eras, especially in relation to the Universal "monster rally" teaming of studio properties (Frankenstein Meets the Wolfman [1943], The House of Frankenstein [1944], The House of Dracula [1945]). Oddly, the strategy employed from the late-period Universal "monster rally" films of the 1940s, namely the tag-teaming of lucrative and popular characters into all-out monster rallies to hopefully breathe new life into
tired formulas, was the same strategy employed by Naschy to inaugurate the era of Spanish national productions. What had signaled an end for one franchise was used as a catalyst for birth in another. Moreover, in a storytelling strategy that predates (by thirty-five years) the popular and extremely lucrative movie and novel franchises Twilight Saga (2008—present) and The Underworld Trilogy (2003, 2006 and 2009), La Marca del Hombre Lobo features multiple werewolves pitted against multiple vampires.

As I have noted, Naschy anticipated and incurred considerable resistance to his screenplay and his efforts to get it produced. This following anecdote regarding an early meeting with Amando De Ossorio (who would also become very productive in the genre) illustrates the attitude towards the horror genre while living under Franco.

I recall that my last, desperate visit was to Amando De Osorio. He welcomed me politely and explained that he was just about to start filming a movie about the Royal Canadian Mounted Police. After a couple of whiskies he told me, in fatherly fashion that this horror business was very appealing but just not viable - that's what Hammer were there for - and a genre picture made in Spain just wouldn't work. (Naschy 93)

What I find unique about La Marca del Hombre Lobo, apart from its status as the first Spanish horror film, is that stylistically it holds up surprisingly well when one considers the sheer volume of films from this era that suffer from poor production values, shoddy and haphazard mise-en-scene, ridiculous dubbing, incoherent plots and general inelegance. La Marca del Hombre Lobo however, is a thoroughly professional film both in its technical execution and its visual realization. The screenplay, written by a fan rather than a professional, lacks the finesse or sophistication a seasoned screenwriter may have brought, but this potential detriment becomes the film's greatest asset; impassioned enthusiasm compensates for amateurism. The aim of this film was to generate profit, interest and establish proficiency in the horror movie market while maintaining national standards, and it delivered.
Perhaps the film’s most significant contribution to not only Euro-horror, but horror writ large, is the synthesis of its constituent parts. The film is a successful fusion of its two greatest influences, the highly gothic Universal cycle of horror films from the 1930s and 40s and the erotically charged Technicolor horrors from Great Britain’s Hammer Studios in the 1950s and 60s. *La Marca del Hombre Lobo* was, for the Spanish government, an experiment in a new genre; extravagant treatment was allotted with the film’s locations, its 70mm film gauge and also with its 3D technology. The Samuel Bronston era of training directors, cinematographers and other technicians in the 50s and 60s is evident on this polished and professional effort.

In film, when a fully realized artistic vision is married to a proficient technical execution, aggressive marketing campaign, and in a currently popular genre, the results are often favorable. The Spaniards had learned this, and in the process they attracted American distributor Sam Sherman of International Independent Pictures.

4-5. The film was given extravagant technical upgrades during its production including 70mm and 3D.

4-6. The legendary U.S. distribution of the film had to tie in the Frankenstein Monster as promised to promoters!
Sherman, recognizing that all the requisite elements were prominently and tastefully on display placed the film mainly in drive-Ins where it made "excellent business." He commented that Naschy was "a great werewolf, equal to Chaney's and more impressive physically" (DVD audio commentary).

*La Marca del Hombre Lobo* opened on Madrid's Cine Boulevard in 1968. Box-office was strong, which certainly pleased a government that took a risk, but it was Naschy who emerged the clear victor. As usual, and not surprisingly, critics published in "reputable" media outlets didn't care for the film.

As was to be expected, the Spanish critics didn't look too kindly on the film. It was only natural, what did those hacks know about horror fantasy, vampirism or lycanthropy? One scathing reviewer in *La Codorniz*—"the more audacious magazine for the more intelligent reader"—slagged it off in no uncertain terms, although he also predicted it would go down in history. And it undoubtedly did. It sold the world over, being shown in 3D in the USA, Argentina and Germany. Today it is revered as a genuine cult movie. As was also to be expected, the reviews garnered outside Spain were excellent: in this life everything is so subjective... The main thing is that the Waldemar Daninsky mythology had been born. Along with him was born Paul Naschy. (Naschy 94)

*La Marca del Hombre Lobo* set the stage for "*La Edad de Oro del Fantaterror Español*" or "The Golden Age of Spanish Horror." It did this with considerable style and class as is evident in the structure of the film's derivative but creative and effective narrative and its elegant mise-en-scène. Moreover, it set up the even more popular and lucrative sequel (a co-production with West Germany), *La Noche de Walpurgis (Werewolf vs. the Vampire Women,* 1970), which cemented the "Waldemar Daninsky" franchise.
Order over chaos: the "classical" horror movie finale was becoming rare in the 1960s. Also cemented through the public's embrace of this new genre was the nascent evidence that horror could be successfully produced, distributed, exhibited and, if necessary, censored in Spain. Given all of this, the successful television pioneer, Narciso Ibáñez Serrador had a project in mind.

*LA RESIDENCIA* – *(1969)*
(The House that Screamed)

Thanks to a television career that had spanned ten years and many successful series, Narciso Ibáñez Serrador was able to secure Government support for his *La Residencia* (The
House that Screamed, 1969), an Oedipal and Sadean thriller set in a neo-gothic tableau that proved popular, profitable and influential.¹

La Residencia opens with a young girl, Teresa (The Living Dead at the Manchester Morgue's Cristina Galbó) and her guardian arriving at a remote French château in Provence. The château is a private school for "troubled" young girls (a euphemism for delinquents) administrated by the authoritarian Madame Fourneau (Lilli Palmer) and her coterie of elder student pets, led by the militant factotum Irene (Mary Maude). Once Teresa settles in, she quickly observes the layers of social strata on display and is also informed about the many extracurricular activities on campus. These include the prostitution of a local brawny woodsman whom Irene pimps as a man-whore to her fellow students as well as the secret relationships kept by Madame Fourneau's mollycoddled son Luis, a voyeuristic, supposedly asthmatic and over-polite young teen. When the most recent of Luis' "girlfriends" disappears, Teresa becomes increasingly suspicious of Madame Fourneau and the fact that five girls in four months have vanished without a word or clue. Add to this recipe a scene of brutal corporal punishment where Irene (under Madame Fourneau's instruction and supervision) administers a whipping to a repeatedly impudent student and, before long, Teresa finds herself suspected and targeted by Madame's favored pupil, Irene. The film operates under this principle that rebellion against entrenched authority can lead to punishment and death, clearly a fear that all Spaniards knew. However, in what was a politically diffusing and clever move, it is revealed at the film's climax that Madame Fourneau's son, Luis, is the killer. The suggestion that Luis has been severely warped by a controlling, overprotective mother and the repressive environment of her school is there, but far enough removed to scapegoat blame and attenuate any political connections or commentary, at least at that time. Ultimately we learn that Luis, in attempts to build the perfect
version of his Mother's younger self, has been murdering the girls and taking their "parts" to build a dead facsimile of Madame Fourneau. The film's overwhelming ending suggests both incest and necrophilia and was quite controversial.

While Paul Naschy was busy reviving the genre's supernatural side of the ledger with the previous year's *La Marca del Hombre Lobo*, Narciso Ibáñez Serrador chose to pen a taut psychological thriller where human nature and fallibility provided all of the necessary elements for evil. *La Residencia* contains all the classical components of the gothic tale: the familiar tropes of dark corridors, winding staircases, candlelit explorations and secret rendezvous are on display, but they are fused with heavy doses of repressed sexual and psychic energies. *La Residencia* resembles Hitchcock's *Rebecca* (1941), and *Psycho* (1960), as well as the filmed version of Henry James' *The Turn of the Screw*, and Jack Clayton's *The Innocents* (1961), among other works. And, while Spain's first non-supernatural horror film is of historical significance "as is", it also sits nicely in the company of its literary and cinematic analogues.

Where *La Residencia* truly impresses is via Serrador's arrangement of the formal elements at his disposal: the camerawork, mise-en-scène, editing, and musical arrangement. Through these building blocks of film, spectatorship often reaches a level achieved in the film that *La Residencia* most closely resembles, Alfred Hitchcock's *Psycho* (1960). Not to be casually overlooked, however, is that the American film industry took over thirty years before it arrived at the complex and immense machinations of a film like *Psycho* (1960). *Psycho*’s visual and narrative sophistication (along with its diverse readings and applications) have rendered it "into the canon of the 20 or so most frequently taught and critically revered films" (Williams 353). And so, while Spain entered the sphere of the cinematographic taboo or transgressive rather late, this late arrival was not without certain privileges. The ability to quickly absorb and
integrate currently fashionable, recent or foundational trends in cinema arrived just one year into their production status. The paradigm shift from vampires and werewolves to the monstrosity of the human species came just inside of a year.

*La Residencia* was shot in scope (at 2:39:1) by one of Spain's most admired director's of photography, Manuel Berenguer (*King of Kings* 1961, *Krakatoa* 1969). Berenguer employed a Goyaesque muted-pastel color palette with very tight interior framing which lent an appropriately gothic and occasionally claustrophobic aesthetic to the film and, in particular, the interiors. These dark and oppressive interiors offer a contrapuntal balance to the painterly attention Berenguer gives the picturesque countryside of Comillas, Spain and its 19th century *Palacio de Sobrellano*. Additionally, some interiors were shot in the *Estudios Moro* in Madrid, a spacious facility for film, television and cartoon production.

*La Residencia* opens at a leisurely pace, deliberate enough to draw comparison to the film's literary bedrock, the gothic melodrama; it takes considerable care in setting up its physical setting, situations and characters. The opening credit montage is representative of the film's comfortable tempo; a horse-drawn carriage takes us gradually, deeper and deeper, into isolation and ultimately to the foreboding estate of the film's title.

![4-8. The natural beauty of Las Comillas was effectively rendered.](image)
Once inside the school, we are slowly immersed into the world of its "delinquent" students as well as the aforementioned headmistress' son Luis, who like Norman Bates also seeks and gains pleasure by looking. In what is a reconfiguration of the classic voyeur scene from Hitchcock's *Psycho*, Serrador combines Luis' voyeurism with his Mother's Sadist handiwork to intensify looking relations. The room that houses a large cast-iron coal boiler which heats the school's showers also has a crawl space that extends to the shared wall of the showers, and here on this wall, Luis has fashioned himself a peephole. Here he not only gains pleasure from looking, but compounds his desire intake by observing his mother *also* taking pleasure in looking. On this day, she admires not only her students, but also the scars Irene has administered through her authority and power.

*4-10. Luis' voyeuristic peepshow turns self-reflexive, reminding us why we go to the movie theater.*
Madame admires her own handiwork while Luis looks on, notice the scars that line her back.

Shortly after this, during one of the woodsman's conjugal visits to the school, Serrador constructs a scene of frenzied inter-cutting that packs substantial affect. The woodsman approaches and Serrador takes this cue to uncoil the heavily repressed sexual energies contained in the school.

"The woodsman cometh" and the raw sexual energy of teenaged students begin to uncoil.

A literal "roll in the hay" is juxtaposed against another type of insertion—that of thread into needle.
The lottery winner of the week exits to have sexual relations with the woodsman in what predictably looks to be the school grounds stable. The other students, fully aware of this, unhappily and haphazardly participate in craft activities like sewing, but their attentions are clearly focused elsewhere. Serrador's editing pace increases and intensifies, ending with a clever visual representation of a petite mort. Multiple orgasms are reached via the off-screen climax of the sex between the woodsman and the student and the on-screen climax of the sexual energies contained in that crafts room. The one student shown to have had trouble keeping her hands under control suddenly pricks herself at the very moment orgasm is achieved (the audio has been present from the sexual encounter all through this scene). This conflation of sex, blood and death is representative of the grand Euro-horror tradition that came before it, and finally Spain was now initiated too.

The fluidity of Berenguer's camerawork quietly glides us through the honeycombed corridors of this mansion creating a heightened sense of spectatorship. We prowl, peak and creep along corridors and transoms, often with Luis (which should cause some suspicion) but also with students who are trying to escape from the prison-like school, are having clandestine encounters with Luis or are having sex with the brawny local woodsman. These events and expositions that reveal character, setting and situation comprise the film's opening forty minutes. And then, we are presented with the first on-screen murder of the film. The killing is certainly one of if not the
most disturbing pre-slasher genre murders in Euro-horror history. Luis convinces his current student infatuation to meet him after hours in the school's greenhouse.

4-11. She enters the greenhouse and is then penetrated by the most often used weapon in Spanish horror, a knife.

4-12. The superimposition of the white roses blotted with her blood is bone chilling.

The stabbing is rendered in slow motion with a superimposition of the girl's blood blotting out white roses that are being cultivated in the greenhouse. There is cinematic rupture in this scene that is unsettling in its formal excess. The musical score is cleverly composed 180 degrees in the opposite of the action with a lovely slow-tempo melody that slowly grinds to a halt—like a phonograph that has its power cut. The beauty of the shot composition is what simultaneously attracts and repels the spectator, but in doing so, the sequence risks the reconfiguration of pleasure and excitement into that of the traumatic. Death has been presented in a formally beautiful manner here, but after so long a lull in action it truly unsettles the viewer. This is clearly an inversion of Hitchcock's strategy of killing off the film's star, Janet Leigh, in the first twenty minutes of Psycho. Serrador delivers an expertly rendered scene that is both shocking and influential, particularly for filmmakers like Dario Argento in Europe and the fleet
of American directors who would go on to helm and define the American slasher genre (Brian De Palma, John Carpenter, Wes Craven, Brian Sean S. Cunningham, etc.).

As noted, *La Residencia* shares similarities with Hitchcock's *Psycho*, and in both films it is the voyeuristic son with "mother issues" who is ultimately "responsible" for the murders. Madame explains to her son in a bit of exposition that she has not been selfish in keeping Luis with her, rather she is merely protecting him; his physical and mental immaturity would prevent him from properly integrating into the mainstream socialization process. She goes on to explain that the girls of the school are anathema to a boy like him and what he really needs is a girl just like mom used to be.

Madame explains, "You need a woman like me who loves you and takes care of you. The kind of girl I used to be, strong and capable, and she'll live for you, the way I live for you. And she'll love you the way I love you." Sadly, Luis' interpretation of his mother's words is taken to a very disturbing place. When she also explains, "Luis, I told you a hundred times, none of these girls are any good to you" it later becomes clear that they will be of some particular use to him. In the film's last scene, he uncovers his creation. "I decided to make a girl like you, a girl for me. She has the same hands as yours, slim, but strong. And, now she's got everything, gold hair like yours, the same eyes, Isabelle had almost the same eyes as yours. You always said I'd have a girl like you when you were young and now I've got her."
La Residencia was a daring film for its time; it brought horror home, not to Spain per se as the story was situated in France (with Spanish locations), but home to the realm of the real and the uncanny as opposed to the realm of vampires, ghosts, werewolves and other abstractions. But, in my view, what is even more daring is that its creators took it upon themselves to boldly broadcast their progressive business politics in a mission statement that addressed exhibitors, potential backers and the press. This document explicitly called for a balance between artistic and commercial success without the overemphasis of domestic tropes in tired genres that had consistently yielded poor box office performance (see below).

The Finishing School

It is our intention that «The finishing school» will be for us a stepping-stone from which we can break into the international market.

We are of the opinion, with all due respect, that the present Spanish film production considered as «commercial» is created solely for the internal market, the main part of the production being concerned, for this reason, with the making of comedies in which, usually, local humour is overemphasized.

Commercially and with a view to the international market the above mentioned form of production is completely negative. Few, very few, are the films which in the entire history of the Spanish cinema have gained normal box-office takings in foreign cinemas.

It is our aim, therefore, to attempt to produce Spanish films which, always taking into account their cinematographic quality for its presentation, actors and themes, will be exportable, not in an attempt to compete but simply to figure as some more titles in the normal film programmes abroad.

«The finishing school», our first film, has been made in an attempt to combine artistic success with the commercial. We know that this is very difficult, but if we succeed we will have won the first great battle.

Even more remarkable is that the guiding principles of this mini-manifesto actually took hold and, over time, became the dominant method for conducting business. Thanks to the collected efforts of several dedicated and passionate artists (Narciso Ibáñez Serrador, Paul Naschy, Jess Franco, Jorge Grau, Amando de Ossorio, León Klimovsky and Carlos Aured among others), the goals stated in the above document were met over the next ten years.

*La Residencia* opened on January 12, 1970. The censors' labeling of the film as "seriously dangerous" predictably attracted the curiosity of the public and lured them in large numbers to propel *La Residencia* into the number one spot for the year (Domínguez 8). Additionally, international distribution was broad and lucrative; *La Residencia*’s U.S. release, with the title *The House that Screamed*, played very well in regional releases. The success of Lopez's *La Marca del Hombre Lobo* and Serrador's *La Residencia* cemented the opinion between the public and the government controlled motion picture industry that horror films (typically with different domestic and foreign cuts) should continue to be made with increasing frequency for mass consumption.
In 1973's *Una Vela para el Diablo* (A Candle for the Devil, 1973), we clearly begin to see repressions, particularly sexual repressions, surface and spill over to rupture everyday "normal" life—in this case, the everyday normal life of a small provincial Andalucian town. We also see these repressions are now being given form and weaved into social documents like film. By 1973, the horror film and its sibling, the *destape*, were beginning to wage a conspicuous game of chicken with the censors; the filmmakers' trump-card lay in the popularity of these films as proven by the very strong box-office performance of the last five years and the rapidly decomposing health of Francisco Franco and his regime. To paraphrase Marx, money is the ultimate intelligence, and if we add the fact that regimes eventually and inevitably crumble, we can begin to predict the trajectory Spanish horror was about to undertake.

As discussed at length in chapter two, Spain's import of foreign culture resulted in many shifts with mass culture. With more than twenty million visitors per year by the mid-to-late
1960s, there were clear indications that social attitudes were evolving. Franco's plan to stabilize Spain's economy had succeeded and backfired simultaneously. The "miracle" of Spain's economic growth came at a cost: importing visitors meant importing culture. Pervasive Catholic dogma coupled with decades of tourism provided the engine for *Una Vela para el Diablo*’s violent disruption of the everyday world.

There is an old axiom in horror that the more reality-based the tale is, the more frightening and resonant will be its terror. *Una Vela para el Diablo* is just such a tale and building off of the foundations and precedents set in films like *La Residencia* is Spain's first real entry into the practice of common, everyday horror. The execution of the "horror of everyday anxieties" and the "commonplace" is a rather sophisticated approach to creating terror and takes a delicate hand. The genre's potential here can fall easily fall into ill-resonating amateurism or conversely terrify an audience in spectacular and lasting ways.

*Una Vela para el Diablo* tells the warped tale of two sisters, Marta and Veronica, who run a guesthouse in an old convent. Both are middle-aged spinsters repressed by religious faith. Neither Marta nor Veronica fashion a monastic austerity to their appearance, on the contrary, they are both conventionally attractive but deemphasize their "femininity." The sisters are often revolted at the antics of the vacationing foreign tourists that stay in their house. The film opens with a young English tourist, May Barkley (Loretta Tovar), sunbathing topless on the roof. Although she is lying on her stomach, the nearby men in adjacent buildings begin to annoyingly catcall her and thereby flag the attention of Marta and Veronica. In their attempt to hide her, they inadvertently throw her down a narrow stairwell where she smashes through a stained glass window, killing her. Marta is convinced that it is a sign of divine providence intervening and administering justice to the wicked and corrupt as May was pierced by a shard of stained glass...
decorated with a sword. Marta reasoned that it must be the Archangel Michael's sword doing God's work. In a bit of bad timing, May's sister, Laura Barkley (Judy Geeson) arrives into town just minutes later, looking for both a room and her sister, May. Marta and Veronica quickly inform Laura that she hasn't been around for awhile and might've actually gone out of town for a few days, but they let her check-in despite their fears. After getting settled at the inn, Laura leaves to search for her sister around town while the sisters move to quickly conceal May's death by firing up the kitchen furnace and cremating her.

Later, Laura arrives at the museum where her sister was sent to take photographs for an English company and learns from a friend of May's that she has not gone anywhere and should still be in town and a resident of the sister's Inn. Back at the Inn, blaring popular music heralds the arrival of a new busload of tourists that invade the town square. One of the tourists, Helen (Lone Fleming), decides to cool off in the plaza's fountain, commanding the gaze of everyone around, both male and female, including, of course, Marta.
4-16. Marta exclaims "Years ago, that shameless girl would have been burned alive at the public square."

4-17. Marta may disapprove, but the men of the square, the young and the old, seem to enjoy Helen's free spirit.

Thus, we are presented for the second time in the film's opening act with an attack and backlash leveled at tourism and tourist culture. These girls are being murdered for smuggling in different attitudes and precepts about sexuality, their own sexuality, and the responses prompted from their male onlookers. More to the point, Marta and Veronica are eliminating that which in themselves they cannot accept or even rationalize. Their envy and disgust power and rationalize their criminal actions. In an interesting twist, we learn shortly after this that Veronica is actually being sexually "serviced" on a regular basis by the manservant/busboy at the inn's restaurant, Luis (Charley Pineiro), whom she also till taps for. By suppressing her sexual urges, Marta has turned outwardly violent; conversely Veronica has surrendered to her sexual desires, but cannot enjoy them without engaging afterwards in severe guilt and self-loathing.

4-18. A promiscuous Veronica gives into her carnal desires but with guilt and self-loathing.
Marta, usually aware of her sister's whereabouts grows curious and suspects she may be at Luis' home. No one is there, but Marta's suspicions were correct; they had just finished moments earlier. Marta, lost in her own sexual daydreams, wanders off to a nearby stream where she spies naked teenagers bathing. She becomes dizzy with desire and turns to flee, but in her haste to get away she becomes entangled in thorns, which tear at her dress and skin. She arrives home in frantic condition and desperately tries to wash the sin from her bloodstained clothes and flesh.

4-19. Marta becomes consumed by her sexual fantasies but is punished for her transgressions.

This temptation of the flesh is brought to climax that very evening when, after returning to the inn, a drunk Helen, who is clearly tired of being ridiculed by the sisters, taunts and sexually provokes Marta, who is still upset from the events of that afternoon. A confused, but not altogether uninterested Marta releases a torrent of anger and rage by taking her phallic blade and stabbing deeply into the body of Helen. Veronica, hearing the commotion, bursts into the kitchen and finishes the job by burying a meat cleaver into Helen's head. The kitchen furnace is stoked once again, and Helen's remains are destroyed.

Laura, who is now suspicious of the sisters and still hasn't heard from her sister, returns to the inn and, after an unpleasant exchange with Marta, decides to finally check into another hostel, but when she sees a new female guest arrive and with a baby, she becomes concerned and is compelled to act by warning the young mother and making sure she will notify her of what's
going on at the inn and when she is planning on leaving. The sisters are thrilled to take in their new boarder but later learn that the mother is unwed and, moreover, not entirely sure who the father is. Their madness and jealousy rationalize their actions to kill the mother and take the baby for their own. The sisters confront the mother, murder her and employ the kitchen furnace once again.

While burning her possessions, they come across a love letter from the woman's husband that discusses his reluctance to get a divorce. They realize that the mother was in fact married and that it was just local gossip to the contrary. Marta rationalizes that it wasn't a "real" marriage in God's eyes if divorce was being discussed. At this point, the authorities have become suspicious at the number of missing persons; Laura investigates at the inn herself but gets her male friend to masquerade as her husband while at the inn for insurance. The charade fails and the sisters bind and gag the snooping Laura. The authorities and some concerned locals are dispatched to the inn and as the story reaches its summit, they arrive just in time to find the sisters attempting to kill Laura. The credits roll as Laura, bound and gagged stares back at the gaze of the police and local residents, inverting the "tourist gaze" the film had employed previously.

The film's director, Eugenio Martin has stated, "I felt the Catholic Church had been disastrous for Spain and that countless human miseries were committed in religion's name,
therefore I felt it was a great idea to criticize the religious fanaticism of some characters in a small Andalucian town" (Aguilar and Haas 104). And so, once again, in what was becoming a more common and explicit theme, history had possessed a Spanish horror film. I argue that our capacity to rethink the Spanish horror film with history as its primary narrator opens up these texts to a more refined and multifaceted understanding. Certainly, one can sense an energetic and living catharsis at work through the acting out of these types of repression-fueled stories.

The film was a lightning rod to the censors; it featured inflammatory religious content, sex with full-frontal male and female nudity and gruesome violence. In short, *Una Vela para el Diablo* boasted everything guaranteed to invite the censors' scissors. However, the film's violence was, as usual, protected. As Martín notes, "In one of those inconsistencies typical of all dictatorships, violence and terror were allowed by the Francoist censorship, however strong they were, because they considered politically innocuous" (Aguilar and Haas 105).

*Una Vela para el Diablo* performed well both in Spain and in other markets, notably West Germany and also in The United States where it saw a regional release as *It Happened at Nightmare Inn*. In the final analysis, consider then that Eugenio Martín was bold enough to present a vision of Spanish provincial life that had become an endangered species, a lifestyle with a looming expiration date. Within two years, the death of a dictator and a constitutional re-birth would provide every Spanish citizen the right to choose their own lifestyle without the fear of imprisonment or death. *Una Vela para el Diablo* was one of Spain's first horror films to openly tackle concerns endemic to Spanish culture and society. As we will see presently, the following, and last film discussed, *Quién Puede Matar a un Niño*, would not have really been possible without Eugenio Martín's aesthetic perspective and generic approach to telling a gothic horror story in a small, sunny, tourist-laden Andalucian town. Eugenio Martín once pondered,
"How many horror stories, stories of genuine horror, remain hidden in the framework of our civil war?" (Aguilar and Haas 105). The next film discussed is a function of this question.

*QUIÉN PUEDE MATAR A UN NIÑO? – (1976)*
(Who Can Kill a Child?)

The unexpected and considerable success of both Enrique López Egiluz's *La Marca del Hombre Lobo* and Narciso Ibáñez Serrador's *La Residencia* helped to launch the golden era of Spanish horror, but several years passed before Serrador would return to the genre that had afforded him prior successes, not only with the second film discussed in this chapter, *La Residencia*, but also with his television series *Historias Para No Dormir* (Tales to Keep You Awake, 1966-82), a Spanish version of *The Twilight Zone*. Based upon the success of his previous works and the continuing popularity of Spanish horror, Serrador was prompted to return to the genre. If, as discussed, *La Residencia* shared much in common with Hitchcock's *Psycho*, then *Quién Puede Matar a un Niño* aligns with another Hitchcock film. The brutal and
apparently unexplainable attacks of the birds in Hitchcock's *The Birds* (1963) is a shared theme in *Quién Puede Matar a un Niño* which also investigates the validity of rationality; rather than birds however, it is innocent children who "cry havoc and let slip the dogs of war."

4-21. The title card and central question the film asks of its characters and spectators, "Who can kill a child?"

4-22. The credit sequence alone is difficult to sit through. The rest of the film also proves to be challenging.

In one of the most unique and equally bizarre opening credit sequences in cinema history, *Quién Puede Matar a un Niño* chronicles in gruesome detail—with statistics that run along the frame's lower third in ticker-tape fashion—the toll (in mortality statistics and psychological) taken on the children of the world during times of war. Serrador suggests that, historically, it is the children of wars that sustain the most deaths, serious wounds and psychic injuries. Most of the war footage is European, with footage of various Asian and African conflicts also incorporated. Conspicuously absent from this credit sequence is any mention at all of Spain's own Civil War (1936-39). Only once during the film are the atrocities of Spain's Civil War referenced. And they are referenced by a doomed tourist, an outsider, a foreigner.
Serrador explains, "In a certain way, the children are the main victims of what consciously or unconsciously adults bring about, that is, we kill them. We kill them with wars, we kill them with bombs, we kill them with famine. The children are always the victims" (DVD commentary). The credit sequence, while one-of-a-kind and provocative, in retrospect does feel a little heavy; Serrador has admitted as much over the years, he has gone on record to say that the film should have appended with the footage rather than open with it. With this strategy "I think it would have been better because you are telling the viewer at the end, look, this is vengeance, or defense of the children against their enemy. Who is the enemy? The enemy is the adult. The adult who fabricated wars, the adult who kills people" (DVD commentary).

Quién Puede Matar a un Niño's narrative is a mélange of literary ingredients that are weaved into a powerful statement about the needless and senseless pain of suffering inflicted upon children, particularly children caught in the crossfire of war. Its main sources of inspiration appear to be the already mentioned The Birds (the appearance of beings, whether birds or children, subverting the peaceful nature or status quo), The Lord of the Flies by William Golding (for its isolation of the island and other survival elements) and lastly, John Wyndham's The Village of the Damned for its adolescent revolt against adults, authority figures and general patriarchal subversion.

Serrador's approach to spectatorship differs in this film as he returns only partially to the territory of generating sympathy, dislike and suspicion for characters as he had done with most of his previous work, especially the second film in this chapter, La Residencia. Here, in an unconventional approach, Serrador prompts us—via his arsenal of formal devices—to assume a variety of different and unconventional points of view throughout the film. He asks us to consider what constitutes the evil, the monstrous, and the unnatural in this world and then asks us
to reposition its presentation. Serrador's contention is that horror films are "gloomy, with lots of shadows and the bad guys are very ugly or monstrous looking. So to make a film under a blazing sun and with children instead of monsters, I thought it was very intriguing" (DVD commentary). This also intrigued Serrador's highly acclaimed director of photography, José Luis Alcaine who shot the film in harsh, direct sunlight.

As Eugenio Martín has noted, "In Spain we cannot have the horror atmosphere that you could find in England or in America. Here we have so much sun, so much heat, that the horror here is never mysterious—it's in an open place full of sun. That was the Spanish tradition for horror" (Martín, personal correspondence). What Martín had realized so effectively in his Una Vela para el Diablo, Serrador continued in Quién Puede Matar a un Niño by tapping into the hidden potential that lay in the tropes of everyday anxieties. And this is precisely the bath that Serrador wishes to bathe and immerse his viewer in: sun-drenched, sweaty, unthinkable and inescapable horror.

As in most of Serrador's works, the story is simple, but the themes at work are complex. In Quién Puede Matar a un Niño, Tom (Lewis Fiander) and his pregnant wife Evelyn (Prunella Ransome) are feeling stressed from an unplanned pregnancy (which will be the couple's third child) and general stresses at home in England. They decide to take a vacation alone to "sunny" Spain where Tom has spent many happy days, particularly in the small mountainous resort town of Benhavis on the Costa del Sol. They are clearly still in love with each other and discuss their lives openly, including whether they should see this pregnancy to childbirth or not, and despite their worries, both agree that they will. This scene resonates for its implications about adults deciding the future of their unborn children and will be revived later. Before too long, Tom complains that Benhavis is "too crowded" and that there's "too many people." He persuades
Evelyn, who prefers to stay in Benhavis, to go to the island of Almanzora, which is a four-hour boat ride deep into the Mediterranean. We are told that Tom had spent time on the island ten years earlier and feels Evelyn will unwind more fully there. Then, in what is a familiar convention to the genre, a warning from the concierge that the island has no doctor goes unheeded; Tom, who is a biologist, arrogantly explains that he's "nearly a medical doctor" and can take care of his pregnant wife. Additionally, two severely mauled bodies (suggesting murder) have washed up on the beaches of Benhavis causing concern and speculation. Regardless, they depart and as expected, when they arrive to the island, things quickly deteriorate.

As they approach the docking area, they see a small group of children fishing. After tying up their boat, Tom tries, in vain, to engage the children in conversation, but one child in particular appears just as puzzled by Tom's efforts to say hello as Tom is at the boy's lack of any response. The boy's quizzical expression, which taps into the main theme of the film (alienation between adults and children), becomes a visual focal point that Serrador revisits as the film unfolds.

4-23. The first child encountered naturally becomes the most reoccurring and iconic in the film.

Tom and Evelyn soon discover that the small town is deserted except for all of the children that live on the island, and even they are scarcely visible. Their hotel is empty, the
adjacent restaurant shows signs of people having just been there and yet is also empty. Tom leaves Evelyn to investigate further and two important events occur. First, what appears to be a smiling, playful girl pays Evelyn a visit in the restaurant. The young girl doesn't speak to Evelyn but is clearly fascinated with her pregnancy. She slowly takes a knee and touches Evelyn's stomach. She holds there for a moment, listens to the fetus, smiles and then quickly leaves. Simultaneously, Tom has found what appears to be the only adult on the island. The man goes on to explain that the children have gone mad and murdered all their parents and all the adults. His daughter is nearby but he feels powerless, he asks, "After all, who can kill a child?" Tom is horrified when moments later she beats her father to death.

4-24. Evelyn is visited by a young girl who is fascinated by her unborn child.

4-25. Tom is shocked to see a child beat her father to death and only smiles afterwards.

Tom and Evelyn escape to the other side of the island, where the children appear normal, and a boat awaits them, but it takes only a gaze from the rebellious children, especially the one first encountered on the dock, to turn the others against the adults. Before the boat arrives, the
children arrive *en masse* pouring down the mountain like an infestation of angry army ants. Tom and Evelyn rapidly escape in a Jeep and decide they must make a run for their own boat which is tied up in harbor.

Serrador's sunny and sweaty world of disorder and irrationality builds with increasing intensity and discomfort for the viewer. At this point, we have accepted with some difficulty, that children have erupted into unexplainable violence against their parents, but in the film's most unsettling sequence, an unborn fetus commits suicide by aborting its mother and itself. It is one of the most memorable sequences I have ever encountered in a horror film, Spanish or otherwise.

Tom and Evelyn's gauntlet derails on their way back to the dock because of their unwillingness to run over children who barricade the only road. They hole themselves up in a small room in a plaza building. When Tom has no alternative but to shoot a child or be shot, he does so, and the other children quickly retreat in shock that one of their own has been murdered. Evelyn, feeling very ill now, confesses to Tom the earlier encounter with the creepy young girl at
the restaurant. Considerable waves of pain overtake Evelyn and she screams that she knows her unborn child is trying to kill her. She pounds her fists against her stomach while Tom stands helplessly by, in shock and paralyzed with fear. Evelyn hemorrhages and dies in front of him. Of course, there is no medical doctor on the island; Tom was warned of this beforehand. But in all likelihood, however, any doctor would be dead by now. Tom passes out from sheer exhaustion and shock.

He awakens and decides to resume his gauntlet to the boat in the harbor. He finds himself surrounded in a matter of minutes.

4-28 & 4-29. Tom creates a hole by gunning down several of the children that block his path.

Perhaps it is the sight of one of the children holding a newborn that prompts Tom into action, but he shoots enough children to create a hole in their wall. Out of guilt or out of bullets is unclear, but Tom discards his weapon as he dashes to the dock to untie his boat. Once on the boat, the kids overwhelm him as a port authority ship nears.
The military guard aboard the boat only recognizes an adult viciously beating children despite Tom's cries to the opposite. Tom is shot and falls over into the ocean. The children kill the officers aboard the ship and discuss heading to shore, to Benhavis, where one child informs all the others that "There a lots of children in the world. Lots."

Despite this "downer" ending which was then currently in vogue with horror, *Quién Puede Matar a un Niño* was a substantial critical hit and did excellent business at home in Spain and in virtually every market in which it was distributed. Its themes, though proving difficult for some audiences, ultimately resonated as life affirming rather than the opposite. Unfortunately for the fans of these types of films and for the workforce that produced them, the Spanish horror film and its corollary genres, the spaghetti western and the "S" (soft-core) film, had already gradually begun to decline. By the time *Quién Puede Matar a un Niño* hit the cinemas, the numbers were waning compared to only a few years prior. There are many contributing factors that led to the gradual disappearance of these once abundant genres by decade's end, not the least of which are political in nature and shall be discussed in the next and last chapter.

These last two films discussed in this chapter *Una Vela para el Diablo* and *Quién Puede Matar a un Niño* exhibit cultural specificity in a way that earlier national and international film productions would, and for that matter, *could* not. The emerging trend to *explicitly* target Spanish culture or Spanish history reaffirms my assertions regarding national trauma, fascist
repression and the psychic aftermath of civil war. The significant distribution of these films into mainstream visual culture in Spain happened to coincide with the drafting of a new government and constitution. I believe that these films, in their sheer overwhelming numbers, were collectively utilized as part of a new constitutional framework which accepted its past and forged a new and more prosperous future.
La Residencia's influence can be measured in numerous films—among them Don Siegel's The Beguiled (1971) and Dario Argento's Suspiria, (1977).
CHAPTER 5

CONCLUSION

I stood beside Van Helsing, and said. "Ah well, poor girl, there is peace for her at last. It is the end!"

He turned to me, and said with grave solemnity, "Not so, alas! Not so. It is only the beginning!"

- Dr. John Seward: Dracula, 1897

"Whereof what's past is prologue; what to come."

The Tempest, Act II—Scene I - William Shakespeare

What happened to the Spanish horror film? Why did it vanish as quickly as it had appeared? Effectively, along with major structural shifts in Spain's new government and constitution (ratified in 1978) came certain new safeguards to offset and, it was hoped, prevent the risks of repeating failed policies. In retrospect, one might consider these safeguards in relation to the motion picture industry as "protectionist." Making Spanish films for Spanish people was the order of business for Spain's new government and its new Director General of Cinematography, Pilar Miró. Films proposed that were considered to be of "quality" and of an "artistic" nature were given priority and a greenlight. The idea was simple, fewer films but with an emphasis on "quality" and the "human condition." The Miró Law (El Ley Miró) was thus enacted in 1983 (but was de-facto since the late 1970s) to ensure that these were the conditions for filmmakers in Spain. Unquestionably, the law helped to kick-start the career of many voices that had previously been silenced, among them that of Pedro Almodóvar, whose career would later become something of a world phenomenon. Nevertheless, the policy remained very controversial due to the fact that the Spanish government still controlled vital aspects of the industry. Mainstream commercial cinema was to be de-emphasized, which brought fiscal subsidies and tax breaks for "commercial" projects to an immediate halt. Eugenio Martín, the
director and screenwriter of two of the films discussed in this dissertation, *Panico en el Transiberiano* and *Una Vela para el Diablo*, comments:

Before, you could do the horror films, the adventure films, conventional stories, but at that moment the conventional stories were finished. So, you had to have your personal way of filmmaking and that was very difficult. At that moment began a very difficult situation for many directors and many screenwriters. At that moment you had to tell human stories. It was much more difficult, some people could go on and some couldn't - screenwriters and directors both.

(personal correspondence)

By the late 1970s, with this cry for more characteristically "national" and "authentic" films, the following genres, both international and national, gradually ceased to exist: the Euro-horror/sex film, the Iberian softcore destape and the "paella" western (spaghetti westerns with Spanish locations and a predominantly Spanish cast and crew). As is often the case, the pendulum swung too far to the other end. It has been remarked that another sort of post-Franco nationalism had emerged at the close of the 1970s. Genres that had brought Spain the long-sought economic stability it had hunted for decades in the motion picture industry were casually dismissed and mostly forgotten. In an effort to raise awareness and redress this dismissal, this dissertation has focused scholarly attention on these films, the era to which they belong and the circumstances that allowed for their creation.

Also with Spain's new constitution came the legalization of hardcore pornography, which tapered demand for the sex (which was tame by comparison) featured in both the Euro-horror films and the destape. Beyond the Spanish legislative policies that ensured the death of these genres, this overall decline in production activity was additionally fanned by a shrinking distributive flow to once reliable exhibition outlets in The United States. The 1970s saw massive shifts in ownership paradigms and conglomerate; the grindhouse, arthouse and drive-in were drying up with the ever-expansive growth of multiplex theaters. *Jaws* (1975), *Star
Wars (1977), Superman (1978), and the other major avatars of the blockbuster era were drastically outperforming and outlasting the relatively low-concept Euro-horror offerings. Moreover, the aggressive implementation and eventual ubiquity of satellite television and subscription cable, couched with the lifestyle changes that accompanied the home video revolution, were making homebodies of large segments of the population.

Horror movie production during the 1980s and 1990s trickled to merely a few titles per year. The first major development for reviving horror as a more viable genre for production was born in Spain at the Sitges International Film Festival (which, like Spain's first horror film La Marca del Hombre Lobo, arrived in 1968). Sitges went on to establish itself as the number one festival in the world for fantastic cinema and in October 1998, Brian Yuzna, the American producer and creator of such films as Re-Animator (1985), From Beyond (1986), Society (1989) and Return of the Living Dead III (1990), met with the prolific Spanish producer Julio Fernández to discuss his plans to mold Barcelona into the new horror film center of Europe. In 2000, the dream was realized with the creation of their production company, "Fantastic Factory." The "Fantastic Factory" was very successful for Spain and the new millennium; it boasted internal consistency, employed new Spanish talent in front of and behind the camera, and was a very successful international distributor.

As Shakespeare wrote, "what's past is prologue," and as of this writing, the most recent and critically admired resurgence in horror movie production for Spain has taken place over the last decade. These films do not correlate in numbers to the "boom" of the late 1960s and 1970s, but building off of the success of the "Fantastic Factory," filmmakers like Álex de la Iglesia, Alejandro Amenábar, Paco Plaza, Nacho Cerda, Jaume Balagueró, Antonio Bayona and Guillermo Del Toro have completely embraced and resuscitated the genre. Indeed, Bayona's El
Orfanato (The Orphanage, 2007), Del Toro's El Laberinto del Fauno (Pan's Labyrinth, 2006), Jaume Balagueró and Paco Plaza's Rec (2007) and Rec 2 (2009) were all top moneymakers in Spain and abroad.

Additionally, many of these films went on to claim prizes at major international film festivals and award ceremonies. El Laberinto del Fauno (Pan's Labyrinth) a Spanish co-production with The United States and Mexico won three Academy Awards from an impressive six nominations. It also won major awards at the Los Premios Goya (Goya Awards), Spain's equivalent to the Academy Awards. Combining elements from horror, mythology and fantasy and set against the atrocities of the Spanish Civil War, El Laberinto del Fauno became the watershed moment in the new millennium for Spanish fantastic filmmaking, Tim Lucas writes:

Pan's Labyrinth is unmistakably a crown jewel of the Spanish fantastic cinema, possibly unprecedented as an example that was able to achieve commercial and critical success in America despite del Toro's admirable refusal to produce an English language dub track. We should take heart from its global success; not only because del Toro was able to produce such a film on his own terms, but because in this day and age, he has proved it is possible for even a sophisticated work of the fantastic to find a receptive American audience despite a resolute refusal to be Americanized. It represents simultaneous triumph of the fantastic cinema, international cinema, and art house cinema. (Lucas 30)

Likewise, Rec has been hailed as one of the most original and intense zombie films since George A. Romero ostensibly defined the genre with his Night of the Living Dead (1968). Rec was very successful and prompted an immediate English language remake (released in 2008 as Quarantine) and an equally successful sequel, Rec 2. These films (and many more) continue the Spanish tradition of feismo as an appealing and expressly national aesthetic to lens a film through. Both Rec and El Laberinto del Fauno employ this long-standing tradition of painterly composition in the cinematic process and celebrate Spain's long and rich history in painting. In both cases, the visual ingenuity employed by these directors is grounded within a
social and historic reality (bio-medical contagion in _Rec_ and The Spanish Civil War in _El Laberinto del Fauno_). To see _feismo_ once again featured prominently in a Spanish film is to acknowledge the long and difficult journey undertaken by the _vieja guardia_ (or, "old guard") of filmmakers who struggled with censors and battled with the government for artistic control. The Spanish iconography of Francisco de Goya is ever-present in the stills featured below in figure 5-1.

5-1. "Saturn Devouring His Son" (Goya, ca. 1819-23), Sra. Izquierdo devouring a fireman (_Rec_, 2007) and the Pale Man devouring a pixie (_El Laberinto del Fauno_, Pan's Labyrinth, 2006).
One of the major points that began this dissertation targeted the surplus repression facing a Spanish society sick with post-war malaise and economic despair. I have argued throughout this dissertation that horror films have the power to help us cathartically deal with anxieties and return to us what has been repressed. I believe the Spanish horror boom of the late 1960s and 1970s is a function of this process. Contained energies burst into a creative frenzy of filmmaking that Spain had not witnessed before, or, for that matter, since. Several of these recent films have used the Spanish Civil War not only as setting or backdrop, but also as their central antagonist, among them, *El Espinazo del Diablo* (The Devil's Backbone, 2001), and the abovementioned *El Laberinto del Fauno* (Pan's Labyrinth) and *El Orfanato* (The Orphanage, 2007). This ongoing negotiation of past traumas, present day fears, and anxieties regarding the future, still proves to be a fertile area for the imagination of filmmakers. History, whether it's our own personal past or a common national narrative, ultimately cannot be repressed or forgotten. In tracing Spain's horror movie genealogy, I have found that history has indelibly marked these films and possessed their narratives.

Where do I see contemporary Spanish horror cinema going? Although negative reviews and pretentious critical commentary will always be present, the fans of this genre instinctively know "good" horror when they see it. And, a lot of that "good" horror has been coming from Spain. If the successes of the previous decade (2000-2010) can be used to fortell, with some measure of accuracy, the chart that Spain will plot, then I predict that Spain will continue to produce impressive movies in a genre that for a long time it was prohibited from entering.

I've employed the occasional nautical metaphor throughout this dissertation and this is not by accident. Spain is a country known for navigation; it was, after all, the Basque navigator Juan Sebastián Elcano who first circumnavigated the globe and not the mistakenly credited
Ferdinand Magellan (who was killed in the Philippines). Many countries have had difficulty navigating modernity, particularly in the twentieth century. Spain, however, was "back on course" by the mid 1970s and on its way to becoming a freethinking society of ordered democracy. Facing uncomfortable truths can do that.
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ABSTRACT


by

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This project explores how a group of films produced, distributed and exhibited under the crumbling dictatorship of Francisco Franco's Spain can potentially lead us to a better understanding of the political, social and cultural conditions during this contentious period in Spain's long history. Between the years of 1968 and 1977 Spain experienced a boom in horror movie production that rivaled other sectors of production and yielded impressive statistics. This work canonizes these films in relation to their historical genesis, aesthetic characteristics and their social reception.
AUTOBIOGRAPHICAL STATEMENT

Nicholas G. Schlegel was born August 4, 1970 in Royal Oak, Michigan. He earned his BA from Eastern Michigan University and his MA and PhD from Wayne State University. Nicholas conducts research on horror, cult, and exploitation cinema with a global emphasis and balances critical studies with video production work. He enjoys teaching and travel.