

THE CONSTRUCTION OF EARLY MODERNITY IN SPANISH FILM

A Dissertation

by

MIGUEL ANGEL ZARATE CASANOVA

Submitted to the Office of Graduate Studies of
Texas A&M University
in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of

DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

August 2011

Major Subject: Hispanic Studies

The Construction of Early Modernity in Spanish Film

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ABSTRACT

The Construction of Early Modernity in Spanish Film. (August 2011)

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The presence of early modern Spanish history in Spanish film has received only limited scholarly attention. The entire group of Spanish films dealing with the Spanish early modern era has never been placed under study by any overarching research. This dissertation reframes the evolution of the cinematographic representation of the Spanish past as it studies the mechanisms employed by Spanish films in representing an essential part of Spanish past: early modernity. Studied are 19 period films that group themselves around some of most representative subjects in early modernity: the Monarchy and Nobility, and the Spanish Inquisition. Studied also is the most expensive Spanish period film, *Alatriste* (2006). Through the analysis of artistic, industrial, historiographical, and political elements, and the deconstruction of the historical message of each film, as well as the analysis of their reception, it is clear that Spanish period films set in early modernity tell us as much about the time of their making and the shaping of the historical consciousness of Spain as they do about the era that they represent on screen.

DEDICATION

To my parents, Miguel and Isabel, who have supported me in my endeavors all of my life.

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I want to acknowledge the support of my adviser Dr. Richard K. Curry, who has guided me through every step of my academic career in the United States. I also would like to thank the contributions to my research from my committee members at Texas A&M University and Autonoma University in Madrid. I also wish to acknowledge the sponsorship of my research by The Fulbright Commission and The Glasscock Center for Humanities at Texas A&M. Last, but not least, I want to express my gratitude to all of my friends who were there for me, and kept me going.

NOMENCLATURE

AGA	Archivo General de la Administración Alcalá de Henares
BOC	Board of Censors

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

The purpose of this research is to clarify the inner mechanisms employed by period Spanish films in representing the past, and to show how any historical film is tributary to its time of making.

What propels my interest in choosing this topic is my belief that film and early modern history are instrumental assets in the construction of the past of Spain. The title of this dissertation, *The Construction of Early Modernity in Spanish Film*, indexes this goal, to understand the intricacies of the filmic representation of the past by analyzing a large number of Spanish feature films that portray the second most recurrent period of Spanish history brought to screen. Early modern history, or early modern era, describes the historical timeframe at the end of the 15th century through the 18th century, ranging from different historical events that scholars generally assume to start at 1492 with the discovery of America and finish in 1808 with the outbreak of the Spanish Peninsular War. This historical era continues to be a reference for the conception of the Spanish past, as it is institutionally -for instance, in education- and popularly regarded as the peak of Spanish leadership in the arts, politics and economy. Moreover, regardless of its actual date, the word *España* is effectively used in the early modern period for its first time.¹ It is this intrinsic nature, early modernity and birth of the Spanish State, that allows early modernity to maintain its relevance, as it continues to be a topical subject in

This dissertation follows the style of *Revista Iberoamericana*.

Spanish politics as left, right wing, and separatist parties quote events and historical figures from the 16th-18th centuries when debating the identity of Spain (J. Soria n.pag).²

The early modern era stands out as a source of ideas in the shaping of the national identity of Spain, with several events -the discovery of America, the political unification of the Hispanic kingdoms, the Spanish Golden Age- that are held as milestones within the identity model of the nation. A quick look at the historical development of the curriculum of the subject of history in high schools in Spain reveals a constant prevalence of the 16th-18th centuries over the rest of historical eras (Valls Montés 2009, 73). One example of the traditional importance of this trend is that it becomes the first choice of topic to cyclically inspire the script of the most expensive Spanish film productions (i.e. *Alba de America* (Juan de Orduña, 1952), *El Dorado* (Carlos Saura, 1988), *Alatriste* (Agustín Díaz Yanes, 2006)), although they usually produce poor commercial results. An example of this trend is the film *Alatriste*. A cinematographic adaptation of the internationally best selling period novel by Arturo Pérez Reverte, it was expected by the Spanish press, the audience, and film critics to be the new way of filmmaking in Spain, which would dive into the Spanish past in search of ideas. However, the reaction of the press upon its release, revealed a concern from film critics about how the Spanish film industry has come up with its own vision of events, insofar connoisseurs, and historians questioned the dissemination possibilities brought by the film.

It is thus imperative to analyze how period films have cast and are casting different interpretations of topics/stereotypes of the history of Spain. The origins of the

Spanish state in early modernity offer vivid cinematic materials, primarily because there are so many dramatic episodes associated with early modernity: the struggle for the political unification of Spain, the height of Spanish political predominance in the world, the Spanish Golden Age in Arts, and the religious intolerance of Spain, personified in the Spanish Inquisition.

The list of 19 films that I have selected embraces these historical topics. The list is not exhaustive, but I have attempted to create a list with the films that make the representation of the early modern era their central point. I therefore left out other films which could have been part of this research, such as classical literary film adaptations, i.e.: Miguel de Cervantes' *Don Quixote*, the anonymous *Lazarillo de Tormes*, or Lope de Vega's *El Perro del Hortelano*. The reason for this selection lies in the atemporality of their original works, that is, an analysis on these films would bring more light into relations between the time of filming and its conception of the literary source, rather than its adaptation of Spanish early modern history. Except for a few cases, most of the films will be in Castilian Spanish, although one of them were in other languages of the Spanish state, such as Basque, and one of them was shot in English. Only a few of these films enjoyed some acclaim. Many of them were barely distributed and in many cases they scarcely covered their budget. But their commercial failure must not make us forget their actual potential: they are the ultimate expression of the conception by certain times of their own past, times whose sociohistorical heritage remains embedded in their own portrayal of that past.

HISTORY-FILM, A RECIPROCAL RELATIONSHIP

Among its many existing definitions, it is commonly agreed that history is the discipline that deals with the record of events and explains their causes. But what it is the use of history, what is its importance in our society? History is a necessity of Humankind, the necessity that every human group experiences in each moment of its evolution, a search in the past for meaning to present facts, events, and tendencies. There is little doubt that history is utilized in society in order to confer identity to a social group or even a nation. It provides uniformity, a common origin, and a sense of identity for a society.

From an interdisciplinary perspective, history is a series of texts that give shape to an image, a tradition, in other words, the historical memory of a society. The link between history and film occurs when the latter presents its own interpretation of past societies, or merely assuming any present or past perspective. Yet, it is undeniable that written history is not the only expression of history that may reach and influence public history. Film is an inner witness of the way in which a society thinks its own past, but it is also an active agent that incite several transformations in the mind of the spectators, as well as a medium that resorts to stereotypical representations and models in order to deliver a message and a view of the past (Lagny 187). As Pierre Sorlin asserts “most societies build up an image of their evolution and use it to organize and give meaning to their present life” (Sorlin 1998, 205).

When attempting to understand the nature of any filmic representation of history, one must face two undeniable facts: that filmed history is widely consumed nowadays,

and that our society is turning to a more visual conception of its past rather than a written one. It is also undeniable that film and TV contribute greatly to people's historical consciousness, because the physical reach of a film -temporal as well as spatial- enables it to reproduce visual information in an apparently more accessible way than written work. Indeed, like photographs or television pictures, period films have the ability to summarize, condense, and render comprehensible the difficulties of history (Moss 2).

Period films have become a representational and historical document that reflects both past the images and contemporary perspectives. They are an oblique reference to the present by reference to the past, its own visual sense of history that embodies textual complexity and acts as supplement and an extension to written history, as it adds depth to traditional written history. Filmed history has become an important asset in historical representation and dissemination, regardless from debates on how this form of divulgation about the past threatens the role of history itself as an academic discipline. In a visual society where images have gained predominance, filmed versions of the past of a nation are increasingly becoming a vehicle for the transmission of the past, and, according to Nora's assertion, then, film may play a role as the recoverer of history, offering a method of representation comparable to historiography itself (Grindon 223). For instance, film historian Mark H. Moss when accounting for the reasons that led him to the theorization of period film, states that the majority of his students today are exposed to history -understood as ideas, knowledge, and culture-, from film and television far more than from any print versions (quoted in O'Connor 17). Filmed history has therefore become an addition to oral and popular history as in the contemporary

world, the public demands "hallucinatory recreations of the past" in places of memory, cultural spaces of all kinds to which memory clings (Guynn 22).

ENTERTAINMENT AND CONTINUITY IN PERIOD FILM

Based on the attitude that has defined its inception, development, and overall effect, the historical film genre identifies itself with the trend just indexed. But a historical film is, above all, a commercial product whose earnings at the box office must return to the producers their production costs. It cannot replace academic history because filmmakers are typically less worried about depicting a historical time faithfully than telling a story that fits into the like of the audience. Unlike other forms of arts, such as poetry or photography, filmmaking is a daring enterprise, as each of its productions is made for fast consumption, requires a serious investment whose recovery is not always guaranteed, nor proportional to its financial effort.

As I stated, the majority of films are made in order to sell as a commercial product that must entertain people. This fact exposes another feature of period films: the uniqueness of the discourse of the historical film, which embeds distinctive abilities. Unlike other fiction genres, a period film must deal with a sometimes overwhelming factor for the filmmaker: the previous historical knowledge and/or conception by the audience on the topic depicted by the film itself. Every person is his or her own historian, creating idiosyncratic versions of the past that make sense given personal situations and experiences (Glassberg 10), and the film spectator is not an exception. Film audiences have a previous knowledge of any historical subject which may vary

from complete ignorance to full expertise, but regardless of the degree of such knowledge, it is true that their historical conception influences their reception of the film, as it either weaves or unravels the fabric of continuity in the film. As the risk of sounding too generalizing, we must admit that most examples of non-independent period film productions prove that filmmakers do not try to diverge from the general historical expectations of the public in order not to break the continuity in the film: *Zapata* (Antonio Aguilar, 1970) *La Reine Margot* (Patrice Chéreau, 1994), *The Patriot* (Roland Emmerich, 2000), *Elizabeth* (Shekhar Kapur, 1998), or *Bolivar soy yo* (Jorge Alí Triana, 2002).

In order for any historical film to succeed in its range of ability to deliver its message successfully, that is, to create the illusion of objectivity and be able to disguise the subjectivity, manipulation becomes necessary. Robert Brent Toplin sees historical films as poetic speculations about the past, and thinks that manipulating a historical film is a way of communicating a broader truth - the overall interpretation is more important than the detail (Toplin, quoted in Falbe-Hansen 112). It may be described using many terms, but this *broader truth*, *manipulation*, or *artistic licenses*, is what it is eventually conveyed on screen and makes any historical film a unique historical document. We must therefore analyze historical films not only for their historical accuracy of faithfulness to the time they represent but also we should analyze how this how this supposed inaccuracy becomes its creative interpretation, in other words, the very core of the film's interpretation of the past.

SCHOLARLY BACKGROUND AND SIGNIFICANCE

From a historiographical perspective, prior to the 1970s film historians did not used to see a meaningful relationship between filmic representations and their contemporary context, and they had little to say about commercial film production (Guynn 7). Film studies were more based on the accounting for artistic and biographical details of filmmakers, and sociohistorical analysis of film was limited to the works of pioneers like Siegfried Kracauer and his canonical work *From Caligari to Hitler*. The novelty of this book was its goal, that is, to utilize German film as a gate that led access to understanding the psyche of the German *volk* in the pre-Hitlerian years of the Weimar Republic, to use the film medium as a premonition of the Nazi catastrophe (Sánchez Biosca 1994, 107). Starting in the early and late 1970s, historians like Kevin Brownlow (*The Parade's gone by*), Marc Ferro (*Cinema and History*), and Pierre Sorlin (*Film in History, Restaging the Past*) among others, advocated for the sociohistorical analysis of film and for its eventual consideration as a historical source. In the 1980s, many film studies departments in the United States -influenced by the discourse arising from Cultural Studies- also considered films as a source for understanding society.

In regard to Spain, in order to understand the development of the concept of interdisciplinary film history it is helpful explain at some degree the evolution of film studies in Spain for the last 40 years. American-trained historians have used the term *interdisciplinary* since at least the early 1950s but the underlying concept of the interdisciplinary study of film-history only started to bloom in Spain by the mid 1970s. The studies on film in history have covered both the historical period film genre, and

how films manipulate and represent history in films. Among the numerous international manifestations of historical theory of film studies, one arose in France under the leadership of the philosopher Marc Ferro, whose book *Cinema and History*³ was published in 1975, and Pierre Sorlin's *The Film in History: Restaging the past* in 1980.⁴ These works coincided with the work that Spanish-trained historians began in the mid-1970s. Above all the advent of democracy brought a general interest for the national past in Spanish media and audiences. With the end the Francoist dictatorship in 1973, film studies produced the first generation of film historians in Spain (i.e. Ángel Luis Hueso, José María Caparrós, Román Gubern, Julio Pérez, and Ramón Sala Noguer), who have laid the foundations for the historical analysis which have resulted in remarkable initiatives such as the creation of the Research Center and journal *Film-Historia* at Universidad Autónoma at Barcelona, the foundation of Asociación Española de Historiadores de Cine, the foundation of the scholarly journal *Archivos de la Filmoteca Valenciana*, and the divulgation work led by Filmoteca Española (such as their effort in confectioning the minute catalogues of Spanish cinema

In addition to these initiatives, one of the first Spanish works in the relationship between film and history was a doctoral dissertation by Ángel Luis Hueso *El cine, fuente histórica del siglo XX*, defended in 1975 at Universidad Complutense, one of the pioneering studies on this subject in Spain (Caparrós 1989, 197). Soon the study of film and history was endowed with a measure of professional acceptance, as this breakthrough of research avenues in the 1980s would lead to the completion and defense of several dissertations focused on the cinematographic portrayal of different ages,

dissertations which were overseen in many cases by film historians Angel L. Hueso y José M. Caparrós Lera, or Jose Enrique Monterde,⁵ a generation of film historians that began their career as film critics. Another generation of film historians, this one coming straight from Academia -Josetxo Cerdán, Josep Estivill, Luis Fernández Colorado, and Valeria Camporesi among others- began to explore and face other fields of film history which did not receive attention before: film reception, economical or technological intricacies of the film field (Diez Puertas 15). The number of publications regarding the potential of history in the conformation of our notion of history began to grow significantly over this and the next decade.

In the last three decades in Spain, scholars from diverse backgrounds (film studies, Hispanic studies, art history, education, etc...) have contributed numerous works to the historical analysis of film and television. Many of them have focused on the relationship between film and history, producing theoretical and empirical studies on the power of period or *historical* film to evoke the past. Due to the shift in methodological approach in the curricula of Films Studies in Spain, there has been an extensive production of scholarly works aiming to demonstrate the quality of the filmic representation. The growing interest in film from other disciplines led sociologists, anthropologists, and historians to initiate collaborations with film historians, or at least undertake their own interdisciplinary approach to film. One of these examples is the celebration of the interdisciplinary congress *International Conference Imagines, the Reception of Antiquity in Performing and Visual Arts* in October 2007, which included six studies of filmed images of Antiquity.⁶ In the same year another collaborative and

interdisciplinary approach to history, this time to Spanish queen Joanne the Mad, is *Juana of Castile: History and Myth of the Mad Queen* published in 2008, which collects studies from different perspectives on the life and representation of the queen in order to deliver a common conclusion of the transcendence of her historical figure.⁷ One of the latest works on the sociopolitical nature and relationship of period film is the recent republication in 2009 of the dissertation by Luis Mariano González-González *Fascismo, kitsch y cine histórico español (1939-1953)*.

From the standpoint of the period film and also to underscore the fact that any film may be treated as historical by itself -as it can be treated as a historical document- this growing interest for the past in film led film historians in Spain to deal with this genre employing different approaches. Works centered on the genre have either catalogued and/or interpreted historical eras or events in film. Above all, the Spanish Civil War has become an era popular with filmmakers and the main topic that has sparked the attention of national and foreign film scholars, among them the early work by Román Gubern⁸ and Carlos Fernández Cuenca.⁹ This list of works of the Spanish Civil War on film has been continued to the object of study by in the 1990s. among many film scholars by Thomas Deveny,¹⁰ and by Santiago de Pablo who focused on the representation of the bombings of Guernica in Spanish war films,¹¹ along with his collaborative contribution with Jose María Logroño.¹² In the 2000s, the Civil War is still a reference as object of study Rodríguez Tranche,¹³ revised by Vicente Sánchez Biosca,¹⁴ and as a part of the project led by Alberto Elena in Universidad Autonoma de Madrid *El cine de las dictaduras europeas (1933-1945)* in 2002-2007.

Another contemporary historical event that has more recently arisen the attention of film historians is the War of Independence in Spain. This is the case with the essay by María López “El cine español y la Guerra de Independencia.”¹⁵ Coinciding with the celebrations of 200th anniversary of the beginning the conflict, Maroto de las Heras and Larrey Sand have published monographic works¹⁶ on the filmography devoted to this historical event.

The cinematographic representations of other historical ages have not been so exhaustively studied, but there exists a considerable number of works focused on Ancient Times, mostly on international productions.¹⁷ The Spanish Middle Ages has attracted similar attention, encompassing doctoral dissertations by Valverde and Sánchez in the late 1987 and 1992 respectively,¹⁸ and more recent works by Juan J. Alonso, Juan Antonio Barrio and José Rodríguez.¹⁹

Yet, the films set in Spanish early modern period has not managed to spark the same kind attention of film scholars. This film genre embraces more than one hundred and fifty feature films. At this time, only two scholars have written exclusive collective works on the cinematographic portrayal of Spanish early modern history. The most relevant work on this topic is still Rafael de España’s *Las sombras del encuentro, España y América, cuatro siglos de historia a través del cine* (2002).

De España’s study focuses on the different Spanish and international feature films that have chosen early modernity as a source of inspiration and setting for creating filmic stories, and remains the most extensive work in this area. De España’s work is comprised of the interdisciplinary analysis of over 100 films. With a strong emphasis on

the analysis of the filmic representations of the colonial history of Spain, this work by de España blends film critique with political analysis. Yet, his work has neither included many other films that narrate stories set in the early modern period of peninsular Spanish history, nor has it examined the sociological context of the countries where these films were produced and premiered.

The second collective work, *Las representaciones de la historia moderna en el cine* (2008), by J.M Santana Pérez and G Santana-Perez, is restricted in its approach to film reviews, and therefore does not undertake any socio-historical analysis of the films in any regard. Thus the group of Spanish films dealing with the early modern era, which embraces over 50 feature films, has never been place under study by any overarching research. Some of the films which belong to this group have been analyzed individually from a sociohistorical perspective in articles, and some book chapters (for example, *Esquilache* (Molina, 1989) in *La representación cinematográfica de la historia* by José Enrique Monterde, and also in the three leading scholarly publications in Spain: *Secuencias*, *Film-Historia*, and *Cuadernos de la Academia*).

METHODOLOGY

As a methodology to be employed in this research, I propose an interdisciplinary approach which combines a historiographical and political contextual exploration with Rosentone's model of analysis for the historical analysis in his article "Walker the dramatic truth as historical truth,"²⁰ as well as the consultation of the film press and censorship files.

American historian Frederick Jackson Turner wrote once that “the aim of history is to know the elements of the present by understanding what came into the present from the past” (52). Without intending to sound paradoxical, my work will reverse this asseveration. The aim of this dissertation is to understand what came into the past from the present in Spanish films. In other words, in studying the cinematographic construction of early modernity, I want to show that these films tell us more, or at least as much, about the time in which they were made than about the past in which they were set. My historical analysis of filmed history in Spain does not aim to criticize the ways history is portrayed in film production, but rather to account for the processes that bear such a portrayal.

Though generally regarded as “a window to the past,” historical films do not follow a scientific method when studying the past. They are extremely complex ways of producing historical film, and the ultimate representation of a certain historical period is less subject to scholarly history production than to aspects intrinsically related to production, art, and marketing. Thus, in order to fit a history lesson in such a limited range of time, a filmmaker will have to resort to the adaptation/distortion/invention/manipulation of what has been told in history books in order to convey his personal view of the past, that is, “communicating an overall interpretation of the past as the director sees it” (Falbe-Hansen 112). We must consider a period film as a lesson in history that must fit in a limited time, typically no longer than 120 minutes, a lesson that denies the complexity of written history in favor of a straight story and a disregard for alternatives (Moss 23).

As Pierre Sorlin writes, it is hopeless to answer all of the questions that a film poses (Sorlin 1980, 31). I thus must choose an array of questions that allows my research to find its way through the maze of multiple questions. The specific goals of this research aim to answer the following questions:

-Which historical topics/events from the Spanish early modern era are the most commonly chosen? What are the reasons for such a choice?

- What historical facts does the film select and discard? How does it develop them? How are they connected by the film? To what extent does the ideological and political time of the making of a period film influence its portrayal of historical events? In other words, the point is not to write and/or criticize any possible historical bias in any film, but rather to understand the ways in which any historical film makes its points, including the implicit visual and sound elements of interpretation -the art of the filmmaker-, reflecting commercial and market commitments, sociopolitical environment, scholarly view of a certain historical topic, and, whenever enough data is available for research, its audience expectations.

- How do filmic representations of the past interact with the audience conception of the past? Though limited, is it possible to identify some of the different signs that a historical film? Can we detect any recurrent issues raised by the reception of any film in regard to its representation of history?

SOURCES

The first condition for creating a scientific approach to historical films implies understanding the creation process of any historical film. To understand the cinematographic construction of early modernity in Spanish film, I will focus my analytic attention on the place of the authors of the film, while trying to understand the conditions in which the film was conceptualized, made, and released.

Regarding the procedures to be followed in order to accomplish the specific aims of this project, I will undertake an interdisciplinary approach to film analysis. To treat film from a national point of view, its analysis must be undertaken not only in aesthetic and cultural terms, but also in quantitative economical terms (i.e.: production, commercial ratio) and institutional units (each State has its own censorship-normative, commercial rules and financial aid for filmmaking).

The diversity of the aspects that must be examined to answer the questions proposed in my research requires consulting different fields: film history, political history, and reception studies. Due to this multiplicity of fields, it is crucial for my research to narrow the group of films and other sources that form the corpus of primary sources for this dissertation.

Concerning the categorization of the sources for this research, two different types of sources can be distinguished: primary, and secondary. The first group, those primary sources, consists of all the feature films selected for this dissertation. When considering different films to be part of my research, the following criteria of selection were used. Films must have been produced in Spain, or at least have a Spanish participation -co-

production- in producing the film. This criterion is imposed for reasons related to national identity of national cinema, since expanding this list of films and its subsequent socio-historical and reception analysis would not allow to employ an extensive approach.

The second criterion for film selection is that the story or time in which any film is set must relate directly to a topic from peninsular Spanish early modern history. Thus, excluded are the majority of colonial films made to date.²¹

The third criterion is also one of exclusion: to exclude silent films from the period 1900-1940. The reason for this selection, which excludes those films made in Spain during the silent era and the 1930s, lies in the lack of availability of primary sources, that is, the loss of copies of the many of the films, such as *Locura de Amor* (Ricardo de Baños, 1910), *Don Juan de Serrallonga* (Ricardo de Baños and Albert Marro, 1910). Also, because examining their reception would require a too specific research of audience and reception patterns of moviegoers in the silent era in Spain, where there appears to be little material for study. Moreover, the study of these films within the 1940-2000s timeframe allows for the establishment of an evolution in the modes and content of historical representation between the film shot in the years of Francoist dictatorship and those made in the Democracy years.

Another primary source will be production notes and original screenplays. Regarding production notes, no film can be treated in a fully historical way unless we seek to put ourselves in the place of the author(s)/director(s), trying to understand the conditions in which the film was created. John O'Connor reminds us that, when

performing a historical analysis on a film (73), we must be mindful that film productions are the result of complex collaborative efforts in which scores of people -producers, directors, screenwriters, cinematographers, editors, actors, and publicists- work together. The point of examining these notes is to determine possible changes in the original conception of the film throughout its production by comparing the final cut of the film to the original script. The availability of the original version of the screenplay of the film will condition the degree to which this part of the analytic process is available.

Regarding those sources relating to the reception of the film, another primary source will consist of those that assist in reading the reception of the film, such as published reviews in the press and in web sites, blogs, but also data regarding the distribution of the film.

The secondary sources will comprise diverse information related to the film's analytical works, theories about film, and scholarly production. The scholarly works to be consulted will range from publications (articles, books) on the corpus of film studies, publications of film theory, works on Spanish film history, Spanish sociopolitical history, to the most relevant historiography regarding the historical events represented on the screen.

ANALYTICAL APPROACH

The main premise that channels this research is that by analyzing historical films we have a chance of finding an embedded view of the present within the portrayal of the past. That is, the depiction of a specific past event in a film is influenced by the cultural

time in which such depiction is drawn, because historical films are examples of cultural works and participate in the cultural production of any society as such. The historical film is a dissertation about history which does not question its subject -a certain historical topic or event- but which establishes relationships between facts and offers a more or less superficial view of them (Rosenstone 1995, 23).

As Robert Rosenstone has made clear, “[...] for the historian, it is not an easy task to engage in this discourse, that is, to interpret each different background with its own vocabulary, agenda, goals, and boundaries” (Rosenstone 1995, 28). In order to understand the *symbiotic* relationship between historical films and history, we must undertake an multi disciplinary approach to the historical film, examining influences coming from different backgrounds that allows me to understand what O’Connor defines as the *interior history* and *interior-exterior history* of the document (97). Historical films cannot be treated simply as traditional written history, but on their own terms and using a specific approach to history on film. I thus propose the following structure of analysis, which consists primarily of two sections of methodology for the analysis of each film.

First, before engaging in the analysis of the films, I must explore their artistic, commercial, political, and scholarly contexts in which the film is created, by answering the following relevant questions in each context.

Political: In what way has the film has been marked by the political variations of its time? Does censorship or self-censorship make a historical film undergo important alterations?

Artistic: What decisions might lead a filmmaker to adapt history to his/her own filmic needs? As film historian Pierre Sorlin states, a film is not simply a story played by actors, it is a succession of information through a specific language -editing, screenplay, dialogs, costumes, cinematography, music- which creates an influence its content and through its relationships (Sorlin 1980, 29).

Commercial: Features are made with the intention of entertaining the audience. Do the audience expectations play any role in these alterations? The point is to identify what, if any, possible changes are made to a film project in its portrayal of history to please the audience.

Historiographical: What is the traditional view on a certain historical topic? What does historiography -referring to the work of historians, or anyone, based, in principle at least, on all the available documents- (Sorlin 1980, 17) say about a specific historical topic? Although also related to the commercial context, do films allow for the participation of historians?

Once I have taken into account the scope of influence of these questions, I will proceed with the analysis of each film itself. My research will follow Robert Rosenstone's applied model of analysis, and examine the discursive strategies used in the film to deliver any historical message (Rosenstone 1992, 203). The reason for adopting Rosenstone's model of analysis lies in its successful integration of historiographical investigation, historical discourse analysis and filmic and extra-filmic strategies of historical representation through three main areas: stages of interpretation, tasks of history and strategies of representation.

Stages of interpretation: I will attempt to identify the film's position within the evolution of the interpretation of the historical topic which is represented on screen by examining the evolution of the topic within the historiographical and, if all possible, within the popular memory tradition.

Tasks of history: I shall identify what traditional historical tasks the film fulfills. These tasks can be summarized into *recounting*, *explaining*, *interpreting* the events of the past, and *justifying* their portrayal. The point is to allow me to identify which historiographical tradition(s) (Marxism, Historicism, Nationalism, Romanticism...) the film may participate and what its influence in the articulation of the historical discourse is.

Strategies of representation: I will determine the usage of the strategies of representation of history in the films (Rosenstone 1992, 43). Some of the possible strategies utilized by a historical film include: *omission*, *condensation*, *alteration*, *invention*, and *deliberate anachronism*.²² The point in employing these strategies is to channel my analysis of the film's representation of history. Studying the application of these strategies in rendering history in the film will allow me to determine which historical details the films selects, which ones are not mentioned, how they are presented and what connections are shown with the interpretation or message of the film.

The first two strategies, *omission*, *condensation*, are common within any written, visual or audiovisual representation of history, and they answer to the nature of communication itself: a message must be delivered and thus a variable degree of information on a historical topic will be selected. The next strategies, *alteration* and

invention differ in that *alteration* typically changes documented facts by restructuring incidents or events (altering time, place, and participants), while *invention* freely creates characters and incidents. These strategies play a vital role in the creation or recreation of historical events on screen, insofar as both strategies are a direct result of the manner in which historical film “engages the arguments and ‘truths’ of our existing historical knowledge on any given topic” (Rosenstone 1992, 5). The last of the strategies, *deliberate anachronism*, aims, as Rosenstone states, “to point to inevitable interpenetration of past and present [...] to cast into doubt notions of historical distance and objectivity, and insist that the questions we take to the past always arise from our current concerns” (Rosenstone 1992, 5).

RECEPTION

Finally, if sufficient data is available, research will attempt to reach a general idea about reception in period films. In order to understand how period films play with and alter the historical impression of the audience, understanding how these filmic texts are read by the audiences is instrumental. In order to do so, I have collected lore including industrial rates, prizes, and general and feature press articles. In order to understand the previous historical knowledge of the audience on the topic depicted by the film itself, and thus reach a more complete picture on the effect of the film on the historical view of the audience and vice versa, I will analyse, compare, and reason any evidence that permits me to answer the following questions regarding the way individuals experience historical film based on their subject positions:

-Is it possible to identify any preconceived notions about the film and the historical period among viewers?

-Is it possible for these notions to affect the viewer's understanding and/or the believability of the historical period that is represented on the film?

The ultimate goal, is to approach the historical reception of the films in two ways: how these films interact with the audience preconceptions of the historical topic represented on screen, and how the audience reacts to the filmic representation: which aspects of an a specific period film are typically taken as loyal to their own conception of the historical time, and which are taken as distortions of the past, and account for the possible reasons that lead to this conception by the audience.

I start my analysis by considering the various factors that may have influenced how the film was viewed by researching all available data for research. Due to the stretched film production, the nature and availability of sources will inevitable vary, and the methodology that I propose will be more feasibly and reliably applied to contemporary film.

-Media accounts: printed and web-based press, weblogs, etc. It is important to remember that the opinions of film critics may not be representative of a large portion of the audience. Thus, I have also consulted others sources of media accounts, such as letters written to the editor, gossip columns, and newspaper and magazine articles.

-Sources from the film industry: fan fiction, Internet message boards, and fan clubs are examples of direct interaction between spectators and films.

-Fan discourse also forms a crucial element (possible merchandising, weblogs, etc).

-Box office results.

The use of materials from the press, the film industry, and fan culture as a means of analyzing a film's reception may not give a complete picture of how audiences interacted with a particular film; however, these sources do provide an impression of how a film is received. The study of reception should aim to attain the most complete and best possible impression of the way that filmed history interacts with the audience. To meet this end, I have attempted to infer the press historical reception of the films by analyzing the film reviews under five criteria:

1. Existing preconceptions among the press reviews on the historical topic depicted by the film.
2. Their own interpretation of the film's historical reading.
3. Remarks on technical details of the film (acting, editing, staging sound & music).
4. Ratings of the film. For standardization purposes, the ratings have been divided under four categories: excellent, fair/good, poor, and bad.
5. I have also taken into account the political adscription of the editorial line of the newspaper or the magazine, which is based on its open or covert support to a specific political ideology or party in Spain.

For films premiered during the Francoist dictatorship, additional sources for reception analysis can be provided: the provincial Delegate Reports *-Informes de*

delegados provinciales. These reports were written by State officials, accounting the reception of the film among different audiences during the first week of its projection at the province's capital. The reports cover the following aspects: 1) Audience reaction; 2) Aspects of the film that influence audience reaction; 3) Possible different reactions and sectors on audience reaction; 4) The Delegate's personal opinion. Examining these reports may pose a challenge at first sight, as they do not always answer this methodical answer sheet pattern. They make possible the identification of evolutionary patterns in the reception of these films, if only in very elementary terms, especially regarding the loss of audiences due to factors such as slow paced scripts, unrealistic staging or repetitive storylines. These reports must be taken cautiously, as they are not subject to the laws of freedom of speech and it is impossible to verify their accuracy. But a careful analysis shows how these reports are more critical to patriotic Spanish films than what one should expect at first: they did write very critical reports on patriotic historical films in account of their cinematographic flaws. Even during these films' commercial height in the 1947-50 years, the delegates wrote harsh critics on these films, also at their commercial decline with films such as *Alba de América* (by Juan de Orduña, 1953).

Yet, I must note the limitations of employing this model, since it does not include materials such as polls made at the theater that help attain a closer and more examination of the reception of the film. As reception theory argues, "contextual factors, more than textual ones, influence the way the spectator views the film or television program" (Staiger 1). The materials in this study of the reception are thus not nearly complete. As context-activated models of reception prove, when looking at the historical

circumstances surrounding reception to place the reader/spectator in context, we must examine everything from the individual subject's position to the text's mode of production and the circumstances of exhibition. It is the sum of these events that gives meaning to the viewing or reading experience. Also, it must be noted that this analysis faces further limitations: there is limited data available concerning the reception of the films made prior to democracy: many studies on box office, press reviews, and moviegoer practices in films made prior to 1975 are generally biased by the nature of the sources consulted, because they were collected, stored, and strongly censored by the dictatorial apparatus. Box office records are also to be distrusted until the 1990s as many theaters did not disclose their actual sales records, in the hope of receiving greater state funding by lowering their incomes.

All in all, the purpose of this approach to the reception of the film is only to attain a general picture of how period films play with and alter the historical impressions of the audience.

DISTRIBUTION OF CONTENTS

By organizing these chapters around specific historical subgenres and not by their year of release, I attempt to provide an insight of the evolution of this genre by analyzing the evolution of its historical representation.

From the days of the idealization of the discovery of America in *Alba de América* (1951) to the expression of the rawness and cruelty of the daily life of the 17th Century in *Alatriste* (2006), this dissertation is an attempt to arrive at an understanding of this film

genre and the reception of early modern period. It is an attempt to understand the intricacies of art form which not only feeds from the contemporary conception of history at the time of its making, but also feeds the same conception with its own way of interpreting and disseminating history. In the same spirit as Rafael de España's work, this dissertation chooses a thematic approach to the genre rather than a chronological array, this privileging the analysis of the historical topic at the expense of a more linear, yet limited and cataloguing, perspective.

This dissertation is organized as follows.

Chapter II is titled "The Royal Biopic", because it focuses on the biographies of monarchs and noblemen. This chapter will examine the construction of the cinematographic representation of the lives of Joanna the Mad in *Locura de amor* (Juan de Orduña, 1948) and *Juana la loca* (Vicente Aranda, 2001), Queen Isabella I in *Alba de América* (Juan de Orduña, 1948) and *La Reina Isabel en Persona* (Rafael Gordon, 2000), and military leader and nobleman John of Austria in *Jeromín* (Luis Lucía, 1953). The main theme of this chapter is the analysis on how and why different historical times have portrayed different these historical figures.

In Chapter III, "Politics and court in early modern Spain", the analysis deals with controversial topics, such as the different political conspiracies that took place at the royal court in Spain during the 16th-18th century period: The revolt of Las Comunidades in *La Leona de Castilla* (1951, Juan de Orduña) the assassination of Secretary Juan de Escobedo (*La Princesa de Éboli*, Terence Young 1953 and *La Conjura de El Escorial* by Antonio del Real in 2008), the decadence of the Habsburg dynasty in *El Rey Pasmado*

(Imanol Uribe, 1991) the French connections of first Bourbon king, Philip V, in *La Princesa de los Ursinos*, by Luis Lucia (1947), the revolt of Madrid in *Esquilache* (Josefina Molina, 1987).

Chapter IV is dedicated to a polemical topic, the Spanish Inquisition. Different themes are present within this chapter: the idealization of the Holy Office in *La Dama del Armíño* (Eusebio Fernández Ardavín, 1947), the corruption of the institution itself in *El Segundo Poder* (José María Forqué, 1976), the inquisitorial repression in the Basque Country in *Akelarre* (Pedro Olea, 1984), the perpetuation of the Spanish Black Legend in Spanish international co-productions *Torquemada* (Stanislav Barabas, 1989), and *Goya's Ghosts* (Milos Forman, 2006).

Chapter V is devoted to a retrospective and perspective analysis on historical filmmaking in Spain by analyzing one of the biggest commercial flops in Spanish filmmaking *Alatriste* (Agustín Díaz Yanes, 2006). This chapter will examine the cinematographic construction of history by taking this commercial failure as a point of reference, that is, the discrepancy between the expectation of film critics and viewers sparked by the novels by Pérez Reverte, and the narrative and artistic decisions made by the director during the adaptation of the film.

Chapter VI presents the conclusion for this dissertation, in which I will recollect which modes representation and historical topics are most frequently utilized by the filmmakers in the reconstruction of the historical period reveal an interpretation of the past from a contemporary sociopolitical perspective.

NOTES

¹ The actual time within the 16th -18th period in which the term *España* can be used without raising controversy is now the 18th century, with the implementation of the new political administration of the Bourbon dynasty, The Nueva Planta Decrees signed in 1715.

² For instance, former president of Catalonia Jordi Pujol, has called for the need to reexamine the sovereignty and territorial administration of Spain over the last decade by recalling the Nueva Planta Decrees and their suppression of the institutions, privileges, and the ancient *fueros* of the areas that were formerly part of the Crown of Aragon: Aragon, Catalonia, Valencia, and the Balearic Islands (J. Soria, n.pag).

³ Ferro, Marc. *Cinéma Et Histoire*. Paris: Denoël, 1977. Print.

⁴ Sorlin, Pierre. *The Film in History: Restaging the Past*. Totowa, N.J: Barnes & Noble Books, 1980. Print.

⁵ Regarding one of his first works on the relationship between film and history, one title must be referenced, Monterde, José E. *Cine, Historia Y Enseñanza*. Barcelona: Editorial Laia, 1986.

⁶ Some of the examples of historiographical works are:

Antela Bernárdez, Borja & Prieto Arciniega, Alberto. "Alejandro Magno en el cine".
Castillo, Pepa. *Congreso Internacional "imágenes", La Antigüedad En Las Artes Escénicas Y Visuales: Universidad De La Rioja, Logroño 22-24 de Octubre De 2007 =*

International Conference Imagines, the Reception of Antiquity in Performing and Visual Arts. Logroño: Universidad de la Rioja, 2008: 21-56. Print.

Lapeña Marchena, Oscar. “La ciudad antigua en el cine: mucho más que un decorado”. Castillo, Pepa. *Congreso Internacional "imagenes". La Antigüedad En Las Artes Escénicas Y Visuales: Universidad De La Rioja, Logroño 22-24 De Octubre De 2007 = International Conference Imagines, the Reception of Antiquity in Performing and Visual Arts*. Logroño: Universidad de la Rioja, 2008: 231-252. Print.

Molina, José. “A través del espejo Preocupaciones contemporáneas por la paz mundial en el cine histórico sobre la antigüedad”. Castillo, Pepa. *Congreso Internacional "imagenes", La Antigüedad En Las Artes Escénicas Y Visuales: Universidad De La Rioja, Logroño 22-24 De Octubre De 2007 = International Conference Imagines, the Reception of Antiquity in Performing and Visual Arts*. Logroño: Universidad de la Rioja, 2008: 189-198. Print.

⁷ Gómez, María A, Santiago Juan-Navarro, and Phyllis Zatlin. *Juana of Castile: History and Myth of the Mad Queen*. Lewisburg: Bucknell University Press, 2008. Print.

⁸ Gubern, Román. *1936-1939, La Guerra De España En La Pantalla: De La Propaganda a La Historia*. Madrid: Filmoteca Española, 1986. Print.

⁹ Fernandez, Cuenca C. *La Guerra De España Y El Cine: Tomo I*. Madrid: Editora Nacional, 1972. Print.

¹⁰ Deveny, Thomas G. *Cain on Screen: Contemporary Spanish Cinema*. Metuchen, N.J: Scarecrow Press, 1993. Print.

¹¹ "El bombardeo de Gernika información y propaganda en el cine de la Guerra Civil." *Film-Historia*, 8.2-3(1998): 225-248. Print.

¹² Pablo, Santiago, Logroño, J. M. "Cine y propaganda en el País Vasco durante la Guerra Civil: los reportajes franquistas." *Film-Historia*, 3.1-2 (1993): 238-249. Print.

¹³ Rodríguez Tranche. "El cine del bando nacional durante la Guerra Civil, El frente y la ocupación de Madrid a través de la propaganda cinematográfica del bando nacional en la Guerra Civil." *Cuadernos de Información y Comunicación*, 12(2007): 95-118. Print.

¹⁴ Sánchez Biosca, Vicente. *Cine Y Guerra Civil Española: Del Mito a La Memoria*. Madrid: Alianza, 2006. Print.

¹⁵ López Talavera, María del Mar. "El Cine Español y La Guerra De Independencia: Acordes Y Desacuerdos." *Aportes: Revista de historia contemporánea*, 16.46 (2001): 65-77. Print.

¹⁶ Maroto, de H. J. *Guerra De La Independencia. Imágenes En Cine Y Televisión*. San Sebastián de los Reyes, Madrid: Cacitel, 2007. Print.

Sanz, Larrey G. *El Dos De Mayo Y La Guerra De La Independencia (1808-1814) En El Cine*. Madrid: Consejería de Cultura y Turismo, 2008. Print.

¹⁷ Below are, in chronologically order of publication, some of the most representative contributions from Spanish historians:

Hueso Montón, Ángel Luis. "El mundo clásico en el cine histórico." *Cuadernos cinematográficos* 6 (2003): 75-85. Print.

España, Rafael . *El Peplum: La Antigüedad En El Cine*. Biblioteca Dr. Vértigo, 13. Barcelona: Glenat, 1998. Print.

Solomón, José. Peplum. *El mundo Antiguo en el Cine*. Madrid, 2002. Print.

España, Rafael . *La Pantalla Épica: Los Héroes De La Antigüedad Vistos Por El Cine*. Madrid: T & B, 2009. Print.

¹⁸ Jerónimo I. Valverde Tesoro. *El mundo histórico medieval en el campo cinematográfico*. Dir. Angel Luis Hueso Montón, Dpto. de Historia Universidad de Barcelona, 1992. Print.

Santiago Sánchez González. *La Edad Media en el Cine*. Dir. Manuel de la Vallina y Velilla. Dpto. de comunicación audiovisual y publicidad, II. UCM, Madrid, 1987. Print.

¹⁹ Rodríguez García, J.M. "Historia medieval y cine español" *Historia 16* (2004): 99-107. Print.

Barrio Barrio, Juan Antonio. "La Edad Media en el cine del siglo XX". *Medievalismo*, 15 (2005): 16-32. Print.

Alonso, Juan J, Enrique A. Mastache, and Jorge Alonso. *La Edad Media En El Cine*. Cine historia. Madrid: T&B Editores, 2007. Print.

²⁰ Rosenstone, Robert. "Walker: The Dramatic Film as Historical Truth." *Film Historia*, 2.1(1992): 3-12. Web. 2 May 2011.

<<http://www.publicacions.ub.es/bibliotecaDigital/cinema/filmhistoria/ArtRosenstone.pdf>

>.

²¹ The primary reason for this exclusion lies in the fact that films on the Spanish presence in colonial Latin America have already been studied by the work by Rafael de España mentioned before.

²² For clarification purposes, each time I employ these terms, they will appear edited in italics.

CHAPTER II

THE ROYAL BIOPIC

The genre of the biopic refers to those films that choose to portray the life of a historical person, past or present (Custen 5). The appeal of the period biopic lies in seeing an actual historical figure whose actions left its imprint in history and there are known mostly in public. In narrating, showing and criticizing/celebrating a historical figure, the period biopic allows for an interpretation -the filmmaker's- of that very same figure in history. As Bingham writes, "at the heart of the biopic is the urge to dramatize actuality and find it in the filmmaker's own version of the truth" (10). This very version of the truth is, for the purpose of this research, a source of knowledge to understand the evolution of early modernity on film. The portrayal and/or the evolution of a historical figure on film allows for the understanding on how a certain time (the time of the film's making) has seen a particular queen, nobleman or common person.

Unlike other forms of biopic, the early modern figures depicted on the screen ceased to exist long time our eldest generation were born. Thus, in approaching the persona of a historical figure, the biopic genre shapes the lives of these figures according to its placement and perception within popular and academic history. The biopic therefore may render and perpetuate legends, bywords, and any form of popular history that the film depicts on the screen. It may even use the life of a historical figure for propagandistic purposes. And finally, the biopic embeds a series of contemporary values to bring a certain historical figure close to the audience. That is why the analysis of re-

construction of historical figures on film will tell us much about the commercial, artistic motivations of the time of making of a biopic, but also much about the era which brings it to screen.

The films analyzed in this chapter include two films on the life of Queen Isabella I, another two films on the life of Queen Joanna I, and one film on the childhood of Don John of Austria. They are perhaps, three of the most representative historical figures in Spanish early modernity, and their analysis on film can help us answer whether the same figures evolve and go through cycle changes, and whether the period biopic play a powerful part in creating and sustaining popular and academic history, or how much a film may defy historical conventions on a historical figure by bringing its own interpretation.

THE CINEMATOGRAPHIC EXTENSION OF A PERPETUALLY ROMANTICIZED MONARCH IN *LOCURA DE AMOR* AND *JUANA LA LOCA*

The first two films in this chapter have played a part in the construction of a historical figure in Spanish historical memory: Joanna I of Castile or as popular memory has come to remember her, Juana la Loca -Joanna the Mad-. *Locura de Amor* and *Juana la Loca*, shot respectively in 1948 and 2000, are two films which use different cinematographic strategies to deliver a different view on the life of Joanna of Castile. The same interpretations that, though minor existing differences, anchor their sources in the very same classic interpretation of the personae of Joanna, and help preserve the romantic and traditional interpretation of her reign that have existed .

THE STORY AND HISTORY OF JOANNA I

Perhaps few political figures in Spanish history have been as perpetually romanticized in national arts and media as Joanna *the Mad*. Queen of Castile (1479-1555), Joanna I remains a mostly unknown figure in Spanish memory except for the tumultuous relationship between her and her husband Philip I, King of Castile. Born in 1479, Joanna was the daughter of the Isabella and Ferdinand, monarchs of Castile and Aragon. She was raised in the traveling Court of the Catholic Monarchs and educated in religious studies, etiquette, arts of dance and music, and languages. In 1496, at the age of sixteen, she was betrothed to Philip, Duke of Burgundy, also known as Philip *the Handsome* because of his reputation as a successful ladies man. Joanna left Castile and she married Philip in Flanders in October 1496. Thus began a fruitful marriage, and between the years 1498 and 1507 Joanna gave birth to six children: two emperors and four queens. As a woman and daughter of the king and queen, she was not expected to become heir to the Spanish kingdoms according to the dynastic law of House of Trastamara. Yet, the death of her brother and sisters made Joanna heiress to Castile and its lands in America upon the death of her mother Isabella in November 1504. Then, Joanna and Philip traveled for the second time to Spain to take possession of Castile, but a triple conflict involving Joanna, Philip, and Ferdinand started regarding the control of that kingdom.

For years, Philip tried to prove Joanna's insanity in order to become king of Castile. According to popular culture, such an illness was the result of Joanna's extreme jealousy for her husband, who led a dissolute life. In 1506 Philip died suddenly,

apparently of typhoid fever. For a month, Joanna tried to exercise her rights as Queen of Castile to rule alone in her name, but soon her father set up a regency council under Archbishop Cisneros, and eventually he would become king of Castile, confining Joanna to the monastery of Saint Claire of Tordesillas. After the death of her father and the coronation of his son Emperor Charles V as king of Castile in 1517, Charles would continue Joanna's confinement until her death in 1555 at the age of 75. She had spent nearly 50 years imprisoned.

An unprejudiced historical study of Joanna I has been relatively recent topic. Academically, the first historical studies by Gustav A. Bergenroth in 1868¹ raised the historical interest in this political figure, and they were widely criticized for portraying her as an unfaithful and indifferent to Queen Isabella. The first Spanish study, a reply to Bergenroth's work, appeared in the late 19th century by Antonio Rodriguez Villa.² In 1930 and 1942, Ludwig Pfandal and Nicomedes Sanz asserted that Joanna's behavior was the result of schizophrenia. An analysis of the historiography about Joanna in the last 70 years reveals a series of recurrent questions regarding her life. The most important of all is whether she was imprisoned because she was actually mad or whether she was simply the victim of a political conspiracy?

Secondary questions arise when seeking an answer for the question above:

- Was Joanna a helpless political figure, lacking any political initiative?
- Was King Philip fully responsible for her imprisonment, or was he himself manipulated by his counselors?
- To what extent did her father conspire to seclude her in a monastery?

Nowadays the large historiography on Joanna has not come to a full agreement in answering the questions above, but it can be agreed that the most predominant view of the Queen nowadays is the one that portrays her as an incapable monarch whose mental condition was aggravated by the intrigues of those around her. Spanish historian Manuel Fernández Álvarez in 2006³ headed the group of historians that looked at Joanna as a helpless victim of political schemes (Fernández Álvarez 12) that aggravated her mental condition. Yet recent studies, such as the one by Bethany Aram in 2005,⁴ have strived to get off the romantic image and begin to expose that the “actual” state of the mental condition was portrayed or interpreted by contemporary peers depending on their real political interests (Aram 281).

These two films examined are part of the continuation of a long romantic tradition that started in the 19th century and has continued to present,⁵ as both films are adaptations of the drama *Locura de Amor* by Tamayo y Baus.⁶ The drama play by Tamayo y Baus relies on the decisive influences in the shift of the portrayal of the Joanna I. Before Tamayo y Baus, French historiography tradition had stated that Joanna was simply mad, but the 19th century meant the beginning of the romantic tradition on Joanna, whose insanity began to be interpreted as caused by the passion and jealousy towards her husband. Such a tradition limited the account of events of the reign of Joanna to those relating to her madness and the infidelities of her husband. In other words, they were limited to only five years in the life of Joanna. That is why, despite their differences in the bodily physical expression of the relation between Joanna and Philip, both films become extensions of the romantic legend.

JUAN DE ORDUÑA'S *LOCURA DE AMOR*

Locura de Amor is one of the films regarded as one of the few examples of successful historical films released during the Francoist dictatorship. It was an old project that was started in the 1941 by film production company UFISA and recovered in 1944 by the leading film production company CIFESA when the company had absorbed the defunct film company UFISA. Along with the merge, CIFESA bought the rights to the 1941 film project *Locura de Amor*. The project would come to a standstill on two occasions: first with the rejection of the first script by CIFESA's department of screenplays (Fanés 189), and again in 1945 when CIFESA experienced an economical crisis due to the end of WWII. The shooting of the film would eventually take place in 1947 from February 14 to October 20, with an official budget of over four million pesetas.⁷ Upon its premiere on October 8 in the Rialto Theater, Madrid, the film was critically acclaimed, and it earned the unprecedented amount of nearly seven and a half million pesetas.⁸

Juan de Orduña's *Locura de Amor* follows the main plotlines of the original drama by Tamayo y Baus. At some point during the first quarter of the 16th century, an old and secluded Joanna receives the visit of her son Emperor Charles V, who is unaware of the chain of events that led her mother to madness. Escorted by Álvaro de Estúñiga, the emperor witnesses her severe state of mind, and listens to Estúñiga while he narrates the events that led the Queen to madness: her passion for her husband, his continued infidelity with the Moorish courtesan Aldara, and the political intrigues against the Queen led by the Flemish knight Philibert of Vere. This counselor turns King

Philip against Joanna by attempting to prove her insanity in order to let Philip dethrone her. In the meantime, Joanna's allies -headed by Estúñiga and the Admiral of Castile- try to prove the opposite and the country is on the verge of civil war. Eventually Aldara joins efforts with Estúñiga and assassinates Philibert of Vere. The conflict comes to a standstill as Philip falls suddenly ill, and begs Joanna for her forgiveness before dying. She concedes but turns mad due to her passion and inability to accept her husband's death and thus ends her days secluded in a monastery.

THE TASKS OF HISTORY IN *LOCURA DE AMOR*

Locura de Amor is a drama film whose construction of the representation of the historical period, that is, the early 16th century in Spain and the reign of Joanna and Philip, is shaped from or responds to the expectations raised by the political establishment of the time of making the film. Its depiction of the historical events portrayed in the film will mirror the same pattern used by other contemporary historical films of the 1940s. In such films, historical events mirror the contemporary mannerist and chauvinist conception of Spanish history, a cinematic depiction of a country under siege such as in *La Princesa de los Ursinos* by Luis Lucía in 1947.

In order to convey such a depiction of history, *Locura de Amor* employs different strategies of representing history which may or may not respond to traditional historical tasks. Such strategies are, in the same way as with other historical films, *condensation*, *omission*, *invention*, and *alteration*.

The first one of these tasks, *omission*, is one of the central points that support the romanticized view of Joanna. By restricting the account of events to nearly four years of the life of Joanna, encompassing her return to Spain from Flanders and the death of Philip, the filmmaking is restricting the interpretation of Joanna's reign under the same premises of the romantic tradition. But, it is also an efficient strategy in order to avoid more sensitive parts of the life of Joanna, such as her relation with two iconic figures in the founding of the Spanish State: her father Ferdinand II and her son Charles V.

Perhaps the most frequently used strategy in the film, the *alterations*, aims to polish those conflictive historical details of the reign of Joanna, while at the same time portray an image of Spain that serves the political ideology of Francoism. For this, we should take a look at the alienation of the characters in the story. On the one hand, we find those who defend Joanna, who are almost entirely composed of Castilian noblemen headed by the Admiral of Castile; while on the other hand, we have the Flemish nobility aided by a few Castilians, who scheme against Joanna.

Moreover, the language and statements of characters show how the characterization of the characters creates a chauvinist conception of a country under siege (González González 141). Such a conception clearly stands out in the characterization of Philibert of Vere. The power of this character is overemphasized in regard to his real sphere of influence in that time. Thus by *altering* the role of this counselor of king Philip, capable of manipulating a rather innocent king and forcing him into signing blank decrees, the story intends to force the audience to sympathize with Joanna's cause.

In contrast, Spanish knight Álvaro de Estúñiga is idealized in order to offer a nemesis to the scheming Flemish. As Gómez has stated, “Don Álvaro evokes at the same time the image of the loyal and disciplined soldier [...] The *raison d'etat* prevails in him as he sacrifices his love for his patriotic duty” (Gómez 2008, 1). The characterization of the allies of the Queen answers to the conception of the Francoist monk-soldier, amongst whose values are defense of Christianity, nobility and defense of the motherland above all, but at the same time, this monk-soldier maintains a morally impeccable attitude towards his feminine lovers, with whom he never consummates his passion (González Aja 75). Unlike the allies of Philip, their ultimate aspiration lies above personal ambitions, that is, to serve Christendom and their Kings.

Such a mannerist depiction of this conflict mirrors some of the vision of international affairs by Francoism, the perpetuation of the image of a country under siege. The state of international affairs in Spain by 1948, along with pro-governmental historians helped shaped this chauvinist conception of the past: a country expelled from the United Nations for its allegiance to fascist regimes during WWII. A quick look at the curriculum of the subject of history in Spanish high schools reveals this trend (Valls Montés 1984, 74). The mannerist characters depicted according to a black and white thought are not the only example of *alteration* in Orduña’s film. The purpose of presenting the political crisis as the result of foreign conspiracies is to give the political crisis a non-national source. By doing so, the film barely mentions King Ferdinand -who took sides with Philip while imprisoning her daughter- by mentioning him as a potential ally for the cause of Joanna.

Locura de Amor employs a film strategy not found in historiography: the flashback. The film opens with the visit of young Emperor Charles V at a monastery, where he comes to know about the condition of his mother, the “real story” and conspiracy led by De Vere against her, and her subsequent and irreparable condition. This cinematographic portrayal serves a clear purpose: to exempt Charles V from any responsibility regarding the imprisonment of his mother, at a time -1948- when Charles V was regarded by the Francoist regime and historiography as a model and inspiration for the reestablishment of the foundation of the Spanish Empire, to be Charles V, Emperor of Germany and king of Spain.

Closely related to the *alterations*, the *inventions* in *Locura de Amor* work as powerful and representative assertions of the contemporary conception and interpretation of Queen Joanna. By showing her busting and yelling at Philip in a cantina while he meets with his mistress, the film distances her personality from the ceremonial attitude that would be expected from a monarch. By showing her forgiving Philip without hesitation, the film exposes both her irresponsibility as a Queen and her overly condescending attitude as a helpless cheated wife. First, as partial irresponsibility holding to her political duties, “¿Locura defender el respeto de mi nombre? Mi madre me dice, ‘piensa en tus deberes’, yo digo, ‘pienso en ti’. Aunque me aborreces, cada día te quiero más, y más / Is it madness to defend my name? My mother tells me to keep to my duties, but I say I think about you. Even though you despise me, every day I love you more and more.” With these *inventions*, Joanna fits into the conservative conception of women during Francoism, which embodies restricting specific moral, ethical and social

values: a figure whose role as a political figure is seriously impaired by her feminine condition. As Harvey examines in his study of heroic images of Spanish women in schoolbooks for girls published during the dictatorial regime, he states that the Francoist educational system aimed at indoctrinating women within a separate domestic sphere in which a “woman was to complement her husband; her sacred duty was to be a mother,” whereas men took care of politics public affairs (281-282).

As Ballesteros has noted, “hysteria, masochism and sanctity merge into the persona of the queen, thus nullifying her autonomy and highlighting her feminine virtues: love, loyalty and charity” (61, my translation). Such an alteration in the depiction of Joanna links with the very depiction of women in the film. Whereas the protagonist role of the woman can also be seen as subverting the regime's reactionary discourses on the social role of women in the domestic or private sphere (Martín Pérez 71), it eventually proves to be a submission of the woman. The reality is that Joanna becomes an image of the fatherland that is subject to the actions of the men. According to Ballesteros:

La mujer heroica podrá serlo siempre que se mantenga en su rol de mediadora, acompañante y facilitadora de la empresa militar masculina, siempre que siga siendo una "sombra de destino en lo universal / The heroic woman can only be heroic as long as she maintains her role as mediator, companion, and facilitator of the male military enterprise, as long as she continues to be destiny's shadow of everything that is universal. (65)

Even the character of Joanna herself questions this role, when she is about to attack Aldara and yells that men are lucky for having the right to sort out their differences with the sword. Herein lies the greatest difference between both films despite their restricting their interpretation of Joanna's life to her madness: whereas Orduña utilizes madness as an essentialist metaphor of the feminine, Aranda employs madness as an uninhibited expression of female sexual desire (Donapetry 153).

Last but not least, the film features a recurring feature among historical films of the 1940s in Spain, *Castilianization*. Often and wrongly employed in other period films such as *Amaya* (Luis Marquina, 1952), the term *España* to refer to *Castilla* is used indistinctively in historical periods in which *Spain* was not yet a united nation. The reason for such misuse lies in the heavily politicized conception of national unity within Francoist historiography, which canonized the prior reign of the Catholic Monarchs as unifiers of the Iberian kingdoms to such extent that it overlooked facts such as the attempt by King Ferdinand to split the Crown of Aragon from Castile. Indeed, at times the characters resort to an overly dramatic, teleological acting when Álvaro de Estúñiga refers to his kingdom -Spain, not Castile-.

Locura de Amor was a national commercial success with an effective ideological message embedded in its narration, as is clear from the reception of the film. Praised for the quality of the sets, the still fashionable melodramatic style, and the novelty of the genre, the film would become an example for later films. The analysis of 32 different film reviews shows excellent reviews in regional and national Spanish media. Regarding technical and artistic values, *Locura de Amor* was praised highly, and the majority of the

reviews point to the film as a giant leap for Spanish film industry (Kostka, n.pag) that showed the direction that future Spanish films should follow: blending high budgets and extensive resources that would place Spanish films on the same level as Hollywood productions. Above all, these reviews show a proud chauvinist message, hailing the patriotic virtues and political message of the film. In this sense, the analysis of the reviews reveals a general predisposition from the film critics to assume the guidelines of the romantic legend of Joanna. In this regard, the historical pre-conception of the press can be summed up in this statement: “El infortunado amor hizo que la infortunada Reina enloqueciera” (“Locura de Amor” 6 Nov 1948, n.pag).

Only a few reviews expose the changes in the life of Joanna, such as Guerrero Sáenz in the Catalan newspaper *La Vanguardia*, who states that the facts depicted in the film were distorted for the artistic reasons (8). One fourth of the reviews envision the reign of Joanna as a dramatic and pitiful parenthesis between the glorious reigns of her mother Isabella and her son Charles V, while at the same time, exhibiting the theory of the a conspiracy led by foreigners and Spanish traitors:

Don Felipe tuvo unos cuantos brivones y ambiciosos deseando enredar e intrigar y someter al reino a sus caprichos, entre ellos sus favoritos Don Juan Manuel y el marqués de Villena [...] Página triste que cede al reinado glorioso de Fernando e Isabel. / Philip had a few ambitions rascals who wished to meddle, plot and subject the kingdom to their pleasures, among them Don Juan Manuel and the Marquis of Villena [...] This was sad episode in Spanish history that giver way to the glorious reign of Isabella and Ferdinand. (B.S.A. n.pag)

Yet, overall the majority of the reviews display a historical preconception of Joanna as a romantic figure whose passion towards her husband drove her to madness, or being seen as a schizophrenic (n.pag). In the same way, reports made by the Provincial Delegates during the local release of the film bring similar results regarding the reception of the film.⁹ If taken as faithful, these reports share most of the points highlighted by the film critics, and they show a great success with all different types of audiences, who found the technical aspects and acting excellent, above all, the performance by Aurora Bautista. The majority -12 out of 15 reports-, show that the delegates found *Locura de Amor* a model for future historical films that could convey “the truly and honorable Spanish features versus Hollywood films” (AGA, file 36/3331) due to its high budget appearance. Below is a transcription of one of the most representative delegate reports that share this opinion:

- a. Well received by the most of the spectators.
- b. The acting by Aurora Bautista was highly regarded above all other details.
- c. Review of the delegate: the audience is clearly right. Moreover, the film praised Hispanic qualities, among them, nobility and honor against illegitimate interests. We do believe that the film’s success will outshine the success of foreign films.

(Report by Valladolid Delegate Santiago Juárez. December 7 1948. Found in AGA, file 36/3331. My translation)

The dossier of the film by the BOC shows an almost equal enthusiasm from the Spanish censors who approved both the script and later the film. Except for a change in

the location of sword fight between Estúñiga and De Vere -which originally was meant to take place inside a church (AGA, file 36/04673)- the original screenplay by Manuel Tamayo Castro was approved without major changes. On June 17, 1948 the film was approved by the BOC “without any cut”, who rated the film as suitable for general audiences, reported the film as “colossal”, and invested the film with the two maximum awards, *Primera Categoría* and *Interés Nacional*, allowing the film to be exported also. The film’s earnings went up to 7.4 million pesetas¹⁰ (AGA, file 36/3331), which more than sufficiently covered the production expenses declared to the BOC.

VICENTE ARANDA’S *JUANA LA LOCA* (2000)

Catalonian director Vicente Aranda is regarded today as one of the most representative and veteran figures in filmmaking in Spain, and his filmography stretches from the mid 1960s (*Brillante Porvenir*) into the 21st century, with his latest film *Luna Caliente* (2009). For over forty years, he has devoted his filmography to the exploration of passion and sexuality. By displaying different approaches, he has intuitively portrayed the bond between passion and characters. Regarding historical films, such an approach manifests itself in the exploration of the sexuality of the body of human beings, especially women’s, as a source of ideas to explain the constant clash between womanhood and society. Previous films such as *La Muchacha de las Bragas de Oro* (1980), *Amantes* (1991), *La Pasión Turca* (1994), and *La Mirada del Otro* (1998), reveal this trend in Vicente Aranda, whose exposé and art of filmmaking utilizes sexuality as the narrative core that propels the action. Indeed, it is not surprising for Aranda to have

chosen sexuality as the narrative approach to the historical figure of Joanna I under this premise. The following statements by the filmmaker show this his interest for Joanna I: “me atrae el personaje porque resulta que fue una precursora de lo que luego los surrealistas denominarían amor loco... / I am interested in her figure because she was a precursor of what the surrealists defined as mad love.” (Muñoz 2000, 25)

With a budget of over 800 million pesetas, the film was presented by the press as another adaptation of Tamayo y Baus’s *Locura de Amor*, although the plotlines vaguely match those of Orduña’s version. It is the year of 1496, Princess Joanna, aged 16, is betrothed for reasons of state to Philip, Habsburg archduke of Flanders, the son of the emperor of the Holy Roman Empire. Having arrived to Flanders, they instantly fall in love with each and other get married without further ado by a priest before the official ceremony. An intense emotion compelling sexuality and control over her husband arises in Joanna. It is not long before Philip became bored and began to have affairs while Joanna becomes overly jealous and attempts to keep him under control, but her unbecoming actions as a Queen are taken by her peers as a sign of mental instability. Upon the death of her mother Isabella, Joanna becomes Queen of Castile and must return to her homeland. There Philip’s spies and allies spread rumors about the possible insanity of the Queen in order to prove her mad and enthrone Philip as King of Castile. In the meantime Philip brings to the palace his Moorish mistress, Aldara, to live close to him disguised as a lady-in-waiting of the Queen. Being unaware of this, Joanna is blinded by jealousy and cannot confront the schemes against her. Philip, counting on the support of Joanna’s father, King Ferdinand, summons the Castilian Parliament to vote

for the dethronement of Joanna. She takes a last stand at the Castilian Parliament and stalls their decision to imprison her. Philip dies of the plague shortly after, and Joanna mentally breaks down, thus determining her final reclusion in a monastery, where she mourns her husband for fifty years, the rest of her life.

Released in 2000, the film coincided with a revival in the national and international interest for the figure of Joanna I, accounting for the publication of scholarly studies such as Ludwig Pfandl's *Juana la loca madre del emperador Carlos V: su vida, su tiempo, su cultura* (1999) or Manuel Fernández Álvarez's *Juana la Loca: la cautiva de Tordesillas* (2000). This reviving of curiosity for the figure of Joanna went as far as putting on a show by Spanish dancer Sara Baras in 2001, *Juana la Loca, vivir por amor*, and the monologue *Juana la Loca* directed by Raúl Luján. In the vast majority of examples of cultural production from that year that dealt with the historical figure of Joanna, the adjective "La Loca" predominated in its presentation, such as in the press as a special issue by the weekly publication *Magazine* on September 23, 2001, or the monthly magazine specialized in historical articles *La Aventura de la Historia*, which published an article by Hispanist Joseph Perez devoted to the reign of Joanna in September 2001.

TASKS OF HISTORY AND STRATEGIES OF REPRESENTATION

The analysis of the historical and cinematographic representation in Aranda's film shows it to be a combination of eroticism, the romantic legend on Joanna of Castile

as “La Loca” and how the life of Joanna had become a fashionable topic in 2001 (Caparrós 2004, 101).

But, unlike Orduña’s film, the narrative strategies of this film attempt to perpetuate the romantic legend of Joanna and work together with conveying Joanna as a helpless political figure, nullified by her intense, yet misunderstood passion for her husband. Vicente Aranda stated in an interview that Joanna “era una mujer muy moderna que se anticipó a su tiempo. Juana la Loca era una hippy de la Edad Media / a very modern woman who was ahead of her time. She was a sort of hippy of the Middle Ages” (interview in Muñoz 2000, 38). Such a conception by Aranda led him to depict Joanna not only as a sexually active women, but also as an over-possessive wife: “Juana la Loca estaba dominada por un afán de posesión absoluta / Joanne was consumed by her utter possessive nature” (interview in Reviriego 21).

Indeed, the *Juana la Loca* relies on this interpretation of the reign of Queen Joanna for its formulation of the past, and to such an end Aranda combines the over sexualization of the body and persona of Joanna with the display of several strategies of representation of history that present the conspiracy against Joanna as a action of intentional misunderstanding of her sexuality.

First, in an apparent *fidelity to history*, the film attempts to show a less romanticized account of events, relying entirely on voice-over from the beginning of the film that helps to locate the spectator into the historical time while setting the background. As Doane states, “the voice-off is a sound which is first and foremost in the service of the film’s construction of space and only indirectly in the service of the image.

It validates both what the screen reveals of the diegesis and what it conceals” (40). In *Juana la Loca* the voice of the narrator seeks to provide the spectator with enough aseptic unbiased historical data that may work as the foundation where the romantic legend may lay in the several invented historical situations present in the film.

There is also *invention*. Yet, just like any fictionalized account, the film combines faithfulness to historical accounts with invented events that help the filmmaker disseminate his view of history. It is not true that Joanna never saw her mother again after mother and daughter parted in Castile, because the latter returned to Spain 1502 to be recognized as Princess of Asturias, therefore, heir to throne of Castile. The result of this license is but to further evoke the atmosphere of dislocation surrounding Queen Joanna during her stay in Flanders.

Also, there are *anachronisms*. Sometimes the degree of success of a historical film in delivering a message or impression of a certain era lies in its ability to make it understandable to the audience. Certain anachronisms thus can be employed in order to instruct the audience in the intricacies of a problem in an era. For instance, the pace and vocabulary used by Queen Joanna in the film, with her 21st century cursing and swearing, may appeal more to the Spanish audience and thus convey a more plausible portrayal of a monarch gone mad. Moreover, the same approach applies to the characterization of King Philip. For instance, his tanned skin, long dark hair, and athletic constitution differ sharply from his actual appearance, which was pale skinned and rather fragile, his nickname *The Handsome* owing not to his beauty but his success among women as a *courtier*. The reasons for such a contemporary portrayal by Aranda were,

according to his own words, an attempt to make his figure more appealing to present audiences and thus allow them to understand Joanna's ardent passion (Manuel Montero 2008, n.pag).

This leads us to examine another aspect in Aranda's historical interpretation that allows us to discern its greatest difference from Orduña's: the narrative inferences of its erotic imagery and its sexualization exclusively of the body and persona of Joanna I. The story opens with a scene in which a 70 year-old Joanna still remembers her husband for the sexual passion that he used to arouse in her, delimiting the margins of the storyline and providing the viewer with an orientation as to how to read the film. Indeed the drive or the narrative core of the story, Joanna's passion, as Asunción Gómez writes, "is manifested not by means of grandiloquent speech but rather through physical pleasure" (Gómez 2008, 234). The lust of Joanna for her husband blinds her mind and leads her to be subject to her husband's will. In the scene when Joanna learns about the death of her mother and discovers her husband while having an affair with a courtesan, her vengeance is directed towards her husband's lover, not against him, because even though she spurns him, she confesses to him to be madly in love: "I must be mad to love someone as despicable as you." This journey into the characterization of Joanna borders on animalization, as is reinforced by Joanna's physical acts that divert attention from the way of protocol attributed to a royal figure: yells, screams, insistence in breastfeeding her children.

Martín Pérez has exposed how the oversexualization in the film shows signs of animalization: "Aranda's animalization of Juana's character, moreover, reinforces her

portrayal as a person deviant from the world of reason and politics” (76-77). In the scene mentioned above, she sniffs the bed, where her husband has had sex with his mistress, in order to help her find out the identity of the lover, who later happens to be one of her ladies-in-waiting, whose hair Joanna cuts off in retaliation to the surprise of the rest of the Court, which subsequently undermines her Queenship. Such an image repeats itself throughout the storyline in several other scenes; for instance, when Joanna gives birth to the future Emperor Charles V in a toilet, as she cuts the umbilical cord with her teeth without any assistance, and getting covered in blood in the process, to the awe of her servants. Indeed, as Martín Pérez writes, it is her deviance from both worlds that impairs her to compliance with her protocol and regal duties (77). Here lies Aranda’s interpretation of the downfall of Joanna: she is taken as mad not only for her hysterical actions, but rather the subsequent undermining of her Queenship, in contrast to Orduña’s version, where Joanna’s madness is the result of the actions of foreign enemies such as De Vere.

Let us compare two similar scenes in both films that reflect the different interpretation of the madness of Joanna: her entrance into the Castilian Parliament, Las Cortes de Burgos. Both films share many of the cinematographic elements present in the scene, but each one of them delivers utterly different interpretations to the downfall of Joanna.

In Orduña’s version, the scene in which Joanna interrupts the session of the Cortes function as the culmination of the political conspiracy, offering a brief lapse of prevalence by Joanna over her enemies, only to eventually fall into madness as the result

of the scheme by De Vere. The cinematography and dialogs of the scene serve this purpose, presenting a fearless Joanna walking through the guards, as the speaker's announcement of her titles (Queen of Spain, Princess of Aragon and Jerusalem, Lady of Biscay, etc), and the harmonic Renaissance strengthening music convey her majestic presence. While walking towards her husband, a parallel dolly shot follows Joanna's pace harmoniously. Once she stands by her husband's side, she then begins her speech, facing her enemies by exposing their past of repeated grievances. Editing intercalates a succession of high upper shots/counter lower shots of Joanna and her enemies: De Vere, Marquis of Villena, and Don Juan Manuel. Joanna's power is also conveyed not only by angle framing, which makes her stand taller than her enemies, but also by lighting, which in a common fashion by CIFESA, seeks only to reinforce the protagonist's presence among other characters. This climatic last stand by Joanna is expectedly (as usual with Orduña's films, surprise is not to be found within a tension-less script focalized by the viewer, from whose grasp no event escapes) broken when the Admiral of Castile shows the blank letter, which causes every member of the Parliament to assume Joanna's madness. The climax is conveyed by the zooming into a perplexed Joanna who leaves the church in a crestfallen stance, being this the first close up on her in the whole scene. Taking into account that one of the features of royal protocol relates to the inner distance that must be kept between a monarch and the audience (Braddick 263), Orduña succeeds, not just in narrative terms, but also in cinematographic ways in conveying a defeated and mad Joanna as the result of the schemes of her enemies.

In Aranda's film the same scene is represented, even mimicking some of the dialogs and shots, but with a different outcome: the discovery of a differing personality of Joanna from the rest of the film, as a powerful political character not only for her enemies but also for her friends and us, the very viewing subjects. In an overly surprising twist, during this scene Joanna is for the first time depicted as a political figure whose presence inspires fear amongst her enemies and pride amongst her allies, unlike previous scenes in the film. Mimicking Orduña's version, her importance is foretold by accounting for all the titles that she bears: Queen of Castile, of Murcia, of Flanders... In the same manner as Orduña's version, the first shot uses the rug and the lances of the guards as a leading line to recreate a symmetrical path while Joanna walks into the Parliament chamber. As she heads for the throne, she stops for a brief moment on the steps, then the image shifts to a reverse shot with a high angle framing, reinforcing the representation of Joanna above all others, specially her husband, who remains on his knees two steps lower than Joanna. Joanna's power is also conveyed by composition and lighting, with more intense light beaming on a close up of her face, while her husband Philip looks darker and smaller than she. The first shot is viewed by the spectator as an imaginary plenitude, unbounded by any gaze and unmarked by difference. The second shot also helps to reinforce the powerful posture of Joanna. The composition, following the rule of the thirds, states the order of political importance: first, on top of everyone and in the middle of the frame stands Joanna; the beefeater stands at the bottom and on the right while Joanna's husband is in between them both. Then, again we find a resemblance to Orduña's film since Joanna leaves the throne and

steps down back to the benches area, while a panning shot follows her walking through the room, and series of shot/reverse shots convey Joanna disdain and victory over her enemies, makes the spectator view the action through the eyes of the Marquis of Villena, when camera relocates the viewer at the other 180 degrees of the same circular field, and thereby implies the preceding shot was seen through the eyes of Villena. The following shot epitomizes the degree of determination that Aranda tries to give to Joanna. By pulling back the lenses and panning behind the shoulder of Villena, it creates a talkspace in the composition. That space will grow smaller as Joanna's list of accusations on Villena reaches its zenith, and as she approaches him.

If in *Locura de Amor* the royal protocol is broken to convey a defeated Joanna, in *Juana la Loca* Aranda utilizes the same feature in order to show Joanna prevailing over her enemies. Suture establishes cohesiveness with the precedent shots by following Joanna with a dolly camera movement in a full shot while she is leaving the Parliament and heading to the exit. The following geometrical composition contrasts sharply with the disruption of space created by the crowd, as her rectitude is reinforced by means of geometrical composition -the lances of the guards, the archway of the palace and the lead lines created by the rug and beams of light coming from both sides.

Although this sequence elaborately attempts to flesh out the powerful figure of Queen Joanna by Aranda, the unfolding of the plot, devoted to the obvious the King/Queen and husband/wife dimensions (Fouz and Martínez 78), turns this scene into merely an anecdote. Joanna's successful last stand at the Parliament session is overshadowed because of the lack of development of the political side of the character

up to this point. As Monterde writes, “la historia política se sitúa como un tenue telón de fondo / the political storylines is merely a flimsy backdrop” (45).

One of the last sequences of the film helps understand the completion of Aranda’s portrayal of Joanna as an incompetent political leader. Suture allows for the depiction of a dialog that is taking place during Joanna’s laments: not the conversation that Joanna holds with the physicians and politicians gathered to follow the news on the King’s condition but rather the inner dialogue that takes place between Joanna and her other self, between the two ideas stated by Celia Martín: Queenship and Love Madness. Suture helps in this case express something that is not said by any character. When a series of shot/ reverse shots between Joanna and the doctors show her approaching the fireplace, another shot shows Joanna leaning over the edge of the fireplace. Suture reveals that it turns out to be the face-to-face shot between Juana and the coat of arms of her royal family. When Joanna is facing the fireplace, camera movement encapsulates the frenzy of her mood, by panning right and left constantly. Whereas she is appealing to her dead mother to save the King, she briefly calms down and then tries to come back to her senses by recalling her duties as a queen. Composition reveals the presence of two other objects that do more than symbolizing this struggle: the fire and the coat of arms. Quoting Ouder, Silverman states that absent fields allow the shot to become a signifier (203). In this shot we see how a complex signifying chain is introduced: the absence of some objects, in this case the coat of arms and its replacement for the flames fireplace, make possible a signifying ensemble. When Joanna is facing the coat of arms, she reminds herself about her royal duties, only to come back to lament. The character looks

quickly while off screen, thus anticipating her final breakdown and the movement of the camera, which pans down, leaving Joanna in a last conversation shot, face-to-face with the fire. This inner duel between Queenship and Love Madness is thus conveyed through this sequence, and it reaches its peak when one of these concepts -Queenship- is finally castrated when the coat of arm is left off frame and replaced by the fireplace, the signifier for Love and Madness.

Once Philip dies, Joanna's transition into the reality of madness is completed. The ending of the film does but reinforce the romantic legend by interpreting more historical facts. The return of the voice-over attempts again to distance from the dramatic tone of the prior events and display a fidelity to history by narrating the events in a factual way: that Joanna was secluded in a monastery for the rest of her life, that she mourned her husband until her death, and that she would be allowed to visit his tomb; but then again, the film conveys for one last time her passion for Philip, as she appears visiting his tomb and kissing his decaying corpse. Her madness, unlike in Orduña's film, is generated solely by intense sexual nature, not instrumentalized by scheming enemies that whirl around her.

RECEPTION OF THE FILM

With 8.8 million euros in earnings at the box office,¹¹ the film met with relative success, as it had spent almost five million euros in production costs (Smith 303). Its sexualizing representation was interpreted by the press as contemporizing, but it went without an extensive discussion by the non-film press. The film reviews released at the

time of its premiere show an overwhelmingly positive response: out of 26 film critiques published in different newspapers, only 3 categorized the film as below average, and none of them reviewed it negatively. Among the positive reviews from press groups of different political views, there exists a broad historical preconception of the personality of the madness of Queen Joanna, reducing her biography to the years of her marriage with Philip and her ardent desire for her husband. On the one hand, out the 26 reviews, only film critic Raúl del Pozo of *El Mundo*, or Jerónimo Martín of *La Gaceta* deliver dissenting opinions. Raúl del Pozo judged Aranda's view of Joanna as reductionist on the romantic legend, as well as topical for recurring to a well-known topic, but not going into depth in the political dimension of Joanna's forced seclusion (n.pag). A review published in *La Gaceta*, accuses Aranda of over- simplifying the story line: "Aranda reduce a neurosis sexual la locura de la reina castellana / Aranda reduced the madness of the Castilian queen to sexual neurosis" (Martín 7). On the other hand, most reviews assumed the historical representation by Aranda as valid and did not open a debate on the history. Most of their remarks were done in a cinematographic way, in some cases highlighting the disparity between the degree of physical representation of the *dramatis persona* of Joanna and the presentation of the political plot (Monterde 45; Sánchez n.pag; Torrecillas n.pag). The same reaction was given by both reviews published on film press, which criticized Aranda for his over simplification of the political plot in favor of the sexual relations (Lamet 9).

CONCLUSIONS

The results of such a depiction must be explained. The image of the reign of Queen Joanna remains untouched or, in other words, does not deviate from the core of the interpretation by common historiography. Thus, Joanna remains a monarch regarded as an unskilled and helpless politician, devoted to her husband, whose jealousy towards her husband, aided by political conspiracies, ended up blurring in her judgment and her ability to hold the throne, thus provoking her life imprisonment.

These films do their part in perpetuating this existing dramatized and romantic view of Juana's reign, albeit displaying different approaches to the nature of the madness of the queen. Both films utilize several anecdotes about the queen and king in order to play with audience expectations and help build the historical discourse, such as the popular anecdote about Philip's death caused by drinking a glass of ice water, or Joanna's mourning of the corpse of Philip throughout the country. And both films portray an image of a helpless political figure, both due to her personal limitations as a stateswoman, and also because of the political conspiracy that revolves around her, although Vicente Aranda adds his personal view about the nature of the conspiracy, extending the role of King Ferdinand as he joins the conspiracy against his daughter. But in Orduña's film, the figure of Joanna is that of a woman framed by her political enemies who drive her to madness and who is incapable of prevailing over them; unlike Aranda's version, which portrays a queen, despite having taken the power back, whose passion impairs her to exercise it as her husband has become but her only concern. As Donapetry sums up, "Orduña usa la locura como metáfora esencialista de lo femenino, mientras que

Aranda usa la locura como expresión desinhibida del deseo sexual femenino / Orduña employs madness as a essentialist metaphor of the feminine, whereas Aranda employs madness as an uninhibited expression of feminine sexual desire” (153).

In other words, Joanna’s madness is induced by political schemes, where for Aranda it originates in her uncontrolled and misunderstood sexuality. Both Orduña and Aranda restrict their vision as they limit the storyline to those events that encompass the marriage of Joanna and Philip to the death of the latter and the subsequent mourning of the former, thus repeating the same re-creating of history of the legend created by historiography and Romanticism in the 19th century. By not accounting for any of the events of Joanna’s maturity and death -i.e.: her role in the revolt of Castilians noblemen against Spanish Emperor and King Charles V,- the cinematographic portrayal of Joanna of Castile remains trapped by legend and myth.

ISABELLA I OF CASTILE IN *ALBA DE AMÉRICA* AND *LA REINA ISABEL EN PERSONA*

To continue with this chapter on the biopic, I have selected two of the most representative films that are part of this research: *Alba de América* (Juan de Orduña, 1952) and *La Reina Isabel en persona* (Rafael Gordon, 2000). Despite being divergent in time and style, both films are united in epitomizing an evolution of the early modern film genre in Spain over half a century. A film that counted with the blessings of the Francoist State, *Alba de América* was not only one of most recognized cinematographic flops in Spain, but also an example of the continued attempts by the Spanish film

industry to resemble the *grandeur* of large-budget period films made in Hollywood. *La Reina Isabel en persona* is, on the contrary, one of the few examples by recent Spanish filmmakers to create a different approach to period films not only in style but also in historical depiction with a minimal staging. And last but not least, both films' historical topics, the reign of the Catholic Monarchs, and especially their depiction of the political and human personality of Isabella I, become instrumental in the process of understanding not only the construction of early modernity in Spanish film but the very perception of Isabella I in Spain.

Despite their filmic differences in approaching this historical figure, and their differences in motivation, both films help us detect a recurrent depiction of Isabella as a cornerstone in the formation of the Spanish state, and also as a current reference in the formation of the Spanish identity, not only nationally but also overseas. But how do these films embed such values? In delivering a message on Isabella, what features and episodes of the life of Isabella do they highlight? How do they relate to what scholarly history and popular memory tell us about the persona of Isabella?

THE STORY AND HISTORY OF ISABELLA I

Queen Isabella I (1451-1504) ruled Castile and Aragon jointly with her husband, Ferdinand -Ferdinand II of Aragon, Ferdinand V of Castile. She was raised by her mother, Isabella of Portugal, until 1457, when along with her brother Alfonso she was brought to court by her half-brother Henry IV. After his death, a war of succession

ensued, finishing in 1479, with Isabella recognized as Queen of Castile. Isabella and Ferdinand ruled with equal authority in both realms.

Among their first acts were various reforms to reduce the power of the nobility and increase the power of the crown: in 1480, Isabella and Ferdinand instituted the Inquisition in Spain, proceeded with their plans to unify all of Spain by continuing a long-standing but stalled effort to conquer Granada, the last Muslim stand in Europe, which would be conquered by 1492. That same year, all Jews in Spain who refused to convert to Christianity were expelled by royal edict. For these efforts, Ferdinand and Isabella were given the title “the Catholic monarchs” (*Los Reyes Católicos*) by the Pope, in recognition of their role in “purifying” the Catholic faith. Also in 1492, Isabella was convinced by Christopher Columbus to sponsor his voyage of discovery. Isabella took a special interest in the Native Americans as her will expressed her wish that the *Indians* be treated with justice and fairness and ensuring their freedom from slavery. Being a patron of scholars and artists, she established educational institutions and built a large collection of art works. Under the auspices of international peacemaking policy, her descendants were married and established the connection between Spain and nearly all the most powerful royal houses in Europe: the Tudors in England, the Aviz in Portugal, and the Habsburg in Flanders.

Few historical characters have embodied the birth of a nation as Queen Isabella for Spain. Since the time of her death in 1504, her reign has been regarded by historians and politicians as one of the cornerstones of the unification of almost every Iberian kingdom and thus the political unification of Spain. Viewed by some as the political

creator of the Spanish state, and as a religious fanatic by others, the contradictory personality of Queen Isabella is an object of interest for national and foreign historians, who have written innumerable works on the reign of Isabella and Ferdinand. Isabella the Catholic Queen has come to share an intrinsic relationship between her life and the identity and birth of the Spanish State, and different political circumstances in Spain have led to different interpretations of Isabella I, even sometimes increasing her role to such an extent that she has outshined Ferdinand of Aragon, her husband and consort king.

In 1940s, at the end of the Spanish Civil War, Francoist historians abandoned an earlier trend in portraying the queen and king of Spain as an example of political equality, only to enhance her role in detriment to Ferdinand's. The work by Spanish historians César Silió (1938), Cerceda (1946), Cuartero (1952), and Sarasola (1955) laid the foundations for the beatification of Queen Isabella in 1958 led by Rodríguez Valencia, starting a process of *Isabelization* in Spanish historiography that would reach its height with the four hundredth anniversary of the birth of the queen in 1951 and her beatification. This *Isabelization* ended up suffocating the study of King Ferdinand, whose memory merited just one commemorative act in 1952 with the V Congress of history of Aragon (García Cárcel 664). In later years such a limited conception made way to a new way of conceptualizing the reign of the Catholic Monarchs and currently Spanish and foreign historians such as Carretero Zamora, Fernando Bouza and Henry Kamen, conclude that the political marriage between Isabella and Ferdinand meant the aggregation of several kingdoms while maintaining their political autonomy, thus not

creating a sole political entity -Spain-. Yet, this *Isabelization* would not reach popular history, According to Dumont and Liss, the monarchy of Isabella and Ferdinand was a well-liked one (Liss 111), and popular memory continues to regard it as such (Dumont 80).

DIFFERENT MOTIVATIONS FOR TWO DIFFERENT FILMS

Both films analyzed here focus their attention on the political and human personality of Queen Isabella, but they differ radically in their artistic and business motivations. The first of these two features, *Alba de América*, is an example of convergence of state support, propagandistic purposes, business aspirations which according to Mira Nouselles, make the figure of Isabella the referential point in the film (133). Being one of the last large budget productions that dominated the cinematographic scene in Spain in from 1940 to 1953, *Alba de América* was also an attempt by the Francoist state and Spanish film studio CIFESA to respond back to British film *Christopher Columbus* (David MacDonald, 1949). This film had drawn a derogatory picture of King Ferdinand -i.e., in the film Columbus knocks him down by slapping his face- that enraged film journalists and producers all over Spain, Directors such as Edgar Neville and Rafael Gilm called for the Francoist State to finance a cinematographic project that would respond back to “such grotesque British nonsense in an efficient and rapid manner” (“Los Realizadores” 10).

Despite its title, the tale of the discovery of America plays a minor role, as the film turns out to be an appraisal of the reign of the Catholic Monarchs. As CIFESA’s

CEO Vicente Casanova stated in a interview a year before the release of *Alba de América*, the main characters of the film would be the Catholic Monarchs, “que hicieron posible la realización de esta gesta heroica / who made possible the realization of this heroic deed” (Sarto n.pag). The film tells how Christopher Columbus, who arrives escorted by his son to Spain to present to Isabella and Ferdinand, queen and king of Spain, his project to reach the Far East by sailing the Atlantic Ocean. During his stay at the monastery of La Rábida, he presents his project to the abbot, who recommends him to a Royal committee to assess his project. Although initially it is turned down, Columbus manages to survive in the next years as a cartographer, selling maps while he awaits the Catholic Monarchs to finish their conquest campaign in Granada and reconsider his project. Again, Columbus’s plan is rejected and thus he plans to go present it to the king of France. Only then the kings approve it, Columbus forms a crew sets out from Port of Pales in a party of three ships. After a difficult voyage, the expedition arrives to the island of San Salvador on October 12, 1492. Spain has discovered the American continent thanks to the perseverance of Columbus, the support of the Spanish crown, and divine intervention. When the first natives arrive to Barcelona, they are baptized with Isabella and Ferdinand doing as godfathers. Both worlds have sealed their fate for history.

The reasons for Rafael Gordon making *La Reina Isabel en persona* are far different. Being a cinematographic adaptation of the play with the same name and by the same author, *La Reina Isabel en persona* is a personal project led by independent filmmaker Rafael Gordon propelled by his passion for the life and persona of Isabella

and their great dramatic possibilities: “el destino hace que tuviera una infancia de Dickens, una madurez de Gil Enil y luego una supuesta vejez de tragedia griega / destiny forced him to have a Dickens-like childhood, a Gil Enil-like adulthood, followed by an old age from a Greek tragedy” (interview in Zarate 97). As Gordon stated, the fact that fueled his efforts in completing this film lay in the inexistence of any film respectful with the figure of Isabella while the British film industry has produced several films about Queen Elizabeth (98). The film has seen only a very limited commercial distribution, being shown in Spanish theaters for only a month. It has, though, experienced an increasing interest among film lovers, and has been shown by Spanish Embassies in cities all over the world.

The story of *La Reina Isabel en persona* takes place five centuries after Isabella’s death, as she comes out of the clouds of oblivion to account for her reign’s successes and failures, for her fears and strengths, and for her dreams and realities. Isabella’s autobiographical tale embraces every sphere of her life as a queen, woman, wife and mother, putting her reign in retro-and perspective successively by questioning her transcendence, by praising her successes, regretting her failures and repenting for her mistakes.

TWO OPPOSED VISIONS OF FILMMAKING: MAMMOTH OSTENTATION VERSUS EXPRESSIVE MINIMALISM

In terms of cinema conception, these two films exemplify two different and opposed ways of filmmaking. On the one hand, *Alba de América* is a grandiloquent film

by film studio CIFESA that displays many of the features that characterized the period film genre in Spain in the 1940s and early 1950s: the grandeurs of the sets, detailed period costumes, in detriment to acting and dialog, rigid camera movements and lighting (i.e.: their lighting covers all of stage, leaving no shadows), and lack of movement and multiple perspectives, being the only concept of suture in the film focalized for the viewer. This combination of mammoth filmmaking with strong patriotic and conservative plots had become a regular in Spanish cinema during the mid forties, having lead to the production of numerous period films in the forties (for instance the successful *Locura de Amor* (Juan de Orduña, 1947) and early in the 1950s *Agustina de Aragón* (also by Juan de Orduña in 1950). But it was a genre that by 1951 was facing exhaustion and the loss interest among audiences, as contemporary productions such as *Leona de Castilla* (Juan de Orduña, 1951) did.¹² Yet, *Alba de América* counted with the support of the Francoist state through Admiral Carrero Blanco, one of the closest collaborators of Francisco Franco, and by Alfredo Sánchez Bella, board member of the Instituto de Cultura Hispánica.

On the other hand, Rafael Gordon shares an opposed conception on the art of filmmaking, his being based on minimalism and acting. *La Reina Isabel* is an example of tradition and innovation in historical period film in Spain. Innovation because instead of detailed and ostentatious customs and sets, what takes place is a minimalist staging that leaves up to the theatrical text and acting the task of historical depiction. As Gordon stated during an interview, historical films do not need to display vast resources, but rather resort to a dramatic expression and acting that reaches the essence of the passion

of a historical character. According to Gordon, one can achieve a world-changing essence through dramatic expression regardless from the usage of conventional surroundings and great sets (Zarate 98).

Because of its deep influence from drama, *La Reina Isabel* links to the long lasting tradition of cinematographic adaptations of theatrical texts among the period film genre, but its conception of the historical film genre is an atypical one within Spanish cinema. Certainly this conception is frequent among British filmmaking, i.e. the BBC drama series *The six wives of Henry VIII* (1970) but not common in a film industry which intermittently releases big budget period films that aim to match the American industry, as the contemporary film *Juana la Loca* (Vicente Aranda 2001) was marketed.

DIFFERENT DEPICTIONS BY TWO FILMS PRAISING ISABELLA I

Alba de América and *La Reina Isabel en persona* are two of the scarce examples of Spanish cinematography depicting this historical character in a positive light.¹³ These strategies of historical representation of Isabella used by both films meet the same end as they portray Isabella as a character who is aware of her historical transcendence at all times. Both Juan de Orduña and Rafael Gordon portray Isabel as a monarch whose remarkable foresight allows her to accurately predict the future consequences of her political initiatives and decisions in the present. However, whereas in Orduña's film Isabella appears to be a character with a strong teleological notion of the historical process that leaves no room for self criticism, Rafael Gordon bestows Isabella with a sharp contemporizing realism that builds up her plausibility in the audience.

The teleological conception of history as a process being “goal-driven”, that is, oriented towards an end-point in history in which it eventually transcends into a new form of life or order while leaving conflict behind, was common among pro-Francoist historians and school manuals, especially when it came to account for the life of such an iconic figure as Isabella I. In this sense, the film *Alba de América* is a reflection of the ideology of the Francoist dictatorship due to its portrayal of the reign of the Catholic Monarchs through the re-construction of three historical events: the conquests of the Muslim kingdom of Granada, the patronage of Columbus expedition, and the subsequent conquest of the American continent. Yet, such a portrayal alters the importance of Isabella, presenting her as the spiritual mother of these events. The motto that defined the reign of the Catholic Monarchs “*Tanto monta, monta tanto / equal opposites in balance,*” is evidently broken to overemphasize her role.

During the military campaign in Granada, Columbus arrives at the royal camp. The story unfolds by presenting several political characters, from army officers to eventually the king, who under the pressure of deciding whether to call for recapturing the stronghold recently lost against the Moors, he commands his military staff to wait for the Queen’s orders. Indeed, during the entire campaign, most decisions rest upon her judgment; soldiers fight, agonize, and die in her name -not in Ferdinand’s-. Isabella is the quintessential monarch that embodies humbleness and pious Christianity, rejecting angelical depictions of her by the head of the Spanish Church while she reminds him that it is God who watches over her soldiers, not her.

Alba de América provides in the same spirit another predominant idea within the Francoist propagandistic apparatus: *La Hispanidad* (Hispanity). This point requires further detail: before and during the Second World War, the newly established regime sought allies and support in Latin America. The ideological apparatus began to index the idea of Hispanity, an early ideological conception of Latin America from the 19th century favored by Falangist thinkers during the late 1930s. The ideal of Hispanity was one of the ideological pillars of Francoism, along with the concepts of Empire and Race, which historically interpreted Spain as a nation whose actions in America led her to become the spiritual unifier of the world (González Calleja and Nevado 60). This historical categorization was embedded in the Francoist apparatus, as the third point in the “Norma Pragmática” of Falange Española stated that “Respecto a los países de Hispanoamérica, tendemos la unificación de cultura, de intereses económicos y de poder. España alega su condición espiritual del mundo como título de preeminencia en las empresas universales” (Chase 124). Indeed, this ideology rooted its foundation in the common cultural heritage shared by Spain and the Latin American nations: the Spanish language, and above all, Catholicism. Thus, by 1946 the works by Caudillo, Gil Serrano, and Cereceda among others, had contributed to the institutionalization of Hispanity, leading to the foundation of Instituto de Cultura Hispánica, which envisioned and patronized Orduña’s film.

Alba de America reflects these ideological trends in the persona of Isabella, by portraying her not only as Queen of Castile, but simultaneously as the predominant monarch of Spain and also the patron of Hispanity -as a philanthropic monarch who

envisions the American enterprise as a missionary expedition that would unite the fates the nations on both shores of the Atlantic Ocean-. In this regard, in *Alba de América* Isabella is the corner stone of such an idea, and at times her significance in the film surpasses that of Columbus and her husband, diverting the meaning of the message of the film from the American enterprise itself but her prominent role in supporting it.

The film devotes various scenes to show her in that way. In a scene set during the conquest of Granada, she is portrayed as the main supporter of Christopher Columbus, when she expresses her excitement to summon him: “Venid, esperaba con ansiedad el poder oiros / Come, I was eager to hear you,” in contrast to King Ferdinand, who remains always skeptical of the American enterprise. While Ferdinand calls for a committee of nautical and geographical experts to examine Columbus’s plan, Isabella remains as Columbus trustee and convinces King Ferdinand of the glory and transcendence that Columbus will bring, and ultimately she even sells her jewels to finance the expedition.

By inserting this historical alteration¹⁴ Orduña transmits a pro-Isabellian view of the events that lessens the role of King Ferdinand. Furthermore, Isabella envisions the enterprise in a more philanthropic and pro-Hispanity way from Columbus. While he tries to lure the Catholic Monarchs by exaggerating the potential riches that await them in the Indies, Isabel portrays the idea of *Hispanity* by foretelling the religious union of Spain with the American lands:

Son otras ganancias, almas para el cielo, pueblos para nuestra santa Iglesia [...] si existen esas tierras, Castilla llevará sangre generosa para alumbrar la noble

familia de las Españas / It is about other type of profit: souls for heaven, peoples for our Holy Church [...] if there exist those lands, Castile will provide the generous blood to enlighten the noble family of all Spains.

The cinematography and composition present Isabella in such way that they enhance her predominance over the rest of the characters in order to augment her role as visionary and leader of Hispanity. Time plays a central role in the performance of the film as the internal scheme of the drama is directed toward seeing the historical moments depicted as great turning points. This is evident, for example, in the last scene, the baptism of the Native Americans. In an evident grandiose staging, with a multitude of extras, detailed costumes, and rigid figures -the ostentatious style that became a trademark for period films made by CIFESA- most of the first close ups are devoted to Isabella, in detriment to Columbus, who remains in the background while the thoughts of Isabella are voiced by one of the few voiceovers employed in the film: As the first American natives are baptized, both worlds and their history will be together forever.

Llevaremos sangre generosa, para alumbrar la noble familia de las Españas, y por encima del mal y del tiempo, nos atará siempre una sola fe en una sola lengua, será el milagro más hermoso de todos los siglos. / We will provide generous blood, to enlighten the noble family of the Spains, and beyond evil and time, we will always be bound by only one faith in one language, and it will be the most beautiful miracle of the centuries.

Although sharing a favorable attitude towards Isabella that strengthens her transcendence, Rafael Gordon's film differs from Orduña's insofar as its historical

representation of the queen does not call upon a static and triumphant character but rather a portrayal that alternates contemporizing realism with historical erudition.

Lindenberger states that there exist three levels of reality which shape our consciousness as we witness a historical play: the historical materials, the theatrical conventions, and the sense of historical continuity (14). First, the historical materials which the play derives from its sources and which it purports to reenact; second the theatrical conventions into which these materials are recast; and third, the sense of historical continuity which the author gives to that segment of the past which he has dramatized.

Regarding the first level of consciousness, Rafael Gordon stated in an interview that his learning about Isabella was part of an extensive research that included modern historiography, contemporary chronicles, and all possible accounts on the life and work of the queen. During the film Gordon displays this research by combining the tale of well known political events with details regarding the personal life of the queen. (i.e.: Isabella may account for the greatness of the discovery of America while at the same time she shares such an intimate memory as her covering her head with a handkerchief while giving birth). Whether accurate or mistaken, the mere act of alternating scenes shows an erudite approach that attempts to convince the audience and confer plausibility to the historical representation.

The theatrical conventions in Gordon's film that recast the historical materials rely, unlike Orduñas' film, on an spartan staging, one actor, and an obvious biased and personal account on the events that overwhelms the spectator with a tide of personal

details and facts about Isabella's life that leaves no room or time for reflection and replying while viewing the film. In order to fully understand the inner mechanism that structures the construction of the past in this feature film, we must understand its theatrical dramatic nature, a fact that even though the author of the film it denies (Zarate 93), becomes instrumental in understanding the historical plausibility created by Rafael Gordon.

This concerns a third level of reality that affects the spectator's reflection on the past portrayed in the film. André Bazin states that film illusion of reality derives from its greater realism versus dramatic conventionalisms that demand the acceptance of rules that force one to distinguish the stage from reality (154). In this sense, Lindenberger states that reality or plausibility on stage exists essentially within the consciousness of the audience: "one of the simplest ways a writer can achieve such continuity is to play on the audience's knowledge of what has happened in history since the time of the play" (6). Indeed, the historical continuity in the film is granted by this combination of erudition and popular history, which also shows its entitlement to tell history by exposing continuously the boundaries of historical accuracy and realism. When the film opens with a voice-over introduction by a narrator who accounts in a patronizing way for a list of Isabella's achievements: she gave birth to the early modern era, guardian of the innocent... While at the end she herself states how her memory among people has dissipated after five centuries. It only comes back from oblivion through the mind of the screenwriter and the acting of the woman who represents her:

I am in the hands of another man from another age, but what about my image, my body, my look? They are in the body of another being [...] The actress. [...] I like the actress, she believes in the Virgin Mary. [...] Actress, may the memory of my lineage of saints and sinners inspire you. [...] May the blood of Isabella of Castile flow through your veins. You are the voice or my memory, until the curtain falls and I return to oblivion. (Subtitles from the film)

This strategy of representation serves as way of breaking the illusion, at least to the extent that we see the events on screen spilling over into a historical continuum with which we are already familiar, but at the same time the same strategy aims to make the audience be part of what it is taking place on screen, As Cornago states, it is common to find how dramatized films utilize this strategy to “[...] proporcionar la transparencia y la autenticidad como medio más eficaz de expresar las utopías y angustias del hombre contemporáneo / to provide transparency and authenticity as the most efficient way to express the utopias and anxieties of the contemporary man” (553-554).

With this continuous breaking of the fourth wall, the film articulates its discourse, a positive account of the success and failure of the reign of Isabella, put in perspective within the very trajectory of humankind for the last five hundred years. *La Reina Isabel* performs what Rosenstone defines as “historical tasks”, that is, Gordon’s film operates in the same manner as a scholarly historical work, *recounting, interpreting* and *justifying* a certain interpretation of history. In this case, the film makes its point at the very beginning, when Isabella questions how modern times examine and remember her reign. Again, as in *Alba de América*, an evident awareness of the consequences of

one historical character's acts defines the portrayal of Queen Isabella, with one exception. Rafael Gordon sets an Isabella on the defensive, wary of the criticism that she faces, and aware of the place that history might have for her:

Who is Isabella the Catholic? I am cut in 1000 pieces. I can't be both angel and devil [...] someone wrote on my tomb *Ipsa Laudatibur*. "For herself she shall be praised". He was wrong. What am I for the world? Oblivion. Daubing where one can read Inquisition, Expulsion of the Jews, Genocide in America. [...] Let's begin. (Subtitles from the film)

Through the instrumentalization of the tasks of history, the film manages to convey its main argument to defend Isabella: humanity cannot get rid of shameful actions and wonderful achievements. The film *interprets* and *justifies* history when Isabella attempts to absolve herself from guilt by attempting to project it on similar contemporary and future decisions. During an intermission in her account of glorious achievements, the scene lighting turns shallow while she faces the camera and utters with difficulty "I know, the expulsion of the Jews from Spain, I signed the decree [...] I was talking about wise decisions, not mistakes." The film *interprets* history when she subsequently deflects her mistake by numbering other nations' similar expulsions: "They were expelled from England, from France first. All that remained is the expulsion from 1492," only to continue her self-absolving speech by quoting a present European law on immigration, and eventually admitting her responsibility:

The decree is not a legend. But I am able to say with my spirit three words. Three words that make all Europe share the same destiny: "Ley de extranjería". We are

where we were in 1492, nothing is easy in this world. [...] A collective error. Expulsion. The Jewish nation left Spain with honor. We asked them: swear the Gospel. They came back. Now Fear is the same, Injustice is greater. We were Cain. (Subtitles from the film)

The display of her role in the reestablishment of is interpreted, and partly justified, as a collective mistake “Inquisition: it was before I came to this world. I have the impression. I can’t defend myself, for not one country has ever had its own Inquisition, the eternally young Inquisition, may God forgive us.” (Subtitles from the film)

The goal of the film in inserting this contemporary references result in the accomplishment of credibility through the presentification of the character. This presentification process not only brings the character of Isabella close to contemporary audiences, but also allows for a radically different construction of the historical discourse and way of addressing audiences than that of *Alba de America*.

RECEPTION OF TWO FILMS DISTRIBUTED DIFFERENTLY

The examination of the network of relationships between the films and their reception, such as film reviews and censorship, reveals their affinity with the dominant ideology and clash with cinemagoers of the time. Both films have different contextual factors involved in negotiating the meaning of each film.

On the one hand, the loss of the favor of the regime proved itself when *Alba de América* went through the examination of the Board of Censors. Its secretary, García

Escudero, summoned the board on December 12, 1951, stating their refusal to grade the films as Primera Categoría, nor to grant it with the prize *Interés Nacional* (AGA, file 36/03416). Due to a petition letter by Manuel Casanova, head of CIFESA, asking the BOC to reconsider its decision and grant *Alba de América* with the mentioned prize and also raise the film to Primera Categoría, García Escudero, was subject to intense political pressure (in an internal memo sent on January 26, 1952, the Director of the Dirección General de Cinematografía y Teatro instructs the Secretario general de Cinematografía y Teatro ask the BOC to bestow *Alba de América* with the Interés Nacional Award (AGA, file 36/03416), leading to Garcia Escudero presenting his resignation in March 1952 (Fernández Heredero 1993, 81). Shortly thereafter the BOC met again and awarded the film with the *Interés Nacional* on March 15, 1952 (80). With a budget amounting to nearly ten million pesetas, the highest budget in Spanish film history at the time, the film never became a commercial success, earning only Even so, the film only grossed 4.4 million pesetas¹⁵ (Fanés 206), confirming its commercial failure, and aggravating the financial crisis of its production company, CIFESA, which would shut down its studios two years later.

Out of the 44 reviews analyzed, an overwhelming majority describes the film as a positive project of an enterprise that would close ties between Spain and Latin America. The ideal of Hispanity was already propagandized in the film press prior to the release of the film, such as in *Imágenes*, which described the film as a message to all of Hispanity (Gómez 1950, 23).

But while most reviews congratulate the filmmakers for the high patriotic educational content of the film -over three quarters film reviews-, only one third of them praise the film for its cinematographic quality. It must be noted that most of the negative reviews came from Aragon and Catalonia, the regions historically belonging to the Crown of Aragon and kingdom of King Ferdinand. These reviews criticized the film for its lack of accuracy in portraying Ferdinand in conveying a pro-Castilian view of the events. *Revista Pueblo*, published a harsh article that described the negative reaction of the audience:

¡Válgame Dios, qué patriotismo tan cegato, tan simple, tan humillante y tan avergonzador! Los aragoneses protestan porque el Fernando de la película es un rey de chocolate y porque la historia de las joyas de Isabel es inexacta / Bless my soul, such a blind, simplistic, humiliating and embarrassing patriotism! The Aragonese are protesting because King Ferdinand appears as an insubstantial monarch and the story of the jewels of Isabel is all false. (Leon n.pag)

Fernando Lozano, president of the Foundation for the preservation of the memory of Ferdinand the Catholic wrote in January 1952 in the same irritated manner to the Minister of Information and Tourism, -under whose control lay the Delegation of Cinematography- requesting the film be banned:

[la película] ha dejado en la penumbra la figura del gran monarca renacentista, [...] como si fuera un Rey consorte de pálida actuación obediente a los deseos de la Reina propietaria de Castilla [...] Solicitamos que se prohíba la distribución de la película. / [the film] has left the great Renaissance monarch [...] as if he were a

weak consort subject to the wishes of the Queen of Castille [...] We request that the film's distribution be banned. (AGA, file 36/04724)

The Catalanian press shared this same reception, with negative reviews found in *Diario Español*, *El Correo Catalán*, and *La Vanguardia Española*. The latter newspaper stated that the film belittled the role of the Catholic king (“Alba de America” 22 Feb 1952, n.pag). Despite the overall positive reviews, the provincial reports by state representatives show a different reality, because only 3 out of 11 reports show that the film was well-received, while the rest of the reports show the exhaustion of this film genre. In this sense, the report from the province of Majorca shows that even if the film press praised the film, the audience began to feel tired of historical films because of their lack of naturalness (AGA, file 36/04724). These reports may explain the commercial flop that *Alba de América* meant for CIFESA. With a budget of over 10 million pesetas, it became indeed the most expensive feature film made in Spain until that time. The film earned slightly more than 4.4 million pesetas (Fanés 206). This only worsened the financial situation of CIFESA, which would go bankrupt and stopped producing films in 1954.

Alba de América would mean the beginning of the end of a certain kind of historical film, the historical productions in Spain. Along with the closing of the film studios, the regime would support them in a more tepid way, and the film press would no longer support this genre unconditionally. The idea present among press and state officials of creating a genuine Spanish film genre that would succeed in the international market would prove wrong, and while in the 1940s a historical film would be released

every year, from 1952 onwards this genre would be scarce, relying more on national co-productions, such as the British-Spanish historical film *That lady / La princesa de Éboli* (Terence Young, 1955).

On the other hand, *La Reina Isabel en persona* remains a relatively unknown film among cinema connoisseurs in Spain. Since its premiere on November 2, 2000, it has never been released in any video format, and the film was shown in theatres for less than a month. In addition to this limited distribution, some of the leading newspapers in Spain, such as *El País* or *El Mundo*, never reviewed the film. Distributed by Hardy Films, eventually the film only grossed 17,201 euros, selling only 3,640 tickets.¹⁶ It is then, a project that would superficially be referred as a *cult film* whose reception among the audience and press becomes difficult to track.

Yet, the analysis of seven film reviews published by main press groups, such as *ABC* and *La Vanguardia*, reveals a unanimous positive response by film reviewers. Among them, reputed film critic Quim Casas praised the film for successfully establishing a dual interplay between reality and representation, while at the same time exposing little known aspects of the life of Isabella (Casas 2000, n.pag). Another Catalanian film critic, Alex Gorina, found the film a vehicle for discovering a historical figure long time tergiversated by both Francoist and separatist history books which identified Isabella respectively with the Spanish Imperial past, and numerous humiliations inflicted by the Spanish state on Catalonia (Gorina 72). Once again another Catalanian newspaper, *La Gaceta*, envisioned the style of *La Reina Isabel en persona* as a breakthrough in style in Spanish historical film.

CONCLUSION: A QUEEN FOR OBLIVION?

The scarcity of films dedicated to the life of Isabella, -unlike Elizabeth I in England- the historical transcendence of her as a political figure notwithstanding her to become a recurrent character in period films in Spain, not even during the 500th anniversary of her death in 2004. This exclusiveness leaves little room for attempting to draw a continuous evolution of her cinematographic representation. Yet, some points must be outlined. Whereas in Orduña's film, Isabella appears to be a character with a strong teleological notion of the historical process that leaves no room for self criticism, Rafael Gordon provides Isabella with a sharp contemporizing realism that builds up her plausibility in the audience. While *Alba de América* magnifies an action in order to create a properly "tragic effect", *La Reina Isabel* represents a "tragic view" of life, only to be set into a larger perspective by the film as a whole, while as the same time it reminds us that despite any of the film's commitment to placing a work within its own time, the very same feature film is unable to escape the biases of the practitioners of its own time, as the monologue says: "Legend always envelops history, like an apple skin the fruit, but it all nourishes" (Subtitles from the film). These different and opposed ways of filmmaking in Spain, help us glimpse two attitudes in the production of the historical film genre. On the one hand, the large budget film which attempts to compete against Hollywood film on equal terms of budget, a cyclically recurrent attempt by Spanish producers. This conception of historical filmmaking continues to expose a way of conceiving Spanish film as a vehicle to disseminate patriotic virtues of Spanish history. But its negative reception and poor commercial results must question the

plausibility of such style within the limited resources of Spanish film industry. Other ways of making historical films in Spain must be taken in consideration. Rafael Gordon's style, relying on a minimalist staging shows a different path in historical film making, an accessible path which effectively provokes the participation of the viewer as it openly plays with the historical conventions of the audience.

JEROMÍN: THE HISTORICAL MENDING OF A FRANCOIST HISTORICAL ARCHETYPE OF IMPERIAL VALUES

When someone examines for the first time the list of Spanish feature films set in early modern history, it is inevitable that they notice the practical inexistence of films devoted to Spanish national heroic figures. A quick look to British, U.S and French cinematography shows a prolific and diverse filmography of dozens of films devoted to adventurers such as Francis Drake, David Crocket, and Joan de Arc. Historical figures that led Spain to her days of military glory are seldom present in Spanish films: neither the battles of conquistadors Hernán Cortés and Francisco Pizarro, nor privateer Alonso de Contreras, nor the victories of Don Juan of Austria, have been brought to screen by Spanish films. That is why, when looking at a film like *Jeromín* (Luis Lucía, 1953), one should expect to find a film that would focus on the heroic deeds of Juan de Austria, the winner of the naval battle of Lepanto and the survivor of the conspiracies of his own brother. Yet, *Jeromín* is a film devoted to the childhood of Juan of Austria, setting aside his soldier and diplomat record. At first glance, common sense dictates that being one of the icons of Francoism, Juan of Austria should have been depicted as an exemplary

victorious warrior in the film. The analysis of the construction of history in *Jeromín* reveals that his film develops similar representational strategies to that of the period films of its time in order to offer an allegorical interpretation of this chapter in Spanish history, exploiting the childhood of Don Juan of Austria as an the background for the expiation of the immoralities of his father Charles V, thus conveying an idealized vision of 16th Century Spain that matches the image of the New Spain advocated by the regime in 1940s.

THE STORY AND HISTORY OF DON JUAN DE AUSTRIA

John of Austria (1547-1578), traditionally known in Spanish as Don Juan de Austria, was the illegitimate son of Spanish Emperor Charles V and he became one of the most prestigious generals at the service of his half-brother Philip II. The offspring of the affairs of his father with Barbara Blomberg, Juan was taken from her mother in Bavaria after she gave birth, and sent to the village of Getafe where he was raised by a foster family. Named Jeromín, at the age of seven, he was placed under the guardian of Charles' majordomo, Don Luis Quijada, who along with his wife would raise Jeromín at their estate near Valladolid. With the abdication of the Emperor, Quijada was called to serve and brought his wife and godchildren to Yuste. During the final months of Charles' life, Jeromín often visited him, although he was not publicly acknowledged as his son. Upon the death of Charles V, Philip II introduced Don Juan to the court and he was presented as Don Juan de Austria in 1554. For the next 24 years Don Juan would increasingly become one of the important military leaders of the Hispanic Monarchy,

suppressing the Moorish revolt in Granada in 1571, defeating the Ottoman Empire at the naval battle of Lepanto in 1573, and attempting to control the uprising of the protestant provinces in Flanders after 1576. His clashes against his half-brother, the denial of Philip II to invest Don Juan with a kingdom, led the former to believe in a conspiracy against him led by his half-brother, which would result in the assassination of Juan de Escobedo, Don Juan's secretary. Don Juan died of typhus in October 1578 without fulfilling the pacification of Flanders.

An illegitimate child, a hero for an Empire, a martyr for Catholicism, a conspirator against his half-brother, the historical figure of Don Juan co-exists with the heroic character conceptualized by literature. Since his half-brother Philip II decided to destroy Don Juan's personal archives, the historiography on Don Juan has depended on contemporary testimonies, ranging from patriotic and/or romantic accounts to scientific historiography. The traditionalist historiography of the 19th century (i.e. the work of Rodriguez Vila¹⁷) represented Don Juan as a source for the ideological consolidation of Spanish nationality. As historiographer Ortiz states, during and after the Spanish Civil War, the winning side tried to link its ideological discourse with the imperialist glory sentiment of the 16th century and its heroic major figures: the conquerors of the American continent, the Tercios of Flanders, and the military victories by Don Juan (Ortiz 2009, 24). Don Juan became, thus, an icon for the victors of the Civil War, and his image eventually was soon popularized to the extent of even appear on postage stamps linking the victorious naval battle at Lepanto with the Nationalist victory in the Spanish Civil War (García Sanchez 65).

The historiographers of the 1940s, developed dense baroque narrative works on Don Juan, and drew up a portrayal of him that fitted into the moral values advocated by the regime: family, religion and State. In his study of the historiography of Don Juan, Carlos Blanco mentions Ferrandis Torres, Tomás Crame, and Ibáñez de Íbero as the most representative historians of Don Juan in postwar Spain, as they introduced a novelty in the interpretation of Don Juan: a preference to study Don Juan's adolescence and youth years -encompassing the military victory at Lepanto-, and a conception of Don Juan as the real heir and incarnation of the virtues of his heroic Catholic father.

As Carlos Blanco states, this responded to the interest of the New Order in showing a Don Juan entirely identified with the family values that were advocated by the regime despite his amoral conception (8), and so this would leave its imprint in interpreting the relationship between father and son. Already idealized since the 19th century, the version of an idyllic kindhearted relationship between father and son, had already been depicted by the painting by Eduardo Rosales *La presentación de Juan de Austria a Charles V (The Presentation of Don John of Austria to Charles V, 1889)*, as Figure 1 shows.



Figure 1. *La presentación de Don Juan de Austria a Charles V* (Eduardo Rosales, 1889).

This historiographical trend connected with the re-edition of a literary work which had been edited twice in the previous 40 years, *Jeromín* (1907) by Luis Coloma. Albeit combining fiction with facts, Luis Coloma wrote an extensive and minute account of the life and works of Juan de Austria, whose story unfolds in a novelistic style which covered his childhood, adolescence and manhood.

LUIS LUCIA'S *JEROMÍN*

A project started by Producciones Ariel in 1952 and commissioned to filmmaker Luis Lucia, who has previously shot another period film for CIFESA, *La Princesa de los Ursinos* (1947), which earned positive reviews but did not do well at the box office¹⁸, *Jeromín* is an example of the last days of a decaying film genre, the allegorical period films from the 1940-1953 period. A latecomer to this film genre, -it was premiered after the commercial flops in 1951 meant by Juan de Orduña's *La Leona de Castilla* and *Alba*

de América- its existence can only be explained by the lucrative interests that came with this genre: the State funding in the form of film importing licenses as explained earlier.

The film is set in Spain, 1554. While the victorious soldiers of Emperor Charles V win battle after battle, within the heart of Spain every children plays war. In a village near Madrid, Jeromín, a mischievous child who prefers playing battles to studying at school, finds out one day that his guardians are not his parents, and he leaves home. In the meantime, in the city of Brussels a tormented soul, Emperor Charles V abdicates and confesses his son Philip that he had another son in an extramarital affair. The son, named Jeromín, was sent to Spain under the care of two guardians. Meanwhile, Jeromín finds a job at a highway inn and works there until nobleman and emperors' majordomo, Luis de Quijada, finds Jeromín and adopts him as his godson. Charles V, chronically ill, resolves to return to Spain and seek peace in a monastery in Yuste, Extremadura, where Luis de Quijada brings Jeromín. Soon a close bond forms between father and son, they both spend the last days of the emperor together. Charles V foretells the bright future of his son, who daydreams with victories over protestant heretics, Turkish infidels, and every enemy of Catholic Spain. Eventually Charles dies without confessing to Jeromín his true identity, Jeromín mourns the death for months until the now King Philip meets with him and discloses the truth: they are half-brothers. Jeromín is introduced to the Spanish court as Don Juan of Austria, history makes room for Jeromín, whose glory dreams will come true in the naval battle of Lepanto.

TASKS OF HISTORY IN *JEROMÍN*

One of the features of cinematic adaptations in Early Francoism was their complacency with the ideology of the regime, as their maker utilized the literary texts that matched best its ideological propositions (Perez Bowie 53). Under these premises, it is not surprising to understand why the filmmakers chose to adapt Coloma's novel, a novel "impregnada de una tendencia moralizante que hoy parece todavía más pegajosa y estática / possessed of a moralizing trend which today seems even stickier and more staid" (L. Quesada 108). Being loosely based on the first part of Coloma's novel, *Jeromín* approaches to life of Don Juan by limiting to his childhood years by portraying an idealized account of his time in the company of his father. Using a moralistic sensibility in the form of family drama, the film allows for an idealized account of the life of Jeromín that serves as a vehicle for allegorically rendering a historical figures and world that fit within a moralist conception of the past and one of the historical cornerstones of Francoist conception of the past: Charles V.

The film *recounts* the story of the infancy of Don Juan as an excuse to approach the last days of Emperor Charles V at the height of the Spanish Empire. The actors who portray the Emperor (Jesús Tordesillas) and Juan (Jaime Blanch) at the monastery at Yuste present us with a family drama that works as a story of penance of Charles V for his sins. Despite Charles V is the ideological cornerstone in the film: the narration of the film devotes more than one third of the scenes to Charles V, making his appearances and dialogs the most striking difference from Coloma's novel. His portrayal in the films depicts him as a kind, humble, and glorious sovereign who feels Spain as his

motherland, although he was born and raised in Flanders, and Spanish was not his first language. As the very character states during his return scene on a boat: “España..., tanto ha podido España en mí, que primero me hizo su rey y después me hizo español / Spain... Spain which has touched me so deeply, first it made me its king and then it made me Spanish.” This *alteration* interweaves with the Francoist conception of Charles V, which wielded the Emperor’s decision to spend his last days in the monastery of in Spain in order to present him not as a Flemish-born-educated Emperor who ruled different states all over Europe, but rather as a Spanish monarch who represented a synthesizing dynasty as he managed to unite all the peoples of Spain for a common goal. The old emperor which we are presented with is a character in penance, who answers to the very interpretation of the period that the same indulging historiography that excused his extramarital affairs in order to fit into the religious morals of the 1940s. In 1944 historian Ibáñez de Íbero had devoted a large part of the introduction of his study on Don Juan to indulge the Emperor for his love affair by writing in a florid narrative style:

In algunos momentos de reposo y soledad, entonces [Carlos V] despojaba los atributos y el antifaz del supremo poder, y surgía el hombre con sus debilidades, sus ansias de amor y de felicidad, como otro ser cualquiera. Cuanto más alto, más sólo se está y más desamparado, sin poder fiar de nada ni de nadie. / In some moments of repose and solitude, he [Carlos v] dropped the trappings and mask of supreme power, and his real self emerged, with his weaknesses, his desire for love and happiness like any other human being. The higher one’s station, the

more lonely and forsaken is one, without trusting or being trusted. (Ibáñez de Íbero 14)

Within these very ideological premises, the film *explains* and *interprets* that Spain in the 1940s is experiencing a generational change, recycling the blood that made Spain's Empire possible. In this film, a Juan of Austria overshadowed by his father, loses the leading role that Coloma's novel conferred on him, and half of his lines are devoted to expressing his awe for the Emperor. The allegorical tale of this childhood serves mostly to portray the ideals of the imperial soldier advocated by the Francoist regime. In postwar Spain, textbooks, historians and other intellectuals advocated for the ideal of rebuilding the Spanish Empire, a task for which a determined will for Empire was needed. With his continuous daydreams and desire to win battles for Christendom, his lack of interest in intellectualism, Jeromín is not only foretelling his future actions, but also, and more importantly, he is connecting the Spanish 16th century with the Falangist ideal of Imperial hero advocated by the winners of Civil War whose ultimate virtue should be total submission a form of authoritarianism represented by a militarized and hierarchical society (Fandiño Pérez 52). As González Calleja and Nevado explain, this will had to have a special influence from the army: "Los pueblos dinámicos necesitan estar en tensión por la milicia. Además de fe en los destinos imperiales, se requiere un disciplina social férrea y una comunión histórica destinada a la acción / Dynamic peoples need to keep the tension by the army. Besides faith in imperial fate, they require a strict social discipline and a historical communion to action" (129). Indeed, the line "action is the language" defines the spirit scenes which show a

preference for military characters in detriment to other groups, even ecclesiastic characters. Even though there is not a battle in the film, figure of the soldiers appear many times in contrast to other institutions such as the Church. This attitude reaches its climax when in a very daring speech for 1950s, the squire Diego Ruiz, the braggart character played by Antonio Riquelme, openly questions the freedom of the Church without the aid of the military.

STRATEGIES OF REPRESENTATION

In order to render history of paternal redemption and militaristic indoctrination, *Jeromín* employs a series of strategies of representation of history that work together the narrative techniques of the film. In this sense, *Jeromín* features a similar narrative pattern that characterized this genre in the 1940s: constant pace-breaking speeches played with a self-conscious tone and a flowering prose with a nearly complete focalization of the narration on the spectator that nullifies any tension in the narration, as the audience has complete access to the chain of events. The lack of a proper plot structure -rising action, climax, falling action-, leaves the characters with little choice but to “go with flow” of events and expect the inevitable end imposed by the screenwriters in an expository pattern.

The film employs scenes not found in Coloma’s novel to convey a penitential representation of a repentant emperor in order to allow the film’s plot to fit into the family morals of Francoism, and thus dodge any moral controversy. In this very manner, the film *omits* historical events which aim to recurrently render history. For instance, the

film *omits* historical facts such as that the Emperor had had other illegitimate children, that Charles only saw Jeromín a few times during his retirement at Yuste and spent no time with him in private (Vaca de Osma 73), or above all, that Charles' codicil stated that no royal status be given to Juan of Austria even though in the film the Spanish court addresses him using the title *your highness*. But by showing father and son playing chess together, Jeromín watching his father overnight, and Charles in awe while listening to his son's dream's of military glory, the film constructs a family reunion that overshadows any moral dilemma regarding. This point especially concerned the members of the Censorship Committee, who expressed their satisfaction for the way the story had dealt with the imperial affair (AGA, file 36/3468).

By *condensing* different facts about the life of Don Juan, *Jeromín* succeeds in idealizing Don Juan of Austria as hero that meets the dual religious and military of a paladin for Christendom that answers to the values of the Francoist hero soldier-monk, which met austerity, sacrifice, and also impassivity to violence in order to create an idealized image of a hero that combined a spirit of order and sacrifice (as a monk) with combatant driving force (as a soldier) (Cirici 18). After his introduction to the royal court, the young Don Juan receives from his tutors a sword that belonged to Charles V and a cross rescued from a battle against the Muslims. During the ceremony Philip II proclaims that "may the edge of that sword defend what the image symbolizes, who is Jesus Christ, and may he always guide your sword, Don Juan". This scene is not only an exercise of condensation, but also *alteration* and *invention*. This *invented* scene -Don Juan was only introduced to the Court as member of the Royal family, yes, but only as

part of the Royal procession during Prince Charles' oath of loyalty ceremony in 1560- seeks to convey the normalization of the social status of Don Juan while foretelling his future in history as a defender of the Empire and Catholicism, thus fitting into the heroic portrayal of Francoist historiography in 1940s.

The strategies of representation also work in a manner that allow for weaving the narrative thread. A common narrative feature of the historical films of the 1940-53 period, the film features a nearly complete focalization of the narration on the spectator, which nullifies any tension in the narration, as the audience has complete access to the chain of events. The lack of a proper plot structure -rising action, climax, falling action-, leaves the characters with little choice but to "go with flow" of events and expect the inevitable end imposed by the screenwriters. But by inserting invented facts such the secrecy of the identity of Jeromín, the constant moral doubts embedded in Doña Inés of Quijada, the film develops a form of subplot that allows for narrative -therefore dramatic- tension. This is another historical *invention*, as this supposedly unveiled secrecy differed with the fact that the Court was aware of Jeromín's actual identity the moment he was presented at Yuste (Ferrandiz 48).

RECEPTION OF THE FILM

The reception of the film differed sharply to the initial lack of interest among censorship officials during the examination of the film's screenplay prior to the start of the shooting. On February 28, 1953, the committee members criticized the project for its slowly paced, tensionless screenplay:

El guión ofrece más posibilidades en su arranque y en general en la primera parte que después. A medida que avanza la acción va perdiendo interés y creemos que llega a cansar. Muy buena tiene que ser la realización para que la película pueda pasar de discreta. / The script offers a greater potential at the beginning, but as the plot unfolds it loses interest and gets tiresome. The direction of the film must be very good if it wants be more than a discrete film. (AGA, file 36/3468)

In this sense, a trend can be noted when examining the film reviews published in the film magazine establishment (*Cámara*, *Primer Plano*, *Radiocinema*). Although praising the film for its portrayal of the childhood of Don Juan, they all devote a large part of their reviews to introduce/remind the reader of the future military victories foretold in the film, as if they were revealing higher expectations. Most of the reviews require going through or introducing the reader to the importance of Don Juan in his adulthood. Yet, out of the 18 film reviews examined, most of them converge in giving positive reviews to the film, praising the acting of Jaime Blanch and Antonio Riquelme. Specially noted was the cinematography by Cecilio Paniagua in *ABC* (Donald 1953, 57) and in *Primer Plano* (Tello 1953, n.pag).

With a declared budget of 6.6 million pesetas¹⁹ (AGA, file 36/3468) the film saw success all around Spain (Cerezo Torres 4), although this assertion by Cerezo Torres does match the data available on its box office results at the Spanish Ministry of Culture (310,631 pesetas), a much lower result that does not match the extended showing of the film, two months in *Tivoli* and three months in *Rialto*, two of the main cinema theaters in Barcelona. Regarding its evaluation by the Board of Censors, and it soon earned the

highest support. On February 25, 1954, the BOC classified the film as Primera A, hence financially supporting the film by assuming 40% of its production costs (AGA, file 36/3468), while later granting the film the award of Interés Nacional on March 18, 1953.

To sum up, Luis Lucia's film conveys a redeeming image of Charles V's sins in order to fit his historical figure within the morality of Francoism, while at the same time it draws up an allegorical portrait of the zenith of the Spanish Empire. Yet, when examining *Jeromín* another matter comes into question. Why the lack of coverage of the adulthood of Juan of Austria, unlike the original novel? After all, the greatest military achievements by Juan -while at the same time being the most useful for Francoism for propagandistic purposes- took place in his adult life. Film historians in Spain have agreed on a reason to explain this: an interest by the filmmakers to avoid talking about controversy surrounding the reign of King Philip II. Shooting the life of Don Juan would inevitable have led to include several disasters of his reign: The Invincible Armada defeat, the plague, the bankruptcy (Gubern 2009, 20; Mortimer quoted in Gubern 1981, 128) quoted on and his turbulent relationship with his half-brother.

Without denying the assertions made by Gubern and Mortimer, I suggest than rather than censoring themselves in view of any potential historical controversy, the filmmakers of *Jeromín* had to face the lack of resources of film industry in Spain in the early 1950s. Had it been pursued, the attempt to depict the victories by Don Juan in Granada, Lepanto, and Flanders would have demanded of Producciones Ariel an economical effort similar to what meant the staging for of *Alba de América* CIFESA a year earlier, which had proven to be disastrous for the company, and was not widely

praised by the film press. Indeed, upon consultation of the press accounts on Jeromín, many reviews criticized Orduña's film for its lack of staging resources -the scenes shot on the sea where not particularly praised for their lack of realism-.

All in all, the delicacy of filming the later years of Don Juan, and thus the reign of Philip II, would become apparent a year later with the controversy brought about by the international release of the British/Spanish film production *That lady / La princesa de Eboli* (Terence Young, 1954), as it will be examined in the next chapter.

CONCLUSIONS ON THE ROYAL BIOPIC

This chapter has brought several conclusions on the development of the filmic representations of the lives of member of royalty. These conclusions points to some patterns in the modes and topics of representation of royal figures of Early Modernity in Spanish film. If we understand that a film is the reflection of its time of making, the royal biopic indeed tells us about how Spanish evokes her kings through time.

Regarding any influence of historiographical trends in the articulation of their discourse, these films present a deep influence by Romanticism. Except for *La Reina Isabel en persona*, they employ a historiographical approach that embeds many of the conventions and interpretations of the Romantic tradition from the 19th century and early 20th century. These conventions manifest either in the adaptation of a literary text from the 19th century (*Locura de Amor*), a historiographical trend of interpretation (*Locura de Amor*, *Juana la Loca*, *Jeromín*, and more arguably *Alba de América*), and the usage of pictorial references in its cinematographic conception (*Locura de Amor* and *Jeromín*).

Thematically, the inexistence of any film devoted to the life of Charles V, Philip II, or Charles III, three kings considered by historians as icons of the height of the Spain in Early Modern History, is noteworthy. Being some of the cornerstones of the Francoist mythical conception of Imperial Spain, the inexistence of any biopic devoted to Charles V and Philip II. Even more striking is the fact that, being Early Modernity an Era dominated by the male figure of monarchs, four of these films focus on the lives of the only two queens who had a leading role as Queens of Castile. This silence may be interpreted during Francoist cinema as the lack of capacity of the national industry to bring to the screen a production that would have had to meet the high expectations of Francoist glorious conception of the past. As exposed in the commercial flop of *Alba de América*, the most expensive national production at the time could not match the rich staging of its competitor *Christopher Columbus*. Hence Spanish industry was in no position to compete against US or British film industries in terms of resources. This, as well as the end of the boom of period film productions in the 1950s, account for the absences during Francoist Spain of any film focused on any of the Francoist iconic historical figures. The advent of democracy brought a different political and ideological scenario: the historical construction of Spain in 1975 did not call upon imperial figures any more. Quite the contrary, they were subject to an adscription to conservative and centralist ideologies that did not fit into multiregional and national conception of the new State of Autonomies.²⁰ In this sense, the analysis of film reviews for this chapter evidences how patriotic, almost protecting, sentiments towards the royal figure on film 1940-50s cinema leave room in 2000 for a less partisan interpretation of their

representation of Spain that interprets the historical figure in a more intimate and less patriotic way.

Indeed, the evolution of the national sociopolitical context of production explains a shift in the historical interpretation of a royal figure and the conception of the very monarchs. In the 1940-50s the film depiction of the historical figure serves their identification with the Spanish nation. Nation and Royal figure become one, insofar as the actions of the monarchs are directly and their fates are sealed together. On the other hand, the films shot at the end of the 20th century convey a very different interpretation of the figures of Isabella I and Joanna I in Spanish history. Even though *La Reina Isabel en persona* and *Juana la Loca* diametrically differ from one another in their topic and strategies of representation, they both share an interest in placing their protagonists not only within the history of the nation, but also in their very spheres as ordinary human beings. Yet, the case of *Juana la Loca* evidences what Hueso Montón refers as the transformation of the past into inconsequential anecdotes, insofar as the strong personality of a fictionalized historical figure minimizes the historical background, thus the historical representation, “en una mera anécdota sin importancia, cuando no en juegos o problemas de alcoba / into a mere anecdote, if not pillow talk” (Hueso Montón 2004, 99).

This last subject, the filmic modes of representation employed in these films, shows how over the years there is an evolution that leads towards the humanization of historical figures. The analysis of these films exposes the breaking of the *royal distance*, presenting royal and noblemen character in a more private way, far from allegorical

representations that appeal for iconic figure that embeds the values of the nation. Indeed, in *Alba de America* and *Jeromín* in their cinematography prevail long-shots, rigid acting and lack of expressive lighting prevail in the 1940s, that flesh out an allegorical formal distance between spectator and characters. Then again, the cinematography of more recent films exposes not only their fragility as human beings, but also a more realistic story which exposes the tension between the public duty and private life of the monarch. Such is the case of the sexualization of Queen Joanna in *Juana la Loca*, but also the humanization in the period biopic is more perceptible in *La Reina Isabel en persona*, by exposing the duality of the human nature of a queen, not only as a wife but also as a stateswoman. To conclude, *La Reina Isabel en persona* remains as the only biopic that features a complete coverage of a character's life, its historical transcendence in a past and present, and a conception of filmmaking that radically differs from the grandiose staging of its counterpart *Alba de América*.

NOTES

¹ Bergenroth, Gustav A. *Calendar of Letters, Despatches, and State Papers, Relating to the Negotiations between England and Spain, Preserved in the Archives at Simancas and Elsewhere: 1485-1553*. Nendeln, Kraus Reprint, 1869. Print.

² Examples of his work are *Bosquejo biografico de la reina doña Juana*. Madrid, 1874 and *La reina doña Juana*. Madrid, 1892.

³ Fernández Alvarez, Manuel. *Doña Juana, Reina De Castilla*. Madrid: Real Academia de la Historia, 2006. Print.

⁴ Aram, Bethany. *Juana the Mad: Sovereignty and Dynasty in Renaissance Europe*. Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2005. Print

⁵ Juan-Navarro has drawn up a very illustrative list of the most popular art representations of this historical figure, in addition to the parody film by José Ramón Larraz, *Juana la loca ... de vez en cuando* (1983), a sarcastic film full of references to political situation in Spain in the 1980s.

Stage dramas: *Doña Juana la Loca* (1864), by Ramón Franquelo; *Santa Juana by Castilla* (1918), by Benito Pérez Galdós; *Love Possessed Juana* (1939), by Angna Enters; *Jeanne la Folle* (1949), by Francois Aman-Jean; *El corazón extraviado* (1957), by Aberto by Zavalía; *Juana creó la noche* (1960), by Martin Elizondo; *Juana del mor hermoso* (1984), by Manuel Martínez Mediero; *Un chateau en novembre* (1984), by Emmanuel Robles; *Falsa crónica de Juana la Loca* (1985), by Miguel Sabido; *La reina loca* (1988), by Wenceslao Godoy; *Retablo de la pasión y muerte de Juana la Loca* (1996), by Manuel Rueda; y *Razón de Estado o Juego de reinas* (1991), by Concha Romero.

Regarding novel: *Jeanne de Castille: nouvelle historique* (1843), by Antoinette Henriette Clémence Robert; *La reina loca de amor* (1863), by Francisco José Orellana; *Juana la Loca: Seis novelas superhistóricas* (1944), by Ramón Gómez de la Serna; *The Prisoner of Tordesillas* 1959), by Lawrence L. Schoonover; *La reine folle d'amour* (1961), by Janina Villars; *Majille arie-Héline Charles Quint* (1974), by Jeanne Champion; *Un amourfou* (1991), by Catherine Hermary-Vieille; *Joana* (1991), by Guillem Viladot;

Strapia: El libro de memorias de Juana la Loca (1991), by Julio Rodríguez; *Juana la Loca* (1992), by Carmen Barberá; *La leggenda di Juana I* (1992), by Adriana Assini; y *Los silencios de Juana la Loca* (2003), by Aroni Yanko. (Juan-Navarro, 215)

⁶ Miguel Villar Toldan's *Locura de Amor* (1926), is not a historical film related to Joanne's life but rather a bourgeoisie comedy film.

⁷ Precisely, the film official budget mounted up to 4,283,390.03 pesetas (AGA, file 36/03331).

⁸ The box office earnings amounted to 7,489,435.35 pesetas (AGA, file 36/03331).

⁹ As explained in the Introduction, these reviews show the audience reaction of the main local theatres where the film was premiered. Organized in four aspects, the reports cover the following aspects: 1) Audience reaction; 2) Aspects of the film that influence audience reaction; 3) Possible different reactions and sectors on audience reaction; 4) The Delegate's personal opinion.

¹⁰ 7,489,435.35 pesetas (AGA, file 36/3331).

¹¹ 8,895,196.82 pesetas "Juana la Loca." *Base de datos de películas calificadas, Ministerio de Cultura*. Web. 21 May 2011.

<<http://www.mcu.es/bbddpeliculas/cargarFiltro.do?layout=bbddpeliculas&cache=init&language=es>>.

¹² Indeed, the members of the BOC had already expressed their weariness with this genre by 1951. Board member Fernando Galainena referred to *La Leona de Castilla* (Juan de

Orduña, 1951), another historical film production by CIFESA released before *Alba de América*, as a

[...] camino que lleva al cine español al desastre [...] Lastima de dinero invertido en esta película. Carece de interés en absoluto, no está bien representada y tiene un guión francamente flojo. / [...] way that leads Spanish film to debacle [...] It is sad to see all this money spent in this film. It is lacking in interest, it has a weak script and poor acting. (AGA, file 36/3403)

¹³ Two other films, *El Doncel de la Reina* (Eusebio Fernandez Ardavín, 1946) and *Juana La loca, de vez en cuando* (Jose Ramón Larraz, 1983), show respectively Isabella assuming the narrative conventions of an adventure-genre perspective and costume comedy. It has not been possible to locate a copy of Fernandez Ardavín's film.

¹⁴ Even though Isabella was one of the firmest supporters of Columbus in Spain, she had already pawned her jewelry at the beginning of the war against Granada in order to finance her army.

¹⁵ 4,405,832 pesetas.

¹⁶ "Reina Isabel en Persona." *Base de datos de películas calificadas. Ministerio de Cultura*. Web. 21 May 2011.

<<http://www.mcu.es/bbddpeliculas/cargarFiltro.do?layout=bbddpeliculas&cache=init&language=es>>.

¹⁷ In Porreño, Baltasar. *Historia Del Serenisimo Señor D. Juan De Austria Hijo Del Invictísimo Emperador Carlos V Rey De España Dirigida a La Excelestísima Señora Da. Ana De Austria*. Madrid: Sociedad de Bibliófilos Españoles, 1889. Print.

¹⁸ This film will be analyzed in Chapter III: Politics and the Court.

¹⁹ 6,279,219.44 pesetas.

²⁰ This issue will be indexed in the last chapter of this dissertation: *Alatriste*.

CHAPTER III

POLITICS AND THE COURT

The following chapter examines several films¹ devoted to the representation of politics and court in Early Modern Spain, encompassing some of the watershed political events in Spanish history: the rebellion of the Comuneros, the assassination of Juan of Escobedo, the War of Succession in 1705-1715, and the pre-revolutionary echoes of the Esquilache Mutiny against King Charles III in 1765. During Early Modern times, the Court became the political hub where all administrative organisms decided the fate of a nation, a nation of which the king became its body and expression. Most films examined in this chapter expose how the power of the Crown in three centuries reached its apogee over the years, and films such as *That Lady* (Terence Young, 1952) and *Esquilache* (Josefina Molina, 1988) devote many scenes to show how of Spain was envisioned and executed from the Royal Court as an effective administrative system that would control the fate of the nation.

For purposes of representation of the Spain in the Modern Age, depicting the Court is perhaps a less restraining historical portrayal than the biopic. One of the narrative consequences of the biopic is its limitation to the development of the *dramatis persona* of the historical figure -i.e. monarchs or noblemen- at the expense of other characters, whereas the political period film facilitates a filmmaker immersing the spectator in a more diverse exploration of the age depicted on screen. Since the representation of the past does not need to focus on the historical figure itself, but rather

on different characters, the political period film allows multiple ramifications in the plot that can enrich the filmic text with multiple perspectives that, unlike the biopic, do not converge into one character.

In this sense, since the Court is the center of politics of the nation, its political verve may become the ideal setting for a filmmaker to state his own vision of the past of a nation through the depiction of the different groups -royalty, aristocracy, clergy- that make up the social elites. But within this historical piece of the microcosms lies a topic whose controversial nature allows us to hint at the conception that a certain political establishment has of its own past: political conspiracies.

Two of films included in this chapter, *That Lady* and *La Conjura de El Escorial* (Antonio del Real, 2008) are instrumental to understanding the evolution of the Early Modern period film, as they contradictorily account for the reasons king Philip II had in his prosecution of his prime minister Antonio Pérez, one of the authors of the *Leyenda Negra Española* -The Spanish Black Legend. On the other hand, other films' relevance lays in the fact that some of them deal with the rebellions against the Crown- the revolt of the Comuneros and the Esquilache mutiny-, and a civil war -The War of Succession. Being Early Modernity the genesis of the modern Spanish state, it is instrumental to examine how these films shed light on the origins, development and aftermath of these rebellions.

As expected, the degree of adaptation/alteration of historical events from academic historical sources varies significantly in each film, ranging from complete adherence to established reconstructions to entire inventions. Their dramatic approach

to history also varies according to the genre in which each film is shot, ranging from epic drama to comedy, but they all converge in the same point: their recreations the past, or as Etienne Souriau defines it, their *diegetic* reality, prove that they are the result of their *afilmic* reality or their time of making (quoted in Plate 12).

THE WAR OF SUCCESSION IN *LA PRINCESA DE LOS URSINOS*

The first feature film in this chapter on politics and the court in the Spanish period film genre brings forth an example of historical filmmaking during early Francoism. *La Princesa de los Ursinos*. *La Princesa de los Ursinos* (*The Princess of The Ursinos*), is a film by Luis Lucía shot in 1947 and premiered on November 27, 1947 whose plot and storyline take place in the early years of the court of Philip V of Spain (1700-1724 and 1724-1746).² In the same spirit as other period films shot in the second half of the 1940s, *La Princesa de los Ursinos* (*La Princesa*, hereafter) is a film that epitomizes the same conception of period filmmaking: a chauvinist and heroic conception of the past of a nation, within the narrative patterns of an epic tale that accounts for the successful deeds of the Spanish spirit in its struggle against foreign foes. As a cinematographic form of history telling, *La Princesa* indexes historical questions regarding a matter whose multiple ramifications were ideologically knotty at the time the film was made: the arrival to Spain of a foreign dynasty, its political compliance with France, and its French-inspired reforms that would introduce the ideas of Enlightenment in Spain. All these were ideologically controversial issues for Spain in 1946, but *La Princesa* manages to neutralize them all by drawing a portrayal of Spain as a nation

whose spiritual matters allow her to prevail over foreign intrusions, then and after. This insistence on national spirituality over the scheming of foreign nations is consistent with the political context of Spain in 1947 when the country was subject to international isolationism.

With a budget of almost three million pesetas, *La Princesa* was the first period film by studio CIFESA set in the early modern era. The film narrates how Louis XIV, king of France, sends his best spy, the Princess of Ursinos, on a mission to Spain to ensure that his grandson Philip V, recently crowned as king of Spain, remains under the his control. Her mission is to urge Philip V in order to keep him under the control of his native country, and entice him into requesting the military aid from France against Austrian pretender Charles of Habsburg in exchange for some strongholds along the Pyrenees. Her mission is essential for the plans of France, as it is well known that the longer Philip rules Spain, the more Spanish he becomes, and the less he listens to the orders imposed by his royal grandfather. Statesman Cardinal Portocarrero, who watches over this transition of Philip V, knows about the arrival of the princess and sends his cousin Luis de Carvajal in order to court and earn the trust of the Princess, and eventually turn her to the Spanish side. In the meantime, the War of Succession continues, as the troops of the Austrian pretender to the throne presses on Madrid. The princess aims to convince Philip V to request military help from Louis XIV to fight the Austrians, in exchange for the concession of benefits to France in Spain. Eventually, being fascinated by the intrinsic and spiritual qualities of the Spanish folk, the princess embraces the Spanish cause and manages to obtain unconditional help from Louis, who

sends his troops to help Philip V win the battle. Luis de Carvajal dies, and the Princess fully understands the last nature that the Spanish spirit entails: sacrifice.

ESPIONAGE WITHIN A NATIONAL AND INTERNATIONAL CONFLICT

The film is set in the early years of the Spanish War of Succession between 1701 and 1713. This was a conflict sparked by the long-lasting international tension between the leading powers of Europe (France, Austria, The Netherlands and England principally) regarding the succession of the childless king of Spain Charles IV. Although the testament of Charles IV gave the rights to the throne to the grandson of the French king Louis XIV, in detriment to the second pretender, the Arch-Duke Charles of Austria, the former did not recognize the French rights to the throne of Spain and declared war on France. But this international conflict became also a civil war, as Philip V represented a French centralism political model supported by Castile, and Charles of Habsburg represented the *foral* territorial system³ supported by the reigns of the Crown of Aragon (Aragon, Valencia, Majorca, and Catalonia). The war brought Spaniards into a civil war which would continue once the question of the dynastic succession had already been put to an end in 1713 in the Treaty the Utrecht. The civil conflict would last until 1714 with the surrender of Catalonia and Majorca, provoking two main consequences in the outcome in the conflict: the final establishment of Bourbon dynasty in Spain and the founding of a new centralist territorial administration.

Within this conflict, a French woman would play an instrumental role. Marie-Anne de la Trémoille (1642-1722) princess of Ursins (or Ursinos in its Spanish version),

was a French noblewoman who had a great influence on the Spanish government during the War of the Spanish Succession. Anne-Marie was the eldest of seven children of the Duke of Noirmoutier, Louis II de La Trémoille, an old but impoverished member of the French nobility. At 17, she married her first husband, who would die in 1670, leaving Anne-Marie penniless, but their marriage had allowed her to be welcomed in the Paris nobility circles, where Anne-Marie would socially thrive. She would marry again in 1675, to the Italian Duke Flavio Orsini, and became a close acquaintance with the French Queen Madame de Maintenon, whose trust she would earn. After the death of her second husband in 1698, she took the nonexistent title of *Princess Orsini* (Princess of Ursins) with which she would historically be identified. Sent by Louis XIV of France to influence his grandson Philip V and especially his wife, Maria Luisa of Savoy, to the benefit of French politics, Marie-Anne became an ally for Spanish side of the Bourbon dynasty. Upon her arrival to Madrid in 1703, she kept pretending to work for the French Minister Torcy, where she directed the king of Spain on how to govern Spain (Castro 57; Perez Samper 161), and earned the support of the Castilians.

In this sense, her support went to such an extent that she helped uncover a conspiracy orchestrated by Louis XIV to take the throne from Philip V. The final break between France and Spain came in 1709 when Louis XIV threatened to withdraw his military support from Philip, to which Marie-Anne replied by forcing the dismissal of most French diplomats from the Spanish Court, which in turn enhanced Philip's popularity among the Spaniards. Eventually, her influence on the king, and especially the queen, became so strong that later historians such as French President

Charles-Jean-François Hénault wrote in 1855 that "she governs, but does not rule" (quoted in Bent 162). Indeed, according to Saint-Simon, upon the death of the Queen she tried to marry Philip V and thus become queen of Spain, but this ambitious move made her lose the trust of the Queen of France and lose also the support of many of her collaborators in Madrid. Moreover, promoting the apparently shy Elisabeth Farnese as a potential candidate for Queen of Spain, and in the hope of controlling her, would be the end of her career in Spain. Upon her arrival, Elisabeth's nature turned out to be uncontrollable by the princess, and the new Queen expelled Marie-Anne from Spain without allowing her to even change her court dress. She would spend her last days in her exile in Rome until her death in 1722 at the age of 80.

The tale of the Princess of Ursins and her role in the War of Succession has been told in Spanish, French and English.⁴ The literary production in Spanish before the release of the film, which influenced Carlos Blanco, the author of the script, featured two main works on the life of Anne-Marie. One of the first dramatic adaptations of the story of Anne-Marie in Spain⁵ was written by Manuel Fernández y González, who in 1864 wrote the historical novel *La Princesa de los Ursinos*. In a fictional and heavily romanticizing style, Blanco depicted the Princess as a self-interested figure that played her part within a larger international spy game, as a special agent sent by Louis XIV to counsel and control Philip V. In this play Anne-Marie watches out for her own interests, as Carlos Blanco depicts her as an intriguing courtesan who controls Philip V through her charms and through his wife. The conflict presents Philip V as a young inexperienced monarch, whose love for the Princess turns him into a political puppet controlled by

Louis XIV and strengthens the idea of a French conspiracy to convert Spain, if not into a province, a satellite state of the crown of France.

Another other historical account, written by Constance Hill in 1889 is *The Story of the Princess of Ursins in Spain (Camarera-Mayor)*, which was translated in Spain by Manuel García Morales and Gonzalo Calvo in 1905. This a tale that strikes on the effects of her help to ensure the consolidation of the Bourbon Dynasty to Spain, insofar as the author concludes that “she laid the foundation of all modern reforms [...] The history of her life is the first page of history of Spain in the eighteen century” (Hill 243).

Taking into account these sources, it can be assumed that by the mid-1940s, the bibliography on the Princess of Ursins had drawn a recurrent picture of her, because these views represent Maria as a woman expert in diplomatic matters, who watched out more for her own interests than those of any of the countries -France, Spain or eventually the exiled British Crown- that she served. She is also referred to as a woman of everlasting beauty who showed no signs of aging, and efficiently used her charms to gain control of men. Despite minor differences in the determination of the extent of her support to the Spanish Crown, it is agreed that she became a mentor for Philip V, a young inexperienced monarch set in power by his grandfather. It is also agreed that the king, age 17, would benefit from the presence of the Princess in Madrid, and she showed him the means to earn the trust of the Castilians during the war, and how to cut the binds that kept him tied to the French Court.

LA PRINCESA AND THE TASKS OF HISTORY

La Princesa presents us with a patriotic story of national spiritual resistance against two enemies who fail to conquer Spain by military means (the Austrian side) or by means of espionage and diplomacy (the French Bourbon side). In presenting this story, *La Princesa* presents the War of Succession as a conflict fought not only on the battlefield but also in the chambers of the Court of Philip V. In this scenario *La Princesa* depicts the pulse between Spanish spirituality and French espionage in order to highlight the everlasting victory of the will of the Spanish nation over her enemies. Featuring a dramatic and patriotic interpretation of history, the film presents us with a nation that manages to neutralize and convert those foes to her cause.

The film *recounts* how the French intervention in the war, though self-interested at first, becomes altruistic because of the realization of French officials of the undefeatable spirituality of Spaniards, epitomized in the in the conversion of two main French historical figures: The Princess of Ursins and King Philip. The Princess of Ursins depicted in the film, unlike all dramatic and historical works on her life, presents us not with a scheming selfish French spy, but rather a sentimental French woman who rapidly embraces the Spanish because of the deep imprint caused on her by the spirituality of Spanish folk. For the same reason, Philip V is conveyed as a young and inexperienced, but fully Spanish monarch, who quickly forgets his motherland because of the same imprint caused on him by the spirit of the Spanish people. The film *interprets* and *explains* the conflict as an invasion of foreign troops led by the Archduke of Austria, who are effectively counteracted by Philip V with the disinterested military help of the

French Crown. The Princess of Ursins plays within this conflict an instrumental role, insofar as she, as French spy who changes sides, she is directly responsible for convincing the French ministers of the impossibility of imposing a foreign regime onto the people of Spain, a unique people who bear a distinct-proud-and self-governing spirit. *La Princesa* conveys the idea of the historical uniqueness of the Spanish people as a result of their resolute and independent spirit, in accordance with the narrative conventions of the historiography of the time. This conception of Spain goes beyond its Romantic origins in the 19th century and its mere classification as chauvinist or patriotic, since it enters the mythical conception of the past for Francoism, whose "... historical discourse [was] achieved by mystifying the past in the sphere of the admirable..." (Herzberger 66). These admirable *spiritual* qualities: honor, sacrifice, selfless interest, Catholicism, become the best weapon within the arsenal of Spain, as they effectively neutralize all foreign, whether French or Austrian, intrusion.

In this sense, the film faces the same problem as 19th and 20th century historians such as LaFuente, Cadalso, Menéndez Pelayo did. These nationalist historians, who despised any historical foreign influence in Spain, subsequently dealt with the same issue: if the 18th century and the Enlightenment brought the economic and administrative modernization of Spain,⁶ how to solve the ideological inconsistencies of presenting a French monarch -Philip V- as the monarch behind these reforms? The solution: the *Spanishization* of Phillip V, his conversion as a result of the Spanish impregnation (García Cárcel 2002, 32). In doing so, the *Spanishization* of Philip V allows the film to dodge such a controversial topic as the prevailing negative interpretation of the Bourbon

dynasty that Francoism implemented in national memory at many educational levels, such as in history school textbooks by authors such as Bermejo de la Rica, Santamaría, and Tormo Cervinio. According to Martínez Tortola, these school textbooks presented the arrival of the Bourbon dynasty and the ideals of The Enlightenment brought along as pernicious and responsible for the degradation of the original ideals and personality of Spain, although this only affected the high upper class, while the common people remained loyal to their principles (102).

The film *explains* these principles through the fictional character of Luis de Carvajal, who bears all of the spiritual virtues that fascinate and convert the princess and the king into firm Spanish believers. In his book *Kitsch y Cine Histórico Español* Luis González González sharply deconstructs the character of Carvajal in order to expose the underlying ideology. According to González González, this character epitomizes four stereotypical features of the Spanish people: anti-rationalist, passion, pride and self-sacrifice (191). *Antirationalism*: By rolling his dice and trusting change, the archetypical Spaniard Carvajal deploys a lack of rationality that sharply contrasts with rational and overly civilized French diplomats (192). So does his emotional attitude towards political matters. *Passion*: Perhaps one of the few establishing shots of the film is in the scene when Carvajal rides his horse while carrying his guitar and singing flamenco songs. By relying on all this array of charms (flamenco singing and guitar playing) to seduce the Princess, the character of Carvajal is participating in the literary and filmic tradition of the *españolada* that started with 19th century travel chronicles by authors such as Richard Ford and was reinforced during Francoism. This reconstruction of national

identity indents according to the stereotypes of Southern Spain that converted the salient features of Andalusia into the universal Spanish stereotype. *Pride*: His proud attitude towards the defense of his country explains why, despite the desperate necessity of the French military aid, Spaniards never pledge to bargain with their land. This pride issue especially concerned censorship officials while approving the final cut of the film, to such an extent that they ordered any line that hinted at despair be removed from the film, as Table 1 shows. The following cuts correspond to the no.10 and no.11 reels found in AGA, file 36/3299.⁷

Table 1. Modifications on the script of *La Princesa de los Ursinos*.

Original cut	Censored cut
ROYAL PALACE; AFTER ROYAL SPEECH Philip V. ¡No princesa!..Llegaréis a Francia y gracias a vos nacerá esa alianza que nos dará la victoria y hará temblar a Europa.	ROYAL PALACE; AFTER ROYAL SPEECH Philip V: ¡No princesa!...Llegareis felizmente y gracias a vos nacerá esa alianza que con nuestra victoria hará temblar a Europa.
PORTOCARRERO'S OFFICE Portocarrero: ¡Si fuera cierta la ayuda de Francia!	PORTOCARRERO'S OFFICE Portocarrero: ¡Si fuera cierta la ayuda esperada!
KING'S OFFICE AT BURGOS Philip V. Sí... ¡Ha conseguido la ayuda de Francia! Philip V: Con la ayuda de Francia... Portocarrero: Han atravesado la frontera 30mil soldados franceses al mando del Duque de Berwich.	KING'S OFFICE AT BURGOS Philip V. Sí... ¡Ha conseguido su propósito! Philip V: Venceremos Monseñor... Portocarrero: Están atravesando la frontera 30 mil soldados franceses al mando del Duque de Berwich... y entretanto nuestro ejército contraataca con heroísmo, cada casa es una fortaleza y cada paisano un infante. ¡Venceremos Majestad!

Table 1 continued

Original cut	Censored cut
<p>KING'S OFFICE AT MADRID</p> <p>Philip V: Gracias, Ana María... España os debe el triunfo que hoy publican las campanas de pueblo en pueblo.</p>	<p>KING'S OFFICE AT MADRID</p> <p>Philip V: Gracias Ana María... España celebra el triunfo que hoy publican las campanas de pueblo en pueblo.</p>

The character also conveys the ideal of the ultimate *sacrifice*: life. In accordance to the ideology of fascism in Europe and Spain, for which martyrdom became a ritual act which corroborated the commitment of its followers (Gallego 182), the film conveys the same appraisal of death. As the character clearly states to Anne-Marie that he would give everything for his country, and so he does at the end of the film.

In conveying this patriotic history of Spain, *La Princesa* reveals the same political project found in similar historical films of the time, insofar as their representation of the past glorifies and mystifies it in order to “reinforce the need for national unification” (Labanyi 2000, 174). But this representation of the past deeply roots into the national political climate that reigned at the time of the film’s production and release in 1947. In December 1946, the regime faced a nearly complete international isolation: the closing of almost every foreign embassy in Spain was followed by the decision of the General Assembly of the United Nations that the Francoist Government of Spain be debarred from membership, as well as the decision the French government to close her frontier with Spain. The subsequent economical isolationism of the nation worsened the already harsh living conditions of most Spaniards due to the extended damages caused by the Civil War in 1939. It was a time when the press sent calls for

resistance against an international conspiracy against Spain led by Masonic forces (Buñuel Salcedo 335). But above all, December 1946-January 1947 was a period in which the press controlled by the regime called for national cohesion and succeeded in increasing the popular support for the dictator by presenting Franco as the defender of a nation under the siege of foreign conspirators (Pardo 18).

The film attempts to *justify* its monolithic historical discourse at the very beginning of the film's titles. Because of the high importance for the historical approach of the film that lies within it, the introduction must transcribed in its entirety:

No hemos pretendido hacer historias -nombres, fechas, y recuentos de batallas- sino reflejar el ambiente espiritual de España en un momento del siglo XVIII. Luis XIV de Francia, El "Rey Sol" acaba de lograr que su nieto ocupe el trono de España con el nombre de Felipe V. No se conforma con este triunfo. Quiere más y su ambición le enfrenta con el carácter español, indómito, independiente, forjado en siglos de lucha y para quien Los Pirineos ni han desaparecido ni desaparecerán jamás. / Our intent has not been to re-make history -names, dates, and the recounting of battles- but rather to reflect the spiritual atmosphere in Spain at a point in time during the 18th century. Louis XIV, the "Sun King," has just managed to place his grandson on the throne in Spain with the title of Philip V. But this achievement is not enough. He wants more and his ambition places him in conflict with the indomitable, independent Spanish character, forged from centuries of conflict and for whom the Pyrenees have not, nor will not, disappeared.

The film *justifies* its artistic licenses and liberties taken in recreating the period by ambiguously quoting on a double fictional and historical nature: “Entre realidad y fantasía conoceréis un famoso duelo diplomático cuyas vicisitudes silencia la historia. / Half way between reality and fantasy, you will know a famous diplomatic duel whose vicissitudes are silenced by history.” Thus, the film openly denies any comparison to the fact-accounting forms of conventional history telling⁸ by hiding behind the aim of accounting for the resilient spirituality of Spain in the 18th Century.

THE STRATEGIES OF REPRESENTATION OF HISTORY IN *LA PRINCESA*

In order to convey two ideas: unity and resistance spirit, *La Princesa* utilizes a series of strategies of representation that allow the history of the Princess to meet the ideology of the film. Indeed, the film manipulates familiar data to create an Anne-Marie and a King Philip suitable for the nationalistic conception of the past in the mid 1940s by drawing an overtly patriotic and chauvinist portrayal of their participation in the war. The representational strategies of history (alteration, condensation, omission) employed in the film allow the depiction of the Spanish nation to fit into the Francoist patriotic conception of the past. In this sense, the strategies of representation in *La Princesa* reveal the same political project found in similar historical films of the time, insofar as their representation of the past glorifies and mystifies it in order to “reinforce the need for national unification” (Labanyi 2000, 174). The *alterations* and *inventions* of the film apply fundamentally to the three historical leading characters: Anne-Marie, Philip, and Portocarrero. The princess, though initially presented as a “supremely intelligent,

Machievellian intriguer” (Labanyi 2000, 177), is subsequently portrayed in a way which does not agree with what is currently stated by historians from the image portrayed by historians and novelists, as she adopts a less important role as the political backdrop evolves, and masculine figures overtake her in political decisions. Even though the film presents her as arriving to Spain for the first time, she was already accustomed to Spain as she had visited the country decades earlier during a visit with her husband (Castro 45). But the film manages this *alteration* in order to stress her romance with Spain and the profound *Spanishization* that she experiences. This *alteration* allows the film to convey the ideas of the Spanish neutralization of a foreign threat. In the penultimate shot of the film, by showing her abandoning her flamboyant French dress and wearing dark clothes and the traditional Spanish ornamental comb, the film fulfils her ideological and cultural transition to the Spanish side. This transition would not be possible without another of the historical *inventions* in the film, the fictional character of Luis de Carvajal, who bears all of the spiritual virtues that fascinate and convert the princess and the king.

In this sense, by presenting a Philip V increasingly independent from Versailles (rather than the monarch who would abdicate and leave the throne of Spain in 1724 to try to succeed the throne of France), *La Princesa* presents us with an *altered* representation of a monarch who identifies himself with the country that he rules as a result of the same *Spanishization* that affects the princess.

Perhaps one of the greatest *alterations* is the presentation and development of the war. In order to deliver patriotic calls for unity of all Spaniards, the representation of

conflict is strongly idealized into a foreign invasion that unites all of the Spanish people -and eventually their French allies- against the foreign invasion of Charles of Austria. The film indeed *omits* that the war was also a civil conflict by excluding the transcendental⁹ participation of the Aragonese, Catalanian, and Valencian countries in support of Austria, as well as the fact that Portocarrero changed sides twice during the course of the war, and had more interest in confronting the Princess because he found in her a threat to his influence on the king, not to Spain. As Labanyi explains, this *sparring* (Labanyi 2007, 245) between Portocarrero and Anna-Marie, acts accordingly with the way in which these events were described in school textbooks of the time, which presented the history of Spain as a permanent struggle against foreign enemies.

Another effect of these *omissions* is that they resemble the black-and-white conception of history common in many nationalist dictatorships, that is, to reduce to conception of politics to its minimum complexity. In the same manner, the film *condenses* the conflict into the years 1706-1709 in order to simplify its military development and allow the film's narrative pace. As Labanyi writes, the film "collapses the evacuation of the court from Madrid (1706) with the arrival of French military aid which in reality the Princess secured from Louis XIV in 1710" (Labanyi 2007, 40). This simplification of the war and, thus, politics (Sánchez Redondo 70) deprives the War of Succession of its local repercussions, and reduces the life and politics at Court in the 18th century in the same conception of foreign affairs in 1947 by which Spain is depicted as a nation under siege.

A WELL-RECEIVED FILM

With a budget of almost three million pesetas,¹⁰ *La Princesa de los Ursinos* would officially earn more than 2.8 million pesetas (Fanés 206).¹¹ Despite its modest commercial performance in the national box office, *La Princesa* received overwhelmingly positive reviews. The reception of the film shows that the filmmaker's choice of a patriotic message, along with the utilization of adventure film genre conventions, was interpreted not only as a wise decision, but also as an inspiring example for future productions. In this sense, the 30 film reviews on *La Princesa* that have been consulted attest to the positive reception of the patriotic qualities of the film, and its mannerist conception of history. Only two newspapers, *Correo Español-Pueblo Vasco* and *La Gaceta Regional* did not rate the film as either excellent or good. The analysis of these reviews shows also how the release of another budget film was regarded as another triumph for the Spanish film industry, having been presented on a par with other patriotic period films released in the same year, such as *Reina Santa*.

The film would owe much of its success to its historical reconstruction through the patriotic exaltation of the Spanish spirit, as the vast majority of the reviews consulted make the historical view of the film their own. Falangist newspaper *Arriba* praised the film for its efforts in proving the immortality of the Spanish spirit and its invincible character (Juanes n.pag).

The reviews on *La Princesa* show how the press assumed the film's artistic licenses in representing history as necessary or acceptable (Predola n.pag). But despite admitting its fictional account of history, the majority of the press assumed the historical statements

of *La Princesa* as real. *Pueblo* praised the film for its articulation of national virtues as “un aire de la inmaculada y heroica resistencia hispánica, triunfante y erguida, con sublimidad de sacrificio y victoria sobre cualquier época y las mayores vicisitudes / an air of immaculate and heroic resistance, triumphant and proud, with an undercurrent of sacrifice and victory over any period and the greatest obstacles” (“La Princesa” 7 Nov 1947, n.pag). “Toda ella es una lección de recio españolismo” (“La princesa” 16 Dec 1947. n.pag). This overtly patriotic reception epitomizes a trend that would last for at least four years following the release of *La Princesa*: the Spanishness of the film as a requirement for success among critics. Most of the historical films of the period would be rated either positively or negatively depending on this conception, especially in magazines like Falangist *Primer Plano*. As Pérez-Bowie explains, in the 1940s

La españolidad del filme se esgrime especialmente por parte de la crítica a la hora de juzgar aquellas adaptaciones que supone una exaltación del heroísmo patrio [...] / The Spanishness of the film is used by part of the film critic community when it comes to judge those filmic adaptations of literary texts which extol patriotic heroism [...] (112)

This would lead to the generalization of a similar heroic film during the late 1940, and only with the release of *La Leona de Castilla* (1951), would the press start criticizing these films for their artistic and filmic shortages, no matter how patriotic they were.

But it was the year 1947, and the novelty of *La Princesa* in combining patriotism, adventure genre features, and its usage of rich staging resource raised

optimism among film critics towards the possibility of setting a trend for more period films that could succeed against other swashbuckler films in international markets (“El cine español cuenta” n.pag) “una prueba más de la vitalidad y maestría que va adquiriendo de día en día nuestra producción nacional” (“La Princesa” 17 Nov 1947, n.pag); “Primera gran película de un nuevo género del cine Español / The first grand film of a new genre in Spanish Cinema” (Predola n.pag).

The reviews point to a recurrent aspect in the history of period films’ expectation and reception: their always assumed potential for becoming the flagship of Spanish cinema and break through competitive international markets. Indeed, as would happen to other historical films in Spain in the 1940s, the press made clear a certain resentment among film critics towards the quality of their national cinema, insofar as the critics does not miss the chance to recurrently compare national cinema to Hollywood films: “Una cinta que nada tiene que envidiar a la producción exterior y con una serie de valores y virtudes que, para nosotros, la sitúan muy por encima de aquéllas / This film can stand alongside foreign films. For us, its virtues and values allow the film to stand out from foreign films” (“La Princesa de los Ursinos” 19 Mar 1948, n.pag).

According to the reports sent by the Provincial Delegations, the film was well-received among the public during its first week of screening, even though the opinion of the delegates on the film was more tepid than the press’ comments concerning the film’s acting, staging and script. Out the fifteen reports examined, seven consider the film as a trend to be followed by national cinema and rate it positively, while six reports highlight its poor acting and slow-paced script, and find the film not a model to be followed by

other films in the future. The most negative review was done by the delegate from Valladolid: “Esta película [...] pasará desapercibida como una más entre la multitud de anodinas que producimos. / This film [...] will go unnoticed just among the many that we produce” (AGA, file 36/04687). In this same sense, the harsh review¹² by the Provincial Delegate for Balearic Islands, who put special emphasis on the unnatural dialogs and backdrops, foretold what things would turn the press and audience against the period film genre four years later with the release of the commercial flops *Leona de Castilla* and *Alba de América*.

CONCLUSION

All in all, this patriotic portrayal of a civil conflict is effectively represented through the means of a construction of the characters (opposed antagonist characters, limitation of the role of the woman as a sign of transition towards Spanishness), the strategies employed to represent history (omission of the reference to the civil war, alteration of the true identity of Philip V as king of Spain), and a preference for the display of large on-stage resources, the presence of a romantic plot which evolves parallel to a political plot. This model of cinematic representation of history transforms this historical film into an idealization of the past that casts a propagandistic view of the spiritual essences of the Spanish nation. In accommodating the Spanish court into this model of historical representation, *La Princesa* ignores the complex nature of the Court in the early modern era. If early modernist Smutt defined the Court of the 18th century “as a magnet for ambition and talent, the arena where people struggled for the political

power of the nation” (quoted in Vázquez Gestal 268), in *La Princesa* the very court is only a stage for the dissemination of the propaganda of a nation which in 1947 considers itself under siege.

LA LEONA DE CASTILLA: INCONVENIENT ODDITY OR IDEOLOGICAL COMPLACENCE?

The revolt of the Comuneros is perhaps one of the most decisive events in Spanish history, as it altered irrevocably the evolution of the Spanish Empire. One of the outcomes of the conflict was that the kingdom of Castile became the main supporter of the recently established Habsburg monarchy and its empire in America and Europe. The existence of a film that is apparently sympathetic to a cause -The Comuneros- which is diametrically opposed to the epitomizer of the height of the Spanish Empire -Charles V- would seem hard to believe in a time -the early years of the dictatorship of Franco- when the Francoist ideological apparatus chose the reign of Charles as a historical paradigm upon which the epic past of the Spanish nation might be built. Yet, a close examination of its historical re-construction reveals that Juan de Orduña's *La Leona de Castilla* -The Lioness of Castile- (1951) is a quintessential example of the ideological and artistic inconsistencies of the Francoist regime, as the film mirrors these inconsistencies through a patchwork of ideological (Castilian vs. Spanish Imperial nationalism), literary (the proliferation of cinematographic adaptations of epic and moralistic, 19th century dramas), and cinematographic (the extended, yet commercially unsuccessful, model of high-budget historical productions) conventions that the filmmakers did not orchestrate.

THE STORY OF MARIA DE PACHECO AND THE COMUNEROS

In 1520 a faction of the noblemen and eighteen cities in Castile raised up in arms against the recently crowned Charles I of Spain. An inexperienced Flemish teenager whose lack of command in Spanish made him look like a foreigner in the eyes of Castilians, King Charles enraged many members of Castilian nobility by increasing taxes and loans in order to raise enough funds to pay for his election as Emperor of Germany. The tax increase was badly received by many Castilian noblemen, a social stratus historically opposed to monarchical centralism whose interests laid in the exploitation of the resources of the American and Mediterranean market, and thus expected little benefits from the imperial enterprise.

The disagreement between the Crown and Castilian aristocracy reached such a degree that by the summer of 1520 hostilities were seen as inevitable, and the cities and towns of Burgos, Soria, Segovia, Ávila, Valladolid, León, Salamanca, Zamora, Toro, Toledo, Cuenca, Guadalajara, and Madrid broke war on the Royalist forces. Despite initial victories by the Comuneros, on April 23, 1521 reorganized Royalist forces delivered a crippling blow to the Comuneros at the Battle of Villalar. The following day, rebel leaders Juan de Padilla, Juan Bravo, and Francisco Maldonado were beheaded. The army of the Comuneros fell apart and surrendered to Charles V in the following weeks, whereas the city of Toledo kept the rebellion alive until its surrender in October 1521. For six months María de Pacheco, Padilla's widow, demanded generous terms of surrender from Charles V, while at the same time she took control of the city and the

remains of the rebel army, and collected funds to keep the city defenses from the clergy and the noblemen.

On October 25, 1521 Toledo surrendered to Charles V and an Imperial official was put in charge of the city, yet it would not be long before his administration sparked tensions between royalists and former Comuneros under the leadership of Maria de Pacheco. On February 3, 1522, riots broke out in protest. While the royalist forces put a final end to the remaining Comuneros forces, Maria de Pacheco escaped the city and fled to her exile in Portugal, where she would live until her death in 1531 expecting a pardon from Charles V, which despite constant petitions from Spanish noblemen, was never granted.

Charles V and the Spanish monarchy would never encounter in Castile such a united party that would question his power, and Castile became the political center and engine that economically kept the imperial wheels turning for all the Early Modern Era (Cebamanos 8).

HISTORY AND THE COMUNEROS

Since the time of their defeat, the historiography on the Comuneros has been subject to the evolution of politics in Spain, with different theses developed on the nature of their revolt that have cyclically oscillated between two different points of view: their depiction as freedom fighters against a foreign king, and their conception as medieval lords opposed to the modernization of the Spanish State.

During the 17th century, the revolt fell into oblivion, whereas in the 18th the Borbonic absolutist historiography depicted the revolt as an unrighteous rebellion by noblemen who did not wield any legal claim and only aimed to control the kingdom. In the 19th century, the newly born liberal State sought a chapter of the Spanish past which would help in breaking the existing binomial relationship between Spain and the Empire. Thus, the fathers of the 1812 constitution stated that their legitimacy dated from the Castilian Parliament and its defenders, the Comuneros. Throughout the 19th century, along with the independence of the American colonies -and thus the loss of imperial identity-, Spanish romantic and liberal writers, such as Espronceda, regarded the Comuneros as the builders of Spanish national identity. Also, state sponsored contests promoted patriotic paintings which contributed to dignify the Comuneros, such as *Ejecución de los Comuneros* (Antonio Gisbert, 1858) -see Figure 2- and *La Batalla de Villalar* (Manuel Pícolo, 1869).



Figure 2. *Ejecución de los Comuneros* (Antonio Gisbert, 1858).

The political recovery of the Comuneros ended up in their portrayal as pioneers of the 19th century Liberal State. In 1898, with the fall of the last remnants of the Spanish Empire, the Comuneros would stand unquestionable as some of the major figures of Spanish history and identity not only for liberals, but also by conservatives. In a context of national crisis, the search for national identity led literary movements such as The Generation of 1898 or Modernist drama to revive the history of Castile, i.e.: Eduardo Marquina and Pedro Muñoz Seca. And so, in 1915 Francisco Villaespesa, wrote *La Leona de Castilla*, thus bringing the Comuneros to stage and depicting them according to the Romantic tradition, that is, as liberal revolutionaries that stood for their country and identity against a foreign aggressor, Charles V. According to this conception, the Comuneros stood for the oppressed people against the injustices committed by a monarch badly advised by his Flemish counselors who ravaged the country in his absence.

Yet, three decades later, another turn in the study of the Comuneros would occur: in the 1940s the Francoist institutions and historiography would portray the Comuneros in the same manner as they had been in the 18th century, depicting them as anachronistic representatives of the Middle ages who were concerned with their feudal rights in comparison with institutional modernization, national unity, and imperial glory advocated by the reign of Charles V. Ramiro Ledesma, founder of Spanish National Syndicalism, a fascist inspired movement, stated in 1935 that the Comuneros represented a reactionary force that stood against the truly revolutionary magnificence represented

by the Empire (Ledesma, quoted on Sánchez Diana, 5). The work by historian Marañón envisioned the conflict as

Las Comunidades representan, es la verdad, un sentido antiespañol de España [...] no lucharon por la libertad del pueblo, sino por los derechos feudales de sus municipios [...] / The rebellion of the Comunidades actually represents a anti-Spanish sense of Spain [...] they did not fight for the freedom of the people but the feudal rights of their towns [...] (Quoted in Cebamanos 8)

“Los hombres locales entorpecían la unidad nacional / Local men hindered national unity.” (Quoted in J.M. 20)

JUAN DE ORDUÑA’S *LA LEONA DE CASTILLA* AND THE FRANCOIST VIEW OF THE PAST

La Leona de Castilla is an attempt to bring these two historiographical traditions together under the dramatic premises of period film in early Francoism: the evasive and heroic conception of history, its blunt and conservative conception of national identity, its castrated conception of the feminine role, and its resource-limited forms of filmmaking.

The film is set in the Castile in the year 1521. María Pacheco leads a quiet life as the wife of Francisco Padilla, general of the Comunero army. Upon a short leave in Toledo after a victorious battle against the imperial forces of Charles, Padilla must leave again, this time to face the defeat of his troops. Padilla is captured and executed for treason by the Imperial troops, along with fellow Comunero leaders Juan Bravo and

Francisco Maldonado at Villalar. María Pacheco sneaks into the town in disguise and witnesses the execution of her husband. Later at night, while she returns to Toledo, Imperial aristocrat Guzmán delivers to her a letter from Padilla. Touched by the content of the letter, María resolves to return to Toledo to resume the fight against Charles V. After the raising up of the city of Toledo in arms again, Maria de Padilla makes a last stand against the Imperial forces while traitorous town council Ramiro and his trustee captain covertly work for the Empire to sow discord within the city walls. The Imperials lay Toledo under siege, and during a skirmish between Imperial and Comunero forces, Guzman is captured by the Comuneros and faces execution but his life is spared by Maria de Pacheco in exchange for his delivering Padilla's letter. Ramiro uses this event to spread rumors of infidelity about Maria, who loses the entire support of the people of Toledo after the councilor deceives her to sign a decree to pillage the relics and treasures of the Cathedral of Toledo. The Comunero troops abandon their posts, and Maria escapes when the Imperial army enters the city, and she exiles herself to Portugal where she will die in poverty.

Juan de Orduña's film is an adaptation of a drama text by Villaespesa. Again, as it happened with previous period films (*Locura de Amor* in 1948; and *la Dama del Armíño* in 1947) a period 19th century drama was chosen as a source of ideas for a screenplay. But Villaespesa's drama was in the antipodes of what historiography in the 1940s wrote about the Comuneros in the 1951. The drama showed how, Castile, a region traditionally regarded as the most supportive nation of the Spanish state rose up in arms against Spanish king and emperor Spanish Charles V. The drama thus defied the

traditionalist Spanish historiography that since the 16th century had legitimized the pivotal role of Castile in sustaining the Spanish state (Morales and Vega 13). The drama conveyed an anti-absolutist view (Castilian fueros against the absolutist Habsburg Monarchy), an anti-imperialist message (the economical cost for Castile of the enterprise of the empire), and an anticlerical depiction of the ecclesiastical representatives (González González 157). Its disparity with the prevailing ideological and historiographical contexts commands to understand what reasons possibly lured the filmmakers into choosing to adapt such an inappropriate text.

The adaptation of a historical drama had become in the 1940s a preference for avoiding controversial present topics. The Spanish dramas of the 19th century, with a strong emphasis on the historical roots of the Spanish nation, provided plenty of historical plays, while at the same time they approached the same historical themes only from a nostalgic perspective that bordered in evasion. López Estrada writes that “este teatro toca asuntos referentes a héroes, leyendas y episodios de transcendencia para la nación española, pero de carácter evasivo: evasión que consiste en salirse del presente” (quoted in Cabrales 43). At a time when the reference to the immediate past -the Spanish Civil War- was regarded as a compromising task, and the new regime aimed to reinforce national identity by resorting to the myths of Early Modernity such as the Empire and the Golden Age, historical drama thus seemed a logical decision in 1951. Moreover, Villaespesas’s drama had also earned success since the time of its first premiere, with many re-releases in 35 years.¹³

Another factor that influenced CIFESA into choosing Villaespesa's film was the commercial and administrative film context of the 1940s, which had entered a state of minimal artistic and commercial stimulus. The period film had become a recurrent genre for film producers during the decade, as had become a way for producers to declare a higher budget to the Censorship, with the intention of obtaining profitable film import licenses. CIFESA had grown over confident over the second part of the 1940s on the commercial prospects of this genre that was characterized by the recurrent adaptation of these dramas using a melodramatic register. Along with the existence of lucrative state prizes, the success of prior adaptations such as *La Dama del Armíño* (Eusebio Fernández Ardavín, 1947) produced by Suevia Films, and *Locura de Amor* (1948) produced by CIFESA, has led film studios to embrace this film genre brimming with enthusiasm.

This being said, the expectations on the film raised by the film press that had been supporting this genre during the 1940s (most notably *Cámara*, which repetitively published highly reviews on the film before its premiere in January, February, and March 1951) anticipated another commercial success as had happened to prior historical films *Locura de Amor* and *Agustina de Aragón* also by Juan de Orduña.

LA LEONA DE CASTILLA AND THE TASKS OF HISTORY: THE IMPOSSIBLE HEROIC REPRESENTATION OR THE OVER-DRAMATIZATION OF HISTORICAL FILM BY ORDUÑA

To come to an agreement between the ideas of Imperial glory and Castilian nationalism, that is, to bring together opposite political interpretations of history within

the limited space and time of a film, the answer for CIFESA mandated, a Fanés writes, to request once again the services of the company's most prolific filmmaker: Juan de Orduña (Fanés 175). For Orduña, the solution to bring together the Francoist conception of the Comuneros with Villaespesa's Castilian nationalism was to employ the same cinematographic conventions that he used previously in *Locura de Amor* and *Agustina de Aragón*. Thus, *La Leona* resulted in sharing with the latter film its metonymic operation of representing Spain by choosing one of the leading regions in the Spanish state, its use of an important iconography from painting, and a melodramatic register to convey a historical interpretation (Fanés 253).

But, the script would not easily pass the censorship filter of the BOC. The makers of *La Leona* were, of course, aware of the ideological discrepancies between the original dramatic text and the political times they lived in, even before their *censura previa*.¹⁴ As Michele Lagny writes, one of the different forms of censorship is the self-censorship imposed by the artist himself (92). In this sense, Orduña and the scriptwriters of *La Leona* censored Villaespesa's play in order to polish the most controversial points of Villaespesa's play: the cause of the Comuneros was deprived of any ideological reasoning except for pride and a stubborn sense of honor. The most virulent cries for the death of the Imperial side were also removed in the final version of the script (Filmoteca Española, file G-953).

The representation of history presents a political vacuum in order to present the revolt as an example of the indomitable essence of the Castilian-Spanish people, but keeping the a respectful tone towards the Christian values of the Francoist regime. Yet,

despite the dialog changes, the screenplay submitted would not pass censorship without having to modify some of its dialogs and assertions, such as the explicit authorization of Maria Pacheco to allow the people to sack the houses of the noblemen. Such a scene was considered by the BOC as offensive, and it was subsequently removed (AGA, file 36/3403). One copy of the screenplay with censoring comments available at Filmoteca Española shows how these changes aim to convey a less pro-Comunero film.¹⁵

The original introduction referred to the cause of the conflict:

“[...] junto a los muros de Toledo, cuando Carlos Primero de España iba ceñir contra la voluntad de Castilla, la corona del imperio romano germánico. [...] El Tajo escuchó muy de cerca las viejas canciones de los Comuneros alzados contra el rey. / [...] By the walls of Toledo, when Charles I of Spain was going to take, against the will of Castile, the crown of the Roman-Germanic Empire [...] The Tajo River listened very closely to the old songs of the Comuneros against the King. (Filmoteca Española, file G-953)

Yet, the actual introduction differs in its presentation of the cause of the Comuneros, as they omit all reference to the Imperial election and therefore the funds that were being collected from Castile:

Frente a esa ambición del César hispano, se alzó el criterio estrecho de los Comuneros [...] / The narrow judgment of the Comuneros rose against the ambition of the Hispanic Caesar [...] (Filmoteca Española, file G-953)

As a result of its attempt to come to an almost impossible agreement between the cornerstone of Castilian nationalism and the beacon of Francoist Imperialism, the

resulting text was a slowly paced and irregular script which the censorship officials themselves rated poor (AGA, file 36/3403).

The film undertakes the historical tasks of *recounting*, *explaining*, and *interpreting*, but it is the latter that matters the most to analyzing what happens to history in the film. The cinematic strategies employed by *La Leona* aim to deliver a message: though wrong, the rebellion of the Comuneros is a paradigm of the heroic and rebellious nature of the Spanish people. The resistance of the city of Toledo was thus presented as the quintessential example of the innate nobility of the people and their loyalty to their leaders, even when they lead a wrong cause.

The strategies of historical representation in the film, *condensation*, *omission*, *alteration*, and *inventions*, aim to convey and justify such interpretation. The opening credits serve a clear example of *condensation*, as they encapsulate this pulse between the two forces within their image and sound. The film opens with a model of Toledo, a city traditionally remembered as capital of the Medieval Visigoth Empire. The army anthem present in every scene of the Imperial army, whose vibrant tone works as a lei-motif, sharply differs from the more tragic music score of the Comuneros which appears in the next scene of the sequence. While the music fades from one track to another, the sequence continues into the first image of the main square of the town of Villalar. In a strafe shot, its composition attempts to resemble the painting *Los Comuneros de Castilla*, accounting for the overly rigid stance of the multitude of actors on stage and semi pictorial clouds at the back. In order to reinforce its depiction as a dramatic last stand, the film also *condensates* two different rebellions -the first rebellion that ended in

October 1521 and the reprisal of the rebellion due to the election of pro-Imperial cardinal Adriano as pope on February 2, 1522-, only to *omit* the antireligious traces present in Villaespesa's drama. But it *condenses* also two ideologies in the characterization of the historical figures a wrong yet honorable Maria de Pacheco is not far from her rival, the just Duke of Medina Sidonia.

The artistic licenses of Orduña over history and Villaespesa's play are clearly evident in the selected *omissions* in the screenplay, which lead to an ennobling presentation of two bands in the war. Other than a patronizing appeal to the "espíritu de la rebeldía española" the film *omits* the reasons that caused the Comuneros' uprising (the increase of taxes of Charles I in order to finance his imperial election), as well as the patriotically questionable attempt by Maria de Pacheco to seal an alliance with the French army which was invading Spain in October 1521 (Martínez-Gil 184).

But it is the strategy of *alteration* that evidences best Orduña's difficulties in reconciling both ideologies. *Alteration* takes place around one of the most controversial facts for the adaptation of Villaespesa's film: her decree ordering the pillaging of the cathedral. Seriously taken over the centuries, only questioned recently, the greatest shame that has taunted the figure of María de Pacheco was her decision to pillage the tabernacle of the cathedral of Toledo on July 27, 1521, in order to collect enough funds to pay for her army. This controversial decision has constantly been mentioned within scholarly and popular memory. Recently Martínez-Gil has asserted that the image of Maria entering the cathedral on her knees while sacking the temple was a histrionic invention by Fray Antonio de Guevara in the 16th century and later consolidated and

amplified by romantic historiography, i.e.: Pedro Alcocer and Alonso de Santa Cruz in the 19th and 20th centuries respectively (189). Whether true or not, this event is one of the historical images that, along with the execution of the Comunero leaders in Villalar, spectatorship had in mind 1951 when the film was premiered, and thus in order to eliminate any trace of antireligious sentiment within the Comunero ranks, the filmmakers chose to present the pillaging under a different authorship. Presented as a deception by Ramiro, María indeed signs the decree, but only after Ramiro purposely misfiles it within a stack documents awaiting her signature. Then, the people of Toledo enraged and mutiny after the decree is published, turning against María de Pacheco and spelling the last stand of the Comunero cause.

The film's conception of filmmaking is an example of the construction of history in the period film genre in 1940s. This genre itself is an extension of the same conception of history present in school text books of the time. Such a conception was characterized by a series of features that appear in the period films of the era: the lack of any interpretative or critical hypothesis, the idolization of the mythical conception of history, the biased selection of the historical events which were presented as glorious to legitimizing the present, and above all, the existence of a teleological conception that advocates the completion of a concrete national mission which dominates over any regional difference (Monterde quoted in Gustrán 181). Francoism had thus taken over the teleological narrative of national unification which liberal historians had crafted in support of Spanish nationhood in the nineteenth century, only to apply it in cinema.

The slow-paced, epic, yet irregular and tensionless script, channels the pathos of the character, who was driven by destiny, in a view focalized by the spectator. The result of these strategies of representation is that they deprive the script of any narrative tension in the plot. This plot features a black and white depiction of the characters, whose development is determined by a rigid conception of the storyline, because Orduña is “a contemplative director, not a narrative one” (Llinás 88, my translation). The filmmaking style of Orduña in *La Leona* conveys this very teleological conception not only through its argument but also through other means such as a composition, and editing.

Throughout the story the spectator has access to all of the development of the plot; there are no twists or tension in the story, but rather an obvious exposition of events on a strict line which leaves no room for surprise. Such is the expositive narration of Orduña, in which the story is focalized by the god-spectator. Llinás remarks on the usages of editing for expressing this focalization during the scene in which Maria takes her oath as Leader of the Comuneros (89) and commends Toledo to carry on the fight, one of the most decisive moments of film for both sides of the conflict. As Figure 3 shows, the scene opens with an extreme high upper shot that encapsulates the court room where the Toledo noblemen, the Imperial representatives and the people of Toledo are. The next countershot shows the local representatives listening to the Imperial demands. The scene concludes in the same manner, as the Imperial representatives leave the chamber under the crucifix's watchful eye, from an extreme upper shot, reinforcing the idea that God oversees history at its most crucial moments.

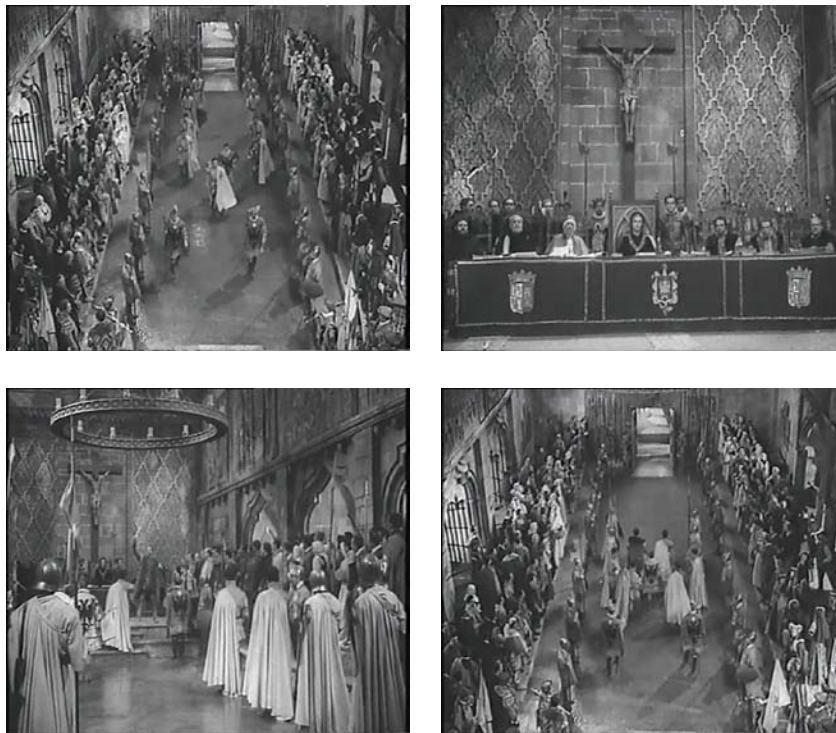


Figure 3. Oath scene from *La Leona de Castilla*.

The importance of the usage of the crucifix transcends not only a point of reference for shooting, but also as an object that triggers the transition of scenes. Marsha Kinder defines these objects as *hot spots*, an interactive strategy embedded within the narrative of a film that works as a transition between two scenes (8). In this sense, as Figure 4 shows, during the scene in which Maria begs Ramiro to obtain Medina Sidonia's pardon, while the camera shoots Ramiro lying to María, the image dissolves into a crucifix pointing at the members of the Military Tribunal who are to sentence the Imperial military Duke of Medina Sidonia to death. The proximity of Justice and God reinforces the idea of the ever-watchful presence of an omnipresent spectator, from whose discernment nothing escapes.



Figure 4. Dissolve transition from *La Leona de Castilla*.

MARÍA DE PACHECO AND *LA LEONA DE CASTILLA*

But is there is an aspect in the film that proves that the conception of the past in *La Leona* is tributary to its time of making, and it is its representation of the role of María of Pacheco. The conception of the historical figure of Maria Pacheco has closely been associated with the rebellion itself. The historian community has contributed only a few historical works dedicated exclusively to her. In this sense, as Martínez Gil states the role of Maria de Pacheco in the rebellion has become a historical burden over the centuries to the point of being imprisoned by her depiction as the wife of the leader of the Comuneros, or as Martinez-Gil puts it, the legend of the *widow of Padilla* (50). Maria de Pacheco intermittently sparked the interest of romantic playwrights of the last

quarter of the 18th century, mostly because of her condition as a woman, mother, widow, and her tragic destiny (29). In 1788, playwright Ignacio García Malo premiered the drama *Doña María Pacheco Mujer de Padilla*, advocating for the conservative thesis on María de Pacheco, which depicted her as a faithful wife who carried on with her husband's cause even though she eventually rejects the rebellion, regrets her involvement, and swears loyalty to Charles V. Later writers turned her into a heroic woman, as did Francisco Martínez de la Rosa with his play *La Viuda de Padilla* (1812). The play by Francisco Villaespesa, *La Leona de Castilla* (1916), meant the last the play about Maria de Pacheco, tragically depicted her as an active and dedicated member of the Comuneros, a solitary heroic figure whose zeal in the defense of the identity and freedom of Castile, along with her tragic destiny, bestowed her with a quasi religious nature.

In the first half of the 20th century, the scarcity of monographic works on Maria de Pacheco had yet one exception. With the rise of women rights during the Spanish Second Republic, the open political climate led to the publication of the first scholarly study on Maria de Pacheco, by María Roca Tallada. Under a feminist approach, Roca-Tallada envisioned María de Pacheco as an independent woman, who influenced her husband, while at the same time she embraced a righteous cause (31). The advent of Francoism would share this interpretation of María de Pacheco as an influential woman but in a negative sense, as historian Marañón presented her as an over ambitious woman whose schemes were responsible for the outbreak of the rebellion (Cebamanos 8).

Orduña shapes the historical figure of Maria de Pacheco into the same archetypes of femaleness in his period films *Locura de Amor* and *Agustina de Aragón*: a heroic female who is the image of the Spanish spirit, but limited in her social role at all times by the masculine figure of men. The Francoist regime developed a legislation that excluded women from many activities with the sole purpose of keeping them in traditional roles. The regime wielded a reclusive discourse that kept women at home, submitted to their parents at first and then to their husbands (Ortiz 2006, 2). This ideology based its argumentation on a biological conception, as it projected congenital differences between men and women. A closer look at *La Leona* shows how its representation of women does not escape the ideological establishment. The heroism of María de Pacheco in *La Leona* unquestionably differs sharply from the heroic image conveyed in Villaespesa's play, but it unmistakably matches the heroic images of Spanish women that the Francoist establishment indoctrinated. In his study on the image of heroic figures of Spanish women in schoolbooks for girls published during the dictatorship, Jessamy Harvey states the existence of two separate spheres in Francoist society, which allocated the domestic and moral sphere to women, and the political and public sphere to men (282). In adapting Villaespesa's play, Juan de Orduña and Vicente limited the political role of to the extent of her having no initiative of her own, presenting her as a preserver of the memory of her husband. Her role in the revolt is just inspirational, that is, to raise the people up in arms, as her actual role in the rebellion is left to the male characters. Her role as a political figure is restricted to the home. As González González sharply exposes, in order to convey this Maria de Pacheco, Orduña

transformed her role to such extent that she became just a political instrument of her deceased husband, who it is, in fact, the leader of the resistance of the city of Toledo (168). In doing so, Gonzalez adds, Orduña and Escrivá introduced a historical *invention* neither present in any historical account nor in Villaespesa's play: the letter in which he commands his wife to carry on the fight against Charles V. Taking this task into account, one can't infer that it works to the detriment of Maria's political role, which, although heroic, proves to be utterly reliant on men's influence. Her role is thus contemporary to the image that Francoism indoctrinated in schools. Harvey accounts for the case of another Spanish national heroine whose portrayal in Francoism matches María de Pacheco's: Mariana Pineda, leader Liberal Resistance against Absolutism in 1831, whose "involvement in politics is portrayed as the lamentable effect of an early widowhood, the loss of her husband inspiring an unhealthy obsession" (282).

RECEPTION OF A COMMERCIAL FAILURE

With a final budget of more than six and a half million pesetas,¹⁶ *La Leona de Castilla* has been generally accepted as the first commercial flop of the film studio CIFESA. Its high production costs were not covered by its earnings at the box office, coming two million short (Fanés 206).¹⁷ Despite its poor commercial results, the film spawned 25 reviews published in 1951 in different press groups that have been analyzed to show an overtly positive response by film critics. As had happened to prior films by CIFESA, the vast majority of the press praised the film for its patriotic virtues in portraying a heroic chapter in Spanish history. Yet, in each of these cases, the press'

historical conception of the cause of Maria de Pacheco and the Comuneros is not heterogeneous. The reviews indifferently have either a pro-Castilian view of the events or pro-Imperial, but they are united in presenting it as a turning point in the course of Spanish history. Yet, it can be identified that the more the positive the review is, the more it has bought into the film's interpretation of history. Sevillian newspaper *El Correo* epitomizes this trend present in 12 reviews: "los Comuneros, aquellos heroicos caballeros que lucharon por una noble causa, aunque equivocada / The Comuneros, those heroic gentlemen who fought for a noble, yet wrong, cause" ("La Leona de Castilla 2 Nov 1951, n.pag). The reviews that rated the film as "excellent" or "masterpiece" do not provide many details on the film's quality.

The nine delegate reports found at the censorship files of *La Leona* state that the reception by the public was unenthusiastic, and audiences irregularly received the film (AGA, file 36/3403).¹⁸ Only one of these reports described the film's reception as bad, and the remaining reports rated the film's reception as good. Despite their final rating, it is revealing that film reports show how the style of filmmaking employed by CIFESA had fed up the audiences, especially the over-dramatic acting of the main character, Amparo Rivelles. The most common statement on the film is epitomized by this concluding quote by the Delegate from Cáceres:

En general la película se elogia, pero el argumento general no ha llegado a penetrar en el publico / The film has been praised in general, the argument of the story did not reach the audience." (Found in AGA, file 36/3403)

It had to be the denegation of the awarding of Interés Nacional that would expose the commercial failure of *La Leona*, a decision made by the Board of Censors on May 25, 1951. Even though they classified the film as *Segunda Categoría*, earning two import licenses, the BOC wrote harsh and retrospective reports on the cinematographic approach common in this genre for the previous year. Censor Galainena warned of the unprofitability of this type of genre “Por este camino va el cine español al desastre / Spanish film will turn into a flop this way” (AGA, file 36/03403). Censor Joaquín Soriano, called for an end of the state support of this genre without meeting a certain quality level. “Películas similares se han desclarado de 1^a, pero creo llegado el momento de no fomentar estas producciones, que por su importancia y tema, están más obligadas a ser realizadas sin esta inconsciencia y falta de sentido cinematográfico” (AGA, file 36/03403). What had changed for such a radical change in the mind of the censors? Roman Gubern and Rafael de España have pointed to the arrival of Jose María Garcia Escudero as head the DGCT from August 1951 to March 1952, which witnessed a new mentality towards film reorientation which did not privilege the period film genre. Also the reason of this change of mind in the censorship board lays in their realization of the commercial exhaustion this period film genre, epitomized in the negative reception earned by this type of period films in the film and general press, was echoing the poor commercial results of this conception of the period film, as the later *Alba de América* showed months later. The film thus anticipated the end of a cinematographic cycle, a cycle which in a period of five years had evolved from success and building the hopes of

the state film officials for the creating of a national cinema, only to end up being an exhausted source of ideas, a genre detested and dilapidated by film critics.

In conclusion, the cinematographic approach to the revolt of the Comuneros and Maria Pacheco is lacking in a cinematographic reference that could rival the image of the romantic legend created by literature and paintings in the 19th century. As for Maria de Pacheco, perhaps, one of the consequences of the film is that, after the ambiguity of the film deprived her of any consistency the figure María de Pacheco fell into oblivion (Martínez-Gil 37). Also, the Comunero Revolt would not be the subject of an academic research until 1970 by Joseph Perez in his research *La révolution des "Comunidades" de Castille (1520-1521)*, as well as Maria de Pacheco, whose figure would have to wait decades to until a serious research on her would be published again by Martínez Gil in *María Pacheco, 1497-1531: La Mujer Valerosa* in 2005.

The lack of films devoted to this historical chapter makes the task of comparison of *La Leona* an impossible one. Yet, *La Leona* stands nowadays noteworthy film in the first place: despite being shot in the early days of Francoism, the film remains today the only film representation of a regionalist political rebellion against a Spanish dynasty. In the second place, the transcendence of *La Leona*, lies, not only within the intrinsic nature of the construction of its historical discourse, an example of the ideological inconsistencies of the period film shot during the early years of Francoist regime, but also in the consequences of the combination of regime's protectionist film law with the archaic conception of cinema making by film studio CIFESA and its business mentality

that raised production costs in order to obtain the support of the State and its economical subsidies.

**THE ASSASSINATION OF JUAN OF ESCOBEDO IN *LA PRINCESA DE ÉBOLI*
AND *LA CONJURA DE EL ESCORIAL***

Approaching cinematographically the murder of Juan de Escobedo to address controversial issues for the interpretation of Spanish history: first the reign of Philip II considered by some the height of the Spanish Empire and by others as the ultimate expression of obscurantism; second, one of the most controversial episodes of the reign of Philip II that was utilized by those supporters of the so-called *Leyenda Negra Española* or *La España Negra*, the Spanish Black Legend.

Throughout history, most countries have experienced a political conspiracy that left its imprint on popular memory through the centuries. The conspiracy usually is also understood as a turning point in the course of the nation. Italy had the Medici Conspiracy (1478), England almost had its Parliament blown up by the Gunpowder Plot (1605), and the Meiji conspiracy marked the end of medieval Japan (1867).

To talk about conspiracy implies talking about how the current social, political or moral order of a nation is threatened. First, to address such an issue implies to approach first that what matters in history is the individuals and the power against the masses (i.e. peoples and societies). But, discussing conspiracies in Early Modernity implies a sharp difference from more recent ones, insofar as their effect in national history becomes

amplified through centuries into broader topics such as they role in shaping of the image of the nation.

When explaining the cinematographic portrayal of one of the most controversial and unsolved political conspiracies in Spanish history it is necessary to understand the construction of Early Modernity in Spain. The two films studied in this chapter, *La Princesa de Éboli* (Terence Young, 1954) and *La Conjura de El Escorial* (Antonio del Real, 2008), account differently for the events that led to the assassination of Secretary Escobedo, but both converge in defending the role of Philip II, and holding his secretary Antonio Pérez responsible for convincing his king as to the necessity of the murder.

A conspiracy is half a truth, constructed on lies which are subject to the passing and judgment of time (Helyen 15), which exposes if not the actual culprits, most of those parties who initially tried to cover their participation. That is why there is no perfect conspiracy. If it were so, it would never be discovered, and thus we could not talk about a hidden plot and/or its multiple ramifications. These very same multiple ramifications turn the historical conspiracy into an irresistible source of ideas for popular storytelling, literature, and of course filmmaking, as the conspiracy frequently fits within the canon of the political thriller: *Elizabeth: the Golden Age* (Shekhar Kapur, 2007), is a clear example of the exceptional narrative possibilities that a historical conspiracy offers to period film.

This chapter indexes the cinematographic construction of one conspiracy in Spanish history, the murder of Juan of Escobedo, by analyzing two films, the Spanish version of an English-Spanish coproduction *That Lady/La Princesa de Éboli* (*La*

Princesa, hereafter), and *La Conjura de El Escorial* (*La Conjura*, hereafter). *La Princesa* is a British/Spanish co-production filmed in 1954 under the intense surveillance of Francoist censorship, whereas *La Conjura* is a recent feature film directed and produced in 2008 by Spanish filmmaker Antonio del Real, in radically different political and industrial circumstances.

Yet, despite the 50 years that separate these films, in re-constructing this historical event, both films employ different ways of filmmaking which will alternatively clash and differ from one another, but they both share and convey similar interpretations on the participation of Philip II in the affair. That by means of articulation of their historical discourse, which aims to clear Philip II of deliberate responsibility in ordering the assassination of Escobedo, as Philip is manipulated at all times by his first Secretary, Antonio Pérez.

The examination of these films' political and historiographical contexts, along with their strategies of representation of history, reveals how these films are not only tributary to their times of making in the filmic articulation of their historical discourse, but also very close in dealing with the political role of many of the historical figures in the assassination of Escobedo.

STAGE OF INTERPRETATION OF A POLITICAL MURDER

On the night of the 31st day of March 1578 Juan de Escobedo, secretary of Juan de Austria, was murdered by six disguised felons on the streets of Madrid. Currently, national and international historical research from different historical schools agrees that

this murder was a political decision planned by Royal Secretary Antonio Pérez and had the approval of Philip II, who was convinced by Pérez that Escobedo's death was necessary for the good of the monarchy. The exact arguments used by Pérez to convince Philip remain without consensus, but Spanish historiography has traditionally and currently pointed to the fears of Philip for his brother John of Austria to overshadow or even overthrow him (Fernández Montaña 380; Pérez Tudela 205).

In July 1579, Antonio Pérez and Ana de Mendoza, princess of Éboli were put under detention under the charges of state secret betrayal. Pérez was released shortly after and kept under surveillance, but the princess would spend the rest of her life under house arrest. Pérez would be arrested again in 1585 on the charges of corruption and State secret trafficking, for which he was condemned to serve two years in prison. Finally, in 1587 Antonio Pérez was formally accused of the murder of Escobedo and sent to prison again, where he would be interrogated and tortured. He pointed to the king as the person behind the killing of Escobedo.

Pérez escaped from jail and spent his remaining years in exile until his death in Paris in 1611, despite plans by Philip II to kidnap him and send him back to Spain (Kamen 15; Parker 238). During most of this time, he plotted and intrigued against the figure of his former master, by helping his enemies Elizabeth I of England and Henry IV of France. During these years he wrote his *Relaciones*, blaming Philip for using him as a scapegoat for a crime that the king ordered, being the king's former passion for Éboli the actual reason that drove the monarch to imprison Pérez. The *Relaciones* would, along

with the *Apologia* written by William of Orange in 1580, help create the *Black Legend* that would haunt the figure of Philip II for centuries.

Indeed, this latter chapter of Pérez's life links the assassination of Escobedo to a much broader historical topic: the historical construction of the image of Philip of Habsburg and the birth of the Spanish Black Legend. The reign of Philip II (1556-1598), known as the Prudent, or as his allies referred to him, the Demon of the South, represents for Spain the peak of its political power in the western world. As a major player of the world's greatest power, Spain, Philip II ruled a vast array of kingdoms and in 1580 by annexing the kingdom of Portugal and its overseas territories, Philip's dominion stretched along the five continents, from the Netherlands to America, from the African coasts to the Philippines. During his reign, Philip turned his Empire into an administrative machine which devoted its resources to preserve Catholicism, thus fighting the spread of Protestantism in Europe and the Ottoman Empire in the Mediterranean Sea, although he never succeeded in defeating the Dutch rebellion or forcing England to restore Catholicism in the island. By the time of his death, Philip's kingdom was the ruling state of Europe, but at a high cost: four bankruptcies and heavy taxes as a result of the unbearable burden of his foreign policies that left the leading territories in Empire, such as Castile, economically exhausted.

No Spanish sovereign but Philip II has been the object of such diverse judgments by history essayists and scholars. No sooner was Philip dead that historians from rival countries began attacking his historical figure and creating the Black Legend, whereas national historians ardently defended his work and legacy, conforming a more positive

view on Philip and the Spanish Empire which has been called the “White Legend”. Thus, the historical debate on the affair has been impaired by the bias from both sides.¹⁹ As historiographer Hillgarth writes, “the ‘Black Legend’ of Spain, which has dominated so much foreign thinking about that country since the sixteenth century, is any less powerful (or less harmful) than what one might baptize as the ‘White Legend’” (23). The Spanish Black Legend portrayed a bellicose and savage image of the Spain in the Early Modern period and such a propagandistic trend utilized several episodes of Spanish history to draw up the portrait of a country consumed by religious intolerance: the brutality of the early conquest of America, the Inquisition, the unclear death of Prince Charles (García Cárcel 2002, 119), the pillages committed by Philip’s armies in Europe, and his responsibility in the assassination of Juan of Escobedo. This later event has been instrumentalized by the some of the disseminators of the Black Legend to portray the king “as the direct result of one of the king's own devious plots, those against Don John and Escobedo, which backfired” (Koenigsberger 1994).

Before undertaking the analysis of the representation of the plot in the film, it is instrumental to have a historiographical view of the research undertaken by historiography on the multiple ramifications of the plot. Over the centuries different interpretations have led to different explanations of the role of the protagonists in the plot, therefore leading to opposing interpretations of the role of Philip II. This may bear little importance at first sight, but not if one takes into account that this is one of the controversies around King Philip that shaped the international and national conception of Spanish history in Western historiography (López Vela 2004, 63). The work by

historians through the 19th and 20th centuries has led to different and opposing interpretations. On the one hand, “en el mundo occidental, especialmente en Europa, la austera y negra figura de Felipe II se erigió en la expresión asfixiante del antiliberalismo” (López Vela 1998, 372). The biased historiography on the affair in the 19th century reached its height with the publication in 1845 of *Antonio Pérez y Felipe II*, by Mignet, which primarily used Pérez’s *Relaciones* as research source (Kamen 2001, 15), and asserted that Philip II wrote the letter which ordered the murder of Escobedo (Mignet 29), and also that Philip II had had an affair with the Princess of Éboli in the past (Kamen 2001, 20). This latter assertion, whether true or not, becomes instrumental in the construction of one ramification of the conspiracy: that the King and Pérez competed for Éboli’s love, and that he was propelled to prosecute Antonio Pérez for this reason. On the other hand, this blunt accusation found its own biased counterpart in the works of historians like Fernández Montaña, for whom Philip was never aware of the misdoings of Pérez, and was cheated by his secretary (380). This interpretation became recurrent among nationalist historiography and was particularly present in Francoist historians 50 years later (for instance, historians Cayetano Alcázar Molina, Luis Fernández de Retana in 1958), who stated that the king never ordered the assassination.

In 1952, the research by Gregorio Marañón -though openly rejected by Francoist film censors (AGA, file 36/04742)-stated that the King knew and consented to the political necessity of killing Escobedo (Kamen 2004, 20), thus stating another ramification of the plot which was further developed in later years: the responsibility of Pérez and the complicity of Philip II. Thus, in the second half of the 20th century, the

biographies on Philip II by British historians Geoffrey Parker and Pieter Pierson, regarded as two of the most convincing biographies on Philip II (Kramer 91), worked in this line of interpretation. Parker, along with fellow historians Henry Kamen, and Fernández Álvarez, presented an interpretation of the murder of Escobedo not subject to passionate and nationalist interpretations or any of the forms of the Black Legend. Rather than stating a unilateral explanation, the work by these historians pointed to the many holes in the story that left no choice but to speculate about all the possible ramifications in the history, although they discarded some of the interpretations by former historians, such as the presumption of innocence of any participant of the conspiracy.

All in all, recent historiography agrees upon the following: the relationship between the king and his brother was not at its best terms at the time of the killing of Escobedo, the king knew and consented to the assassination induced and carried out by Pérez, and that the Princess of Éboli was involved in the whole affair to a certain degree.

Yet, several questions in this affair remain unsolved, and constitute the basis for the narrative core of any artistic, historical, or literary representation of the conspiracy:

1. Did Pérez arrange the murder acting under the king's orders? Although this question is answered by many contemporary historians, for centuries this very same question became the cornerstone of the interpretation of the whole affair. Thus, it must, for the sake analysis of *La Princesa*, remain unanswered.
2. Was Escobedo murdered because he was the representative of Don John, therefore a rival of Philip II? Or did Pérez plot to murder Escobedo because the

latter threatened to disclose information of the former's selling of state documents and his affairs with the princess of Éboli?

3. Why did the king take so long -a year- to publicly press charges against Pérez? After the murder, the king protected Pérez for months; what were the motives that made him decide to put Pérez in jail later? Did Philip prosecute him because he felt betrayed by his secretary, or only because he attempted to divert the general attention by using Pérez as a scapegoat?
4. What was the role in all of this matter of the Princess of Éboli, what reasons led to her imprisonment?

There lay the most crucial unsolved ramifications of the plot, with their subsequent interpretations of Philip's participation. The existing artistic representations of this event may be inspired or not by any historiographical trends, but their answer to these very questions convey result in the film's own interpretations of the murder of Escobedo. A two pieces of history, *La Princesa* and *La Conjura* index these very same questions of the assassination of Escobedo, render their own interpretation of history, and eventually contribute to the evolution of interpretation of the conspiracy outside academic spheres.

THE TASKS OF HISTORY IN BOTH FILMS

If academic history cannot provide final answer to this affair -Fernand Braudel, founder of the Annales School of historiography, stated once that "in this mysterious matter, no one will have the last word" (quoted in Parker 1978, 141)-, *La Princesa* and

La Conjura provide their own historical interpretation on the affair. Indeed, both films answer differently to each one of these questions by employing different filmic and extra-filmic modes of representation. The analysis of the representation of the tasks of history and strategies of representation in both films reveals two opposite motivations for recreating the murder of Escobedo.

My contention is that in creating their own representation of the assassination of Escobedo and the Spanish Court in the 16th century, both films contribute their interpretation to this episode of the reign of Philip II. Both films employ utterly different cinematographic means to convey the same interpretation that points to the joint intellectual authorship of the assassination while excusing one of its authors: Philip knew and did not stop Pérez to have Escobedo murdered, but the king only did so because was cheated by his secretary on the true nature of Escobedo's plans.

This interpretation answers the questions stated early under similar historical preconceptions: Answer to question number one: in both films Pérez does manipulate Philip to order his brother's secretary be assassinated. Question number two: Escobedo is murdered with the royal consent because he had become a threat to an over-ambitious Pérez who acts against the king's good faith and judgment. Questions three and four: having Philip's allies recently informed his majesty of the corrupt and immoral motives that drove Pérez to manipulate him, the king ordered Pérez and Éboli be imprisoned. Question five: although in both films Pérez and Éboli share a passionate affair, the Maria de Mendoza from *La Princesa* plays no active part in the political conspiracy, as she is

nobody but a helpless character, whose role sharply contrasts with the openly scheming character played by Julia Ormond in *La Conjura*.

Both films present the Early Modern Era as a time when Spain was the leading country in Europe, and Philip her ruler. Philip II in *La Conjura* and *La Princesa* is portrayed as an intelligent, cunning yet righteous statesman devoted to his kingdom. He is a solitary man whose ability to rule the country depends to a degree that the constant ambitions of his closest collaborators do not turn against him. These ambitions are the result of the passions that drive the inner nature of the individuals that dwell at the Spanish court and allow for its mere existence.

Both films convey this interpretation of history employing different filmic modes of historical rendering: whereas *La Princesa* is the result of the radical editing changes dictated by Spanish Censorship officials, the representation of the conspiracy in *La Conjura* is the result of the articulation of a historical discourse under the heavy influence of TV cinematography and editing.²⁰

LA PRINCESA DE ÉBOLI: HISTORY DETERMINED BY FILM CENSORSHIP

La Princesa de Éboli / That Lady (Young, 1955) is an international co-production by Atalanta Films (United Kingdom) and Chapalo Films (Spain). As it would happen with other international productions, the Spanish participation in the filmmaking process would primarily be limited to that of a distributor that facilitated its British counterpart the entrance to the Spanish market, the approval for a British company to shoot in Spain, and the possible eventual concession of state funding to Chapalo Films.

Except for a limited presence of Spaniards, with José Nieto and Ángel Peralta as secondary actors, the crew of *That Lady* was primarily international.²¹ Yet, what makes this production be considered part of national cinematography is the zeal of Spanish censors and the lucrative desire of its producers to allow for its domestic distribution. The film was intended for Spanish and international markets, but the systematic corrections to the original screenplay ordered by Spanish censorship, along with the later changes made in the editing of the film, resulted in two different versions of the film. These two different versions opposed each other in the development of the storyline and would eventually spark a conflict of international dimension.

The original version in English openly dissented from the Spanish version in its plot. For reference purposes, I have included a summary of the storyline of both films at the end of this chapter.²² Let us see some of plotlines from both films. While in *That Lady* Philip orders the explicit assassination of Escobedo and prosecutes Pérez once the king finds out about his affair with Eboli, in *La Princesa* Escobedo kills Escobedo because the latter blackmails Escobedo to disclose his affair with Éboli to the king. Whereas the English version features a faithful Pérez whose imprisonment is only the result of Philip's jealousy for Escobedo's affair with Éboli, in the Spanish version Pérez is a traitor who does not hesitate to sell his services to France and leave Éboli and his son stranded.

The tasks of history and the strategies of representation in *La Princesa de Éboli* are the result of the rollercoaster that the concession of approval from the Spanish censorship meant. The intellectual authorship of the second version is unquestionably

Spanish, since it is the result of the zeal of Spanish censorship in preserving the image of Philip II, the Spanish monarch most involved in the Francoist ideal of the zenith of the Spanish Empire. But the representation of history is also the result of the common lucrative interest of Atalanta and Chapalo Films in having the film distributed in Spain, as they collaborated and complied with the requirements from the Censorship Board at all times. Due to the complex and high importance of this process in profiling the role of the king in the conspiracy, it is instrumental to understand the intricacies of the censoring process.

The original script was an adaptation of the novel *That Lady* by Kate O'Brien. This Irish writer drew a highly fictionalized account of the murder of Escobedo, and her novel was amended by Spanish censorship when it was to be released in Spain. It presented King Philip as a resentful lover who prosecuted Pérez out of sickly jealousy, sharing the same romantic interpretation of the conspiracy by Mignet the 19th century, for whom Philip prosecuted Pérez blinded by jealousy. The censor officials demanded that a foreword be included stating that the novel was inspired by the real events but it did not aim to be a historical account (Morales Ladrón 65)

In 1953, Atalanta Films presented a copy of the script to the BOC, which was loosely adapted from the novel. The BOE rejected this first version of the script, as they found it derogatory against the figure of King Philip and rejected the theory that underlined Philip's authorship of the murder. Censor Manuel Nolla Rubio wrote on September 22, 1953:

La tesis del guionista aparece clara, según ello Felipe II decretó el asesinato del célebre Escobedo, dejó, luego que la opinión pública lo atribuyese a Antonio Pérez, y consumó su fechoría encarcelando a éste y a su amante. [...] Ni política ni moralmente puede autorizarse, no debemos consentir que el rey Felipe II quede tan vejado. / According to the interpretation of the scriptwriter, Philip II decreed the murder of Escobedo, left the public opinion to believe Antonio Pérez to be guilty, and consummated his felony by having Perez and Eboli imprisoned [...] Nor politically, nor morally can this script be authorized, we must not allow Philip II be so humiliated. (AGA, file 36/04742)

The BOC assigned historian Manuel Fernández Álvarez to oversee a new version of the script, which would be presented on December 28. Further changes were specially made to the dialogues and role of the Princess of Éboli in the story, especially those parts regarding her relationship with Antonio Pérez, which the censors interpreted as pointing to a former love between Éboli and Philip. Also, the rifts between King Philip and Cardinal Granvela were suppressed in order to hide Philip's constant clashes with the Church. Still, the verdict of the officials was to threaten with the refusal to allow for the shooting of the film "Consideramos que el guión debería PROHIBIRSE / we believe that the script should be BANNED" (AGA, file 36/04742). Finally, in February 1954, the BOC would allow the beginning of shooting on the condition that the film script would comply with even further changes regarding the role of Pérez (AGA, file 36/04742). Yet, this would be but the beginning of one of the most polemical cases of the duality of the Spanish censorship. Between May 28 and September 30, 1954,

Atalanta films would eventually shoot and edit two versions, one in English, closer to the original script and aimed at international markets, and another dubbed in Spanish meant for domestic release, that followed the corrections made by the Censorship. Once released in the United Kingdom, in Spring 1955, the disparity in the content between both versions led to a international scandal: the screening of the Spanish version was put on hold by Censorship officials, and the attempts by Spanish official to press Atalanta Films to withdraw the English version out the international market only led to a propagandistic campaign by the British media that would help promote the film under the slogan that it represented a view of history banned by Francoism. As an article in the English newspaper *The Weekly Sporting Review* says:

Anything that robs royalty of its [Philip's] fictitious perfection and traditional concern for Spain above everything else being, in official eyes, harmful to present policy is, therefore, taboo (Mountjoy 18 March 1955, n.pag).

After the sacking of Joaquin Argamasilla, head of the BOC, the film would be reexamined by Spanish officials, which instructed further changes in the dialogs (AGA, file 36/03504). Some of the most representative amendments demanded by the censors are shown in Table 2, and they mostly aim to hide the participation of Philip in the assassination and any possible hint pointing to any past affair with the Princess of Éboli as well as eliminating any trace of treason from Don John of Austria. The result is a radically different film from the English version, in which editing and dubbing create a new story of the assassination that does not undermine the figure of Philip II.

Table 2. Modifications on the script of *La Princesa de Éboli*.

Original script	Modifications ordered by the BOC on Feb 18, 1955
REY No puedo comparar a Mateo con Antonio. Si bien conozco sus defectos, que son muchos. Pérez es un oportunista. Sé que su bolsa está llena... y hace ostentación de un gusto estrepitoso. Pero... confío en él. Es leal a mi trono.	REY No puedo comparar a Mateo con Antonio. Si bien conozco sus defectos, que son muchos. Pérez es tal como decís, un hombre vanidoso y hace ostentación de un gusto estrepitoso. Pero confío en él. Es leal a mi trono.
ANA: ¿Por qué has de decirme eso? No puede haber nada más falso. No confundas la actitud del Rey. El no ama en mí a la mujer. Sino a una añoranza idealizada. ¿Es que no lo comprendes?	ANA: ¿Por qué has de decirme eso? No puede haber nada más falso. No confundas la actitud del Rey. El no ama en mí a la mujer, sino a un linaje siempre leal. ¿Es que no lo comprendes?
PEREZ: Ana, dímelo, y tú, le amaste?	PEREZ: ¿Ana, dímelo, y tú, le amaste?
ANA: No sé si llegó a ser amor. Yo era una niña entonces y él no era el hombre que es hoy, envejecido prematuramente y más cerca de la historia y el Cielo, que de inspirar amor. Entonces creo yo le amé. Quien sabe si él también me amó, pero fue él precisamente él, quien arregló mi boda con el Rey.	ANA: Nunca hubo nada entre él y yo. Tú lo estabas viendo ahora, Antonio, un hombre envejecido prematuramente y más cerca de la historia y el Cielo, que de inspirar amor. Entonces creo yo le amé. Yo era una niña solamente, hasta que fui la esposa de su más entrañable amigo.
PÉREZ: Si te hubiese amado no te habría dado a nadie	PEREZ: Fue él precisamente quien arregló tu boda con Ruy.
ANA: Qué sé yo, Antonio... Tal vez lo hiciera con intención de evitarlo	ANA: Así es Antonio, Quiso unir a dos linajes que él tenía por dignos y merecedores de su noble afecto.
PEREZ: Que hombre tan complicado	PEREZ: Que hombre tan complicado
PEREZ: Son mi única defensa en caso de que me quieran atacar. Deberás llevarlos a Aragón y ponerlos en seguro	PEREZ: Estos secretos de Estado serán mi defensa, si es que me atacan. Deberás llevarlos a Aragón y ponerlos en seguro
ÍÑIGO: Entonces acabemos de una vez y haced que sea juzgado	ÍÑIGO: Entonces acabemos de una vez y haced que sea juzgado

Table 2 continued

Original script	Modifications ordered by the BOC on Feb 18, 1955
VAZQUEZ: ¿Queréis darle ocasión de comprometer al Rey en su declaración?	VAZQUEZ: ¿Queréis que divulgue secretos que harán peligrar la seguridad del Estado?
ÍÑIGO: ¿Acaso nolo está haciendo ya? El solo hecho de no condenar le hace creer que existen dudas acerca de su culpabilidad	ÍÑIGO: ¿Y hasta cuando estaremos así? El solo hecho de no condenar le hace creer que existen dudas acerca de su culpabilidad
ANA: Quizá todo pueda arreglarse	ANA: Quizás todo pueda arreglarse.
PEREZ: Yo no creo en cierto milagros	PEREZ: Yo no creo en cierto milagros
Original script	Modifications ordered by the BOC on Feb 18, 1955
ANA: Es muy sencillo. ¿Olvidas mi amistad con el rey?	ANA: Es muy sencillo. ¿Olvidas mi influencia con el rey?
PEREZ: Ana, ¿piensas que sería capaz de utilizarte de escudo contra mis enemigos?	PEREZ: Ana, ¿piensas que sería capaz de utilizarte de escudo contra mis enemigos?
ANA: ¿Ya no crees en la fuerza de mi amor?	ANA: Haré hasta lo imposible por salvarte
REY: Ana me habéis herido... herido profundamente	REY: Además pude pensarlo... Estoy apesadumbrado.
REY: Calláos! Yo no hice eso ni se lo ordené tampoco a nadie. Sentí un golpe al ver cartas vuestras de esa índole en mis manos. Las guardé bajo llave. Pero no llegué a leerlas. Estuve mucho rato dudando si debía leerlas o no, pero no pude hacerlo. Creo que fue por temor a la pena, a la profunda pena que iba a sufrir	REY: Calláos, Yo no hice eso ni se lo ordené tampoco a nadie. Cuando las leís me anonadaron. Nunca creí que os aliaríais a un hombre que me ha sido desleal. Experimenté gran pena al comprenderlo... una profunda pena... y amargura...
REY: Me dais un gran consuelo y--- una gran lección también. Rogad mucho por ella y por mí. Eminencia. Porque pueda soportar el peso de estos años...de estos interminables años.	REY: Me dais una triste noticia. Desgraciada mujer, triste, ha sido su destino. Rogad mucho por ella, eminencia, para que Dios la perdona en su bondad infinita.

Under such premises the film articulates its historical discourse under a romantic conception of history in which passions (of any kind) become the motor of history. The film profiles its tasks of history and performs its strategies of representation to present us with a love story featuring false dilemma in rendering of history that pictures only extremes.

The film answers the questions regarding the assassination by *recounting* the story of the assassination and by employing a series of fast-paced events that focus on a forbidden love affair between Pérez and Éboli, the blackmailing by Escobedo, and the consequences of the clash between Pérez and Escobedo. *La Princesa* recounts the events from this perspective, presenting us with King Philip as a just and firm monarch who, despite distrusting Pérez, admits the need of him as a counselor. Philip is presented as a solemn monarch who rules his kingdom with a firm hand and justice, a king who trusts his aide but fails to foresee his betrayal.²³ According to his version, he does not know the assassination of Pérez and it is Pérez who takes justice by his own hand. Perez is presented as a scheming politician who triply betrays Philip's trust: first out of lust (by courting his best friend's widow), then out of fear (by killing Escobedo after having been blackmailed by him) and out of treachery (his attempt escape with state secrets to the court of France). *La Princesa* depicts Pérez as a spineless statesman who does not hesitate to sacrifice anyone who stands in his way. The film fully discredits this historical character in accordance with the official historiography on Philip II in the 1950s, therefore releasing the king from any responsibility in the affair, and in agreement with the cuts and changes recommended in a report by Fernández Álvarez to

the BOC: “Antonio Pérez dirá concreta y explícitamente que la persecución del Rey tiene su origen en las deslealtades y traiciones por él cometidas. / Antonio Perez will precisely and explicitly say that he is prosecuted by the king because of his own treason and disloyalties.” (AGA, file 36/04742)

The film roots its *explanation* and *interpretation* of the murder in the most conservative version of the conspiracy, since it exempts the king from any responsibility. The larger historical context is the political relationship between Philip and his brother, the latter also being manipulated by his secretary Escobedo. The film *explains* history using a certain 19th century romantic approach, an approach in which characters and historical figures get involved in affairs full of passions, along with a certain male chauvinist mentality, that fits within the most conservative thesis of the affair by Spanish pro Philippinean historiography in the 1950s. The King’s innocence remains unquestioned at all times. On the other hand, by presenting us a scheming, cowardly politician, the film underscores how Escobedo is murdered as much by his corruption as by the hand of Pérez.

Regarding the role of the Princess of Éboli in the film, while in *That Lady* her role serves to support the *interpretation* of Philip’s actions against Pérez because of his desire for her, any affair between the two is denied by both parties. The transformation from the original character in the English version -audacious, she even dares to retort to the king in private -does differ from the interpretation of her role by historians of the time, which depicted her as an active politician in the Court of Philip II. In the film she becomes just another part of the schemes of Pérez. By employing an extreme moralistic

tone, she is portrayed as a betrayer not only to the king but also to the memory of her husband by not mourning him to her death. By showing how improper is for a widow (Éboli) to have an affair, the film is echoing the same limiting role to the actions of a woman in Francoist society that were found in other films of the time (i.e.: the previously examined *La Leona de Castilla*).

The course of events is *interpreted* and presented in a *falsum in uno, falsum in omnibus* fallacy, a black and white conception of history which interprets the beginning and evolution of the conspiracy as a result of the character's initial immoral misdoings of each of the characters, and their eventual corruption and fall caused by the same misconduct: Antonio Pérez (prison and exile), Éboli (prison and death), and Escobedo (murder). In doing so, the film presents a certain moralist-didactic intention: sinners and traitors do pay for their crimes/ crime does not pay.

Having been determined by the cuts imposed by the censorship, the film presents several strategies in its representation of history that aim directly at presenting us with King Philip II free of suspicion. *Condensation*: the film condenses the several imprisonments of Pérez, the three judicial processes against him, and his escape from prison into one timeline of events that stretch along a few months. By *condensing* and *omitting* the several processes instructed by the king and the changing charges pressed against Pérez, the film wipes away the discrepancies by Philip in prosecuting his closest collaborator, therefore not casting any shadows on the role of the king. *Invention* is also present. Many of the inventions of the film convey the lack of any heroic or humane trace in the character of Pérez in order to *justify* his representation as a scheming and

cheating character. His abandonment of Éboli first, and later her son, underscores his untrustworthy character, and justifies the message of the film. For instance, there is no record that Pérez fled with any of Éboli's children (as a matter of fact, she had ten), but by portraying him abandoning a little boy, the film provides a means to portray a final act of betrayal by Pérez that consummates his role as a villain. Again, cuts and dialog changes provide the story with an archetypical villain rather than the valiant hero from the English version: whereas in the English version he keeps Éboli's son by his side, in the Spanish cut Pérez abandons the young boy on the grounds that "No soy yo quien te conviene. Tú tienes que ser un hombre bueno, a mi lado es difícil serlo, algún día lo comprenderás / I am not the right person for you. You have to be a good man. If you stay with me that is a difficult task. One day you will understand." All in all, by presenting us with a an ambitious and drinking womanizer Antonio Pérez who later turns into an assassin and a traitor, the film discredits one of the protagonists of the Spanish Black Legend.

LA CONJURA DE EL ESCORIAL

Antonio del Real's film, *La Conjura de El Escorial / The El Escorial Conspiracy* (2008), is a film conditioned by different factors, among those, the background of its maker. Period filmmaking is not a common genre for Antonio Del Real, who since 1967 had directed primarily comedy films (11) and TV series (4), not accounting for incursion into the period film genre at all. *La Conjura* was a personal project by Del Real that counted solely on the filmmaker's own budget. It should be mentioned that he

mortgaged his properties in order to produce the film whose budget amounted up to 15 million Euros. According to the filmmaker's words, the film was motivated by Del Real's own interest in the persona of Philip II and the lack of any film devoted to his reign (interview in Crespo 2008, 97). Yet, commercially, the film's choice of topic was owed to the relatively popular trend opened by recent period films -*Los Borgia* (2006), and *Alatriste* (2006)- and to the booming trend in historical novel in Spain the 2000s that chose the 16th and 17th centuries as a point of reference.

His cinematographic approach to history in *La Conjura* follows the same pattern as contemporary filmmakers such as Alex de la Iglesia, or Alejandro Amenábar: shot in English, the film counts with a cast of national and international stars (Jason Isaacs, Julia Ormond, Jürgen Prochnow, Jordi Mollà, Joaquim de Almeida) as an attempt to strengthen its chances of international distribution, a decision well received by the press. This choice of casting and language, which does not limit to the period film genre, must be understood as an industrial strategy by national producers to secure or increase the chances of a national film to be distributed internationally, a common practice among other filmmaker in the 2000s.

The plot of the film tells how, within the court of the most powerful nation of the world, two parties court the favor of the king: the supporters of Antonio Pérez and those of the Duke of Alba. The Hispanic Monarchy must control one of its territories, Flanders, which swirls in rebellion under the governorship of Don John of Austria, the king's step brother. The two factions bring forward different solutions: The Duke of Alba requests he be sent back to violently repress the rebellion, whereas Antonio Pérez,

who is having an affair with the king's former love; Princess of Éboli, secretly conducts peace negotiations with the rebels. Don John of Austria sends to Madrid his secretary Juan Escobedo, to request more funds from the king to pay for extra troops and put an end to the rebellion. The king and Pérez distrust Escobedo's request, especially Austria's plan to overthrow the Protestant queen of England. Escobedo grows impatient as the king delights himself in not giving an answer. One night, while prying in Pérez's home, Escobedo finds papers that prove how Pérez and Éboli have been paid by Flemish leader William of Orange to convince the king to sign a peace treaty with favorable terms for the rebel. Escobedo catches Antonio Pérez and Éboli in bed and threatens to make their affair public. The day after, Pérez demands Escobedo to return his documents, only the latter refuses to do so. Pérez has the king order Escobedo's assassination, as Pérez manipulates the king into believing that his brother is planning to use the troops of Flanders to invade Spain and overthrow him. After a failed attempt to assassinate Escobedo by poisoning him, Don John's secretary is stabbed by six hired swordsmen, who leave a crossbow at the scene of the crime. Second Secretary of State, Mateo Vázquez, use this crime evidence to initiate an investigation, aided by constable Espinosa. In the meantime, Antonio Pérez unsuccessfully tries to retrieve the incriminating state papers. One of the servants of Escobedo turns the documents over to Vázquez, who delivers them to the king. An astonished Philip instructs Mateo Vazquez to execute the arrests of Pérez and Éboli, while he orders a last attempt to murder Mateo Vázquez and Espinosa, who fight off their enemies. Pérez and Éboli are arrested, and while John of Austria dies, his correspondence gets delivered to the King, who finds out

that Pérez's accusations of John betraying his brother were groundless and aimed only at turning the King against his brother. Vázquez takes charge as New Prime Minister of Spain, while the King follows his brother's last will and appoints a different governor for Flanders rather than the Duke of Alba.

TASKS OF HISTORY IN *LA CONJURA*

La Conjura complies with many of the agreed points by recent historians regarding the role of the protagonists of the conspiracy, such as the joint responsibility of Philip and Pérez in having Escobedo murdered. The film addresses the same questions stated before, yet unlike centering on the figure of Perez, the film prefers to convey a general veil of corruption in the court that serves to highlight the manipulation of King Philip by Pérez and Éboli.

In order to create an accessible account of the conspiracy, in the film *La Conjura*, Del Real *recounts* the events using the narrative patterns of a political thriller genre. Following many contemporary interpretations of the event, *La Conjura* presents Philip II as a politician responsible for the death of his brother's secretary, but purposely misled by his closest collaborator Antonio Perez and blinded by the affection inspired by his former love for Éboli. The conspiracy is an example of the inner fights that plagued the court of the most powerful kingdom of Europe and shadowed its splendor. The broader historical context is provided by scenes which depict the debate that dominated the political scene of Spain during the height of her empire: how to deal with the rebellion of the Flemish provinces, without abandoning her role as protector of the Catholic faith in

Europe. On the one hand the flexible, yet lucrative, plan of the party of Pérez and Éboli to set down the matter by abandoning the provinces to William of Orange, and on the other hand, the party led by the duke of Alba that advocates for the suppression by force of the rebellion.²⁴

Explaining and interpreting: By presenting how both the Éboli and the Alba parties are responsible for the assassination, the film *explains* how corruption deeply rots the most powerful country of the world (for instance, though not clearly explained but suggested, the Alba party knows of the assassination hours before it takes place). Similar to *La Princesa*, Philip II, Mateo Vazquez and Don John appear to be the only idealist political figures, who watch over the fate of Spain and not their own, the film presents Philip as a monarch who tries to establish order in a corrupt court. Using a certain self-centered individualistic approach, the film *interprets* that even though the fate of the empire and its religious integrity are at stake, the court of Philip II is a place where religion or ideals weigh less than the interests of individuals in their pursuit of desire. According to this *interpretation*, the murder of Escobedo is the collision of different individualities driven by the inherent nature of their desires: power, lust, or justice.

This *interpretation* is present in the character development of the film, but it is explicitly stated by the character of the Duke of Alba during the African dance scene. While witnessing the different power and courting games between Pérez, the king and Éboli, the duke sarcastically recites the known Socratic and Platonic principle: “Aristóteles decía que solo existía el deseo como principio motor / Aristotle used to say that desire is the only principle.” The Platonic conception of history involves the

conception of the human being as an individual dominated by the principle of desire, a principle that exerts its causality, not only in relation to pleasure, but also in relation to the constitution of the human individual (Bravo 52). Indeed, in *La Conjura*, the court becomes the place where human desire manifests itself in its many forms accounting for lust (Pérez, Éboli, the hired murderers, and even the king himself), power (Éboli, Pérez, Escobedo, King Philip) or justice (Mateo Vázquez, or Constable Espinosa).

Yet, within this apparently equal treatment of the role of each party involved in the conspiracy, the film clearly excuses Philip, insofar as his misdoings are only the result of the misinformation provided by Pérez, and Philip only orders the execution of Escobedo for the good of his kingdom. Finally, the film attempts to *justify* this interpretation by utilizing voice over²⁵ during the introduction and ending of the film, in the form of a historical account of events, in order to confer historical legitimacy to the story told in the film.

STRATEGIES OF REPRESENTATION

The film presents history according to many of the conventions of the political thriller. For instance, the plot unfolds according to a threat set against a backdrop of political struggle (Éboli versus Alba); the argument is designed to give political power to somebody while the opponent tries to prevent it; innocent people (Moorish thief Damiana, and also Escobedo himself) are drawn into the political world and unjustly executed; the story involves national or international political scenarios, and there is a

last-minute helping character (the maid of Escobedo) that allows for the solving of the plot.

In addition to these genre conventions, *La Conjura* resorts to the adaptation of TV conventions that build up the narrative and historical continuity of the film. The film conforms its television treatment of history both in technical terms (cinematography, editing, and sound editing) and narrative strategies. Regarding the latter, the cinematography and temporal organization confer respectively to the film its concise and fast paced ways of storytelling.

Though having a strong influx from the ambitious and passionate nature that conducts the development of the characters, throughout the film, cameras usually avoid close ups and extreme close-ups and favor two-person shots and group shots. This cinematography ushers a distant approach to the chain of events and to history itself.

The less personal historical approach combines itself with to the temporal organization of the film, that is, its editing. Although conceived of as a feature film, the film shows a TV treatment in its editing, insofar as its continuous fast scenes expose the common need of TV series to pause at regular intervals for commercials, thus sequences transition to different actions on a regular basis. This lack of long sequences or even scenes characterizes the narratives modes of telling history into a succession of fast paced events which leaves the spectator little room for reflection, but also does not resort to any form of historical referentiality. These conventions help define history as a continuous and concise series of events for which desire becomes the driving force, as Del Real had stated his preference for “potenciar las historias de amor para acercar la

historia del siglo XVI a la época actual / to enhance love stories as a means to bring 16th century history to present times” (E.F.E 2008, 3).

In addition to this distancing cinematography and the fast-paced series of events, another example of TV treatment in *La Conjura* that directly influences history telling is its composition of the scenes and preference for an emphasis on the literal over figurative meaning. Almost the entire film declines the usage of the former, thus reinforcing “what happened” on an external level. By discarding the possibility of multiple historical interpretations or metaphorical meanings embedded within the narration, the film betrays a recurrent certain expository nature.

All these TV strategies operate to weave the narrative thread that reinforces Del Real’s *interpretation* of the assassination of Escobedo in *La Conjura*: that the murder was the result of the desirous nature present in all human beings that operates as the motor of history. The sexual scenes between Pérez and Éboli, as well this Platonic interpretation of history accompanies some of the strategies of representation of history.

All of the major *alterations* and *inventions* in *La Conjura* can be seen as and justified as means of representing the corruption of Antonio Pérez and his abuse of his power entrusted to him by the king. By opening the film with a secret political and passionate meeting at the back of the church between the latter and the princess of Éboli, Pérez is portrayed as a profane deceiver whose desire for lust and power leads him to cheat his country and wife. The film’s *inventions* work together to present the pulse between two different parties within the Spanish court: The Ebolist and The Alba. One of the most important *inventions* in the film is the second opening the scene in which the

two parties court the favor of the king while walking in the gardens. Whereas the international politics of the kingdom were actually discussed within the council of Flanders and not in such a casual location, as the gardens of the Monastery of Escorial, works as a metaphorical arena wherein both parties clash. The incident of the attacking dogs, though unreal, presents the audience with the clash of the two policies -political pragmatism versus Catholic militarism- that would convulse the international affairs of the Spanish Empire for over one hundred years.

RECEPTION OF THE FILMS

Premiered on March 5, 1955 in Madrid, *La Princesa* would earn 1.6 million pesetas at the box office in Spain. The analysis of the fifteen film reviews published in Spain in the first week upon its release shows how the film was in general terms well received by the press. The film was praised for its technical qualities (Cinemascope, live sound, rich staging), and most the reviews stated the potential of the film for telling a story set in the peak of splendor of the Spanish Empire. There is almost no mention to the previous scandal around the existing second version in the United Kingdom and its radically differing representation of the monarch. Only one of the film reviews, found in sports magazine *Mundo Deportivo*, hints at the controversy “por lo menos quedan a salvo en la versión española aquellos principios ideológicos que importaban / at least in the Spanish version those ideological principles that really mattered remain safe” (Objetivo 6).

Although the lack of further references about the representation of history makes it impossible to be conclusive about the reception of the film in terms of its historical recreation, there can be inferred a change of attitude among the Spanish press towards period films. As it happened with contemporary films like *La Leona de Castilla* and *Alba de America*, both premiered two years earlier, the reviews show that, unlike earlier features, a period film would be criticized for its formal features, and not only by its patriotic potential for disseminating national history.

Regarding its historical representation, the majority of the reviews focus on the representation of King Philip II. Only those conservative newspapers, such as the Falangist newspaper *Alcázar* and Monarchist dailies *ABC* praised the film for its dignifying and respectful characterization by actor Paul Scofield (“Estreno de la Coproducción” 39). Still, only Falangist magazine *Primer Plano*, which assumes the characterization of Pérez and Éboli as faithful to history, discusses the main matter of the film, the assassination of Escobedo and the prosecution and imprisonment of Perez and Éboli (“La Princesa de Eboli” n.pág).

Having been premiered on September 1, 2008, the film reviews of *La Conjura* show a very different reception. The negative reception of the film was a fact during the first month of its showing. It would not recover its 14 million euro budget at the box office, earning only 1.8 million Euros.²⁶ These poor commercial results mirror the negative reception among the press. Out of 39 film reviews consulted, only seven from different press groups rated the film as good or above average. Moreover, the only two positive reviews found do not get into any detail regarding either technical details or

storytelling. The negative ratings from rest of the film reviews point to technical inconsistencies in the discrepancies between the clichéd action scenes and the examples of historical referentiality at the beginning and ending of the film -voice over, aerial shots-as the reasons for a breach in the continuity that decreased the quality of the film. Other points of criticism were the film's narrative fragmentation (Ruiz 12), and somewhat superficial didacticism (Herrero 2008, 66).

The majority (24 out 39) of the reviews regard the film in delivering its historical interpretation as ineffective and conclusive. Recurrent aspects and highlights found in these reviews may point to prevalent skepticism among film critics regarding the past work and capacity of Del Real to engage in the direction of a historical film (to cite the two most hostile of them in *Comercio* (Egure 89) and in *Gara* (Insausti 2008, 45).

If *La Princesa* highlights a change of attitude towards period films in published opinion, *La Conjura* resuscitated the worst fears and clichés attached the genre: “[...] aglutina los peores tics del cine histórico casposo / [...] it brings together the worst of dried up historical film;” (Bernal 17) “[...] como en las peores producciones del cine histórico, sólo destacan sus buenos vestuarios / [...] as in the worst historical film productions, the only aspect that stands out are the costumes (Gelabert 21).

Finally, and more retrospective review by film critic José Torregrosa situated the film's commercial failure and lack of artistic innovation into a recurrent feature of the period film genre since the 1940s:

[...] si comparásemos sus resultados artístico e ideológicos con los de *La Princesa de los Ursinos* (1947) y *Jeromín* (1951) de Luis Lucía; y con *Locura de*

Amor y Alba de América, de Juan de Orduña de 1948 y 1951 respectivamente, podríamos comprobar lo lento que va esto / [...] if we were to compare the artistic and ideological results with those of *La Princesa de los Ursinos* (1947) and *Jeromín* (1951) by Luis Lucía and with *Locura de Amor* and *Alba de América*, by Juan de Orduña from 1948 and 1951 respectively, we could show how slowly this procedes. (Torregrosa 16)

CONCLUSION

La Princesa and *La Conjura* contribute their own vision to the assassination of Escobedo. From the narrative conventions of romantic film to those of the political thriller film, the films answer differently to most of the questions, especially the one dealing with the responsibility of King Phillip II. Despite their disparity in answering the questions that remain open interpreting the ramifications of the plot both film converge in the same interpretation of Philip II: they present Philip II in a positive light not only as a noble statesman who takes the necessary actions to protect his nation, such assuming the political necessity of ordering the dismissal of one of his own officials,²⁷ but also as a penitent man burdened by the responsibility of his actions.

Whereas *La Princesa* epitomizes the most conservative version of the White Legend (blunt denial of Philip's authorship, affair, and betrayal of Éboli), *La Conjura* characterizes most of the points shared by historians (responsibility of Philip, corruption of Perez) and it shares some of those from the romantic legend of the 19th century (affair between Perez and Éboli, a past romance between Philip and Éboli). The interpretation

and representation of the different ramifications of the conspiracy in *La Princesa* history are not tributary but the direct result of the obsession of the Francoist censorship and historiography in protecting the reputation of one of the historical cornerstones of the Francoist conception of the past. On the other hand, *La Conjura*, free from the control of Francoist censorship, has the capacity to present Philip not as the author but one of the two people responsible for the assassination. All in all, if both films do not manage as Braudel's statement says "to have the last word" in this historical matter, as pieces of filmed history, they both manage to draw their own portrayal on the conspiracy that contributes to its non-scholarly and filmic historical dissemination, and therefore to the half-trueness that any conspiracy is.

ESQUILACHE: CULTURAL HEROES AS THE ELITIST MOTOR OF HISTORY

The last film discussed in this chapter on politics and the royal court is *Esquilache* (1989) a film by Josefina Molina whose plot is set in the Esquilache Riots of Madrid in 1766. Molina's film is one which proves the extent of the role that the early modern era has played in shaping the historical consciousness and identity of Spaniards, insofar *Esquilache* is a film whose historical reception is determined by the political atmosphere of Spain in the 1980s and the conflict between the audience's expectations and the intention of the filmmaker in depicting the Riots of 1766.

The construction and reception of history in the film *Esquilache* (Josefina Molina, 1989) is tributary to its time of making because of the work by its filmmakers

and the press to promote the film as a set of political circumstances -the riots of 1766- that bore strong resemblances with the contemporary political tensions of Spain in the 1980s. Even though the film was shot more than 200 years later, the cultural image of the riots remained so influential at the time of its premiere, that *Esquilache* inspired its filmmakers and critics to draw parallels between the popular discontent prior to the revolt of 1766 in Madrid and the general unease during the eighties in Spain because of the economic reforms of the Spanish Socialist Government. Yet, the reception of the film would be determined a collision of opposing trends in the interpretations of the very historical event by the audience and the makers of *Esquilache*.

The film tells the story from the perspective of a moribund Esquilache who lies in bed and is surrounded by his family in his exile in Venice. His son reads aloud a letter from Carlos III in which the monarch praises his services in favour of Enlightenment but regrets that perhaps they pursued their reforms too far. The action shifts to show the arrival of the minister and his secretary at the Palace of the Seven Chimneys in Madrid. The uprising starts and the rioters loot the residence of the minister and kill one of his servants. Having been halted by some rioters, Esquilache heads for the royal palace in his carriage. During the journey, while rioters loot on the streets, Esquilache recalls the most important moments that marked his political and personal life: his attempt to introduce the Enlightenment in Spain and the subsequent resistance of the old nobility and the clergy; his deteriorating relation with his wife Pastora, and his affair with his maid Fernanda. Esquilache also reminisces about his ordering the act that prohibits people from wearing traditional long capes and large-brimmed hats in order to prevent

robbers from remaining anonymous in assaults. Having found this new law an attack to their customs, the people of Madrid riot against the government and above all, the Italian ministers of Charles III. Once Esquilache arrives to the royal palace, as he tries to make sense of the events leading to the violence which endangers his life, his policy, and the future of the whole country, he discovers that he is a victim of a vast conspiracy led by his friend and predecessor the Marquis of Ensenada and many other conservative noblemen who paid mobsters to enrage the common people and revolt. The rioters present their demands to the king, but one stands about the others: the dismissal of the minister and his immediate exile. Alarmed by similar riots that are taking place in the rest of Spain, Carlos III must ask his loyal minister to resign from his post and deports him. Afterwards, the action returns to the opening sequence, showing Esquilache in bed finishing his recollection and asking his son to read the letter once again.

THE STORY AND HISTORY OF THE RIOT

The revolt against Esquilache (*Motín de Esquilache* in Spanish) is the name given to a set of riots that took place in Madrid and other cities of Spain in 1766 during the reign of Charles III and the ministry of the Marquis of Esquilache. Their suppression provided the first test for Spain's new Enlightened Despotism of the Bourbon Monarchy and its ministers (Rodríguez 223).

Leopoldo de Gregorio, Marquis of Esquilache or Squillace (1701/1708-1785) was an Italian diplomat and politician at the service of Spanish king Charles III. Charles III appointed him as Secretary of Finance of the Treasury, and together they both carried

out several reforms in order to implement the reforms of the Enlightenment: the Army and Navy were reorganized, the state of the finances was attended to, the price of bread was allowed to float, and along with these, the city of Madrid was renovated by paving streets, installing street lights and street furniture, cleaning the crowded streets of waste by constructing the sewage system. All these reforms raised taxation and increased the price of basic goods, such as bread and candles, and also meant the removal from the spheres of power and privileges of many old members of the nobility and clergy. Thus, the reforms by Charles III implemented by Esquilache raised a general resentment among old nobility, the Church, and the people against the policy of reform and the foreign ministers of government, who were branded as thieves in libelous and popular songs. Esquilache became a scapegoat for many of the economical -the inflation of essential foodstuff such as a bread, oil and soap led to increases above all- (Andrés-Gallego 171) problems that plagued Spain in 1765-66.

One of Esquilache's reforms would turn out to more polemical than others. In order to improve security in the capital Esquilache tried to eradicate the use of long cape and chambergo (wide brimmed hat) on the pretext that, by disguising under those clothes, individuals were assaulting with impunity and hiding weapons under their clothing. Following the publication of the decree that ordered the implementation of this reform, popular protests in Madrid grew and in until the outbreak of the revolt on March 23, 1766: soldiers trying to arrest recalcitrant citizens were attacked and killed by crowds. The trigger for the crisis was the publication of the edict, but other causes include the recurrence of food shortages, price increases of essential goods, and the

rejection of Charles' III foreign ministers by the Spanish population. The rebels demanded lower food prices, the withdrawal of the edict on clothing, the removal of foreign ministers, and the general pardon for all of the rioters. Charles III yielded to their demands, as the revolt had spread from Madrid to the whole of Spain -Zaragoza, A Coruña, Bilbao, Barcelona...- Finally, the revolt ended with the forced removal of the Marquis of Esquilache, but the riots provided the government with an excuse for implementing further reforms in later years.

Despite the relative agreement among historians in asserting that the revolts were the result of the widespread discontent, the historiographical debate about the riots remains open and has been determined by the question on the intellectual authorship of the riots: were they sparked by scheming elites or was it a popular uprising? Historiography has attempted to determine the identity of the real authors of the plot, with its subsequent ramifications. The earliest interpretations on the subject date back to the year 1776, with diverse theories pointing to the involvement of different members of the upper classes: the clergy and the Jesuits (Ferrer del Rio 105), and those discontented noblemen who felt their posts in power threatened by the reforms. According to this interpretation, the higher states of the realm played the leading role in the conspiracy, and they were responsible for manipulating the popular classes into revolting against their king.

In the 1970s and 1980s, a diametrically opposed trend applied a Marxist approach to the causes of the revolt by pointing to economic reasons -recurrent foodstuff and basic good shortages- as the reasons for the popular uprising, of which Esquilache's

enemies took the most advantage (Andrés-Gallego 171; López García 236; Vilar 199). Other conciliatory interpretations have appealed to a conjunction of discontent forces (Feijóo and Ormaechea 64; Rodríguez 232) that manipulated the general discontent of the masses (Macías Delgado, 238).

The implications and ramifications of these different interpretations are crucial to achieve an understanding of the historical background of Molina's *Esquilache*. Let us see some of them. If the clergy -mostly the Society of Jesus- were proven to be the leaders of the conspiracy, this decision would politically prove their persistent insubordination of the political establishment which resulted not only their expulsion from Spain in 1767, but also later in 1932 in the II Republic. If the Marquis of Ensenada (predecessor of Esquilache) or any of the other noble and clerical heads of the conspiracy were to be found the only active conspirators of the riot, the common people would not play an active part in the uprising rather that a passive role. It would lead to a interpretation of history as a process made and conducted by the elites, whereas the common people are presented as a docile instrument in the hands of higher estates of the realm: "una tesis conservadora que rechaza que las capas subalternas de la época tuviesen iniciativas políticas / a conservative theses that denies that the lower class of the time had any political initiative" (López García 237).

Regarding its presence in popular memory, the revolt continues to be a historical reference among Spanish people. If a national politician or policy -especially if implemented in Madrid- is considered unpopular, the memory of the revolt against Esquilache is then used to recall the defiance of the masses against nonsensically

unexplainable reforms. Examples of the relevance of the Motín de Esquilache in the popular reaction to politics -especially if they are applied in Madrid- are its constant allusion in blogs, web forums (such as foroejercito.forumup.es), and newspapers (Bocos n.pag) when it comes to criticize governmental policies and call for citizen action. For instance, the aggravation of the economic crisis in Spain inspired Journalist students in March 2011 to launch a blog called *Herederos del Motín de Esquilache* (Heirs of the Esquilache Riots), featuring entries and articles that aim at calling youth to struggle against governmental injustice and get their voice heard.

ESQUILACHE AND ITS TASKS OF HISTORY

The manner in which the historical environment -the revolts in Madrid in 1766- is created in *Esquilache* allows the film to become a dramatic form of history that situates itself within a certain historiographical tradition. *Esquilache* employs the original dramatic text by Buero Vallejo (1958) and a conservative conception of history that together present political elites as the motor of history; and, at the same time the film utilizes a subjective sensibility to approach the events through the consciousness of the Prime Minister Esquilache. The narrative strategies of *Esquilache* determine its account on the events, as they are focused through the character of Esquilache, but its zeal in pursuing this narrative perspective deters the film's ability to deliver a less elitist interpretation of history. The consequent clash between this elitist interpretation of history and the political context of Spain in the 1980s is one of the reasons that would lead to confusion among film critics when reviewing the film, as the next section on the

reception of the film shows. This is one of the examples of many narrative inconsistencies -one may arguably call them the erratic message- in the construction of history in *Esquilache* that would determine its loss of audiences.

The film *recounts* the riots of Madrid from the subjective recollection of the memories of Esquilache. The riots are presented as the result of a conspiracy led by discontented noblemen who hire the services of the underworld to raise the masses against the government. The film depicts the main character as an honorable, yet naïve, statesman whose misdoings are the result of the corruption of those opposed to reform. The actor who plays Esquilache (Fernando Fernán-Gómez) presents us with a daydreaming person who seeks romance at his 60 years of age, but also an idealistic politician, if not a martyr for the ideals of Enlightenment. His actions and delusions depict an honest statesman whose idealism is only shared by the king and his fellow Italians in government, a man who wills to sacrifice his personal life (he agrees not to divorce from his wife) and his political career (he puts the interest of the kingdom ahead of his own by accepting his exile) for sake of the nation. Charles III acts as an overseer of the reforms of his favorite, but his ideals also make him naïve, as he is subject to the decisions of those who control him (his mother Isabel and his mentor Bernardo Tanucci).

The broader context of history is provided by the letters that attest to the tension between modernity and conservatism in Spain. This recovers an old debate within the evolution of Spain over the place of modernity: the resistance of Spaniards to change. This discourse of modernization versus conservatism dates back to the very origins of

the state in many forms: the pulse of Enlightened politicians versus reactionary conservatives in the 18th century, the clash between the liberals and the absolutist supporters in the 19th century, and most evidently in the well-known generation 1898, when modernization is referred to as *Regeneracionismo*.

The film's historical *interpretation* participates in the historiographical tradition of a conservative interpretation of the riots by presenting the audience with a general discontent among the privileged classes both because of their opposition to the reforms of Enlightenment (the old nobility, the Church and Society of Jesus who feel that their privileges had been threatened by Esquilache's policies) and also by those traitors who once acted as defenders of the implementation of the Enlightenment in (The Marquis of Ensenada). As part of this interpretation, the popular masses, manipulated by the criminal underground (which itself was instructed by reactionary upper high class groups), lack initiative of its own and the development of its actions bring it closer to herd behavior.

The filmmaker stated in a personal interview that, having studied the latest research on the subject, she found that the most plausible thesis on the riot was the one that presented the revolt as a conspiracy hatched by reactionary forces that hired criminals who pushed the people to riot by taking advantage of the general discontent with the reforms of Carlos III and Esquilache (Molina interview in 2005). The *interpretation* of history in Esquilache goes beyond this mere assertion. Molina betrays her elitist interpretation of the history of Spain when she states that this conflict reflected the contradictions and passions of Spaniards by quoting Eugenio d'Ors "España es un

perpetuo motín de Esquilache / Spain is a perpetual Revolt of Esquilache” (“Josefina Molina” n.pag). By partially quoting D’Ors, Molina hints to what her interpretation of Spanish history is, as becomes more evident when reading the entire text by D’Ors:

España es un perpetuo motín de Esquilache, una tensión continua entre una minoría renovadora y una mayoría ignorante, movida por los intereses de los grupos reaccionarios / Spain is a perpetual Esquilache Riot, a constant tensión between a renovating minority and an ignorant mass manipulated by reactionary groups. (quoted in Suárez 66)

Whether Molina agrees fully with d’Ors or not, the intentionality of her film leads to this very same interpretation. This statement could be argued if we took into account that the author expressed her intention to convey only Esquilache’s perspective during a limited time span -48 hours (Molina 132). In this sense, solitude defines very well what *Esquilache* is to the historical interpretation of the riots of 1766 in Madrid. As Charles III illustrates “we are alone, it is we who are the conspirators.” The identification between Esquilache and modernity is conveyed on several occasions, mostly as a result of his clashing with the reactionary groups. His list of supporters limits itself to the trust from the king and his fellow Italians, thus enhancing the solitude of his power. Other groups, even his close family and the king’s relatives, only see in the Enlightenment a vehicle for empowering. In other words, the film’s interpretation of history is that cultural martyrs (primarily Esquilache and his Italian aides who resign for preserving the integrity of the kingdom, and also Charles III for dispensing with his loyal

ministers) are the only motor of Spanish history and stand against a corrupt and ignorant majority.

The film *justifies* its historical portrayal of the events and people by resorting to the usage of voiceovers during the reading of the letter from the king. The tone of the letter conveys not only a friendship between Charles and Esquilache, but also it delivers the only film's historical reflection -its broader context- since it underlines the historical shortage of supporters of modernity in Spain (in this case, the Enlightenment). Against their enemies (mostly reactionary groups), the fall of the supporters of Enlightenment is darkly interpreted by the king in the film as “las víctimas de tiempos de oscuridad / victims of times of darkness.”

STRATEGIES OF REPRESENTATION

Esquilache calls upon a series of strategies of narration and representation of history that build up the historical message of the film. In the same spirit as the title of the drama by Buero Vallejo *Un soñador para un pueblo* (A dreamer for a people, 1958) the strategies of narration in the film confer a more personal tone to the tale by using a double flash-back structure one of the dreamer and that that belong the very flashback (soñador ~ flashback).

The film's *omissions* are mostly responsible for the construction of the interpretation on the role of the masses in the film. The film neither shows the conditions in which the town folks lived -scarcity of basic goods- nor those economical decisions that affected their living conditions (the governmental freeing of the price of wheat in

1765 had led to an over inflation of bread prices by mid 1766). The lack of non-violent scenes of the popular masses weakens the nature of their demands and supports the theory of a headless mob-controlled riot. Also omitted is the presence of non-underground characters among the popular classes: the people's demands are undermined since they voice only a ruthless desire for tradition: their depiction is limited to thieves, murders, abusers, and sometimes it borders on the grotesque. There is also an elimination of the popular characters (María, Lauda, or Morón) and non-riot outdoor scenes from Vallejo's original drama which depicted not only their harsh living conditions but also conveyed the desire for change and modernity among popular classes.

Whether this *omission* can be interpreted as a deliberate decision by the filmmaker or not, it is possible that the reason for these omissions of history in *Esquilache* lies within the production limitations that Josefina Moline had to face, as they had only 300 extras to fill the parade ground of a palace in Aranjuez (Molina 131). But the effect of these *omissions* is that the crowds appear more concerned about the tradition of their fashion rather than pondering the actual consequences of changing their attire.

Indeed, the omissions leave no trace of the real consequences for the crowd in abandoning the chambergo hat and the long cape, which were more appropriate to protect oneself from the crude winters of Madrid. But the same omissions apply to the reforms and politics of that these Enlightened politicians struggle to implement them. Except for the National Lottery, and the Edict of Capes and Hats, the film fails to

explain what kind of Spain Esquilache and King Charles aim to create. It can be stated that the film profiles the Enlightenment from a superficial level, insofar as its depiction only engages its most visual aspects, such as the renovation to the streets and street furniture.

Along with the same line as its *omissions*, the film's *alterations* aim mainly at conveying a patronizing view of the events, underlining an Enlightened conception of paternalism under whose guidance people seem like children who do not succeed in recognizing an action done for their own good and prefer conservative oppression to reform. As Ensenada and Esquilache discuss, the people are still too immature to govern themselves. The quiet, humble character of the king underlines a patronizing attitude towards his subjects epitomized by his *altered* line: "Los españoles son como los niños que lloran cuando se les lava la cara / Spaniards are like children, who whine when they have their faces washed." The actual quote attributed to him reflected the same thought, in a less sympathetic and far more demeaning fashion: "[...] les pasa lo mismo que con los niños, que lloran cuando se les quita la mierda / they [Spaniards] are like children, who whine when someone washes their shit up" (quoted in Cepeda 611). The same patronizing attitude among the privileged classes is depicted during the first of series of reminiscences of Esquilache at the banquet of the Economics Society. An over optimistic Esquilache accounts for the excuses given by Spaniards to reject his reforms: the brick roads (thought to create coldness), clean streets (protect against sickness), work (against the conception that work discredits nobility).

The usage of anecdotes from the uprising and their insertion within this framework of *alterations* act as metaphorical historical statements that increase contrast between a free-thinking elite and traditionalist violent masses. In the same scene at the Society, the hails to the Enlightenment “Vivan las luces / Hail to the lights” fade out and blend into the shattering of the glass of the street lights being stoned by the crowds chant that Spain cannot afford so many candles. Another anecdote is the scandalous behavior of Esquilache’s wife -taken by several accounts as one of the reasons for the popular hatred against Esquilache- presents her as another example of nemesis to Esquilache.

The *inventions* of the film refer mostly to the fictional characters and what opinions on the historical assertion they metaphorically communicate. By portraying Esquilache’s attempt to attempt to commit suicide, the film falls deeper into the sacrificial character of Esquilache as a man who puts these ideals ahead of his own life. By inventing the character of Campos, a secretary sold to the enemies of Esquilache, the film resorts to state the same problem: the overwhelming corruption among all of Spaniards impairing any reform and the innocence and naïveness of Esquilache in trusting the Spanish people. The *invention* of the character of Fernanda is undoubtedly the most influential decision in the construction of the historical message of the film, as she is the only direct contact of Esquilache with the common people. Her role in the original story is reversed in the film to such extent that it affects the historical interpretation of the film. If in Buero Vallejo’s play the character develops a sense of self-reliance that symbolizes the act a maturity of the people, that is, “how the people become the actual force of progress and turn their back on darkness” (Willis-Altamirano

156), there is no trace of such a metaphor in Molina's film. As Gómez clearly states, this character does not epitomize the change of the popular classes (99) but rather helplessness and disappointment with Esquilache when he refuses to take her with him to Italy and abandons her: "No tiene otra cosa que ofrecerme más que grandes palabras / You have nothing to offer me but big words." Fernanda epitomizes the gap between the elite and the popular classes, as her last scene in the film metaphorically shows. In the last shot of her, her fate remains unknown while she breaks through the crowd with her back to the camera and is momentarily called by the leader of the masses.

Her role in the story of the film is limited to offering emotional support to Esquilache, she does not show any signs of hope for freedom, but rather epitomizes the same inner destructive passion and irrationality that Esquilache and Charles refer to and attribute to all Spaniards, as she is terrorized yet charmed by one of the leading rioters.

RECEPTION AND CONCLUSION ON THE FILM

The film was premiered on January 25 in 1989, coinciding with the bicentenary of the reign of Charles III and the general interest on the monarch rose by conferences, special TV programs, and institutional events, along with the recent events of the general strike on December 4 in 1988 against the economic reforms by the Spanish Socialist Government. This event echoed the general disillusion among Spanish voters towards European-inspired governmental reforms (salary cuts, inflation, budget deficit), and eventually paralyzed the country for 24 hours, prompting the government to negotiate with the unions. The events of 1766 and 1988 rapidly inspired filmmakers, intellectuals

and journalists to draw parallels between the riots of Esquilache and the general strike. This parallelism would eventually influence the outcome of the film's reception among critics, as it would raise different expectations from the film that clashed against the intentions of the filmmaker. The film obtained poor commercial results at the box office, earning only 105 million pesetas, in contrast to its 260 million pesetas budget.²⁸

The analysis of 28 different film reviews shows how the Spanish press initially praised *Esquilache* with positive reviews. For the first week following the premiere of the film, most critics from the leading newspapers in Spain stressed mostly the acting of the players and the historical settings of the film. Later critics from most specialized Spanish film magazines analyzed in more detail the historical discourse and presented a tepid critique on *Esquilache's* weak historical discourse. For instance, its lack of historical credibility due to the poor quality of the film's outdoors scenes which made the movie unrealistic (Gil de Muro 1989, 51; Hidalgo 9), or its narrative fragmented by its numerous subplotlines (Fernández Santos 1989, n.pag). For other critics, these divisions of the story plot result in too many secondary stories -the courtesan life of the Bourbon court, the marital relationship between Esquilache and Pastora and the affair of Esquilache with Jacinta - and hence it could not focus in the riot itself ("Esquilache y populacho" 32). Other critics found that the fragmentation of the argument kept the film from reaching its creator's goals: to shoot a historical film that could realistically represent the mentality and politics of the time (Urbez 22). A harsh review by film historian Carlos Fernández Heredero concludes that the film was merely a decent cinematographic industrial product, since it did not pose the least interesting historical

analysis (Fernández Heredero 1989, 46). Yet, with the exception of Fernández Heredero and Fernandez Santos' reviews, the film generally earned positive reviews among the Spanish press.

Nevertheless, these reviews show a conflict between the historical nature of their expectations (more weight on the revolt) and the conservative interpretation by Josefina Molina (focused on the figure of Esquilache and the elites that spark the riot by controlling the people). In the immediate days before and after the films' premiere, Molina linked the events of 1766 with those of 1988 by presenting the film as a reflection on a contemporary event and politicians (Muñoz 1989, 48). But from a point of view which shared the conservative thesis on the authorship of the riots, the film was not going to portray why Spanish people were to riot, but rather how they were a mindless crowd manipulated by conservative groups: "la salvaje irracionalidad siempre vence en nuestra historia / wild irrationally always prevails in our history" (Manuel Montero 1989, n.pag); "un pueblo apegado a la tradición y tutelado por la Iglesia y la vieja nobleza / the people is attached to tradition and the nobility and the Church are their guardians" (Hidalgo 9).

The reaction of intellectuals and journalists can hint at how the audience considered that the present continuous demonstrations against the social and economic reforms of the Socialist Party were a contemporary situation that echoed what had already happened two hundred years earlier. In this sense, *La Vanguardia* published references to debates that linked to the then current ministers of the Government to the figure of Esquilache (Muñoz 1989, 48; "Esquilache Actual" n.pag). Days after the

Spanish writer Francisco Umbral wrote in a review of the film that superficially it drew a comparison between the events of 1766 and 1988, and stated that

Los nuevos ilustrados son hoy los economistas, que quiere recortarle el jornal a la puebla como Esquilache quería cortarles la capa: Boyer, Solchaga, Almunia, creen en la macroeconomía como Carlos III creía en la cultura. / Nowadays the new illustrated politicians are those economists that will to cut the wages of the workers just the same way Esquilache tried to cut down their capes and hats. Almunia, Solchaga and Boyer believe in Macroeconomics in the same way Carlos III believed in the Enlightenment Reforms. (Umbral 53)

These reviews may point to how among the press there was an interpretation of the events closer to that of the interpretation of the riots that depicts them as a popular revolt sparked by the economical crisis. This is the point that allows the film to be read as an appraisal of the power in the 1980s and not as an appraisal of freedom as happened to Buero Vallejo's drama in 1958. Even though *Esquilache* sold nearly three hundred thousand tickets,²⁹ its ratings and attendance differ sharply from other contemporary Spanish period films such as *El Rey Pasmado* (which doubled *Esquilache*'s results with more than six hundred thousand tickets sold).³⁰

All in all, *Esquilache* is a film that exposes the effect of present history in portraying past history in a novel way for period film genre in Spain. By engaging a historical topic which, though distant in the past, remains controversial in popular and academic history, the film sparked different reactions among the press regarding not only its cinematographic means but also the historical message delivered. This is not a

very common situation among early modern period films; the generational distance of contemporary audiences from the events presented in the film typically does not index the previous historical knowledge among the audience, but this movie is a common place, so much so that the riot is part of a fossilized language and popular history reframed. The proximity of the General Strike of 1988, plus the promotional statements by Josefina Molina may have determined to some extent the reception of the film, insofar as they both clash against the narrative line of *Esquilache*. Perhaps it was a too elitist a discourse for a film to premiere at a time when 90% of the workers had followed a general strike a month and a half earlier. Yet, *Esquilache* stands out within the tradition as an example of the recurrent interest of the early modern in its treatment by film: the cinematographic treatment of the evolution of the events, presenting a narration consisting of a triple arrangement of flashback scenes, along with its psychological approach to the persona of Esquilache, provide the film with an approach to political history that, regardless from its acceptance by audiences, effectively delivers a message and contributes to the continuation of the historical debate of the riots of 1766. *Esquilache* does indeed play its part in keeping the memory of Spanish early modern history alive.

EL REY PASMADO: THE SPANISH COURT AS THE MIRRORING IMAGE OF THE DECADENCE OF THE HISPANIC EMPIRE

The next film in this chapter on politics and the court in the early modern period film brings forth one of the moments in early modernity interpreted as a turning point in

the history of the Spanish Empire, the reign of Philip IV. Considered by historians as the realization of Spain's loss of political hegemony in Europe, the reign of Philip IV has been approached from multiple perspectives that account for different causes -economic, military, and/or moralistic- as the reasons the end of the Spanish political hegemony in early modern Europe. These are reasons which intrinsically relate to one concept: the decadence of a country.

El Rey Pasmado (Imanol Uribe, 1991), or *The Dumbfounded King* in its international title, is a period film which, through the conventions of the comedy genre, conveys a sardonic interpretation of the first quarter of the 17th century. *El Rey Pasmado* (*El Rey*, hereafter), participates in a new historiographical trend of interpretation of the Spanish 17th century in its character building of the main historical figures: Philip IV, and his minister Olivares. The film's approach to this era presents interpretation of history with strong similarities the post-structuralist historical approach by historians such as Michel Foucault. Moreover, as a piece of filmic history, *El Rey* is a clear example of the strong potential for history dissemination through film. *El Rey* intricately creates its own truth of the decadence of Spain through the satire of its moral contradictions. Its humorous tone does not distance the film from the seriousness of written history, because *El Rey* is embedded with a profound knowledge of both academic and popular historical events without interfering with the narrative trend of the film.

The film tells how, in Madrid during the early 17th century, the king of Spain is only 20 years old and is a young man who lacks experience both in love and political

affairs. The immature monarch is married, but pillow talk remains an unknown subject for him. One night he discovers a new world of sensations in the arms of Marfisa, the most beautiful and expensive prostitute in the court of Madrid. The king is caught by his friend the Count of Peña Andrada while staring open-mouthed at the naked body of Marfisa. The king is besotted with the beauty of the female body and openly requests to see the queen naked. In the eyes of religious puritans and fanatics, this royal, yet immoral, request leads the head of the Inquisition to summon the council of theologians to discuss the issue. The matter in question is not only whether a married man may see his spouse naked. It is also whether the immoral attitude of the king may bring consequences on the fate of Spain, since it is believed any king's sins are paid by the entire country. Everybody at the court fears that these actions may upset God and may influence the outcome of two crucial events: a battle in Flanders and the arrival of the Indian fleet carrying the necessary gold to pay for debts of the kingdom. A firm believer in this dogma, Prime Minister Olivares is himself controlled by fanatical and sexually repressed monk Villaescusa, who promises Olivares counsel and divine mediation in having an heir. Olivares promises Villaescusa to prevent any sexual encounter between the monarchs, but the Count of Peña Andrada, along with liberal priest Almedia and Marfisa, allow the couple to meet in private at a convent. While the king and queen consummate their marriage, at the same convent Olivares and his wife perform sex under the spiritual guidance of father Villaescusa. After both couples leave the convent, news from Flanders and Cadiz communicate the victory of the Spanish army and the

safe arrival of the fleet. Having realized the how meaningless Villaescusa's dogma of divine intervention is, Olivares secretly ostracizes the fanatical priest.

A faithful adaptation of Gonzalo Torrente Ballester's novel *Crónica del Rey Pasmado /The King Amaz'd* (1989), *El Rey* participates in the trend of period films and novels that boomed during the final years of the dictatorship and the first decade of democracy in Spain. Langa Pizarro provides a full insight into the boom of the historical novel in the early democracy years (to quote a few examples another veteran novelist Miguel Delibes wrote *Madera de héroe* (1987) along with novel writers such as Armás Marcelo and his *Las naves quemadas* (1982)). But this same trend can be found in Spanish cinema of the 1980s and 1990, when many period films were produced, quite a few of them being literary adaptations (for instance, as we have seen, this included the film *Esquilache* by Josefina Molina, which was based upon Buero Vallejo's drama). According to Langa Pizarro, these historical novels all share a contemporizing view on the past that projects the present on the past in order to defend freedom (115), a feature which will determine the representation of the past in *El Rey*.

Basque filmmaker Imanol Uribe, critically acclaimed by his previous films *La fuga de Segovia* (1981) and *La muerte de Mikel* (1984), found in Torrente Ballester's novel an entertaining, distanced and ingenious look into the Black Legend of Spain (Castaldi n.pag). Having rejected an adapted script from Torrente, Uribe had Gonzalo scriptwriters Torrente Malvido and Juan Potau write the final script. In February 1991 began the shooting of *El Rey*, with a budget of over 300 million pesetas, of which 80 were subsidized by the Spanish Government. Uribe envisioned the film's historical

approach by employing the clash between sexuality and morality in order to depict the life in the court of Philip IV (Muñoz and Bayón n.pag).

STAGES OF INTERPRETATION: PHILIP IV AND THE DECLINE OF THE HISPANIC EMPIRE

Philip IV was born in April 1605 in Valladolid, the eldest son of Philip III of Spain and his wife Margaret of Austria. He reigned in Spain from 1621 to 1665 and in Portugal from 1621 to 1640. The first years of the reign of Philip IV saw the strengthening of the rule of Habsburg in Europe, but at his death, Philip's kingdom had lost its political predominance in Europe in favor of France, as a result of endless military defeats and economical instabilities. During his reign, his close relationship with his favorite Gaspar de Guzmán, Duke of Olivares (1621-1643), generated harsh criticism from its very beginning, and popular history claims this dependent relationship as a sign of carelessness and lack of dedication from the king to his duties as a monarch. However, despite the historiographical controversy about his abilities as a statesman, Philippe IV not only did become one the greatest art collectors of its time, but also witnessed and sponsored many artists during the Spanish Golden Age, the blossoming of Spanish arts in literature, painting, and architecture.

The portrayal of Philip IV as an apathetic statesman, subject to the dictates of Olivares and given to a whirl of pleasures, has been the source of much speculation for traditionalist historians as well as popular history. Moreover, this historiographical interpretation has contributed to a larger topic, the demeaning historical conception of

Spain as a corrupt, religiously fanatical country: an image perfectly coherent with the so-called Black Legend. A part of this interpretation of a corrupted country, the legacy of Philip IV has been conditioned by traditionalist historians and writers. Already during Philip's reign, he was depicted as a snappish monarch who, when discontent with complicated state matters, turned his attention to women and parties (Picatoste 31). Quevedo dedicated some verses to the king, presenting him as a lazy statesman who dishonored his ancestry: "Muy poderoso y excelentísimo señor, los reyes son trabajadores,[...] holgar es defraudar vuestros sueldos / Most powerful and excellent lord, the monarchs are hardworking [...] to be lazy is to be undeserving (quoted in Moncó Rebollo 31). In the early 20th century, some historians underlined this issue "idleness marred all his qualities, and the lust for pleasure which he was powerless to resist made him the slave of favorites and his passion all his life" (Hume 46). Popular history and traditionalist historiography have blamed the king's favorite for actively taking advantage from trait of Philip's personality as a way of keeping the king away from political affairs because even though the king did not lack in intelligence or interest for state affairs, his weak personality led the king to hand over the power to Olivares. One of the most recurrent rumors on the role of Olivares in causing the disinterest of the king in state affairs was reported to be that the Olivares accompanied Philip on nocturnal expeditions (Elliot 112), or furnished the king with entertainment whenever necessary with women, either courtesans, prostitutes or even novices (Ariza-Canales 3).

This portrayal of the king started to change in the 1980s by Spanish (Gregorio Marañón)³¹ and British historians (Elliot, Kamen, and Stradling)³² who clarified the

extent and reasons for the relationship between the king and Olivares, the so-stated inability of the king in state affairs. According to Stradling, the king suffered *abulia*, a Spanish word indicating a mixture of depression and anxiety, which pushed him into a heavy dependence on others for strength and support (Stradling 1988, 320). These new trends present king Philip IV as a very dynamic man who was indeed passionate about hunting, bulls and women -and he had many illegitimate children. But, also he had great energy and initiative regarding political matters, even translating texts of Francesco Guicciardini. Elliot and Strandling present the king as very inexperienced and more devoted to hunting (Elliot 103). According to this revised interpretation of Philip's personality, despite several attempts by the king to adopt a more active role in governing the country, Philip IV and Olivares developed a symbiotic relationship that would endure for more than twenty years, and was based on consensus: the king ruled and commented actively on any decision or policy, ranging from crucial to insignificant (Stradling 1981, 69), but he relied entirely on Olivares for the bureaucratic organization of the kingdom.

The historiographical interpretation of the decline of Spain goes beyond the economic or military spheres, as it did range from those areas but also to others such as the morality of the court during the reign of Philip IV. The early writings (academic and literary) on Philip contained another statement which is essential to understanding the interpretation of the outcome of politics in the 17th century: that the sins of any king are visited on his subjects. According to this interpretation, the decadence of the Empire and the figure of the King became intrinsically related.

All the historical works account for how 17th century Spanish politicians were extremely concerned about the political consequences of the affairs of the king, because the 17th century was a time when divine intervention in politics was not only desired but also expected. By taking into account Olivares' phrase "Dios es español y combate con nuestra nación / God is Spanish and fights with our nation" (in Brown and Elliott 190), one must underscore the enormous worry for politicians in assessing the divine punishment for the sexual licenses that reigned in the court (Marañón 290). In line with popular memory, traditional historiography stressed this point, presenting Philip's immoral actions as one of the reasons of the decline of Spain due to his constant masquerades and parties (Picatoste 25).³³

In regard to this intrinsic relationship between the king's actions and the fate of the country historiography has given emphasis to the controversy embodied in the figure of Philip's Prime Minister. The paradoxical relationship is defined by Elliot sharply as "a puritanical reformer who leads his monarch astray" (112). Olivares was an active statesman who addressed Spain's economical and social problems wielding a moralistic attitude.³⁴ The heart of the problem of the decadence of Spain, Olivares felt, was Spain's moral and spiritual decline, which resulted in the perdition of the Christian nation, of both the land and its inhabitants. Therein lies the controversy and scandal in Olivares who appears to have promoted this attitude in the king, as popular history and writers portrayed him during the 17th century (Domínguez Ortíz 1992, 42).³⁵ Yet, historians have interpreted this controversy as a double standard for moral measurement which spread to large part of the society. The wide social acceptance (Alcalá-Zamora

54) of the affairs of the king was only matched by its later resentful attitude, as religion instructed among all classes that sex was only conceived as the necessary means for procreation in marriage (López-Cordón 109).

All in all, the picture of the court of Philip IV drawn by historiography and popular memory, despite differences on the extent of the king's participation in governing the country, has consistently underlined his submission to Olivares, the profusion of Philip's extramarital affairs, and their contemporary perception as causes for divine punishment that led Spain to her decline. Within these guidelines (the affairs of the king, and the possible permissiveness of the King's favorite), *El Rey*, engages the personal and human dimensions of this problem: how did Spaniards react to the king's immoral actions? What were the moral consequences of this contradiction? What was the connection between religion and power within this contradiction? What was the Church's attitude towards the sexual behavior of Spaniards? These are some of the questions that *El Rey Pasmado* approaches in a satirical manner.

TASKS OF HISTORY: A BURLESQUE AND IRONIC APPROACH AND REPRESENTATION OF HISTORY

A superficial analysis of *El Rey Pasmado* may lead to a wrong conclusion: the film's obvious preference for mocking historical figures and its constant usage of sexual and erotic scenes may be interpreted as a lack of seriousness in representing history. Also, whether a king may or may not see his queen naked, may lack interest for 20th century audiences.

But beneath its layers of mockery, *El Rey* presents a complex and rich interpretation of the life in the court of Philip IV through the usage of a double narrative registry that combines fiction with historical fidelity. This form storytelling forges its narrative continuity by combining fantasy with a detailed allusion to actual events and historical figures which remain nameless or unidentified in order to appeal to the audience's historical knowledge on the topic. For instance, although there are no names given to the main political characters, the film conveys an imaginary Spanish king clearly modeled on the widely known painting by Velázquez, as Figure 5 shows.



Figure 5. Comparison of *Felipe IV* by D. Velázquez (1621) and a captured frame of King Philip IV from *El Rey Pasmado* (1991).

In creating this story that borders on fiction and fidelity to history, the life in the court in the 17th century is conveyed through certain late 20th century historical sense of awareness (if not influenced, close to post-structuralism), with a profound knowledge of both academic and popular history, along with an ironic burlesque sensitivity that

projects a critical portrayal of Spain during the reign of Philip IV that fits into the contemporary historical consciousness of the 1990s.

The film *recounts* the court of Philip IV as a political arena where the top leaders (the king, the king's favorite, and the chief inquisitor) have their hands tied due to the constraints imposed by the morality of the time. Religious morality, whether ridiculous or not, dominates the spheres of the public and the private in the court, and therefore, its regents as a result of its deep embedment within the sociopolitical fabric. In line with traditionalist historiography, which stressed the political incompetence of the king, in *El Rey Philip IV* is portrayed as a young inexperienced, careless monarch who remains under the control of his favorites, in agreement with the theory of Philip as a king who suffered *abulia*. The acting of Gabino Diego presents the king both physically and verbally as clumsy, thus reinforcing the personification of Philip as a helpless monarch. Having been lured by lust, the king is an incompetent statesman dependent on the aid of others, especially those who encourage his immorality.

The broader context of history is the decadence of the Spanish Empire, though explained only within its public and private morality,³⁶ and only roughly in economical and military terms. The moralistic repression of sexuality goes to such an extent that it impairs the practice of politics, and ultimately spread the tumor of decadence in the realm. This context of decadence is provided by the scenes that expose the absurdity of the zealot priest who watches for the implementation of mechanisms of repression of sexuality.

El Rey explains and interprets the intricacies of the decadence of a country as a result of the early modern idea or belief that the lack of morality from the rulers of a country impacts its development of events. The conflict raised in the film, as well as in the novel is, “between sexuality and religion that represses or demands that one conceal it” (Deveny 97). The film’s historical approach is close to that of Michel Foucault’s conception of history, by which sex is the indicator of the moral and humane condition of an era (Navajas 8). Indeed in Uribe’s film, the plot presents the repressive actions of the sexuality as a sign of the decadence of a country, symbolically conveyed within one of the Catholic mechanisms of sexual repression in the 17th century: the concealment of the body (Foucault 115).

El Rey represents the extreme concern in the court surrounding the feasibility of divine punishment in response to questioning this mechanism, as a vehicle to suggest an explanation for the decadence of an empire: how religious fanaticism prevailed over pragmatism in politics in the Spanish Empire.³⁷ The most powerful figures in the film (the king, the favorite, and the chief inquisitor) are tied by the powerful strength of morality. Despite their constant signs of secretly/openly questioning the relevance of moral conduct, they abide to it, because “the political power remains impotent” versus morality (Janet Pérez 161). This is implicitly true about the personality of Philip in the film: he rules but does not govern Spain. His lack of personal or political development is indeed represented through his clash between his free will and court ceremony (for example one moment in the film when paying 10 ducats for Marfisa, the king states that he has never had such a sum of money in his hands).

The film employs a certain ironic sensibility in representing the patriarchal sexual repression of men towards women, which goes beyond the mere concealment of the body. *El Rey* shows faithfully the repression of feminine sexuality in 1619, a time when women have only one duty, to provide sexual relations to their husband, but only aimed at procreating “pero dirigida a la procreación y al margen de cualquier muestra de afecto que no fuera «la cúpula carnal perfecta y consumada / but directed towards procreation and absent of signs of affection which were not ‘the perfect and consummate carnal culmination’” (López-Cordón 109). The film exposes not only how Catholic morality commands that, even within marriage, sex must only pursue a reproductive end -the nightdress made of esparto grass fabric with the exorcist formula “Vade Retro Satana” around an opening evidences the zeal in the absence of lust in sex-. It even takes things a step further by denying the possibility for women to experience sexual pleasure, as father Villaescusa does (“podemos consentir que los hombres gozen del placer carnal, pero las mujeres deben ignorarlo / we can allow men to enjoy sexual pleasure, but women must ignore it”) when presenting it to Olivares as a condition to secure an heir. The ironical representation of history manifests itself when it is women (queen, ladies-in-waiting, maids, noblewomen, prostitutes, even nuns) who present a most natural and less repressed attitude towards sex, exposing the byzantine character of the discussions engaged in by men.

EL REY PASMADO AND THE STRATEGIES OF HISTORICAL REPRESENTATION

In order to fit the court of Philip IV within this ironic contemporizing view, *El Rey* employs different strategies of representation that hold with the narrative trend of the film, while at the same time sustain the solidness of the historical discourse.

Most of the strategies of representation of history in *El Rey* are defined by the consistent *alterations* of academic and popular historical knowledge. These alterations, while allowing *El Rey* to convey metaphorical symbolic statements on the moral decadence of the modern era, convey numerous interpretations on the character of the main historical figures that match what has been stated by historiography and popular history.

The film *alters* different historical events into one: the film's plot, the banning of the king's request to see the queen naked, takes after the intentional sexual control imposed on the marriage between Philip and Isabel Bourbon (as she was only thirteen-year old when they both got married and the court physicians determined to postpone the consummation of the royal marriage) which sparked the king's protest in several occasions (Alcalá Zamora 53; Montejo González 80). The king's requests in seeing the queen naked evidence his clash against sexual repression in the morality and Habsburg protocol of the court: the concealment of the body. The film *omits* the king's premarital affairs, but by presenting the king experiencing sex for this first time with a prostitute, the film comments on the morally constraining atmosphere of the court as the cause of both his lack of maturity and his later dumbfounding. In order to further strengthen its

ironic contemporary analysis of the past and the moral decay of the court, the film alters the religious questionability of the king's request by converting it into a *raison d'être*.

Although it is not possible to know the real degree of knowledge of these anecdotes among the audience, they attest to the profound historical knowledge of Torrente Ballester. As part of the satire of the film the final scenes (the sexual encounter between the kings, and the sexual ritual conducted by the Villaescusa and performed by Olivares and his wife) take place at the Convent of Encarnación. According to an anonymous writing from the 17th century, in 1638 the king desired a young nun who had newly arrived at the same convent. According to the same legend, Olivares arranged with the *protonotario* of the convent a meeting between the king and the nun through means of a hole made in the wall of the convent to let the king break into the cell of the nun³⁸ (Domínguez Ortiz 1992, 42).

Perhaps one of the most significant metaphors of the film lies in the *alteration* of the role of the favorite. Unlike all previous written and pictorial accounts which depict Olivares –see Figure 6 below- as a corpulent and intimidating authoritarian politician, the film's characterization and acting by Javier Gurruchaga, conveys a more sardonic, if not mocking portrayal of the powerful politician in Spain in the 1620s, especially given the actor's reputation as a popular cross-dressing glam rock star.³⁹



Figure 6. Comparison of *El Conde Duque de Olivares* by Diego Velázquez (1624) and a captured frame of the Count Duke Olivares from *El Rey Pasmado* (1991).

His symbiotic relationship with Padre Villaescusa, who controls Olivares by exploiting the favorite's firm belief in God's punishment (he is desperately heirless) as a result of his sins (his pleasure in having sex in marriage) is an example of the metaphor of impotence of power in *El Rey*. By showing him pledging to Villaescusa's moralistic demands in exchange for divine intervention in having an heir, the film evokes Olivares's historical despair in having a legitimate successor (he eventually had to legitimate his bastard son, Enrique Felipe de Guzman). But, it also underscores the lack of independence of political power from that of religion and morality in the court, or as Pérez has cleverly defined "the impotence of power" (Janet Pérez 161). The same impotence of power applies to the role of the Chief Inquisitor in the depiction his role in the whole affair. Although his name is not mentioned during film, the fact that the film is set in the early years of Philip IV's reign, indicates that he must be Luis de Aliaga, a man of the cloth whose "habit was religious but his spirit secular" (Saraiva,

Salomon, and Sassoon 143). Again, we find an *alteration* of a historical personality to utilize it as an amplifier of the message of the film. The film alters the role of the Chief Inquisitor in order convey the same interpretation of the power of morality as it happened to Olivares: despite acknowledging its oxymoronic nature, religious repression is too deeply rooted within the society to be removed. Thus, despite his cynical attitude towards religion, and his recurrent aid in helping out those who defy the moralistic conventions (the prostitute Marfisa, and father Almeida), and even his probable lack of faith, the pragmatic Chief Inquisitor do not defy the establishment imposed by religious fanaticism.

The *inventions* in *El Rey* bear the contemporary critical discourse of the film. There are no accounts that can attest to the existence of father Villaescusa, and it is unlikely that Olivares, who firmly controlled the Inquisition to his own benefit, would have pledged to listen to such a fanatical character and lose the favor of the king. But his presence in the film allows the film to mock the morality and eventually prove it wrong. Through the histrionic acting of Juan Diego - his thin and drawn aspect-, as well as his visionary thoughts of sex, allow the fanatical monk to stand out sharply from of all of the characters. Moreover, Villaescusa's satirical depiction, as well as with the rest of the character in the film, helps *El Rey* to overcome its dichotomy of "the division of characters between good guys and bad guys" (Deveny 98). But this character also provides the film with its main narrative conflicts -will the sins of the king have any effect on the arrival of the gold to Cadiz or the outcome of the battle in Flanders?- is lust/enjoyment while having sex a sin? Villaescusa believes and attempts to prove so

throughout the film. The ironic message of the film manifests itself through the inconsistencies of his very religious fanaticism, since it leads him to even sacrilege a convent, by portraying the Count-Duke and his wife having sex in the church while Villaescusa conducts the ceremony and delivers a psalm.

The answer or the addressing to this moral problem lies within another *invented* character in the film: father Almedia. He is the nemesis of Villaescusa, as he openly expresses his denial in the sociopolitical transcendence of the king's sins. Not only does he deny Villaescusa's dogmatic statement, but also he questions the very core of the moralistic repression of sexuality.

The film shows another strategy or presentation: *anachronism*. The invented theological council serves as an arena that allows for the introduction of father Almeida and his liberal mentality. The libertarian nature of his words expose the film's contemporary criticism of morality in 17th century, and also it voices the thoughts of any liberal spectator who watches the film by exposing the real motives for God to punish a kingdom regardless from moral jabbering:

Quemar judíos, brujas y moriscos, quemar herejes, atentar contra la libertad de los pueblos; hacer esclavos a los hombres explotar su trabajo con impuestos que no se pueden pagar, pensar que los hombres son distintos cuando Dios los hizo iguales. / To burn Jews, witches and Moorish, burn heretics, to threaten the freedom of the peoples; enslave men by exploiting their work with unpayable taxes, to think that men are different when God made them equal.

The theological and political sparring between both characters shows Almeida as victorious, but the later prosecution of Almeida by the Inquisition exposes the impracticability and the danger of his speech at the council. The *anachronistic* content of his speech -closer to certain Deist struggles of masses- evidences not only its contemporary nature, but also its unfeasibility within the given morality. His speech voices the thoughts of any potential Spanish spectator in the late 20th century who does not understand the reasons for the morality of the 17th century. But the impossibility of expressing Almeida's contemporary political and moral thoughts in the 17th century is only matched by the character's fantastical nature. By disappearing into the fog with Peña de Andrada, thus revealing himself as another fantastical character, he reveals himself as an anachronism, as not belonging to this time. In such capacity, the film expresses the impossibility of projecting the present on the past in order to change it.

Unlike what Jordan and Morgan-Tamosunas have stated, the film does not show the contrast between the political and moral corruption of the Empire and its Golden Age in arts, (Jordan and Morgan-Tamosunas 33), something which was present in Torrente Ballester's novel. The broader context of the film, the decadence of the Empire situates itself as a backdrop which the film does not engage. Only the penultimate scene of the film hints at the political and economical decadence: having had sex with their respective couples at the church and convent, Olivares and Philip meet on the street while messengers bring good tidings: victory in Flanders and safe arrival of the fleet at Cadiz. When the duke brings the news -decisive to the fate of the kingdom- to the king, the latter reacts almost indifferently to the military victory and only self-interested to the

arrival of the fleet by stating that we will be able to buy a dress for the Queen. His words hint at the economical crisis of the Empire, but they also underline the lack of interest in politics of the ruler of the most powerful country in Europe, they underline his *abulia*.

RECEPTION AND CONCLUSION ON THE FILM

The reception of the film shows an almost unanimously positive reception. Premiered on November 11, 1991, the film owed much of its success to its treatment of sexuality in the court of Philip IV. The press judge the erotizing approach to the historical figures was judged as credible and made a difference from the previous historical films. Having earned more than 290 million pesetas, the film did not become a box office hit, as it only matched its budget of 300 million pesetas. It did, though, earn a larger success than any other Spanish early modern period film: *El Rey* was classified by 500 scholars as the best Spanish film of 1991, but it was also awarded with eight Goya awards and thirteen nominations in March 1992, among the prizes included was the prize for best adapted script. Out of the 23 film reviews from different newspapers in Madrid, Barcelona, and Seville, the majority -19- rate the film as excellent. The press did not question the historical treatment of the film, nor its historical faithfulness. Even the conservative newspaper *ABC* reviewed the film as an ironical, yet real, look into the *España Negra* (J.A. 109), therefore agreeing with idea of the moral decadence of the country in 1619.

El Rey Pasmado stands as one of the rare examples of comedy film set in the 17th century. It is not only one of the few successful early modern period films in Spanish

history, but one of the most original ones in its rendering of the 17th century. Although conveyed through fantasy and comedy, the film evidences its effective usage of a serious knowledge of events, legends, of the life in court of Philip IV, insofar as most of the historical metaphors, expressed by the means of the strategies of historical representation (*alteration* and *invention*, mostly), evidence a way of telling a story that subliminally embeds the interpretation of a historical era. Although the lack of audience surveys cannot determine the extent of success of the film in embedding this knowledge into the minds of the spectators, -each spectator may give his own credibility to the film-, the analysis of the film reviews evidences that the reception of the film among critics proves their largely unquestioned belief in the efficacy of the film in portraying the 17th century. This may be understood as the film's success not only in rendering a historical message but also in delivering it. Yet, that is another subject which lies within the uncharted boundaries of the historical consciousness of every film viewer.

CONCLUSIONS

The analysis of the films shows how the film representation of politics and the court during the 16th, 17th and 18th centuries is a prolific field the specific historical context of each production has an overwhelming influence over the way in which the historical portrait is reconstructed. The evolution of the genre encompasses over 60 years, a long period during which the evolution of filmmaking, politics, and historiography in Spain show very evidently an evolution regarding historical themes, genre conventions, tasks of history and strategies of historical representation.

Our analysis shows how, despite their partiality, early modern period films do engage controversial topics (the clearest example is *La Leona de Castilla*, which draws a heroic portrayal of the rebels against the quintessential historical period for Francoism: the Empire) for the time in which the films were released. They offer coverage of some of the most crucial political events for the crown in the early and final years of the early modern era: the revolts of the revolt of the Comuneros, the riots of Esquilache, as well as the beginning of the Spanish Black Legend with the murder of Juan of Escobedo.⁴⁰ As well as in the previous chapter on the royal biopic, these films represent their own form of history according to the narrative conventions of a specific genre. Most of them resort to the romantic drama genre combined with the political thriller, although *El Rey Pasmado* utilizes a certain unusual ironic sense of humor in order to expose and mock the incongruities of the era itself. In this sense, it is evident how in the 1980s, filmmakers abandon the recurrent narrative modes that interpret history from a patriotic romantic and mannerist perspective of the social forces of politics (*La Leona*, *La Princesa de los Ursinos*, *La Princesa de Éboli*), to rather wield a more critical approach to power in which the driving forces tend to be more blurry and less demagogical (*El Rey Pasmado*). Indeed, it is unquestionable that the arrival of democracy furnished filmmakers with the freedom to approach history and abandon the 1950s usage of history to convey a patriotic past.

Yet, these films wield a critical discourse when dealing with the uppermost strata of society. It is clear that all of these films present elites as the motor of history (*La Princesa de los Ursinos*, *La Princesa de Éboli*, *La Conjura de El Escorial*, *La Leona de*

Castilla, *Esquilache*, and with reservations *El Rey pasmado*). In this sense, from *La Leona* (1951) to *Esquilache* (1988), there is little doubt that the films portray a small role played by the common people in the course of history. Indeed, these two films give several examples of a certain self-attribution of the *haut monde*, against an alleged ochlocracy, against the rule of the lower social strata, which is portrayed as a mindless crowd easily manipulated by conservative elites. Therefore, with the exception of *La Leona*, in all of the films in this chapter, the royal court is presented as the political hub of the kingdom, where different parties fight each other to court the favor of the king. Politics in early modern history, according to these films, is dictated by the crown and managed by noblemen, but little is known about the common people who suffer its consequences.

It is important to remind ourselves that, just like any other form of art, film and thus period films tell us about the time in which they were made. Once again the arrival of democracy to Spain proves instrumental to detecting and understanding an evolution over the years. The patriotic conception of the past in Francoist cinema displays a certain tendency to portray political events in black and white. This bias is demonstrated in the highly idealized representation of the heroes and the archetypal negative recreation of enemies, which results in an intentional denial of complexity to political affairs.

The representation of Francoist cinema, more prudish and straitlaced, contrasts sharply to the crudeness displayed by films from the democracy years in representing the political actors (sexual relations, violence). Films shot in the 1980s include not only a more personal approach to monarchs and noblemen (showing their inner passions but

also their flaws), but also the possibility of a more liberal approach in terms of depicting the politics while stressing its most negative parts: corruption, moral decay, and the repressive power of the Church.

Though the arrival of democracy and its obviously greater creative freedom for filmmakers is the main responsible for these changes, one cannot limit their explanation to the transition from the dictatorship to democracy as the only reason. Of course these changes reflect the derogation of the artistic restrictions imposed by Francoist censorship, especially regarding any artistic representation of the Spanish past. But this evolution on the filmic perception of the can attest also to the very perception of the past that Spanish people have gained over the years. The end of the totalitarian, centralist ideology is reflected in the lack of idealization of the political figures and its crude portrayal.

All in all, these films attest to a transition from idealization to crudeness in the images of past politics in the court, a transition that manifests with the arrival of democracy to Spain. This is a common place in other period films set in early modernity, and will greatly influence the evolution of the cinematographic representation of the next chapter's topic: the Spanish Inquisition.

NOTES

¹ The list of films selected for this chapter has been confectioned by taking into account the importance of the political event and/background in the development of the film's

plot, thus discarding other films in which the political acts more like a backdrop rather than performing an active role in the story:

Leona de Castilla (Juan de Orduña, 1951)

Princesa de Éboli / That Lady (Terence Young, 1955)

Princesa de los Ursinos (Luis Lucía, 1947)

El Rey Pasmado (Imanol Uribe, 1991)

Esquilache (Josefina Molina, 1988)

² The first date relates to the first mandate of the king (November 15, 1700-January 5, 1724), when he abdicated in order to succeed the throne of France in 1724, only to reign again from 1724 to 1746, assuming the throne again upon his son's death.

³ Its only equivalent in the Anglo-Saxon world would be the authority or rights *charter*.

⁴ Anne-Marie's extensive correspondence was published several times after her death. Claude Francois Xavier Millot collected Anne-Marie's ten-year correspondence with Madame de Maintenon and published in 1826 in Paris. Also in Paris, a collection entitled *Lettres inédits de Mme of Ursins* by Geoffroy, with letters from her from the National Archives of Sweden, Italy and France, was published.

⁵ There are two dramatic adaptations in Spanish of the Life of the Princess des Ursins: *La princesa de los Ursinos*, by Fernández y González in 1864; and *La noche de las reinas: Isabel de Farnesio y La princesa de lo Ursinos* by Claude Pujade-Renaudin 2002.

⁶ Many of these reforms were epitomized by the Decrees of Nueva Planta, a series of Real Bills for which the new structure was established. The Decrees meant the first realization of Spain as a centralized state, in line with the absolutist reforms of France.

⁷ As the corrections dictated by the BOC show, the final cut of the film left no doubts about the self sufficient capacity of the Spanish Army to counterattack the Austrian army, and the elimination of any trace of despair from the Spanish side to receive French support.

⁸ Yet, the film does indulge itself in recounting battles and names at times.

⁹ One of the consequences of the war meant the suppression of the medieval institutions, and privileges of almost all the areas that were part of the former Crown of Aragon (Aragon, Catalonia, Valencia, and Majorca).

¹⁰ The declared budget amounted to 2,869,528.29 pesetas, while more than a million was spent on backdrops and costumes (AGA, file 36/3299).

¹¹ 2,813,274 pesetas.

¹² Si se ha querido hacer una película para el gran público, la finalidad política que constituye su guión se ha conseguido dada el carácter novelesco de su argumento histórico en el cual se hace hincapié en la repulsa a la injerencia extranjera y esto dosificado con [...] una fastuosidad en cierta manera ramplona, de lo que es en realidad La princesa de los Ursinos. Considerada la película de una manera más exigente, no pasa de ser una buena intención malograda por no haber sabido aprovechar los elementos disponibles, [...] las escenas de las batallas [...], pierden gran parte de su espectacularidad debido a la superposición de planos. [...]. El envaramiento de algunos

de los artistas y en general de las segundas partes resta también brillantez a su actuación / If what was sought was to make a film for a large public, the political ends which its script implies were achieved through the novelistic quality of its historical plot in which the emphasis is placed on the foreign intervention with a dose lavishness, in some ways heavy-handed, of what the Princess of Ursinos really is. If we consider the film in more demanding terms, it is no more than a failed attempt because it does not take advantage of the elements at its disposal...The battle scenes...lose much of their spectacle due to superimposing of shots...The stiffness of some of its actors and, in general, of the secondary parts takes detract from the acting (AGA, file 36/3299).

¹³ Newspaper *ABC* in its Madrid Edition and Catalonian newspaper *La Vanguardia* accounts for several in Madrid and Barcelona since its premiere in 1916, in 1917 (*ABC* 26 September 1917: 12), in 1922 (*La Vanguardia* 1 June 1 1922: 20), In 1925 (*ABC* 26 March 1925:30) (*La Vanguardia*, 23 June 1925: 17), in 1926 (*La Vanguardia* 30 October 1926:15), in 1930 (*ABC* 22 October 1930: 24), and also during the 1940s (1944 (*La Vanguardia* 2 June 1946: 13), 1946 (*ABC* 30 April 1946: 27) and in the same years as the release of Orduña's film (*La Vanguardia* 2 January 1951: 6).

¹⁴ As it happened in any film made during Francoism, any filmmaker had to turn any film's script to the BOC before its approval for filming.

¹⁵ The copy is registered under the file G-953, and presents corrections in ink, and is stuck together.

¹⁶ 6,654,698.32 pesetas, of which three million were spent on costumes and stages (1,445,467.25 and 1,501,631.48 respectively), and half a million on the salary of Juan de Orduña (AGA, file 36/04721).

¹⁷ 4,405,832.51 pesetas.

¹⁸ The reports cover the following aspects: 1) Audience reaction; 2) Aspects of the film that influence audience reaction; 3) Possible different reactions and sectors on audience reaction; 4) The delegate's personal opinion.

¹⁹ A dialogue between both historiographical trends was favored by the King himself, who refused to allow any biography on his life be published while he was alive, while he also ordered the immediate destruction of all his personal correspondence upon his death.

²⁰ This is a result of Antonio del Real's experiences as a director of TV series, and erotic comedy film genre (among others, *Desde que amanece apetece* 2005, *Los hombres siempre mienten* 1995, *Ésta que lo es*, 1977) accounting for only a few incursions into drama (*La mujer de mi vida* in 2001, and *El río que nos lleva* in 1989).

²¹ As a further addendum, there exists an utter discrepancy between the credits of both versions. The British version of the film omits all reference to the participation of the Spanish crew, whereas in the Spanish version, the Spanish crew does not only appear in the credits, but also discards any form of alphabetical order and positions them first, i.e.: Chapalo Films comes first before Atalanta Films.

²² - Plot of the English version of *That Lady / La Princesa de Éboli*:

Mateo Vasquez, second Secretary of State, who rivals Antonio, intercepts a letter from Escobedo to John that incriminates them both. An infuriated Philip issues a death warrant for Escobedo but Antonio convinces Philip to wait until he has talked some sense into Escobedo. While Ana is attending a bullfight, Antonio saves her cousin Íñigo. Antonio impresses Ana, who invites him to have dinner on that evening. The couple falls in love, although gossip begins to circulate about the relationship. Antonio visits Escobedo and commands him to renounce John's plan to remove Philip from the throne. Escobedo threatens to reveal his affair with Ana to Philip unless Pérez and Éboli join John's side. Antonio visits Ana at Pastrana, and both of them consider ending their affair. Escobedo discovered them while kissing and threatens once again Pérez with revealing the affair to the king. An enraged Antonio challenges Escobedo to a duel, who is assassinated hours later on the streets of Madrid. Suspicion falls on Antonio, who fears that he will be held responsible for the murder, and so he entrusts to his servant Pablo the death warrant signed by the king. Though captured, Pérez escapes and leaves the country. Éboli is sent to prison and released, but she dies shortly thereafter as a result of her weakened condition due to her imprisonment.

- Plot of the Spanish version of *That Lady/ La Princesa de Éboli* in 1955.

The year is 1570, King Philip goes from Madrid to the country estate of his old friend Ana de Mendoza, Spanish noblewoman Princess of Éboli. During their youth, Ana de Mendoza and Philip were close friends, and Philip married her to his Prime Minister Rui Gómez and gave her the royal title of *Princess*. Philip uses his influence on Ana to ask her to return to Madrid and help him win the favor of Spanish noblemen. Coming from a

lower class, Antonio has not earned the favor of the court and noblemen, but Ana reluctantly accepts Philip's proposition at his insistence. To Madrid arrives Juan de Escobedo, a scheming politician whose only aim is to profit from the war in Flanders, which the king opposes. Escobedo has manipulated John of Austria, the King's stepbrother, and seeks the support of Pérez and Éboli to change the king's mind. Pérez and Éboli meet in friendly fashion, but they fall in love shortly thereafter. Escobedo finds out about the affair and blackmails Pérez by asking him to help him change the king's mind and allow John of Austria to resume the war against the rebels in Flanders. Pérez and the king intercept a letter from Escobedo to John of Austria in which the former asks to free Spain from the "misdoings" of the king. They both agree in the urgency of politically neutralizing Escobedo. Philip prefers a public trial, but Pérez, knowing that the king will never approve his immoral relationship with Éboli, manipulates the kings to let him eliminate Escobedo covertly. The king consents, but orders Escobedo to wait for a more convenient occasion. Right after Escobedo's final threat to Pérez, Escobedo is murdered by Pérez, who attempts to defect to France and flees Madrid to Aragon carrying secret state documents as safeguard. Philip learns of the affair between Éboli and Pérez and imprisons them both. Appalled by Cardinal Granvela, Éboli's uncle, the king's allows to release Éboli and let her live in her palace. Pérez escapes and briefly joins Éboli, he asks her to come with him. Weakened by her stay in prison, she cannot escort him, and she orders him to leave and take care of his son. Pérez sets out to Aragon with Éboli's son, but halfway he abandons the young boy.

²³ In sharp contrast to his representation in *That Lady*, which presented him as a “saintly autocrat, both ascetic and cruel, dedicated to the rights of monarchy” (*Daily Herald*, [London] March 18, 1955).

²⁴ This was an old debate in Spanish politics since the rise of the Spanish Empire with Charles V. Those who advocated for a more *raison d’État* thinking, were epitomized by the words of the confessor of the Emperor: “Si los herejes quieren ser unos perros, que lo sean y que Vuestra Majestad cierre los ojos, porque no posésis la fuerza para controlarlos [...] Trabajad para que vuestro Estado no se pierda... / If heretics want to become dogs, let them be. May your Majesty close your eyes, as you do not have the power to control them [...] Work to ensure that you do not lose your State” (Erlanger 201).

²⁵ Although this dissertation does not aim to become an exercise of film criticism, its author shares the puzzlement expressed by the press in regard to the usage of aerial shots (Cortijo 68) and voice-over at the last sequence of the film. Though intended to emulate the patronizing tone of a documentary narration, the voice of a laid back anonymous narrator undercuts the emotional tone and continuity of the film. Its verbose prose and professorial tone contrasts harshly with the casual account of events told during the film up to that point. Moreover, the pull back and aerial shots -never seen in the film before- at the end of the film, visually contribute to further confusing the spectator.

²⁶ 1,876,365.88 Euros, according the Film Database of Spain’s Ministry of Culture. “La Conjura de El Escorial.” *Base de datos de películas calificadas. Ministerio de Cultura.*

Web. 21 May 2011.

<http://www.mcu.es/cine/CE/BBDDPelículas/BBDDPelículas_Index.html>.

²⁷ Ironically, one the characters least mentioned in the stories and histories of this conspiracy becomes instrumental in the development of the assassination: Mateo Vázquez, second secretary of Philip II. He is depicted as the last and only faithful advisor of Philip at all times, who either helps or actively fights for the good of the kingdom, and unlike the rest of the characters, he is not driven by a lust for power but for justice.

²⁸ 105,274,347 pesetas, found in to the film database of the Spanish Ministry of Culture.

<http://www.mcu.es/cine/CE/BBDDPelículas/BBDDPelículas_Index.html>.

²⁹ 295,149 pesetas in total in the film database of the Spanish Ministry of Culture.

<http://www.mcu.es/cine/CE/BBDDPelículas/BBDDPelículas_Index.html>.

³⁰ 663, 273 pesetas in total in the film database of the Spanish Ministry of Culture.

<http://www.mcu.es/cine/CE/BBDDPelículas/BBDDPelículas_Index.html>.

³¹ Marañón, Gregorio. *El Conde-Duque De Olivares: La Pasión De Mandar*. Madrid: Espasa, 2006. Print.

³² Elliott, John H. *The Count-Duke of Olivares: The Statesman in an Age of Decline*. New Haven: Yale University Press, 1986. Print.

³³ On the other hand, modern historiography presents the king as a pious man who frequently blamed his dissolute conduct on his family and national disasters, who combined in his persona the figures of a resolved penitent and a relapsing sinner (Alcalá-Zamora 52; Marañón 299).

³⁴ This attitude became evident when dealing with issues such as prostitution. While in the first quarter of the 17th Spain defended Catholicism in Europe, the increase in the degree of extramarital affairs and prostitution among the medium and high upper classes in Madrid had increased so widespread that it alarmed even foreigners (Kamen 1986, 24), despite the banning of prostitution in 1623.

³⁵ As Ariza Canales describes, these accounts narrated the sexual affairs of the king while indulging themselves in scatological and blasphemy details (3).

³⁶ Here lies one of the sharpest differences between Uribe's film and Torrente Ballester's novel. Whereas both dig into the decadent morality of the era, Torrente Ballester hints to a larger picture, the decadence of the era itself, as it includes and refers to other spheres, such as economic (i.e.: the poverty and frugality in the court as a result of the prolonged wars: "si la flota no llega de Indias, no tendremos dinero para dar de comer al rey / if the fleet from America does arrive, we will not have enough money to feed the king" (Torrente Ballester 100), and military (i.e.: when Olivares sardonically tells father Villaescusa that we cannot grant him arquebusier for his armed escort as they are too expensive- (136).

³⁷ At the end of the reign of Philip IV, pragmatism would prevail in foreign affairs in Spain. Having learnt from Catholic France's aid to Protestant cause during the Thirty Years War, at the end of this conflict Spain would side on with The Protestant Netherlands against in subsequent international conflicts.

³⁸ According to popular legend, the nun managed to put off the king by pulling a trick on him: with the aid the abbess of the convent, she set up a vigil scene in his cell with the

young nun acting as a corpse (Dominguez Ortiz 1992, 42) -just like the vigil that blockades the king from entering the queen's bedroom.

³⁹ Obviously this poses an issue of cultural competence, as it is only for audiences who are familiar with Spanish culture in the 1980s the ability to detect the satire in choosing Javier Gurruchaga for the role of Olivares.

⁴⁰ Although the actual extent of the political crisis of the mid 17th century is not approached in this chapter, this will be one of the topics covered in Chapter V, *Alatriste*.

CHAPTER IV

THE SPANISH INQUISITION ON SPANISH FILM

THE SPANISH INQUISITION

To write about the Spanish Inquisition in film implies more than approaching one of the most controversial and sensitive points in Spanish history in popular and academic memory. Having been present in the country for over three hundred years, indexing this institution becomes more than a simple analysis of a reference in the history of Spanish politics, religion and culture, since the history of the Spanish Inquisition continues to be a reference for cruelty, intolerance, and repression of freedom of thought which goes beyond the boundaries of political or sociological history in Spain. Soon after its foundation, the Inquisition acquired a reputation for being “a barbarous, repressive instrument of racial and religious intolerance that regularly employed torture as well as the death penalty as punishments and severely restricted Spain’s intellectual development for generations” (Rawlings 1). Even epistemologically the word Inquisition bears a negative connotation, as in both the Spanish and English languages, being the adjective *inquisitorial* is a byword for prosecution, injustice, intolerance. The Inquisition still captivates history connoisseurs to this very day, because of its dark side -its archives at the Vatican were closed until 1998- its procedures, witch hunts, fight against the devil, Joan of Arc, stakes and torture, are just some of the subjects that still pique everyone's imagination, from literature to the graphic arts to the cinema.

But what is the place of the Spanish Inquisition in the memory of Spaniards? And more specifically, what was the role of Spanish film in keeping the memory of this tribunal alive? The Spanish Inquisition, or as its peers referred to it, the Holy Office, with all of its hermetic activities, its popular images of burning at the stake, dungeons, and lugubrious processions, has always been a polemical topic (Muñoz Sempere 1) that has inspired not only historians, but the arts into profusely producing an endless list of literary, dramatic, artistic works. One of the leading historians on the Spanish Inquisition, Henry Kamen, wrote on the 500th anniversary of the foundation of this institution that the Inquisition is not the result of as a tyrannical machine imposed on Spaniards, but rather the result of the harsh ethnic and social struggles of the 14th-15th centuries in Spain, which was fully supported by Spaniards until the 18th century (Kamen 1981, 39). Kamen also writes how until the 1960s historians approached the study of the Inquisition only as an instrument of suppression of heresy. Yet, whereas since the 1960-70s there has been a real debate among historians which has translated itself into the abandonment of biased and passionate interpretations of the history of the Holy Office, the world of arts has continued to be dominated by a whole-hearted interpretation of the Inquisition as a counterpart to the most horrific torture and executions caused by the secret police of dictatorial regimes of the 20th century.

The modern Spanish Inquisition was established in Rome in November 1478 by Pope Sixtus IV upon a request from Isabella of Castile and Ferdinand of Aragon, following their marriage. The Catholic Monarchs required the establishment of a tribunal to prosecute "false" Christians and heretics. For over 350 years, the Spanish Inquisition

would watch over the purity of the faith of the subjects of the Spanish kings, and it would take two attempts (in 1814 and in 1821) and the end of Absolutism in Spain to finally abolish the Holy Office in 1834.

Being tied to the authority of the Spanish Monarchy, the institution of the Inquisition was intrinsically related to the sociopolitical reality in the aftermath of the conquest of Muslim lands by the Christian kingdoms at the end of the Middle Ages in the 15th century and the construction of a Spanish national identity is solidly based on Catholicism in the dawn of Early Modernity. The unification of the Iberian kingdoms in the figure of the Catholic monarchs led them to aspire to the same national unification as other European kingdoms that considered a single faith to guarantee national cohesion (Joseph Pérez 2005, 21), and religious tolerance became no longer necessary but rather a problem for the unification of the country. From the Monarch's perspective, the Jewish community meant a relative autonomy which did not rule itself by Christian law and had to be controlled -the same as other groups such as the noblemen, and the Church itself in America -. The same applied to the *Mudejares*, Muslims who were subjects to the kings of Castile and Aragon. And so, in 1492 and 1502, Isabella and Ferdinand passed the bills that respectively forced Jews and Muslims to convert to Christianity or face exile.

These new Christians, or *Conversos* were then under the jurisdiction of the Inquisition, who watched over their observance of Catholicism. Although nowadays there is still "consensus" as to what the causes were for the introduction of the Inquisition, historians have pointed out to a number of reasons for the establishment of the Holy Office. For some authors, the Spanish Inquisition was a tool for the

establishment of political and religious unity in a country where three religions had co-existed: as newly Christians, former Jews and Muslim were legally subject to the control of the Inquisition (Joseph Pérez 2005, 23). Another interpretation of the institution of the Inquisition is that the Holy Office was a racist instrument which aimed at the control of the economically powerful minority of former Jews and Muslims by the statutes of *Limpieza de Sangre*, or "cleanliness of blood". According to this interpretation, Inquisitors were thus driven by racial-ethnic hatred of *Conversos* and Jews. Since Former Jews and Muslims converted to Christendom, "new Christians" as they were called, became leaders in economics, politics, and religion, they were resentfully seen by older members of the aristocracy. These new Christians were subject to suspicion and despise from the Old Christians, who feared the former's solid networking and their close relationship with the social elites of the country. Thus, the old Christians questioned the trueness of faith of the *Converso* minority in order to protect their social standing (Netanyahu 1085). Other authors see the Inquisition as a means to strengthening the authority of the Catholic Monarchs over feudal nobility by creating an institution which, unlike other regional institutions, could operate in any kingdom - Castile, Navarre, Aragon...- of the Hispanic Monarchy (Sesma Muñoz 662). Last but not least, another stream of opinion interprets the Inquisition as a basically financial device established to provide the Spanish crown with a source of income by expropriating the properties of those who were found guilty by the Tribunal (Worth 96; Walker 401).

Regardless which of these reasons led to the establishment of the Inquisition in 1480, as Olivera writes, the main issue here is that its mission was to establish order through the reconciliation of the culprit with the true dogma of the Catholic faith (Olivera Serrano 3). According to historians Olivera and Pérez, the main facet was to ensure that a redeemed offender would serve as a measure designed to act as a deterrent for any sinners (Olivera Serrano 4), as the Inquisition did not look to the create martyrs for the enemies of their cause (Joseph Pérez 2005, 139), and sought the spiritual redemption of those who were found guilty and later executed. Initially, principal targets of the Inquisition were the Judaizers, *Conversos* who secretly kept their ancestors' faith, especially during the early years of the Inquisition (1480-1500), and during the last two decades of 16th century (1580-1603), and less severely, against the *Moriscos* during the 16th century. With the spread of Protestantism in the 16th and 17th centuries, other forms of heresy were prosecuted by the Inquisition; Lutheranism, and also other "crimes" such as witchcraft, blasphemy, bigamy, homosexuality, and banned books trafficking.

The arrival of the Enlightenment to Spain meant for the Inquisition a reduction in their activities, so that from 1739 onwards, the tribunal underwent a progressive transformation into a political tribunal at the service of the king, as it would prove itself to be more concerned in stopping masonry and the ideas of the French Revolution than the hunt of heretics as in the 16th and 17th centuries (Ferrer Benimeli 270). For instance, in the reigns of Charles III (1759-1788) and Charles IV (1788-1808) only four out of ten people found guilty were burned (Elorza 2011, n.pag). At the beginning of the 18th century, an open debate on the very existence of the Inquisition gained momentum, and

some of the Enlightened politicians, such as Jovellanos, openly wrote against the Inquisition, Minister of Charles IV prosecuted by the Holy Office. Jovellanos wrote reports in which he indicated the inefficiency of the trials conducted by the Inquisition and those who operated them. Resistance from conservative sectors and the development of national and international politics in Spain provoked that the Inquisition being abolished three times in the 19th century before its eventual abolishment in July 1834 during the reign of Queen Isabella II.¹

No conclusive study has been published which provides figures for the number of people adjudicated, tortured, condemned, and/or executed, Pérez and Kamen estimate that throughout its history, the Inquisition executed approximately 10,000 people (Joseph Pérez 2005, 157). The lack of accurate sources for the early period of the Inquisition makes difficult to account to establish more accurate figures. García-Cárcel for instance, states that the number of people processed during the 1560-1700 period reached 49,000 (García Cárcel 1996, 234), whereas for Monter the number of people executed during the first 50 years (1480-1530) accounted for more than did in the next three centuries (266).

Since I will refer to some of its proceedings throughout the analysis of the films, I must briefly account for the *modus operandi* of the Spanish Inquisition. Most of the points made here, unless otherwise stated, belong to the work *La Inquisición de los Reyes Católicos* by César Olivera Serrano (2004). The Inquisition proceeded to arrest people after having been denounced by *familiares*, informers of the Inquisition. The process of incrimination among peers began in churches -*edicto de Fe*-, where priests

called for those who thought to be guilty to identify themselves. Those who turned themselves in, were to be spared and charged with a penance (Joseph Pérez 2005, 312), but were also required to expose other would be offenders (Joseph Pérez 2005, 124). Though it granted privacy and discretion, the Inquisition did not allow processing of anonymous reports and it severely punished those who raised false testimonies; nor did it accept a report from an enemy of the suspects (Olivera Serrano 102). Having been put under detention, suspects would appear in court after a period of time which ranged from a week to several months (Joseph Pérez 2005, 322). Once summoned to court, the processed would take the oath, and they would be asked about their lineage, religious beliefs, customs, and whether they had any sins to confess. If the processed did not confess, the tribunal formulated the specific accusation twice -the second time using the account of witnesses-. At that point many confessed to be guilty and were allowed to reconcile. If the processed did not confess or consent to plead guilty, and if the tribunal doubted of their innocence, the processed would be put to the question by torture. Unlike popular conception, Torture was not seen as an end in itself (Walker 411), and was generally admitted also in secular justice , although more the Inquisition applied torture les profusely than secular Justice of any European state in the time (Kamen 1985, 75; Walker 412).

Typical physical assaults would include the *garrucha* (the strappado), the *toca* (the ordeal of water), and the *potro* (the rack). Chief Inquisitor Torquemada established at the early beginnings of the Inquisition some rules for the usage of torture: the accused were never to be killed - to which end a physician should be present and ready to

interrupt the torture if the life of the tortured was at stake. Any confession obtained though this means had to be ratified and signed the day after by the processed, otherwise torture would be applied again.

Kamen also explains that four main classes of punishment were endorsed:: the accused would be either acquitted (absolved or suspended), penanced, reconciled, or burnt (in effigy or in person) (Kamen 1985, 184). Yet, if a person was considered heretic and condemned to *relapso* (execution), their punishment was handed over to the secular authorities under the motto "the church does not shed blood". Punishments varied: the most common was the public shame, enforced by forcing the culprits to wear penitential garment *sambenito* or metal masks with shapes of a donkey. Burning at a stake occurred in public when the crime was more serious. Death by the garrote (strangulation) instead of burning was granted for those who repented for their sins. These punishments were made in public ceremonies, called *autos-de-fé*, which lasted for hours and even days.

With over 4,000 published works on the Spanish Inquisition by 1981 (Gil Sanjuán 66), the interpretation of the Spanish Inquisition has become an ever-changing trend over the last five hundred years. Yet, it has only been since the 1970s that historians have engaged the intricacies of the Spanish Inquisition without the bias that characterized previous historical works. According to García Cárcel, the historiography of the Spanish Inquisition has traditionally displayed a retrospective solidarity with the suffering of the victims, therefore generating a sentimental consciousness which impairs the functional understanding of the Inquisition (García Cárcel 1996, 252). Moreover, according to Olivera Serrano, for decades there existed an enduring scholarly tension

between authors primarily concerned with the great figures of the Inquisition (inquisitors Torquemada, Valdés and Salas), the most important cases of heresy (Judaizers, Protestants) and/or the most striking cases (such as witchcraft), and those who looked at other important areas as the social history of the Inquisition (the *familiares*) or its *modus operandi* in its most daily activities such as watching over the people (19).

A large review on the repertoire of works on the Inquisition was done by Emile Vander Vekene in 1963, but a more recent one was done by one of the founding fathers of the modern studies of the Spanish Inquisition, Pérez Villanueva, which has allowed me to draw an outline on the stages of interpretation of the Spanish Inquisition.

The historiographic debate on the Inquisition was dominated until the 1960-70s by a polarization between critics and defenders that led Spanish and international historians for five hundred years to write opposing works on the impact, role and control exercised by the Inquisition in Spain.

On the one hand, the critics of the Inquisition have stressed the most sensationalist features of the Inquisition (the number people tried and executed by the tribunal, the incrimination and torture of the processed) while they have indentified the evolution of Spain as a state and that of the tribunal as one. According to Kamen, historians associated the power of Spain in the 16th century with the Spanish Inquisition, spreading an image in which the Inquisition was a natural part of Catholic politics, as would happen during the rebellion of Flanders against Spain, when the Inquisition became associated with the destruction of freedom (Kamen 1992, 17). Among European Protestants especially, it became a byword for cruel repression, and historians such as

John Foxe typified the Inquisition as the origin of the “Black Legend”: “all laws and institutions are sacrificed to satiate the most bigoted vengeance” (quoted in Lemieux 46). The 18th century brought the arrival of the Enlightenment, and one its manifestations, the French Encyclopedia, would present the tribunal and establish the canon of interpretation for the Inquisition: a fanatical tribunal which blocked intellectual trends, inventions, culture or arts, and the introduction of happiness (Pérez Villanueva 11). Morvilliers, one of the fathers of the French Encyclopedia, linked the presence of the Inquisition to the backwardness of Spanish, and further linked the history of Spain and that of the tribunal. According to Kamen, the 19th century would bring the mystification of the Inquisition (Kamen 1981, 39), both in Spain and Europe, as for the first Spanish writers openly questioned the Institution. In 1817, former commissioner for the Inquisition Juan Llorente wrote his hostile work *Historia Crítica de la Inquisición Española* in which he attacked the Institution accounted for 350,000 people executed by the Inquisition throughout its history. Llorente’s writings served European writers who criticized Spain as a paradigm of intolerance saw the Inquisition as a burden for the development of the country, such as McCrie’s *History of the Progress and suppression of the Reformation in Spain in the Sixteenth Century* (1829). In the 20th century, the arrival of Fascism and Nazism to power in 1920s and 1930s in Europe sparked historians to draw parallels between the Inquisition and the racist policies of Hitlerian Germany such as Cecile Roth’s *The Spanish Inquisition* (1937) (Pérez Villanueva 27).

On the other hand, those historians and essayists who defend the actions of the Holy Office compare its lesser severity to other forms of state violence in Early Modern

Europe, stressing its participation in the building of the Spanish state insofar as the institution allowed Spain to achieve national unity through religious homogeneity. Among the defenders of the Inquisition, there was built a sort of “White Legend” celebrating the Inquisition’s successful struggle to suppress heresy in Spain and parts of the German Empire (Monter 263). This view would continue in the 18th century, as pro-Inquisitorial authors such as Juan Nuix de Perpiñá defended the Inquisition in particular, “and Spanish religious intolerance in general, as quintessentially Hispanic” (quoted in Hauben 8). The polemical work by Llorente in 1817 was retorted by historians through the 19th century (Pérez Villanueva 16). Essayists like Caballero, Cano, and Adolfo de Castro began questioning the extent of the Inquisition’s in controlling liberties in Spain. Through the rest of the 19th century the controversy would go on, with authors ardently defending the role in history of the Inquisition (such as F J Rodrigo’s *Historia verdadera de la Inquisición* in 1876). Another passionate debate by historians Azcárate and Menendez Pelayo was in regard to the actual extent of the Inquisition in slowing down the scientific progress of Spain. And the end of the century many authors, among them, Menéndez Pelayo and his book *Historia de los heterodoxos españoles* (1880), presented the Spanish Inquisition as a defender of the Spanish state, insofar the tribunal became an instrument for the development of the Modern Spanish State and the keeping of the Spanish spiritual essence (Escudero 60). In the 1914 the work by Julián Judería, *La Leyenda Negra*, defined for the first time the existence a *Black Legend* in analyzing the role of Spain in world history, and it reacted against the prevalence of the Inquisition in historical works of Spain.

In the 1950s the academic interpretation on the history of the Inquisition began its development towards a less biased and more scientific approach. In Spain, after a nearly 25-year gap in the publication of academic works on the subject, historians grew again interested in the Inquisition, and it is evidenced in the work by Domínguez Ortíz in the 1950s (*La clase social de los Conversos en Castilla en la Edad Moderna*, 1955). From then on, the evolution in the historiography of the Inquisition experienced a radical turn in the 1960-70s, which manifested in how historians focused on the *qui prodest* of the Inquisition rather than its motivation and origins (García Cárcel 1996, 247). For instance, the work in the 1960s by Caro Baroja (*Los judíos en la Edad Moderna*, 1961), Benzion Netanyahu (*The Marranos of Spain from the late 14th to the Early 16th Century According to Contemporary Hebrew Sources*, 1966) and Henry Kamen's *La Inquisición española* in 1968 laid the foundations for a real debate that would strip the Inquisition of its rhetoric and emotional coloration: "as a result of the significant works and innovative approaches of the prior works, the Spanish Inquisition is nowadays reviewed from a much wider perspective" (Rawlings 20). Contemporary research on the Inquisition received an important impulse in 1978 with the celebration of the First Symposium on the Inquisition organized by Joaquín Pérez Villanueva in commemoration of the 500th anniversary of the establishment of the institution in Spain, and the Inquisition became one of the main fields in historical research in Spain and Europe (Olivera Serrano 19). Regarding these studies, historian James Amelang writes that

[...] these studies mark the coming of age of a new generation of historians [...] that discard the worn cliché of early modern Spain as a rigid and immobile society, incapable of responding to challenges from within and without. (372)

Indeed, these works, regardless of their nationality, have looked more at the economical and social context rather than trying to understand the reasons that led to the institution of the Inquisition. The shift conveys a broader agenda, as it involves other areas of the Inquisition which do not necessarily focus on the most sensitive points, such as the torture and execution of those processed by the institution), rather on other aspects such as its interaction with the society on a daily basis or its methods of financing. An example of this change of trend outside academia at an international level took place in 1994, when BBC London broadcasted the documentary *The Myth of the Spanish Inquisition* (Jonathan Stamp 1994). The program, based on years of archival research, stated that the Spanish Inquisition -seen as the most cruel and violent form of religious control in Modern Europe- owed its dark legend to an image distorted by Protestants who wanted to undermine the power of Catholic Spain, Europe's greatest power at the time. Yet, in spite of the revisionist approach which the BBC decided to expound to its public in the mentioned program, opinions are still quite dramatically divided. As Escudero writes, there is still a certain polarization of the debate between detractor and laudatory views (60).

The films analyzed in this chapter provide an opportunity to understand the evolution of the interpretation of the Inquisition in Spanish cinema. In this sense, the feature films *La Dama del Armíño* (Eusebio Fernández Ardavín, 1947), *El Segundo*

Poder (Jose María Forqué, 1976), *Akelarre* (Pedro Olea, 1983), *Torquemada* (Stanislav Barabas, 1989), and *Goya's Ghosts* (Milos Forman, 2006) show differing views of the roles and actions of the Spanish Inquisition in Spanish society in the first century of its existence, and have transported to the film screen the old debate between the 'White' and the 'Black' Legends of Spain. In the chapter which follows, I will try to determine whether, why, and how these film representations perpetuate positive or negative images of the tribunal: are there any recurrent aspects or episodes of the Inquisition that shape its filmic image? If any, what is the leading interpretation of the Inquisition by film? Has the historiographic debate mirrored somewhat in Spanish film? Has Spanish film detached itself from the ideas of the so-called Black and White Legends of the Inquisition? These are some of the questions that this chapter will try to answer.

LA DAMA DEL ARMIÑO: THE INQUISITION ON POSITIVE LIGHT

The first of the five feature films that make up for this chapter is *La dama del Armiño* (*La dama*, hereafter), a 1947 film by Eusebio Fernández Ardavín and produced by film studios Suevia Films. An adaptation of the play *La Dama del Armiño* by Luis Fernández Ardavín (1927), the film is a case of melodramatic storytelling that renders the history of the Inquisition in a positive light at all levels of its narrative framework. Because of its ambivalences in dramatic representation of a religious life and the inquisitorial process against a Jewish silversmith in Toledo in the 16th century, *La Dama del Armiño* is a heavily romanticized form of history which is tributary to the moralistic melodrama genre in Spanish cinema of the 1940s.

The film is set in Toledo in the second half of the 16th century. During the procession of corpus, Samuel, a skilled and renowned Jewish goldsmith, falls in love with Catalina, the daughter of painter Domenicos Teocoupulos “El Greco”. After the visit of Catalina to Samuel’s workshop, Samuel has a fight with one of his coworkers, Andrés, who eventually denounces Samuel to the Inquisition on the grounds of being a Judaizer. Catalina and Samuel have an affair while Samuel hides in Catalina’s chamber from the Inquisition. The Holy Office arrests Samuel’s father in his place. Samuel turns himself in, and he is sent to prison. During Samuel’s imprisonment, Catalina and Fray Hortensio convince him to embrace the true Catholic faith and reject Judaism. As a proof of his devotion to his new faith, Samuel crafts the Monstrance of the Cathedral of Toledo, an action that grants his freedom.

When in 1946 he started to shoot *La Dama*, Eusebio Fernández Ardavín was one of the active Spanish directors with one of the longest careers in filmmaking. His filmography embraced over twenty films shot since 1917. He had made silent and early sound films, such as *El agua en el suelo* (1933) produced by film studio CEA, of which he became the director. Studio Suevia Films took charge of the production of *La Dama*, whose shooting began on December 11, 1946 and completed on April 10, 1947, with a declared budget of over 2.3 million pesetas.²

La Dama is not just another example of the moralistic period film genre from the 1940s, but rather an example of the religious film genre that would cocoon later with films such as *Capitán de Loyola* (José Díaz Morales, 1949), *Balarrasa* (José Antonio Nieves Conde, 1951) and *Marcelino, Pan, y vino* (Ladislao Vajda, 1955).³ *La Dama* was

an example of the high commercial and artistic expectations laid by the press and filmmakers on the historical film genre with a strong basis of moralistic theological content. Drama became the most appropriate vehicle to represent the qualities of the Spanish character in film (Camporesi 57). Filmmakers, producers and film critics believed that the chance for Spanish film to thrive in international markets lay in creating a moralistic drama film genre with a strong infusion of Spanish history. Thus, Spanish history had to be a source of ideas for historical filmmaking that would give it what Ardavín believed that American films lacked: tradition (Del Arco n.pag.). As filmmaker Sergio Ballesteros stated, period films were to have a strong theological sense in order to depict the Spanish essence “será en el mundo un cine español de sorprendente fuerza cuando logremos darle un ‘fondo teológico’ / Spanish cinema will achieve full strength when we manage to confer it a ‘theological background’” (quoted in Camporesi 58).

Being an adaptation of the homonymous play *La Dama del Armíño*, the film’s narrative and thematic style is tributary to the original drama’s modes of representation according to the canon of Poetic Drama. This 19th and first third of the 20th centuries drama trend combined a double heritage from modernism and romanticism which dealt with historical and epic-heroic themes in a loosely historical manner (often took artistic licenses in this regard) and liberal approaches (attacked those historical figures that represented the height of the Spanish Empire, such as Charles V, as happened to Villaespesa’s *La Leona de Castilla*). Its narrative style was characterized by an affectation of a bright yet empty florid running of verses, a strong sense of morality

which was expressed through the commitment among characters to keeping their honor, an apologetic spirit, and a strong evasive sensibility. Many of these features would be adapted by Luis Fernández Ardavín and Rafael Gil to fit within the narrative framework of *La Dama*. Yet, not only did the filmmakers adapt the story to the peculiarity of the medium, but also polished some of its lines that could be branded as controversial. As happened to the film adaptation of Francisco Villaespesa's *La Leona de Castilla*, in order to have its script approved by the censorship officials, all of the liberal remarks from the original play were not included in the script for *La Dama* (such as the attacks on Philip II and the Inquisition). Although there is no mention to these changes being dictated by the censors in the film's file at the censorship archives, these changes can be understood either as the interest from the screenwriters to avoid any controversy with the BOC, or their compliance with the religious values of the regime. Thus, all of the liberal lines by Samuel against a bigoted Inquisition, and the rebellion of Flanders against the intolerance of Philip II are omitted in the film. This turns the film into mirror of a conservative view that favors the roles of the Spanish Inquisition.

The script blends with the adaptation of the story from the original text. Whereas the original story from drama develops the story only within the moral sphere of the affair between Samuel and Catalina, the film devotes a great part of its storyline to equally developing those parts relating to the processing and redemption of Samuel by the Inquisition.⁴

Thus, in its adaptation from the original drama, the film will present us not with a story of love prevailing over intolerance, but rather a story of spiritual redemption. It is

within this latter part of the plot where religious history and that of the Inquisition are fostered within *La Dama*.

LA DAMA DEL ARMIÑO AND THE TASKS OF HISTORY

Whether intentional or not, these changes in the character and plot development in *La Dama* determine its representation of the Inquisition, and they turn its analysis into a complicated task, insofar as it demands a deep understanding of the intricacies of the inquisitorial judicial process in order to understand whether the film is just an example of melodramatic film with no more real interest in history than in geography (McKee 6) or whether it is actually a pro-inquisitorial film due to a patronizing exposé of the Inquisition which ignores any religious prosecution, along with a heavily moralizing tone. My contention is one that will repeat itself throughout this chapter when analyzing the representation of the nature of the Inquisition: rather than pursue salvation of the soul by torture, the actual goal of the Inquisition was not to kill heretics but rather force their public redemption and embrace again the Catholic faith -even when condemned to death, so that offenders would not become martyrs but traitors to their cause. Taking this view into account, *La Dama* oscillates in its tone of the representation of the *modus operandi* of the tribunal. It can be taken either as a film that takes on the Inquisition in an over indulging light, or a film that partly represents the institution and its goals faithfully. There exists, throughout the analysis of film, a pulse between actual facts on the Inquisition that point to a less strict application of its force,¹ and over positive fictionalized situations of the Holy Office which aim to represent the main goal of the

Inquisition: the exemplary redemption and recovery of those who did not follow the narrow path of the Church, rather than their execution.

Indeed, the film *accounts* for a fictional story of religious redemption through the fictional character of Jew Samuel, granted by the generosity of the Inquisition, and sparked by the Catholic dignity of Catalina the daughter of the Greco. In agreement with less critical studies on Inquisition, *La Dama* presents us with a tribunal that oversees the conversion of Samuel and grants its authenticity by allowing him penance from his sins as Jew without any further punishment. The broader historical context implied in the film is the religious history of Spain, presented through the recreation of the city of Toledo, a place where in the second half of the 16th century -more than fifty years after the expulsion of the Jews- there still remain Jews, whose existence is well known by their peers but not brought up the Inquisition.

The film *explains* how, in the second half of the 16th century, religious life in Toledo is not dominated by the overtly controlling presence of the Inquisition, but the city is rather a locus where Jews still live in relative openness. There exists a certain lax control which allows Jews not to conceal their true faith by repetitively greet strangers by praising Jehovah in such a way that everyone in town is aware of their true identity. The film employs a certain romanticized, yet simplifying, approach to history when explaining how a non-baptized individual, Samuel, was to be put under the jurisdiction of a Catholic tribunal, something utterly impossible under the laws of the Inquisition. This dogmatic approach *explains* the character development: the redemption of Samuel, as a restoration to his former adoption by God and reconciliation to the Church. In this

sense, *La Dama* presents us with sympathetic Inquisition officials who display an unbiased sense of justice and an educational spirit.

The film *explains* how the sympathetic Inquisition officials do not seek to harm Samuel, but rather to force his conversion to Christianity. Indeed, the profoundly benevolent character of the chief Inquisitor not only evokes El Greco's excellent relationships with the Inquisition (Panagiōtakēs and Beaton 76), but it also presents us a different portrayal of the inquisitors, who are stripped of any obscurity and far from the archetypal figure of the sadist inquisitor depicted in the Black Legend. There is the mawkish interpretation of the proceedings against Samuel that ignores the most fundamental modes of operation of the Holy Office, and it conflates the concept of *Converso* with *Crypto-Jew* on several occasions. *La Dama* interprets the daily life of Christians and Converted Christians in such a positive light that cannot even be interpreted as contributory to the so-called White Legend of Spain: there are no direct prosecutions of Jews or Judaizers in Toledo, and this group lives in relative openness without the harassment by the Inquisition, a view which can be situated more than understandably within a condescending view on the Inquisition or the so-called White Legend. The film *interprets* religious history utilizing a melodramatic allegory that does not strike at the darkest and most violent features of the tribunal of the Inquisition. The film *interprets* that the Inquisition is not the bloodthirsty court depicted by its critics, but rather a fair court that listens to all points of view before making a point. The film does not go into depth into the repressive intricacies of the tribunal: the processing of the charges against Samuel. Here is an example of the representation of the Inquisition

which is not found in other period films and attests to its positive portrayal of the tribunal: the members of the tribunal warn Andrés about the felony that it would mean to perjury and give false evidence: “vengo a denunciar a dos judíos, falsos creyentes que realizan delitos de sacrilegio / I come to denounce to two Jews, unfaithful believers, who commit sacrilegious crimes.”

STRATEGIES OF REPRESENTATION

In delivering this positive message *La Dama* relies on a melodramatic register that is directly tributary to the homonymous drama from 1927. Melodrama commonly employs an registry that emotionalizes a film's plot and characters in order to appeal to the emotions of the public, and from a traditionalist historical point of view, this could impair the film's historical message from reaching an understanding and delivering a message on the historical era represented in the film. This could be true at first sight, since one could infer from the verbose style of *La Dama* that its dialogs do more in breaking the narrative continuity of the film rather than keeping it. Yet, despite its loquacious narrative text, the film employs these strategies of dramatic representation, combined with a spartan staging -especially compared to contemporary films made by Suevia's rival, CIFESA- and a consistent resorting to lighting that effectively draws an overtly optimistic picture of the role of the Spanish Inquisition that alternatively dabbles on historical inventions and occasionally historical veracity. The Inquisition and the judicial process against Samuel portray a highly dramatized judicial process in which

most of its stages are fictional, but they also state that what matters is the telling of story of exemplary redemption.

Indeed, all of the strategies of representation in the film work together to draw a portrait of the benevolent Inquisition. The *omissions* in the film intend to avoid the most dreadful and/or humiliating parts common in judicial processes of the Inquisition: there is no interrogation even though Samuel admits that he committed such serious crimes as being a Judaizer and attacking a Christian gentleman; there exists neither any hearing of Samuel, nor any accusations laid out or prosecutors present at the trial, nor any penalty for his sins. Since parts of the process such as the questioning and/or the torture are not present, one could interpret anyone of these *omissions* as a deliberate choice to avoid any sort of criticism against the Church, which in the 1940s was a reality among period films. The fact is that having confessed his sins from the very beginning, Samuel would have never been put to the question. Yet, one must put aside the artistic license that presents a Jew -Samuel- being tried by a Christian Court. If so, this strategy reinforces the historical interpretation of the film: that the Inquisition was a tribunal that took a greater interest in educating its subjects rather than executing and torturing them.

In order to draw a portrayal of the society that fits within its melodramatic framework, the film *condenses* many aspects regarding religious identity, hence creating a mass of different religious confessions and practitioners: Christians, Jews, and New Christians or *Conversos*, and *Crypto-Jews*. It also *condenses* many parts of the inquisitorial process into one. Their effect on the historical representation is the same as that of the film's *alterations*, which simplify and reduce the tone of political intolerance

of the era, as well as working as a framework that weaves the narrative thread. Indeed, according to Martz, the coexistence between old Christians and *Conversos* in Toledo in the 16th century was far from peaceful (46). By *altering* the order of the part of the process against Samuel -in reality he would have done his penance upon his release, not while being imprisoned- the Inquisition appears as a monitoring education institution that corrects but does not execute. It alternates the concepts of converted Christian, with *Crypto-Jew*, and Jew indistinctly -i.e. a Jew, never baptized as a Christian at the time, would have been taken by the secular authorities, as the Inquisition had no jurisdiction over them- But by altering this theological concept, the film allows for the storyline, despite its dogmatic inaccuracies, to unfold in its second half as the story of redemption and a redeemer but also a new believer who embraces the “true faith”.

Since it is an utterly fictional tale set in a historical backdrop, the film relies mostly on *invented* characters that become not only the narrative but also the moralistic framework that supports the story. The most evident *invention* is the existence of Jews in Toledo in the mid 16th century. In the 16th century there existed only *Conversos* who were *Crypto-Jews*, that is, former Jews converted into Christians that were adherent to their old faith while publicly professing to be Christians, all of Jews had been either expelled or forced into conversion. If we accept that the authors meant to say that Samuel was a *Cripto-Jew*, that a harsher penalty should have been applied to him. But, by presenting Samuel as a non-baptized Judaizer, that is, the film allows itself to present him as an example of what the Inquisition attempted, a repentant sinner who admits his guilt.

Another *invention* relates to the depiction of women. The film is talking about the past, but it is also conveying a certain conception of the role of women in the 1940s, one similar to that we have seen in other period films from the same decade such as *Leona de Castilla*. Although there is no record that proves that El Greco had a daughter and used her as a model for his famous painting *Lady in a Fur Wrap* (1577), by presenting us with Catalina as the fictional daughter of the famous painter, the film is allowing for a feminine figure that becomes a reference for the redemption of Samuel and bearer of the honor and morality in Christian society. Women are the main reference to the Spanish culture of the 1940s: they are the ones who suffer, love and forgive (Camporesi 57), and hence there exists a constant depiction of femaleness which links constantly to religion and morals. The representation of women is similar to that of other films of the time: Catalina acts as bearer of the morality and purity subject to the dictate of men; she acts as a beacon that enlightens and converts those men who have fallen. Such a role became instrumental for the fulfillment of the redemption of Samuel, and thus this role aroused the interest of censors keeping it as such: for instance her consummated affair and pregnancy was explicitly ordered by the censors to be disguised, as Gil Gascón transcribes: “será más oportuno indicar del modo más discreto posible lo ocurrido entre Samuel y Catalina y no hacer tan seguidas la caída y la normalidad de la oración” (492).

RECEPTION AND CONCLUSION

Only 7 reviews of this film have been collected, and six of them regard the film either as good or as excellent. It is not possible to reach a general opinion on the reception of the film with so a limited number of reviews, attesting only for an initial positive reception. Having premiered on November 3, 1947, the film was to be in theaters in Madrid for the entire month of November. The film was showed in theaters at Madrid for less than a month, (*ABC* does not show in further screenings of the film beyond November 29), although the film would be distributed in the rest of Spain in later months. Precisely, in the Province of Gerona we find one of the few reviews on *La Dama* that shows a tepid reception foretelling a rejection similar to other reviews of the verbose dialogs and rigid acting (Saurina 3) that would characterize this genre in later films, and eventually determine its rejection by audiences.

None of the reviews engage the historical discourse, nor mention the role of the Inquisition. They focus on the description of the love affair between Catalina and Samuel without discussing the religious conflict that lies within. This is an important matter, as it shows a preference from the press in focusing on the morality of the affair rather than its religious controversiality, as happened during the censoring of the film. In the censorship dossier on the film, there is no mention of the role of the Inquisition, as the censor's attention was utterly devoted to the determination to avoid any reference to any sexual consummation of the affair between Samuel and Catalina, and the latter's likely pregnancy: "Mi culpa tiene a Catalina en pecado mortal / My guilt has put Catalina in mortal sin" (AGA, file 36/03292). The censorship officials did not bestow on

the film a high prize, awarding it only with the Segunda Categoría Prize; and more importantly, they rated it as only suitable for adults.⁵

This could be interpreted as a lack of relevance of the matter of the Inquisition for Spanish Officials in the 1940s. One must remember that it is the year 1947, and as explained in the previous chapter, the Inquisition was not an object of debate, but rather presented as another example of the politics of unification of the Catholic Monarchs.

Yet, it is a rather vexing fact to believe that despite the ideological hatred of Franco's regime in promoting the belief in the existence of a Judeo-Masonic conspiracy theory that alleged world domination, as it reminded Spaniards through state discourses, school teaching manuals, *La Dama* does not display a frontal attack on the nature of the nature of the Jew and Converso community in Spain in the 16th century. Moreover, as it happened with other period film productions in the 1940s and early 1950s, anti-Semitism does not play an important part in Spanish film⁶. Taking this fact into account, as Rafael de España has suggested, the film may be interpreted as a message of racial reconciliation, which echoes the lack of an Anti-Semitist cinema in Francoism (De España 1991, 94).

All in all, *La Dama del Armuña* presents us not only with a dramatic romantic film, but also with rhetorical exercise full of poetic lyricism that models the Inquisition to fit into the role of a patronizing institution. Despite its numerous artistic licenses in fundamental theological matters, Fernández-Ardavin's film presents the tribunal in a overly positive light, and that is, at least probably, the consequence of the year when it was made. Despite the fact that, as De España states, many questions remain unanswered

in the dossier of the film to determine the extent of involvement of the State via the Censorship into inducing the script of *La Dama* (De España 1991, 93), I venture to say that most likely the filmmaker censored himself in adapting the more liberal screenplay from his brother's drama, a fact that according to Lagny, is a very common and usually untraceable form of censorship that acts as effectively as direct state censorship.

Yet, regardless of whether this film is pro-inquisitorial and not, it is true that this mawkish depiction of the Inquisition would change radically with the advent of democracy in Spain, as the next film in this chapter shows.

EL SEGUNDO PODER: THE FAMILIARES OF THE SPANISH INQUISITION

Concerning the popular memory of the Spanish Inquisition, perhaps the strongest image that has ever left its imprint in popular memory is the one that shows a suspect being tried in a dark room by a jury of crooked members of the cloth in a negative raw image. The etchings and black paintings of Spanish painter Francisco Goya have portrayed it as such. It is incumbent to account for those images which portray the dealings of the Inquisition with society at a less judicial and more ordinary level, such as the confidants and spies of the Inquisition who allowed the latter to find heretics among the people and who earned the trust of the common people.

The next film examined in this chapter is *El Segundo Poder* (Jose María Forqué, 1976), a thriller set in the reign of Philip II that brings an insight into the actions and nature of a *familiar*, an informant employed by the Spanish Inquisition.⁷ From a filmic and historiographical perspective, *El Segundo Poder* is a film deeply rooted in the most

negative historiography of the Inquisition as well as the moment of its making: the end of the Francoist dictatorship and the transition to democracy. *El Segundo Poder* (*El Segundo*, hereafter) draws a startling picture of the role of the Spanish Inquisition that, along with contemporary film *Juan de Dios* (*The Man Who Knew Love*), by Miguel Picazo (1978), meant a 180-degree turn from previous period films shot in Spain. Its harsh depiction of religion and the Church meant a filmic continuation of the emotionally biased discourse of the Inquisition and the Black Legend of Spain, although it is presented for the first time in a Spanish production.

The storyline of *El Segundo* is focused on Juan de Bracamonte, a *familiar* of the Inquisition. The film storyline tells how in May 1562, Prince Charles, heir of Philip II, has suffered a nearly fatal accident in Alcazar Palace in Madrid. The event raises suspicion from the Spanish Inquisition, which assigns Inquisition *familiar* Juan de Bracamonte to find out the actual circumstances that led to the accident, and determine whether the accident was an attempted murder or not. The initial findings by this informant of the Inquisition lead him to Laurencia, the main suspect of the case since she was present at the scene of the accident. Laurencia is a frightened fragile young girl whom the prince desired and went to after they were introduced by Laurencia's mother, Estefanía, a sensual yet corrupt woman who had dalliances with the prince. Bracamonte uses his authority as an informer of the Inquisition to gain access to Estefanía. While attempting to find out the involvement of Laurencia in the accident, Bracamonte falls in love with Estefanía, who hopes Bracamonte to save her daughter. Yet, seclusion drives Laurencia mad, and she incriminates herself by admitting having contacted with

supernatural forces. Eager to finish the case promptly, the Inquisition uses Laurencia as scapegoat to prove the existence of a conspiracy by the Devil to assassinate the prince. Estefanía confesses to Bracamonte it was she who pushed the prince to fall, but it is too late for Bracamonte to save Laurencia, who is condemned for being possessed by the devil.

According to historical reconstructions, the *familiar* was by far one of the most important figures of the Holy Office, as it incarnated the daily presence of the tribunal among ordinary citizens, for whom the Inquisition *familiares* became the eyes and ears of the Holy Office and its middleman between the tribunal and the population for the detection of heretical practices (Pasamar Lázaro 165). Their duties involved the denunciation of heretics or enemies of the Holy Office and aid in their capture and guard, the inspection of import at customs checkpoints in search for heretical materials, the escort of Inquisition officials and an obligation to be available for the Holy Office and its staff at all times. They had to meet a series of requirements: they had to be men of cloth with taken orders or lay men who had been married or widowed, and they had to be declared Old Christians by proving *Limpieza de Sangre* (Purity of Blood), that is, clean of any Converso heritage. According to Domínguez Ortiz, the average profile of a *familiar* was a middle class individual looking for means to secure social promotion (Dominguez Ortiz 2002, n.pag). This desire for attaining social gain characterized the figure of the *familiar* and turned it into one of the most hated and desired positions within the Spanish administration (Pasamar Lázaro 174). It was an official post plagued with job trafficking (Cerrillo 546) sparked by the privileges that the job endorsed: fiscal

(exemption from taxation), military (exemption from military service), jurisdictional (they answered for their actions to the Inquisitorial courts), and social (right to bear arms, special clothing, protection for their relatives and estates) benefits (Cerrillo 580).

Yet, soon in the 16th century the main duty of the *familiares* -to work as spies and denounce Judaizer- was unattended by them (Cerillo 731; Pasamar Lázaro 171), and this position became more than a burden for the Inquisition itself, who had to provide means and protection for the more than 10,000 existing *familiares* in Spain at the end of the 16th century (Rawlings 28): “estos familiares eran, en el mejor de los casos, un mal necesario y, en el peor, un motivo de vergüenza para los tribunales / these *familiares* were, at the best scenario, a necessary evil, and worst, a matter of shame for the tribunals” (Monter 81).

José Forqué and Hermógenes Sáinz wrote an adaptation from the novel *El hombre de la cruz verde*, a period novel written by Spanish exile Eusebio Poncela and published in Andorra in 1970. It portrayed a dark representation of the court of Philip II in order to draw parallels between Spanish past and present. The script was originally written in 1971 during the last years of the dictatorship and presented to the Board of Censors (AGA, file 36/05730). The BOC did not authorize the shooting of *El Segundo*, which could only begin with the coming of democracy in 1976, when the new censorship committee -now called Junta de Calificación y Apreciación de Películas (Film Classification and Evaluation Board), allowed it on May 21, though the new board requested that the image of the film not contribute to the Black Legend of Spain or demean the Spanish Monarchy or the Church (AGA, file 36/05219). The production was

designed to succeed both in the Spanish and international markets. To such an end, the cast was composed of some of the most recognizable stars in the 1970s: John Finch as the *familiar* of the Inquisition, and Juliet Mills as Estefanía, along with Spanish star Fernando Rey as bishop. The decision to hire non-Spanish speaking stars and dub them was a decision common in other period (*Juan de Dios*, 1976) and Spanish films, as strategy to secure their international distribution. The presence of these stars raised the expectations of the producers (F. Soria 127), distributors (Quesada 1986, 284), and the director himself as he would state in an interview (F. Soria 158).

EL SEGUNDO PODER AND THE TASKS OF HISTORY

Examining the ways of historical representation of *El Segundo Poder* is a far more complex a task than it may seem at first sight because of the stage in the interpretation of the film's historical topic: the figure of the *familiar*. In the 1970s there was a major shift in the studies of the Spanish Inquisition, and the *familiar* was on the figures of the tribunal that underwent historical revision (Pérez Villanueva 33). Thus, in the 1970s few audiences, nor Eusebio Poncela nor Forqué could have access on the actual details of whose role in the Inquisition. According to Caldwell, the intention of Poncela in writing *El Hombre de la Cruz Verde* was not only to tell a story about the Inquisition, but to tie its representation to the Spanish present -the Francoist dictatorship- that is, "to expose the historical links that exist and to weaken their power over contemporary Spain" (82).

Yet, despite the intention of the filmmaker to convey the same interpretation as Poncela's (Perez Núñez 57) *El Segundo*'s rawness of the filmic image, and its somewhat cryptic storyline does not allow to extract a cohesive message with parallels in the sociopolitical state in 1976. These two features, cinematographic rawness and narrative incoherence, result in the singularization of different events (i.e.: the love affair between Bracamonte and Estefanía, the sickness of Charles, the processing of Estefanía), to such a extent that they do not tie the plot to the larger picture that the authors intended, the history of Spain as the history of country repressive against their own citizens both in the 16th and 20th centuries.

The film by Forqué focus, as its title suggests, on the political power held by the Church in the era, and the capacity of the Church to control society at all levels (F. Soria 126), by focusing on the persona of *familiar* Bracamonte. The course of his investigation becomes the narrative framework from which all of the characters evolve. As Caldwell states, "Juan de Bracamonte reflects those elements of an age which cannot be recorded as factual data. He is the fictional character who reflects the implications of fixed fact and who, as an individual, serves as the medium through which the past becomes understandable in human terms" (Caldwell 40), and delivers the message that its title suggests: that the second power in the kingdom (the Church) acts as another agent within the balance of political power. Just like any other political power, it is likely to become corrupt and guided by individual ambitions, and how this corruption affected those who were under its influence: "the political-religious institution of the Spanish Inquisition

had the power to affect the personality of those whose lives it touched and the mental reality in which they functioned” (Caldwell ii).

The act of historical representation in *El Segundo Poder* lies within the tasks that the film performs. The film *recounts* the accident of Prince Charles in 1562 in keeping with popular memory that states that the prince fell downstairs while chasing the daughter of one of the members of the service of his lodgings (Moreno Espinosa 23), presenting us with repeated references of a choleric, capricious prince whose lust and hate lead him to his accident and spark the entire the investigation that ends up with the torture and execution of an innocent woman. The broader historical context is the actions of the Inquisition and the Black Legend of Spain. Both topics are put into play through the actions of Bracamonte and the corruption of the Spanish society in the 16th century. The *familiar* of the Inquisition presented in the film is a figure which epitomizes the worst and most corrupt features of the institution of the Spanish Inquisition and mirrors the usage of the Inquisition accordingly as an instrument not only of religious repression but also as a vehicle for political purposes. Using a cynical sense of history, Bracamonte is depicted as an ambitious and selfish operative of the Holy Office whose lust for power is far more powerful than his religious zeal and who takes advantage of the superstitions and fears of the common people.

The film’s *explanation* and *interpretation* of history place themselves using a social realist sensibility of history. Presenting a Marxist interpretation of history insofar as the underlying concept in the film is the alienation of the classes, *El Segundo* shows a certain grotesque realism and contemporizing criticism of the lower classes as oppressed

by the elites and middle class; especially women who are subject to the will of men. Using a particular sense of history as social history, the historical narrative in *El Segundo* interprets historical events from the perspective of common people and middle class (the *familiar*) rather than political and other leaders. Employing a certain “history from below” the reconstruction of history appeals to the sentiment of the audience in *explaining* the injustices committed by all of the levels (high and low clergy, lay officials) upon the lower class. The kings, politicians, the noblemen, all of them appear as remote people whose distance from the common people is emphasized by the fact that they are never shown speaking to the people, except for the Duke of Alba. This is the main point that indexes the film’s main topic -one that repeats itself in Forqué’s filmography: how human beings play and are used by the powerful (Pérez Núñez 57).

El Segundo conveys a raw image of not only the *modus operandi* of the Inquisition in conducting an investigation, but also in recreating the ignorance of an era at all levels of society.⁸ Certainly the explicit and graphic ways of showing how Bracamonte and the Inquisition oppress and take advantage of the lower class has much to do with the film’s placement within the tradition of films in Spain in the 1970s, accounting for a strong usage of explicit erotic and nudity as strategies of securing commercial success. But it also is shocking for Spanish audiences in the 1976 to witness a film whose representation of history is characterized by its crudeness of the historical time, in representing sex, at levels that had not been depicted in the early years of the dictatorship. As film critic Diego Galan, the film style of Forqué responded to a successful filmic fashion in the 1970s that brought out people’s ghoulish sexual instincts

of such a sexually repressed society as Spain's (Galán 1974, 76). His interpretation of history in *El Segundo* does not relate intrinsically to the era depicted on the screen, but it rather hinges on the repression of the Francoist regime. Yet, the commercial exhaustion of these modes of exaggeration by the time the film was released, along with the fragmentation of the plot do not provoke the intended effect in linking past and present.

The film attempts to *consolidate*, if not *justify*, its historical representation by resorting to one of the most visual aspects of period filmmaking: settings and costumes are according to the fashion of the 16th century. The film's claim for faithfulness to the era does not lie in voice-over narration, but rather in an unconscious claim to reality in visual aspects, in the mise-en-scene, buttressing not in backdrops but buildings, using the style from other historical films such as *Miguel Servet, la sangre y la ceniza* (1994).

STRATEGIES OF REPRESENTATION

The film's course of events makes much of the historical representation in order to criticize the inquisitorial methods, the power of the Church, and the ignorance of a country. It conveys a grotesque representation of the life Spain that flows into the ideological parameters of the Spanish Black Legend. In order to render this on two narrative features throughout the film, it presents: injustice, violence, and crude superstition/ignorance among all levels of society. These features are enhanced by the usage of an explicit grotesque realism in the characterization of some of the characters: dirty fat, absent minded wardens, cuckolded husbands, lame buffoons and midgets, unfaithful wives. Cinematographically, the preference for mid-shots and the lack of close

ups distance the audience from the scene and confer a tone of coldness to this grotesque reality.

It is certain that the film's *inventions* are the most important historical strategy of the film. There exists no account that shows that the Inquisition ever trialed anybody for the accident of Prince Charles, yet, by *inventing* this historical situation, the film liberates itself from any binds to written history, and thus it can develop its own interpretation of an event, conveying an interpretation not only on the Spanish Inquisition, but also on an era. Hence, by inventing the trial of Laurencia, showing her being used as a scapegoat, the cruelty of her interrogation and exorcism, and the manipulation of the trial by the cardinal who discreetly interrupts the argument of the prosecutor, the film is delivering a message that presents the Inquisition as a political institution guided for nothing but the ambition of its leaders, regardless of any religious intention.

The *alterations* in the historical representation are greatly responsible for the depiction of a society where ignorance prevails at all levels. For instance, radical founder of modern human anatomy Andreas Vesalius was already present during the inner proceedings to save Prince Charles' life (Muñoz Calvo 248). But, by presenting this doctor only at the end of all of the attempts made by the other doctors, the film is referring to a larger context in order to present the brutality of an age by its obscurantism and ignorance. Its recreation in the characterization of the doctors -above all, their preference for leeching as a the most effective cure, cow urine as a refreshing drink, and other medical treatments commonly accepted in the 16th century- conveys to a 20th

century spectator a scatological image that suggests an existing ignorance among the upper classes of the 16th century.⁹ In the same manner, even though Vesalius' saving trepanation on Charles was performed after the exposure of the prince to the mummy of monk Diego of Alcalá, the film alters the order of events to present superstition as prevailing over medical science.

The ignorance of the physicians and noblemen in dealing with the condition of Charles is only matched by the brutality of the methods employed by the inquisitors to prove that Laurencia is possessed by the devil: by choking her to induce convulsive movements that are taken as spasms provoked by the lying evil spirit. As well as with the physicians, the inquisitors are presented using a sharp contemporary criticism that exposes the vacuity of their theories and the brutality of their application. As 20th century spectators, these scenes appeal not to our knowledge on the 16th century, but to our common sense when interpreting that both the doctors and the inquisitor's knowledge lack logic from our contemporary understanding and are only the result of fanatical belief in wrong-minded doctrines (medical and theological). These scenes seek not only to inspire sympathy for the victim or patient, but also the contempt for the fanatical ignorance displayed by her executioners and her healers.

In we understand the nature of a nation in human-like analogy form, that is, consisting of body and soul, then we can state that *El Segundo Poder's* portrayal of Spain in the 16th is one of decadence, epitomized by those who claim to have the final word in the purity of the body -the doctors- and the soul -the Inquisitors-. These *invented* scenes alter our reception of the era -and the Inquisition- portrayed in film, whose gaze

into the past compels the spectators to apply their contemporary criticism. Here lies Forque's attempt to index contemporary political issues (Francoist repression) by addressing the past. That is why, despite its narrative inconsistencies, *El Segundo* does represent a story that as the reception of the film's reception proves, was far from being overlooked by film critics of opposing ideologies.

RECEPTION AND CONCLUSION

Indeed, the analysis of the press reviews points to the reasons that led to the lack of commercial success of *El Segundo* -it only earned nearly 25 million pesetas, in contrast to its 45 million budget (Masó 43), and sold nearly 300,000 tickets¹⁰ after its premiere in Salamanca in January 1977. The analysis of sixteen different reviews shows mixed ratings for the film. At least 6 reviews rated the film as good, whereas 4 rated the film as bad, and another four as below average. Overall the film received a tepid response from film critics who found in the film a better quality in its technical details - the cinematography was praised in nine of the reviews, than in terms of narrative development, where there exists a recurrent criticism regarding the distance and coldness of the film in its treatment of the actions that unfold (Crespo 1977, n.pag; Fernández Santos 1977, n.pag).

Regarding the reception of the era represented on screen, the press' opinions transmit how audiences in the 1970s were not likely to interpret the negative depiction of the repressive Spanish Inquisition. Audiences were not likely to see criticism of contemporary repressive regimes, such as the Spanish dictatorship, since the dictatorship

was gone and by 1977 that topic had commercially been exhausted. And so, the press did notice Forque's attempt to convey a greater historical interpretation of Spain in telling a story of the Inquisition, only to criticize its ability in delivering the message. Except for those film groups ideologically close to far right-wing positions, the press agreed with the fact that the film did manage to justify a feeling for the historical era but failed to delivery and to describe its story (Masó 43). Press groups of liberal tendencies, such as leftist magazine *Triunfo*, one of the icons of intellectual resistance during Francoism, found the film old-fashioned: its raw depiction of the Spanish past as a vehicle to deliver a message of intransigence in 1977 lacked the controversiality that it would have had, had it been released two years earlier during the dictatorship (Diego Galán 1977, 55). The conservative Catholic newspaper *Ya* published review did not aim to criticize the film except for its narrative ambiguities (Cebollada n.pag). In the same manner, the monarchist newspaper *ABC* did not question the historical representation of the film but rather criticized what critic Carlos Colón understood as the film's concessions to commerciality -adopting a gruesome tone, grotesque realism and nudity scenes (C. Colón 1977, 44). It was the right-wing press who wrote the most vivid negative reviews and disagreed with the portrayal of history. The Falangist newspaper *El Alcázar* exposed a disagreement with the film for considering this historical representation was an antipatriotic reinforcement to the Spanish Black Legend and the critics of Spain (Martilay 1977, n.pag). Critic M.A.J considered *El Segundo* a film properly tributary to the same demagogical historical statements made in the films by Juan de Orduña 30

years earlier (n.pag), only this time the approach was anti-system and did not support the state in any form.

In rendering history, *El Segundo Poder* shows what is to become a recurrent feature of Spanish and international film in depicting the Spanish Inquisition: torture and other forms of violence. All of the strategies of historical representation of *El Segundo* express not a metaphorical truth, but rather a metonymical truth. By representing the era in such a crude way torture, ignorance, corruption- the film attempts to convey a historical portrayal of the history of Spain that hinges on its most controversial and recognizable aspects. This correlation between both objects develops to such a close extent that the film establishes what we may define as a metonymical relationship between the Inquisition and its objects, if torture and execution are the objects of a subject (the Inquisition). All in all, this full identification between both concepts goes to such an extent that the Inquisition becomes intrinsically related to its object and becomes one with it. As if with any metonymy, the substitution is based on some understood association and syncretic observation, and the result is that the subject (the Inquisition), becomes the object (torture), this fits within a popular portrayal of the Inquisition and its place in Spanish history.

AKELARRE: THE INQUISITION AS A TOOL OF OPPRESSION FOR LOCAL POWER

The next film on the representation of the Inquisition in film brings a very different scenario than that of the previous urban and prison environments. It deals with

the Basque witch trials and the rural economic riffs of the valleys of Navarre in the early 17th century. *Akelarre* (Pedro Olea, 1984) presents us with an environment in which the Inquisition manifests itself and reveals its nature not only as a tool of local religious control for the Church, but also as an instrument of cultural and political repression susceptible to be used by local oligarchy.

My contention is that due its rendering of history, *Akelarre* is a clear example of how a historical film can be a reflection of the time of its making, insofar as *Akelarre* presents a double influence from the leading historiographical trend on the topic, and from the political and economical context of its time of making. Moreover, its reception proves that a historical film can spark opposing interpretations of its historical recreation when its practices of reception link the film to significant contemporary issues.

A historical film shot in the Basque country and later dubbed in Spanish, *Akelarre* was Pedro Olea's brainchild and almost a lifetime project as a result of his passion for the historical folklore of the Basque country (interview in Llaurada 22; interview in Viola 33). Having spent five years in advertising in order to collect enough funds (56 million pesetas), Olea received a subsidy from the Basque Government of more than 15 million pesetas to finance *Akelarre*.¹¹ In this sense, the film inserts itself into an exponentially growing development of Basque Cinema in the 1980s, as *Akelarre* is a form of historical filmmaking that answers to the cultural, political and economic expectations of the first Autonomous Basque region in more than 40 years. It is a cinema represented in that decade by the growing numbers of Basque filmmakers that searched

in the past of the country to render their own filmed history that could contribute to the recovery of their signs of identity.¹²

As explained earlier, one of the principal genres that benefited from the Basque policy of governmental subsidies was the period film genre. In this sense, the proximity of *Akelarre* to other historical films shot by Basque filmmakers under the sponsorship of the Jauriaritza (Basque Government), lies obviously in its similarity in choosing to tell stories set in the early modern period. Some of these films are *La Conquista de Albania* (Alfonso Ungría, 1983), *Betirako sua* (Jose Rebolledo, 1985), *Viento de Cólera* by Pedro de la Sota in 1989, and *La leyenda del cura de Bargota* by Pedro Olea himself in 1989. These films share a common interest in the folklore of the Basque Country by focusing on an array of topics ranging from local legends (*Betirako Sua*, and *La Leyenda del Cura de Bargota*), overseas military expeditions (*La conquista de Albania*) and the legal conflict for the inhabitants of the lands of Navarre and Castile (*Viento de Cólera*).

Akelarre participates in this thematic trend. Pedro Olea, who co-wrote the script with screenwriter Gonzalo Goicoetxea, chose to shoot a fictionalized account of an actual event that happened in 1595 in the Basque lands of Navarre. The action of the plot takes place at the village of Inza that is subject to the ruling of lord Don Fermín of Areiza, perpetual mayor of the town, who in order to quiet the popular demand for the abolition of his feudal rights, spreads with the aid of the local priest Don Ángel, rumors about the existence of witches who hinder life in the village by capturing children and ruining harvests. His goal is to request the services of the Inquisition and get rid of the main leaders of the valley so that his rule, and that of his son Íñigo, becomes

unquestioned. Inquisitor Domínguez arrives with his instruments of torture and begins interrogating locals, who quickly, under the influence of Don Fermín, begin accusing many of his enemies. One of them is Garazi the granddaughter of a woman found guilty of witchcraft and Iñigo's former lover and the girlfriend of Unai, one of the leaders of the valley. Unai is one of the many locals who still visit the traditional *akelarres* conducted by Amunia, an old healer. Amunia and many of the town folk meet at these social gatherings of pagan ancestry which take place at caves at night when the locals perform rituals to honor their pantheist deity Mali. Under the lack of resistance from the abbot of the local monastery to take any action in the matter, Don Fermín bribes and blackmails peasants to denounce each other, and he commences the trial of many of the leaders of the valley. Amunia and Garazi are captured and forced to accuse each other. Having processed over 33 people, the Inquisitor decides to leave and order the transfer of prisoners to Logroño, where the Amunia and Garazi will be tried. Unai leads a band of supporters who strike on the line of prisoners, freeing many of the prisoners except for Amunia, who is sentenced by Don Fermín himself to burn at the stake.

THE STORY AND HISTORY OF THE WITCHES OF INZA

In 1595 in the Navarrian valley of Araitz, the perpetual mayor Fermín de Lodosa Andueza, initiated on his own witch trials to determine the existence of witches in the Valley. His palace turned into a court where town folks accused each other of belonging to cults and performing ceremonial witch cults in caves where they worshiped the Devil and joined in orgies (Caro Baroja 1995, 1025). Inquisitor Caparroso was sent by the

Holy Office from Pamplona to confirm the interrogations and inquisitorial process started earlier by Don Fermín. After investigating the valley for ten days, Caparroso sent eleven people to the prisons of the Holy Office in Pamplona. Eight of nine women would die in the following months, while the last one of them was acquitted. It was proven that over the months they were in prison that they had rejected their previous confessions made at on Fermín's home, and that they had only incriminated themselves because of the pressure of the local lord.

Regarding its stages of interpretation, unlike other European countries, during early modern times, witchcraft was never as widespread in Spain as it was in Britain, Germany, and France. According to historians Maria Tause and James Amelang, this was the main reason why by the time that Pedro Olea drafted his first storyline for *Akelarre* circa 1978, the history of witchcraft in Spain (Tausiet and Amelang 335), there being only a few historical works on the topic. The works by historians Florencio Idoate Iragui,¹³ Julio Caro Baroja,¹⁴ and Alfredo Gil del Rio¹⁵ remained as some of the few exceptions in national historiography on witchcraft. In 1964, Caro Baroja focused on the analysis of the documentation of witchcraft trials between 1595 and 1610 of the towns in the Basque regions of Navarre. Caro Baroja believed that in order to fully understand the origins and development of these witchcraft trials, one should take into account the sociohistorical reality of the region and the “rivalries between local bands at the time” (Bullen 155). In this sense, historian Gil del Rio pointed out that the real roots of the witchcraft trials laid into different political and less religious interests who aimed to control areas dominated by customs interpreted as seditious from the Catholic Church

(Gil del Rio). For anthropologist Margaret Murray, there existed no witches, just reinterpretation of the 16th century ancient folklore, remnants of pagan practices and “ancient understanding of the cosmos of the Great Goddess, the Earth Mother or Moon, closely linked at the Akelarre” (Bullen 153).

The work by these historians brought a materialistic answer to many questions: witchcraft had a base in pagan traditions used as a scapegoat for the burden of natural disasters, sudden deaths of animals and people, and bad harvests. All this farce was conducted by the zeal of the Inquisitors and the ambition of the local gentry, and discarded other thesis such as conspiratorial theories from the central governments in suppressing the local power of the communities in the Basque country.

AKELARRE AND THE TASKS OF HISTORY

These and other questions are addressed by Pedro Olea’s film in an approach that combines factual fidelity to fictionalizing fantasy. In its treatment of history, *Akelarre* utilizes a double level of fictional historicity, one faithful to the historical documents that leaves no room for other interpretation but the film’s, and one that plays unreality and leaves its interpretation open to the public. The first level corresponds to the representation and interpretation of the oppressor characters and the passive oppressed figures (the oligarchy, but also those peasants who do not rebel against them). By calling upon the socio-economical theories of the Inquisition stated by Caro Baroja and Gil de Alfredo, and by using a certain Manichean representation, this level of historicity does not allow the viewer to escape from or develop secondary interpretations that divert from

what is portrayed on screen. The second level applies exclusively to those characters that resist the repression by oligarchy. This group's actions either border on artistic license or fantasy regarding their acts of magic or rituals, leaving a more open interpretation by the viewer.

These two levels of historicity *recount* the story of a town dominated by the clash between the town folk and the nobleman Don Fermín. This scheme/feature fits within the historical tasks the film performs in representing history. The film *recounts* the witch hunt while using certain demagogical character development -as will be explained shortly, this a consequence of the film's great influence from the conventions of the Western genre- the witchcraft trials as scheme plan conceived by Don Fermín's secretary, Arezo, to allow his master to behead the political opposition of the valley. The film portrays the oligarchy of the valley (noblemen, monks and a priest) as individualistic beings. They watch out for their own benefit and privileges over those of the community, and acts as the actual authors of the repression against the leaders of the valley. It is this depiction which lies more on a historicist way of history telling:-long dialogs calling upon detailed speeches rather than natural language during the group scenes at the town meeting and the dinner scenes at the home of the lord of Andueza-, which accounts for facts about the sociopolitical organization of the valley and the region of Navarre. The broader historical context is provided by the scenes that present the confrontation between the marginalized paganism of the native matriarchal Basque society epitomized by the ancestral rites held in caves and the matriarchal healer

Amunia, and the leading influence of the official patriarchal alien Christianity epitomized by the feudal lord, the clergy and the Inquisition, and many of the town folk.

The film *explains* and *interprets* how the repressed in the valley are the defenders of the communal history and their traditions of the Basque country, in contrast to the repressors of the Navarrian-Basque folk, who wield all of the non-native traditions: Christianity, feudalism, and eventually the Inquisition. Using a Marxist approach to history the film *interprets* the existence of witches as the result of the combination of popular superstitions and rumors spread by the Catholic and aristocratic oligarchy, leading to the conclusion that the reason for believing in witches is an excuse for economic and political thrive. In agreement with the anthropological and economic historical research by Caro Baroja, who acted as consultant for Olea in confectioning the script, the film *interprets* the belief in witchcraft in the valley as the result the convergence of economical difficulties (bad harvests, sickness of animals), economic indentures (for instance, the tavern keeper and the people indebted to Don Fermín) and the persistence of pagan traditions. The film explains how this combination of socioeconomic features creates the perfect environment for spreading the rumor of witchcraft.

The Inquisition, represented only by the figure of the Inquisitor, who is referred to as the nameless *El Licenciado* (The Bachelor), is considered a foreign tribunal meddling in local matters by the abbot of the monastery and the Junta Real in Pamplona. The actor who plays the inquisitor (José Luis López Vázquez) presents us with the only non-Basque character (a Castilian from Burgos) and radical man of the cloth sent by the

Inquisition in Logroño. The inquisitor, a non-Basque from Castile, is only sent to investigate after having received a report by Don Fermín that points to the existence of witches in the valley. The alien nature of this character and its sharp contrast with the rest of the characters is especially evident in original version of the film shot in Basque language, as he is the only character who does not speak Basque, and the rest of the characters only speak Spanish in his presence.

The Inquisitor embeds in the film the presence, yet not the interference, of the central authority of the King of Spain - the Inquisition was the only institution that could operate in all of the jurisdictions of all of the kingdoms of the Hispanic Monarchy, as a sort of federal police. Its presence in the valley is seen as foreign but his nature and role in the story is to serve as a tool for the actual repressor of the valley, Don Fermín (Roldán Larreta 280). The film *interprets* the work of the Inquisition as one which does differ from the repressive acts seen in other films, as *Akelarre* does show the Inquisition and its interaction with other forces of oppression when imposing Christian orthodoxy. Being the only extra-Basque character in the film a figure of repression at the same time may cause the *Akelarre* be interpreted as pro Basque, as the right wing critics did write during the premiere of the film. This is by far a remark that sheds more light onto the cultural and political background of moviegoers of Spain in the 1983, but not on the film, since the final version deleted the lines found in the original script that pointed to a Pan-Basquism with the other Basque provinces that belonged to France on the other side of the Pyrenees: “Nosotros no somos enemigos, sino hermanos, de las gentes que viven

al otro lado / we are not enemies but brothers of the people who live on the other side” (Goicoechea and Olea 12).

A second level of historical reconstruction relates to the victims of Don Fermín and the Inquisition. Here the film *explains* history employing a critical realism when it relates the clash between the pagan traditions and the Christian establishment, only to resort to fantasy in dealing with the actual skills/powers of Amunia (can she be considered a witch?). In the first group, the film interprets the trials from a gender perspective, showing the clash between the patriarchal and matriarchal traditions. This is visually represented in the contrast between the phallic church and uterine cave, and also in the form of a character perspective in the contrast between the male repressors and the female repressed characters. Women take the lead in most of the actual decisions for the valley, have a right to decide when to marry (such as Garazi), and are the guardians of ancestral traditions (the character of Amunia).

The film *interprets* the existence of witches on a more fantastic level, with actions that create a sublevel of fantasy and cast a layer of mystery on the film which was intended by the filmmaker (Olea in Viola 33) despite the prevailing materialistic approach in the rest of the film. Indeed, the film incorporates some elements of fantasy in dealing with the power of Amunia, such as her inconclusive capacity to cast spells that provoke rainfalls or the death of animals, causes rainstorms on the priest, turn bitter the tavern’s barrels of wine, cause the death of the animals of the deceiver tavern keeper, or even metamorphose into an animal.¹⁶

STRATEGIES OF REPRESENTATION

The configuration of this conflict lies in the rendering of history in the film through the usage of certain historical alterations, invention and omissions, along with the direct influence from the genre conventions of the Western genre. Before beginning with the former, some of the most important features of Western films employed in the setting of the story should be addressed: an archetypal conflict configuration of good (those prosecuted by the inquisition) versus evil (the repressors), purity of spirit (Amunia) versus corruption (Don Fermín), virtue (Gariza) versus evil (Inquisitor and all in a setting of characterized by similar impulses of the natural order vs. social law, the community vs. a rugged individualist, or even more traditionally the hero (Unai) meeting his nemesis (Íñigo). As in Western genre these strategies, along with the usage of open and distinct landscapes, configure this idea of the Inquisition acting at a place located at the frontiers, this time those of heresy, a place far from the usual jurisdiction of Inquisition, a place with its identity rules by law of its own.

Omission: The film does not go into depth in the theological conflict between ancient paganism and how it influenced the daily life of the inhabitants of the village (Was there any conflict besides gossiping? Did both traditions live in harmony?).

Alterations: as with most period films, it is the alterations of the film what help define its historical discourse. This creates a historical veracity, a truth that supports the message of the film. In altering the order of events -by placing the 1608 witchcraft trials of French Inquisitor Pierre Lancre in the neighboring French Basque country earlier than the ones in the valley in 1595-, the film is providing a larger historical and spatial

context for the prosecution of the Basque pantheist traditions. By altering the formalities of the interrogation and Inquisitorial process, the film provides the image of tribunal subject to the impulse of Don Fermín and highlighted by his interruptions in the process by bringing a new witness to the tribunal by the arm.

Inventions: the same problem is underlined when at the end of the film, Fermín burns Amunia himself and takes the law into his own hands, despite the pathetic warnings from the local priest, to whom Don Fermín replies “Aquí mando yo / I am in charge here.” The film climaxes with remarks on the political nature of the witchcraft trials and its lack of heretic nature, but it echoes a larger historical truth: that it was he who initiated the interrogation and induced the people to accuse each other without the authorization of the Inquisition. By *inventing* the character of the abbot, the film shows how the ranks of the Church doubted the heretical nature of many of the pagan traditions of the people of the valley, yet the Parish of Pamplona and the headquarters of the Inquisition in Pamplona did not interfere with the local power, and washed their hands of this matter of injustice. Certainly according to the Inquisitorial codes of trial, it was not allowed for any court to have confrontation or contact between a witness and an accused (as it happens between Garazi and Amunia), but in doing so, this artistic license allows for the leader and incarnation of the matriarchal pantheist Basque tradition to confront its nemesis, the incarnation of all of the foreign tradition epitomized by the Catholic Church.

RECEPTION AND CONCLUSION

With a budget of 56 million pesetas, *Akelarre* was a success at the box office, earning 91 million pesetas,¹⁷ it was selected as the film that would represent Spain in the 34th Berlin International Film Festival. The analysis of 21 film reviews reveal a majority of positive reviews that rate the film either as good (7) or excellent (3), whereas the negative reviews show an equally moderate rating, accounting for 6 reviews that rate the film as below average and 3 as bad.

The amount of reviews also allows for a deeper insight into the reception of *Akelarre*, proving to be an example of how a film can be closely linked to both cultural and political contemporary concerns at the time of its release. In this sense, the film provoked different and opposing reactions among the film press that address the manner *Akelarre*'s strategies and tasks of historical representation. This highlights the contemporary sensibility of any topic relating to the Basque identity in Spanish history, and how sociopolitical reality determined the reception of the film.

First, some of the reviews interpreted the film for allegedly possible links to Basque Nationalism and terrorism. One review by Equipo Icono advocated for Pedro Olea for defending the millenarian culture of Euskadi in a peaceful manner (film) rather by violence as those who (terrorist group ETA) wield violence in the Basque Country (n.pag). Many right wing newspapers linked the film to such a significant contemporary cultural and political issues like the Basque Nationalism and the harsh terrorist violence in Spain during the 1980s.¹⁸ Those newspapers of conservative ideology contain the most negative ratings of *Akelarre* and attacked the film for conveying a pro-Basque view

of affairs by trying to link with trials to contemporary politics (“Akelarre” 9 Sep 1984, 58; Gil de Muro 1984, n.pag; Martínez Bretón 6), or even displaying a pro-ETA ideology (Martilay 1984, n.pag). For this group, the film’s apparent references to Basque separatism had far-reaching implications, and due to their political importance, they enabled the representation of historical discourse to gain cultural relevance for these groups: *La Prensa Alcarreña* found a clear demagogical tone in the film, especially when applied to the film’s character development (Badia 14), or as in *Vida Nueva* a explicit childish demagogy in delivering a message of perpetual and historical oppression of the Basque nationalism by the Spanish state (Gil de Muro 1984, n.pag), or as *El Alcázar*, supporting this view of facts in the film such as its financial support from the Basque Government, and its treatment of the non-Basque characters, such as the Inquisitor (Martialay 1984, n.pag). Regarding the roles of the Inquisition, *ABC* published an article in its edition of Seville that claimed Olea’s intention of linking past and present to draw a portrait of Castilian/Spanish repression on the Basque country by creating a clash between past archetypes of feminist Basque freemen in the character of Amunia and repressive Castilian forces portrayed by the character of the Inquisitor (J. Colón 73).

This controversy limited itself to right and far right wing newspapers, because even though this controversy reached some programs of Spanish Television (Roldán Larreta 280), it did not reach other sectors of the political spectrum. That is, the newspapers of leftist or regionalist ideology show a different reception from the press, as they do not aim their criticism in signaling any references to present politics but rather

examine the film in cinematic and narrative terms (Aguinaga 10; Cominges n.pag; Egido n.pag; Guarner n.pag; Hurtado 36; Ridruejo n.pag; Unzúe n.pag; Villalobos n.pag). Regarding the latter term, most of the critics recognized the same materialist approach to history present in the film in approaching the role of the Inquisition and a myth such as witchcraft. Whereas the reviews were praising the film for its filming locations and cinematography, most of the criticism related again to the overly explicit content of the story development and the incomplete characterization of the characters (Egido n.pag; Galán n.pag), mostly as the tendency of the plot to present events in black and white. Yet, regarding the role of the Inquisition, the critics do not question the role or the representation of the Holy Office in the film. The reception in Navarre and the Basque Country, stressed the faithfulness of the film (Unzúe n.pag) in representing the economical and social problems that sparked the witchhunts in the region (Aguinaga 10).

These opposing examples of reception of the film, along with the predominant political profile of each one of them raise the question: can the film be easily identified by targeting a regional/leftist sector rather than a Spanish national audience? Roldán Larreta writes that the reason for conservatives to value the film so harshly lies in the fact that “al nacionalismo español le cueste asumir un pasado relativamente cercano y una singularidad vasca indudable / Spanish nationalism could not assume the proximity of the past and the undoubtable Basque singularity” (281). It can then argued that, as had happened to *El Segundo Poder* seven years earlier, the still recently defunct dictatorship determined the polarization of the Spanish press and Spanish politics to a filmed past by referencing contemporary political instability.

To conclude, *Akelarre* is one of the few examples in Spanish film wielding a different approach to the Spanish Inquisition, one that not only does show its actions as an object of repression, but in using a Marxist interpretation of history, presents us with its interaction with the rest of the social classes (the aristocracy, the clergy, and the common folk) based on class struggle as a result of a economical interpretation of the political interactions: the possession of land and its alteration in the balance of political power in a region ruled by its own laws. It presents us with an inquisition that is but another factor -an external one- in the power gaming that takes place in the valley, only to be used as an instrument of repression and subject to be utilized for political purposes. By highlighting its relationship to power, the Inquisition is shown not as a standalone repressive group, but rather it indexed the actual scope of the interaction and presence of the Inquisition at the frontiers of Spain. Although I will develop further this question for the conclusions of this chapter, *Akelarre* remains the most complete film on the actions of the Inquisition to this point.

THE EARLY YEARS OF THE SPANISH INQUISITION IN *TORQUEMADA*

The next film in this chapter is *Torquemada* (1989), a German/French coproduction by German Filmmaker Stanislav Barabas. The justification for including a non-Spanish film in this research requires a brief explanation. To begin with, even the Spanish government in its official documentation lists this film as pertaining to Spanish National Cinema¹⁹. The film's lead actor, Francisco Rabal, was considered by national and international (Nash n.pag) film critics as one of the most recognizable faces in

Spanish National Cinema. Last but not least, Barabas' *Torquemada* is an instrumental piece of history because its representation of Grand Inquisitor Torquemada epitomizes one of the most radical interpretations of the nature and role of the Inquisition, one that links its activities to the actions performed by any dictatorial regime in the 20th century.

A feature film shot for German and French Television, *Torquemada* remains to date the only film devoted to the figure of the Tomás de Torquemada, along with the Catholic Monarchs, the leading figure in the restoration of the Inquisition in Spain. The novel was an adaptation of Polish writer Jerzy Andrzejewski's *The inquisitors* (1960) a story that depicted a nearly amorous relationship between the Grand Inquisitor, Torquemada, and a young monk, Diego (Milosz 1010) while using the Legend of the Inquisition as a critique of Stalinism (Baranczak 65).

The film tells the story of the last years of Chief Inquisitor Torquemada, founder of the Holy Office of the Spanish Inquisition in 1480. Over the years, Torquemada has become an expert in extracting the truth from heretics, assassins, Protestants under cover, and converted Christians, by the means of torture. Years pass and Torquemada recruits Diego, a young illuminated monk who becomes the most ardent pupil of his practices of torture to extract self incriminatory confessions. During an inspection to a town, Torquemada discovers a unique case that puzzles the inquisitors: a tormented blacksmith who claims to having attempted to enter into communion with the Devil, but the latter never showed up, which leads the blacksmith to the conclusion that the Devil must not exist. Torquemada and Diego torture the man, who confesses the truth that he had, in fact, seen the Devil. Torquemada falls ill shortly after, and starts a long agony

that will last for weeks, while suffering high fever which makes him delirious. During a moment of clarity, he realizes how wrong his actions were. He repents for the damage he has caused all over the country and redeems himself by ordering that all of people held prisoner by the Spanish Inquisition be released. Yet, once Torquemada passes away, his puzzled pupil becomes the Chief Inquisition, ignores his mentor's last will, and carries on the work of the Inquisition.

THE STORY OF TOMÁS DE TORQUEMADA

Tomás de Torquemada (1420-1498) was a Spanish Dominican monk who became the first Grand Inquisitor of the Spanish Inquisition in 1483 to his death in 1498. Born into a family of new Christians or *Conversos*, he took the habits and became a monk in Dominican Convent in San Pablo City. Though he became close acquaintances with the monarchs and became the confessor of Queen Isabella of Castile and King Ferdinand of Aragon, he never held any lucrative position and merely served as an advisor for the Catholic Monarchs. In November 1478, Pope Sixtus IV had authorized Isabella and Ferdinand to choose the inquisitors on their land in Castile, and Torquemada became one of five new inquisitors approved by Sixtus IV. In 1479 in Castile and in 1486 Aragon until his death in 1498, he assumed his position of Inquisitor General of Spain, performing his duties with zeal and determination, and formidable relentless. Within a decade, a network of inquisitorial tribunals was developed throughout the country, thus enabling an entire network in the state that was further reinforced after the murder of the Inquisitor Pedro de Arbués in Zaragoza in 1485, which

was attributed to heretics and Jews. He also drafted the first code of the Inquisition in 1484, his *Compilación de las instrucciones del oficio de la Santa Inquisición*. His last years were marked by constant attacks of gout. In 1498, he chaired his last meeting of the Inquisition, not without having fought Pope Alexander VI, who had aimed to retake control of the Inquisition by appointing in 1494, under the excuse of Torquemada's advanced age, four assistants to the Grand Inquisitor.

During the years the Inquisition was led by Torquemada it was characterized by his ruthlessness. Since the loss of archival sources makes most historical research on Torquemada be based on chronicles, it is very difficult to estimate the actual number of executions that took place, but even historians against passionately biased negative depictions of the Inquisition such as Henry Kamen and Joseph Pérez, agree in defining the first 40 years of the Inquisition as the most violent period of the Holy Office: "it was during this inauguration period that the greatest number of sentences were passed, most of them death sentences" (Joseph Pérez 2003, 105). Conservative authors estimate that under his authority, 2,000 people were sentenced to death (Drees 484). Torquemada processed people of all social strata, including noblemen and high clergy such as Toledan Bishop Davila, in the most violent years of the entire Inquisition, its early days. Yet, it is not only the most violent image of the Spanish Inquisition, it is the one that has prevailed through its 350 years of existence.

STAGES OF INTERPRETATION: TORQUEMADA, THE INCARNATION OF FANATICISM

Torquemada remains to this day, one of the few inquisitors to have been studied extensively -yet not profoundly- by historians of the Inquisition (Perez Villanueva 34). Historiographically, Torquemada, owing to his role during the most violent years of the Inquisition, has been subject to a passionate interpretation of his mandate as a symbol of religious intolerance and the face of the Spanish Inquisition and the Catholic Monarch's religious policy. Spanish chronicler Sebastian Olmedo praised Torquemada during his own time for being "the hammer of heretics, the light of Spain, the savior of his country, and the honor of his order" (quotes in Ott n.pag).

Sabatini's *Torquemada and the Spanish Inquisition* (1913), attempted to confection an unbiased account of the life and mandate of Torquemada as Grand Inquisitor, only to confection an irate account of Torquemada full of inaccuracies that stressed the Inquisitorial practices (incrimination, torture, for instance) uniquely terrible and unjust in their time, only to ignore their resemblance to those of the secular Justice (Jarrett 243).

Decades later, Thomas Hope described Torquemada in *Torquemada scourge of the Jews* (1939) drew one of the most radical views in historiography on Torquemada. By describing Torquemada as a bigot and a sadist, Hope recreated a monster whose cruelty foretold was a match to contemporary Spanish politics epitomized by the fascist regime of Francisco Franco and the German Nazi Regime (Hope 11).

Despite the turn in international and Spanish historiography of the Inquisition in the 1960s and 1970s, Torquemada continued and continues to spark the interest of the historians who produce works on his role in a passionate manner such as Simon Whitechapel *Flesh Inferno* (2002), and Enid Golberg's *Tomas de Torquemada: Architect of Torture during the Spanish Inquisition* (2008). Hence his image throughout the years has been the subject of a constant ardent interpretation that, according to Inquisition historian Perez Villanueva, has mainly been approached in an unscientific manner (34). Only a few historians have brought a different picture of him, such as Longhurst's *The Age of Torquemada*, which depicts him as a man in tune with his age, whose methods of repression (torture, tribunals) differed little from their civil counterparts in the rest of Western Europe.

Regarding personality and appearance, Torquemada's appearance has also changed over the centuries. Early historians of the Inquisition depiction depicted him as a bloodlust state official who lived in wealth and used the confiscated properties of those he condemned to afford the expenses of his luxurious funeral and sarcophagus. Now there is relative agreement in that he was a zealous man who lived in a stern asceticism, as one of the anecdotes on his life is that he convinced his sister to choose nunnery over marriage. But it also shows a man absorbed by his task to such an extent that he rejected higher posts within the Catholic Church, and a tormented soul who wore at all times a cilice (horse hair shirt) beneath his robes and next to his skin in accordance with the practices of penance of the time.

Among popular arts, Torquemada has been depicted as a particular vessel of state brutality (one example is the science fiction graphic novel *Torquemada* published by IPC Media, or even in a more comical yet a sadist registry as in Mel Brook's *History of the World*, 1981), a byword for inhuman cruelty (a recent example of this utilization is the sadist figure of the 15th century Chief Inquisitor in Darren Aronofsky's *The Fountain*, 2006). These examples serve to highlight the implications of the film reception in bringing this figure to film. Indeed, like the life of historical figures that inspire hatred in the historical consciousness of western Europeans, any film on Torquemada must face the embedment this raw image among audience -Spanish and non-Spanish audiences. Hence, any film picture of him will have to deal with this greater historical consciousness and assume it as part of its production/creation. Also for people involved in creating a film on Torquemada it is impossible to ignore his "myth" in the Barthesian interpretation of history.

TORQUEMADA AND THE TASKS OF HISTORY

Barabas' film hinges on many of the topics and details of the persona of the Grand Inquisitor. *Torquemada* is a piece of history that creates a Torquemada that fits within the public image in the 1980s as a symbol of religious fanaticism and Spanish history. The film uses a certain psychological approach to the figures of the Grand Inquisitor and his Secretary Diego, as being the film more concerned about the psychological profile of the man behind the figure than with his role as the inquisitor. It employs an approach to history which is closer to a dystopian reality rather than to that

of the political film genre. The representation evokes the tone of a trend in historiography (epitomized in Hope's work) that link the Inquisition to the worst activities of totalitarian regimes in the 20th century, as they aim not to convert heretics or dissidents to the establishment but rather seek their systematic annihilation.²⁰

The film *recounts* a fictional history of Torquemada and Diego between 1486 and 1498 and uses their figures to show how the ideological and repressive methods of the Inquisition secure its establishment and perpetuation, conveying a dark picture of Spain in the 15th century which takes after the English title of the film *Darkness Covers the Earth*. The film conveys a picture of Torquemada as a highly efficient bureaucrat who performs his duties zealously, yet from the very beginning of the film, the actor who plays Torquemada presents us with an illuminated inquisitor isolated from the rest of society, who only contacts common people when trying or torturing them. He is an inflexible inquisitor who does not present the sadist nature of the depiction of the Black Legend. As the actor himself defines the character, he had a soft harshness, a kind of angelical evil, fully believing what he was doing was good (E.F.E. 1989, 59). His historical portrayal in film renders him as a bearer of many of the bywords of the Inquisition: zeal in preserving the purity of faith over any other goal, usage of violence to inspire terror and societal control, attempt to become a *thought police* that aims to know and control the thoughts of every believer, and an institution more concerned with preserving itself than saving souls, as Torquemada states when he urges all of the inquisitors to make their penalties severe in order to consolidate terror among the population, in such a way that it will prevail forever. His dark character is not driven by

a lust for power, or bloodlust, but rather it is the ultimate expression of fanaticism, the rejection of a higher end -the saving of souls- and the maintenance of power itself. As an initial counterpart to the character of Torquemada, the film presents us with a tormented Diego, an archetypical sorcerer's apprentice whose innocent yet totalitarian vision of the role of religion to avoid injustice in the world leads him to need to believe in a solid truth that can solve the problems of humanity once for all. The broader historical context in the film is provided by the scenes which show the process of implementation of the tribunal in its era: the futile resistance that it encounters from those who oppose to it and the zeal of those who support it.

The film *explains* how the polarization between these two forces is not a seesaw but a tensionless process in which the Inquisition prevails at all times, due to the efficacy of the zeal and blind devotion of the inquisitors. Any attempt to question or attack the institution is defeated: for instance when the abbot quotes the effectiveness of Vicente Ferrer, who converted thousands of infidels to Catholicism, he is bluntly replied by Torquemada on the grounds that that words are only powerful while they are backed up by the sword). Violent attacks on the member of tribunal (the attempted murders on Torquemada, and the successful assassination of the Inquisitor of Aragón) only help consolidate its power.

The story is itself a blunt, dramatic interpretation of the history of the Inquisition which uses a certain dystopian *interpretation* of history -once again very close to an Orwellian conception of authoritarian regimes- the consolidation of the Inquisition is understood as needing a permanent prosecution of heretics and converts, because "power

is not a means, it is an end”²¹ (Orwell 321). Therein lies the nature of the Inquisition, as an institution whose survival depends on the belief that the hunt for heretics must not stop at all costs.

The process of social embedding of the Inquisition is performed through fear, but among the Inquisitors, it is the result of a flawless belief in their code, as it happens when Torquemada orders an inquisitor not to hit the prisoners during interrogation and go by the rules and means of interrogation. Yet, although many scenes prove this depiction throughout the film, with the passing of time, it becomes clearer that the inquisitor presents a double standard when it comes to understanding the applications of the codes. The torture scenes serve to present him as a man who goes by or against the book only when it is convenient to the end of the Inquisition itself. An example of this is when he orders the exhumation of the corpse of the murdered chief inquisitor of Aragon in order to celebrate a lavish funeral and deliver a message of strength to the enemies of the Inquisition, or when they ignore the rules of their tribunal in order not to fall behind their quota of condemned heretics and impress the monarchs of Spain. Their own codes must be broken if that justifies maintaining the power of the institution.

The film *interprets* by exposing the fragility of this thread of thought in the final transition of Torquemada. Tormented by his crimes, he no longer finds any reason to carry on his mission, nor find a way to stop the inquisitorial wheels from turning on: The Inquisition aim is not to save souls, but to preserve a certain structure of power. The film refers to the famous line by Nazi Minister Joseph Goebbels, that a big lie told many times eventually becomes the truth for the people (quoted in Stille 16). Assuming the lie

leaves the participants with a dilemma, there is no turning back, as this would mean questioning their very work and *raison d'être*.

STRATEGIES OF REPRESENTATION

In order to create a Grand Inquisitor that fits within these premises of dystopian representation of history, the film resorts to cinematographic and historical strategies of representation that portray a raw and obscure image of the institution. The very way in which Spain is represented contributes to attach an apocalyptic tone to the story: dust, sweat, intense natural lighting, accompanied by a reverberating cello music (which turns into the Inquisition's dark leitmotif) work effectively to that end.

Along with its gloomy visual representation, *Torquemada* utilizes a series of strategies in order to represent history from Torquemada's and Diego's perspectives. The film *omits* any reference to the foundation of the Holy Office or the early career of Torquemada, as it barely delves into the theological way or thought of the Grand Inquisitor. The film *condenses* almost 15 years or the life of Torquemada, but does not show the relation of the Holy Office with the civil power of the State, nor with society except for the trials, thus enhancing the isolation and standalone nature of the tribunal.

The film's historical *alterations* and *inventions* are greatly responsible for rendering a tenebrous portrayal of the Inquisition. For instance, by *altering* the proceedings in condemning the accused, the film is enhancing the brutality of the Inquisition. By showing the inquisitors burning those condemned and denying the process of strangling even though they have repented from their sins, the film enhances

the darkness of the tribunal and subverts its original religious mission: to recover the souls of those who lost their way, but above all, to avoid the Jewish and heretic communities to have martyrs for their cause.

The film's *inventions* are related not only to Torquemada's life but also to the very role of the Inquisition. This an effective strategy to reinforce the film's ideological coherence and manifests itself in episodes such as the letter from the Pope underlines the existence of a tense relationship with the papacy as a result of the numerous *Conversos* who had flown to Rome and denounced the atrocities committed by Torquemada. Moreover, it shows the power that Torquemada exerted over his superiors. By showing how innocent people and supporters of the Inquisition (the Captain of the escort of Torquemada) are killed by Torquemada to convert Diego to his cause, the film insists in a vision of the Inquisition as a power device with no consideration for human beings, who are considered expendable assets that help keep the ranks of the Inquisition and its presence itself in society.

No doubt, the most important *alteration* and *invention* for rendering history in the film is the relationship between Torquemada and Diego. There exists no proof that Diego de Deza, second Grand Inquisitor, ever became Torquemada's secretary or pupil - at the time when he succeeded Torquemada, he was in his late fifties, by no means the young man the film depicts-. Yet, by *altering* his life, the film succeeds in presenting an initial nemesis to Torquemada who soon becomes a sorcerer's apprentice. His transition as Chief Inquisitor renders a metaphorical representation history, as it represents the tragedy of fanaticism embedded in Spanish society: to die or to become one of them.

The *inventions* in the scenes depicting Torquemada's eventual change of mind - he peacefully resigned from the Holy Office five years before his death at Avila- works to underline the previous statement, but also works as another historical assertion by the filmmakers: the fragility of the Tribunal, the impossibility in contradicting the Tribunal by releasing a prisoner, owing to nothing whatsoever without obtaining a confession at any cost, at the expense of the truth and in benefit of terror. The slightest doubt -however factual it may be- can shatter the entire ideological structure of the Inquisition and must be repressed. This is shown when Torquema utters "Y si todo esto fuera un error / What if all of this is a mistake?," exposing the fragility of their belief in their mission and faith, one that shatters with the conjunction of Torquemada's failing health and the case of a man who does not succeed in entering into communion with the Devil.

RECEPTION AND CONCLUSION

The film's limited distribution in Spain impairs the analysis of its reception, as the film only sold 15,400 tickets²² in Spain. Besides, it does not seem to have gained a great visibility, as the number of the film reviews found reach for only three, and they rated the film negatively as bad or poor during its first month of screening. As far as their content is concerned, though, they clearly showed an interest for the manner in which Barabás interpreted and explained the figure of Torquemada: *ABC* criticized the socially isolated imaged of Torquemada epitomized by the repeated usage of the torture scenes (Santos Fontela 115). As well as *Guia del Ocio*, which labeled the film as lacking ambition in its technical details. According to it, the lack of narrative cohesion impaired

the film from even developing any sort of historical message (Marinero 10). All of the four reviews highlighted the potential for cinematic purposes in bringing into the screen the figure of Torquemada, but criticize its lack of character development.

All in all, *Torquemada* is another example of metonymic recreation of the Inquisition: within the relation between the object (torture, execution, intolerance) and the subject (the Inquisition), the latter characterizes itself attributively within a context (the film) of transferring historical significance and transcendence. These problems underscore, as a means of describing the life of Torquemada, how any filmic representation of him will have to deal with a widespread historical consciousness and assume it.

GOYA'S GHOSTS, THE INQUISITION AT THE TWILIGHT OF MODERNITY

The last film in this chapter is a feature film which precisely brings us to the last period of the Holy Office. *Goya's Ghosts* (Milos Forman, 2006), is a film that, because of its historical treatment of the figure of Spanish painter Francisco Goya, brings to the screen an interpretation of the Spanish society moral life remains kidnapped by the Holy Office in the transition from early modernity to modernity. Moreover, *Torquemada* in Forman's film, the Holy Office finds in torture one of the archetypes that conforms its negative historical image.

The end of the 18th century and the beginning of 19th century is perhaps the most crucial time for Spain's international image and self perception as a nation. It was a period of profound reform in the country, as a result of the implementation of

Enlightened policies that aimed to modernize the country, which were interrupted by the invasion by Napoleonic France. The War of Independence (1808-1814) set the pace for Spanish politics in the 19th century: recurrent civil wars and political dissent plagued the country until 1875, and it eventually deprived Spain from any stable economical reforms, which would result in a cultural, industrial, political gap with the rest of western powers.

Coinciding with this gap from the leading European countries, the image of a dark Spain, subject to conservatism and religion became further bound to that of the Inquisition. The 19th century, in agreement with Henry Kamen, is responsible for the creation of the myth of an almighty, torture-mad Inquisition (Kamen 1998, 306). Partly to blame for this is the existence the so called Spanish Black Legend, since for the first time in the history of Spain, there existed two references from inside that openly criticized the existence of a harmful religious repression and superstition epitomized by the Spanish Inquisition: the paintings by Francisco Goya, and perhaps less known for those not familiar with the history of the Spanish Inquisition, the history of the Holy Office written by former Inquisitor Francisco Llorente.

According to E. Peters, Goya's drawings contributed to a resurfacing of the Black Legend, insofar as his work allowed previous written accounts on the myth of the Black Legend of Spain and that of the Spanish Inquisition to acquire a visual counterpart (Peters 190). For instance, the series of the *Caprichos* (1798), his painting *The Inquisition Auto de Fe* (1812-19), and later drawings such as *Galileo, por descubrir el movimiento (sic) de la tierra* (1823), all of them depict Spain as a dark country ruled by

the harmful fundamentalist power of the Inquisition and a counter culture equally powerful: superstition.

More controversial, because of the ecclesiastical nature of its author, was the *Histoire critique de l'Inquisition espagnole* written by former Inquisition commissioner Juan Antonio Llorente in 1817. A history report on the operations, misdoings, and atrocities committed by the Inquisitio, this work “criticized the Inquisition for inhibiting the development of the arts, industry and trade, and condemned inquisitors for being motivated by financial greed rather than religious uniformity” (Rawlings 6). Both Goya’s and Llorente’s work would form part of a larger international perspective on Spain from arts and historians that highlighted how Spain and the rest of Europe were ideologically, economically, and in most spheres, out of phase.

Goya’s Ghosts is a melodramatic film which deals with the role of the Inquisition in the transition of Spain from early modernity to Classical modernity. The reactionary opposition to this transition is epitomized by the Inquisition, whose representation is the result of the interaction of three factors: the contemporary drawings by Goya, the personal experiences of the filmmaker that shaped his understanding of the role of the Spanish Inquisition, and its coincidence with contemporary events.

The film is set in Spain in 1792. Upon the release of Francisco Goya’s etchings *Los Caprichos*, which criticize the superstition of the Spanish people and the rule of the Spanish Inquisition, father Lorenzo calls the Holy Office to return to the old ways and perform their duties with greater severity. Young Inés, muse of Goya, is arrested by the Inquisition and confesses being a Judaizer after being tortured. Tomás de Bilbatua, Inés’

father, pleas unsuccessfully for her release, while father Lorenzo abuses Inés in prison. Tomás leads Lorenzo into an ambush, puts him *to the question*, the same form of torture that the Inquisition applied to Inés, and has Lorenzo sign a document certifying that he is a monkey. Having failed to secure the release of Inés, Lorenzo is declared a heretic by the Church after the document is released and he flees to France. Fifteen years later Napoleon invades Spain and abolished the Inquisition. Lorenzo has returned from his exile embracing the ideals of the French Revolution and as Napoleon's state prosecutor. He is directly commissioned as prosecutor in the trial of against the former Chief Inquisitor and rest of the members of the Holy Office. Inés, who has been kept in prison awaiting her trial, is released. She meets Goya, and they both look for the daughter that she had with Lorenzo. Goya and Inés come to Lorenzo for help but the latter secludes Inés in an asylum while he finds her daughter Alicia, who works as a prostitute. Fearing a scandal, Lorenzo has Alicia deported to America, but a British army captures the convoy on its way and releases her. Lorenzo is captured by partisans after the French troops are driven off the country. The Inquisition is reestablished and condemns Lorenzo to be executed by garrote.

Goya's Ghosts is coproduced between American producer Saul Zaentz and Spanish studio Xuxa Producciones, and directed the direction of Czech filmmaker Milos Forman. A director whose films feature a critique of those who abuse power and the impotence of men when confronting injustice (*The people versus Larry Flynt* in 1996, or in *Ragtime* in 1981), Milos Forman's historical interpretation of the Inquisition was deeply determined by his life experiences. The Nazi occupation of the Czech Republic

(Forman's parents were arrested by the Gestapo and died in a concentration camp during WWII (interview in Belategui 7 Nov 2006, 68)) and the repression suffered by the Czech Communist police in his youth determined Forman's historical view on the injustice committed by states and religious fundamentalism. This experience left an imprint on his historical conception and interpretation of the Inquisition (interview in J. Fernández 31; interview in Marta Perez 8), especially after studying the case of a woman processed by the Inquisition who had gone mad after having been wrongly tried (Khan 18).

Indeed, as well as Stanislav Barabás in making *Torquemada*, Forman drew parallels among Nazism, Communism, and the Inquisition as a result of his readings on the Inquisition and life experiences. This approach led him and co-script writer Jean Claude Carriere to develop a dystopian view of the universality of torture as a form of repression. In using a certain perception of Spain as one of the most obsolete and reactionary nations in Europe in 18th and 19th centuries, a country where the ideas of Enlightenment had not deepened because of the isolation imposed by the Spanish Inquisition (Carriere interviewed in Dopazo 6), Forman and Carriere attempted to portray the Spanish Inquisition in such a way which could apply to any form of state repression in history. It is because of this idea of the permanence of anachronistic modes of repression in present times, that the representation of the Inquisition in *Goya's Ghosts* becomes associated and real in the 21st century.

TASKS OF HISTORY

As a work of history, *Goya's Ghosts* recreates the last decades of the Inquisition while fitting the institution within a historical framework of contemporary referentiality. Employing a contemporary criticism, we are presented with a look into the operations of the Inquisition which turns the film into a historical essay on the universal nature of oppression of humanity by men themselves. By choosing to identify the Inquisition with its most inhumane and brutal aspects, the film draws parallels to a contemporary issue that stirred controversy in politics and human rights in 2006: the torture and imprisonment of untried suspects as a result of the War on Terror launched by the US Government in the 2000s. Employing a certain conception of social concern filmmaking, the film creates a certain contemporary criticism in depicting the Holy Office as an institution whose actions in the past, present, and future, are likely to happen in every society.

The story *recounted* in the film is a melodramatic tale in which each one of its characters serves as a means of illustrating an era: a former Inquisitor converted into his own political nemesis; an innocent girl, tortured, raped, and deprived of her senses; and a painter whose paintings turn into an exposé of the changes of an era that he witnesses. The Inquisition presented in the film is a tribunal which in the year 1793 rebels against its fainting power, being limited to that of a censor of ideas in arts and books. The characterization of its members (inquisitors and familiars) ridicules the purity of faith they pretend to represent and enforce in reviving their days of greater severity. Forman presents us with decadent zealot inquisitors (their wigs out of place and unshaved faces

indeed create a rough depiction), who seem ignorant in matters of faith and self-indulgent in staring at the naked body of a tortured girl.

Using a particular interpretation of the actions of the Holy Office more akin to its actions in the 15th and 16th centuries, *Goya's Ghosts* represents an institution not limited neither waning but rather reviving in the 18th century, prosecuting members of the high upper class for the rather trivial matter at the end of the 18th century of being a Judaizer. This interpretation manifests itself in the alteration of many parts of the process of Inés de Bilbatúa, but especially in the most brutal and unjust aspects of the operations of the Inquisition: her torture, her remaining untried, and lack of rejection and firm believe in the use of torture on part of the Catholic faith, all of which epitomize the intolerance of the State and its ultimate repressive actions on any individual by the Holy Office. Torture, portrayed through the technique of *strappado* already abandoned by the late 18th century by the Inquisition, becomes the trademark of darkness epitomized by the Inquisition. The Inquisition turns into a fanatical tribunal, defined by its most controversial aspects which draw a picture of intolerance. It is this very definition through religious fundamentalism and torture that draws parallels with the unavoidable events on the international scene in 2006: the findings of the torture by US officers at Abu Ghraib using some of the same techniques as the Inquisition in the film (*strappado*), or the overextended untried imprisonment of war prisoners in Guantánamo Bay since 2003. Forman stated in an interview that the recent scandal tortures by US soldiers at Abu Ghraib²³ were the living proof that same torture had been by the Inquisition and

later was being applied by the German Nazis, the Czech Communists, and the US government (Belategui 7 Nov 2006, 68; Doria 4).

There existing parallels between the war in Iraq and the French Invasion, which Spanish and international media (Costa n.pag; Elorza 2003, n.pag) and politicians (Prieto n.pag) had already noticed during since 2003, explain why a society like Spain fails to detach itself from superstition and obscurantism. The futility of French invaders in forcing Spaniards to embrace the ideals of the French Revolution that might liberate them from the absolutism and the Inquisition, is epitomized during the execution of Lorenzo, when the crows yells the historical hail “Vivan las caenas / Hail to the chains,” which symbolizes their contempt for the freedom offered by the French Revolution. The failure of a forced conversion of Spain into modernity is itself another historical event that evokes the contemporary issue thee of the U.S. Invasion of Iraq in 2003. The similarity in the sociological outcome of both wars had already been drawn by parliament member Iñaki Anasagasti in 2003 at the house of Congress in Madrid in order to criticize Spain’s participation in the U.S. occupation of Iraq. According to Anasagasti, just like the French invasion of Spain in 1808, the operation “Iraqi Freedom,” though projected as the liberation of the Iraqi people from the control of religious fundamentalism, it only served to unite an entire country against a common enemy and hence reaffirm the reactionary forces.

The film *explains* and *interprets* this pulse between early modernity and modernity by describing the decadence of the Spanish society through the pictorial prism of Goya which encompasses three different social levels: monarchy and the Inquisition.

The representation of the royalty matches the cynical realism which is present in this portrait *La familia de Carlos IV* (1801). The clumsiness of the king, his false heroics in “hunting,” and his flamboyant attire with blazing medals only reinforce the falseness of his image as a leader and his apathy for governing a country when he does not take a real interest in the case of Inés. The Queen’s concerns for her public image sharply contrast with the crude reality of her ugliness, doubly depicted on the canvases and the film.

Concerning the second and third level of society, the film *justifies* its portrayal of the Inquisition and its historical context by physically exposing those drawings and etchings by Goya. This usage of pictorial source hinges on two levels of presence in the film: documentary and cinematographic. Regarding the former, the film *justifies* its representation of the Inquisition by repeatedly resorting to etchings from the series *Caprichos* (1797-98), *Desastres de la Guerra* (1810-20), and the *C and F Albums* (1804-1824), as a form of documenting the plausibility of the fanatical image of the Inquisition. To begin with, the film’s opening combines different etchings that related to the Inquisition and its most shocking aspects. The film opens with the sketch *Tortura de un hombre* (*Album F.56*), a drawing of a man being tortured with the *strappado* technique, being following by etchings of diverse yet similarly obscure themes: witchcraft (*Capricho 28 Linda Maestra*), and devil worship, among them, the grotesque *Capricho 67: Aguarda que te unten*, only to return to drawings depicting imprisonment and torture when we see the Inquisitors holding the drawings such as *La seguridad de un reo no exige tormento*. We then return to etchings where Goya mocks superstition (*Capricho 49: Duendecillos*), and finally return to three drawings the depict scenes of trials and

execution that directly or indirectly relate to the Inquisition: *Capricho 23: Brujería de poca monta: aquellos polvos* and *Capricho 24: No hubo remedio* are continued by the non Inquisitorial drawing *Desastres 33: Por un cuchillo*. These images present us with what will later appear on the film: the cruelty applied in the punishment of those processed by the Inquisition and the cruelty of the crowds. *Por un cuchillo*, by showing a man being garroted while holding a cross in his hands, evokes the scene of the execution of Lorenzo at the end of the film. The drawings open the debate between Lorenzo and the Grand Inquisitors regarding the feasibility of the superstitious content depicted on them, which the Inquisitors at the insistence of Lorenzo eventually admit as real. The *justification* of the existence torture and repression of the Inquisition lies within the acceptance by the Inquisition of the reality of all of the drawings by Goya.

Yet, the work by Goya not only serves to support a certain image of the Inquisition: they also functioned as powerful visual references for the film's historical reconstruction and mise-en-scène. Indeed, the film's formal features are inspired by the paintings by Goya. For instance, as Figure 7 shows below, the painting *Auto de Fe* (1812) has a decisive influence on the characterization, lighting and composition, framing and atmosphere to the trial of Lorenzo: the same dramatic light breaks into the middle of the room, enhancing the position of the accused on the stand surrounded by other culprits, the court, the scribes, and the blurred spectators in the back. Even though there is not gothic architecture at the back, the usage of tapestries, increases the sense of confinement and darkness of the court.



Figure 7. Comparison of a captured frame from *Goya's Ghosts* and F. Goya's painting *Auto de Fe* (1812).

The influence of Goya's painting also applies to other scenarios. Throughout the film the same contrast exists between the luminous textures of the court scenes and the darker lighting used in taverns and the Inquisition quarters. The former is close to that of his tapestry cartoons and the portraits of members of the Royal Family in *Maria Luis a caballo* (1799): usage of clear backgrounds on luminous settings with non flattering characterization of the portrayed, stiff posture of the model, and rich detailed garment. The high-level lighting of the court portraits and film scenes sharply contrasts with the usage of *chiaroscuro* (light and shadow) to highlight the position of in the scenes of torture that resemble *La seguridad de un reo no exige tormento* (1810-14).

STRATEGIES OF REPRESENTATION

These visual justifications are also part of the strategies of representation of history in the film that accounts for the creation of an Inquisition suited for the mentality and expectations of the sociopolitical reality in the 2000s. This representation conveys two main ideas on the Inquisition: its universality depicted through its recurrent

activities and comebacks, and its metonymic association through torture. Regarding the former idea, by *condensing* all of the four Grand Inquisitors that chaired the Holy Office from 1793-1814 into one, the film conveys the idea of a continuity in the leadership of the Office' which evokes its ever-lasting nature and therefore its capacity to reappear. This apparently undying power is enhanced by the complete omission of the harsh official criticism against the Inquisition that came from many of the ministers and state officers of Charles IV that aimed to derogate or even abolish the Holy Office (Lama 172).

Being a fictionalized account of events under a strong melodramatic registry, the film relies on strategies of *alteration* and *invention* in order to depict the Inquisition as an established institution whose power does not grow fainter on the threshold of a new era. Torture and Inquisition become one. The alterations in the film work together to present us with a tribunal that fits into the traits of the Romantic legend of the Inquisition and its early days: a fanatical tribunal which resorts to torture as the only means of extracting the truth. The use of the *strappado*, though almost abandoned since the 17th century as it had being substituted by the safer rack because of the high number of cases of dislocation (Escudero 342), allows for a even more atrocious means of torture.

The *alteration* of the concept of torture reinforces operates in the same capacity. Though an accused had the choice of rejecting any confession extracted through the means of torture -at the cost of being tortured again by the Inquisitors to extract a new confession- physical coercion is theologically presented in the film not as an instrument of truth but as part of the dogma of the Church, or as the Grand Inquisitors defines it "the

basic principles of our faith.” This *alteration* in the interpretation of the theological faith draws parallels with *Torquemada*, insofar as representation of the Inquisition it resorts to the widespread misconception that torture was a dogmatic matter for the Inquisition. This overtly negative depiction of the Inquisition is reinforced by the conclusion that being a confessed Judaizer in the 18th century would necessarily carry a severe penalty, whereas that penalty accounted for less than one per cent of the cases that the Inquisition deal with in the time in most regions of Spain (Torres Arce 28). The same intention in conveying a cruder image of the Inquisition is more arguably inferred from the depiction of the dungeons of the Inquisition, depicting Inés naked surrounded by men. Contrary to popular conception, conditions in Inquisitorial prisons were generally better than in civil prisons, to such an extent that often prisoners would blaspheme or pretend to be heretics in order to be transferred from a secular prison to one of the Inquisition (Kamen 1998, 184; Rawlings 31). Hence the metonymic representation of the Inquisition, insofar as an object (torture) of a subject (Holy Office) creates a *semantic switch*, and the Inquisition is defined by but one of its most scandalous aspects.

The *inventions* of the film allow for its narrative development but they also strengthen its message. By creating an Inquisitor that turns into a fervent advocate of the French Revolution, the film is not only underlining the ideological malleability of the Inquisitor, but also echoing actual historical figures such as one of the most influential critics of the Inquisition: Juan Antonio Llorente.²⁴ The *invention* of the character of Lorenzo allows not only for the creation of the archetypical opportunist villain, but also to hint at one of the least represented scenes in film, an auto de fe in the 19th century. His

trial becomes another example of the crude representation of the Inquisition. Besides having him wear the penitential Sanbenito garment before he is even tried, the film resorts to another object embedded in the historical memory the Inquisition in audiences. Yet, his invented trial allows for evoking greater historical truths, such as the actual nature of the Inquisition: by offering Lorenzo the chance to reject his revolutionary beliefs and embrace the Catholic faith again in exchange for his life, the film is telling us the actual goal of the Inquisition: to avoid the enemies of the faith be provided with martyrs for their cause.

RECEPTION AND CONCLUSION

With a budget of more than 16 million dollars, the film only grossed 1.6 million euros in Spain,²⁵ and worldwide earned 9.4 million dollars,²⁶ the film did poorly at the box office. In Spain, *Goya's Ghosts* received mixed responses from the film press. The analysis of 28 film reviews published during the first month of release reveals a majority of negative reviews (14) accounting for below average (10) and bad (4) ratings; whereas 11 reviews gave positive ratings, divided in good (11), excellent (1) and fair (1). The analysis of these reviews does not show any specific geographical or ideological adscription when rating the film. Except for a few critics, all of the negative and positive reviews praised the film when it came to discussing its technical details, above all, the cinematography by Javier Aguirre and the staging of the film. Both negative and positive reviews criticized the film for its schematic account of events (Casas Nov 2006, 12), pointing to a lack of depth in narrative and character development (Merikaetxebarria 50)

with the resulting fragmented story and multiple plots (Bermejo 17 Nov 2006, 23) that impaired the delivery of the message of the film (Méndez Leite 18).

Whereas the film reviews published before the release of the film strike on the similarity between contemporary actions and the Spanish past (F. Fernández 20 Nov 2006, 38; Salvador 40), the same debate does not share the same presence in reviews published after the film's premiere. The link between the Spanish past and contemporary politics, or the universality of its history, is only referred by some (4) of the critics. Veteran film critic Quim Casas defined the film as a conception of filmmaking that offers reflections about the present times by reconstructing past events more or less close to the present (Casas 2006,12). In this sense, Ramón Doria explicitly compared the jailhouses of the Inquisition with the conditions at the prisons in Guatanamo Bay (4); another to the validity of state repression which is still in force (Khan 19) and a last one points to a recurrent cycle in history (Jansa 49).

Some of the reviews criticize the film for displaying a partial depiction of Spanish history, as it only focuses on the darkest aspects of the history of Spain, offering an overtly obscure portrait of the country (F. Fernández 20 Nov 2006, 38). In this sense, the press pointed to the film's similarity to in other period films of released in the same year, such as *Alatriste*, insofar both films shared non-idealizing representation of the past of the country (F. Fernández 20 Nov 2006, 38; M. Pérez 8).

CONCLUSION

The analysis of the reception of the film among film critics point to the disparity between the intention of the filmmaker (to draw a universal historical setting within the film) and the intentionality (his actual message delivered and received through the film). Criticized by its narrative inconsistencies and time warps, the majority of the reviews by Spanish critics saw in *Goya's Ghosts* only a repetitive dark portrayal of Spain which stood along with the high-art gloss of the cinematography of the film, the lure in historical recreation, and the macabre, almost ghoulish, depiction of the Inquisition. This topic becomes the main narrative thread of the first half of the film, reminding us of the depiction of the Holy Office that we saw in films examined in previous chapters (*El Segundo Poder*, *Torquemada*): a repressive institution closely bound to torture. Although torture was widely utilized by European nations, its monopoly and zeal by the Spanish Inquisition in the film binds both ideologically, insofar as the object (torture) and the subject (the Inquisition) become one in a historiographical-semantic switch. In doing so, *Goya's Ghosts* renders a more credible portrayal of the Inquisition that matches the common prejudices of the public image of the Inquisition.

CONCLUSIONS: A DOMINATING DARK FILMIC PORTRAYAL OF THE SPANISH INQUISITION... YET, IS THERE ANY OTHER POSSIBLE WAY?

Through the last five films I have discussed the role of Inquisition in film focusing in its role delivering a certain message. It has been seen that in using different subgenres (melodrama, thriller, western), the Inquisition plays a different role in each.

Despite the utterly chronological and genre diversity of the films discussed in this chapter, it is important to account for many of its common points that can allow us to point to an existing evolution in the representation of the Inquisition on Spanish film.

As happened with the biopic and the political period films examined previously, the advent of democracy in 1975 sparked a radical switch in the narrative and visual ways of depicting the Inquisition on film. Regarding narrative, the genre narratively evolves from being an active instrument of reconciliation (*La Dama del Armíño*), to a drag on the modernization of the country (*Goya's Ghosts*). The filmic representation of the Inquisition presents an intrinsic relationship between aesthetics and truth in which what matters is not the ability of the arts to reveal the scholarly truth, but to create its own truths. It may seem that the whole is identified by one its parts, in this case, the most spectacular of them: torture. In the depiction of the Inquisition in this role, we can point to an existing association between the Inquisition and violence. An identification that draws all of the attention of the Holy Office into its most emotional and polemic aspects: torture, injustice, intolerance. This identification evolves from being an object of contemporary referentiality in *El Segundo Poder* into a basic dogmatic principle of the Holy Office in *Goya's Ghosts*. The relationship between violence and Inquisition reaches its ultimate metonymic identification with *Torquemada*, when violence and terror become the essence of the institution.

The analysis of these films proves that the Inquisition is less subject to this limited portrayal when it is not the main character in the film, or inquisitors used as main characters. Paradoxically, the films which do not focus on these figures, allow not only

for a broader view of the Holy Office but also a deeper one. For instance, in *La Dama del Armuña* the patronizing, yet secondary, figure of the Gran Inquisitor becomes instrumental in delivering a positive message on the role of the Holy Office through the description of one of its non-violent tasks: the redemption and penance of one its members; and also for the mission of the Inquisition in securing the religious homogeneity of Spain. In the same manner, *Akelarre* allows not only for a broader but also deeper perspective that places the Inquisition and its relation to all of the social strata, including upper and lower class, and account for the usage of its religious zeal as a weapon of repression to meddle into non-religious but political affairs. Yet, when focusing on any member of the Inquisition in any capacity, the *familiar* (*El Segundo Poder*), a leading inquisitor (*Goya's Ghosts*) or the Grand Inquisitor (*Torquemada*), the films result in a cryptic development of the character personae of the Inquisitor as the result of the films' criticism of the repressive nature of the Holy Office.

I have perhaps displayed what somebody may interpret as too a positive tone in describing the representation of the Inquisition on film. But, as a historian, one must analyze and judge the historical figures and events from a perspective that places them into the time and circumstances when they took place. Yet, I am not trying to illustrate that the Inquisition is not depicted in film as accurately as a historian would wish, but rather to remind of its archetypical usage in a recurring fashion to encapsulate religious fanaticism, something that does not break the mold of popular history. The constant identification between the Inquisition and its most controversial features (torture, violence, illogical religious intolerance) conveys a portrayal of the Inquisition which

matches the passionate Romantic Legend, presenting a standalone institution with the royal consent of Spanish monarch, but this very image leaves aside instrumental matters regarding the larger role of the Inquisition in society, its relation with other forces of power and its integration in a society for 350 years.

Being the Inquisition an instrument of enforcement of religious orthodoxy, and being the film a dramatic medium of expression, one must wonder how a film can avoid featuring the most *spectacular* aspects of the Holy Office. My contention is that the overtly passionate schematic negative conception of the Inquisition leads -as it has- to a historically distorted rendering of the institution that will leave aside its actual role within society. The majority of these films convey a pattern that shows the metonymical visual description of the subject of the Inquisition with one of its objects (torture, cruel violence), proving that the popular conception on the Holy Office prevails in these films, and any film will have to deal with it when facing its reception. This situation echoes the conflict in the reception of the films between rhetorical practices and topical practices of reception and it highlights the rhetorical (Mathijs 29). In this sense, the popular, and also partly the academic, conceptions of the role of Inquisition (rhetorical practices) have determined such a strong preconceived view on what the Inquisition should be like that the Inquisition cannot get rid of its stereotypification as the most repressive, far crueler, and far deadly method of repression employed by every European state in Modern Era.

But why is the Inquisition so appealing when it comes to chose it to epitomize the repressions of the State in early modern history? Because unlike its secular counterparts, the suffering caused by this Institution laid its legal foundation on a

contradictory interpretation of a law better and more widely known than any state's in Europe. As José Antonio Escudero, one of the leading historians in the studies of the Inquisition, states, we cannot ignore that the Inquisition judged and condemned in the name of the same God and religious principles that pledged for peace, mercy (Escudero 50) and not to judge others: "for in the same way you judge others, you will be judged" (Matthew 7:1-5).

Perhaps it is this contradiction, far greater than that of any state lay tribunal, what determines the Inquisition's ever passionate interpretation, and the fact that as well as its historiographical interpretation, its filmic representation is still under current development. This is perhaps the answer to one of the questions that I left open in the historiographical chapter on the Inquisition: is the historiographical evolution of the Inquisition reflected on screen?

In rendering their history of the Inquisition, these films tell us about the time of their making: the depiction of the Inquisition in positive light by *La Dama* in 1947 can only be interpreted as an example of self-censorship by its filmmakers in engaging a critical view of the Inquisition, and by extension, of the Catholic Church, in a time when the latter conformed to one of the pivotal instruments of power of Francoism. The transition to democracy and the arrival of freedom of speech in Spain in 1975 allowed logically to attack the Inquisition, as self and state censorships were no longer in force. We have seen the result: the Inquisition becomes a quintessential historical reference of repression, intolerance, and most importantly, state violence. Thus, in resorting to use the Inquisition as an epitome of state violence, the films are not only joining the

common perception of the Inquisition that has traditionally prevailed outside academic circles, but also use it to criticize contemporary events. In this sense As Rafael de España explains, what was earlier considered to be part of the Black Legend became a vehicle for criticizing the moral and political values of the defunct Francoist regime (De España 2002, 27). This may be interpreted as the general tendency among period filmmaking that resorts to a 180-degree turn in their filmic approach to historical figure: excessively idealized indulgence on ecclesiastical figures that characterized national cinema during the dictatorship is radically substituted by bare criticism of clericalism that borders on a grotesque usage of the Inquisition to conform archenemies of the common people. *El Segundo Poder*, *Torquemada*, and *Goya's Ghosts* can be interpreted as belonging to this trend, insofar as these films can attest for the continuous process of secularization that Spain began to experience in 1975 with the advent of democracy (Bultó 538). Except for *Torquemada*,²⁷ these films respond to an attempt to use the Inquisition to evoke contemporary issues (the repression of Francoist Dictatorship and the US foreign affairs, respectively), exploiting the general negative conception on the Inquisition that has and does reign among cinemagoers.

That is why, with the exception of *Akelarre*, Spanish cinema relentlessly continues to pursue such a historically controversial and sensitive topic as the Inquisition in the same manner the rest of the world does. That is why these films become tributary to their time of making, because they tell us their time of making than about the Inquisition itself.

NOTES

¹ It was abolished for the first time by Napoleon himself in December 1808 during the French invasion of Spain in that year, then again by National resistance forces of the Cortes of Cadiz in February 1813. Yet, it would be reestablished by Ferdinand VII in 1814, abolished again during the Liberal democratic regime by Rafael de Riego in 1820, reestablished by Ferdinand VII again in 1823, and would remain operative until a year after the death of the monarch in 1833.

² 2,321,958.23 pesetas according to the budget declared to the BOC, a much more modest budget than other close to the 5 million spent in period film *La Princesa de los Ursinos* by studio CIFESA in the same year. Over 79,000 pesetas would be spent in customs and 71,000 in backdrops and setting (AGA, file 36/03292).

³ Though overtly dramatic for today's standards, the acting, narrative modes, and cinematography of film studio Suevia Film's *La dama* work together to assemble a period film which presents a style of filmmaking which differs from the common stories in films by CIFESA: despite an obvious optimistic conception of the Inquisition and the past of intolerance in Spain in the 16th century, in this film there exist no statements of political principle calling for national unity or the transcendent destiny of Spain.

⁴ No details and telling of the imprisonment and procession of Samuel are not accounted for during the third and fourth acts of the original drama.

⁵ This decision provoked a desperate letter from the president of Suevia Film's Cesáreo González requesting this decision be reconsidered in order to avoid further costs by reediting the film (AGA, file 36/03292).

⁶ I am of course referring to hatred against the religion itself and the Hebrew community, not against single Jewish characters. *Amaya* (Luis Marquina, 1952) is the only example of period film which features a negative depiction of the Jews as a scheming community.

⁷ This is a film which has never been the subject of any academic study before.

⁸ Whereas the novel just mentioned parts of the medical treatment of the Prince, it did not enjoy itself in a repeated description of the scatological details as the film does.

⁹ Here is another parallel with another contemporary film *El Hombre Que Supo Amar* (Picazo, 1976), which confirms the existence of a trend in Spanish historical film of the transition for crude visual images of the past. In one of the scenes of this film, the arts of medicine are depicted in such a superstitious unscientific scatological manner when a doctor performs a live trepanation on an insane living man in front of an audience, on the grounds that the procedure will free the man's soul from the evil that dwells inside his head.

¹⁰ 148,233.17 pesetas with 298,233 tickets sold (Film Database of the Spanish Ministry of Culture).

¹¹ *Akelarre* recieved 15,376,350 pesetas from the Basque Government, almost 25% of the final budget of the film (Roldán 112).

¹² Olea stated that this growing numbers of Basque films and filmmaker were the answer to the repression during the Franco years and also the result of exposure of Basque directors -as well as the Catalonian filmmakers- to the European cinemas shown in neighboring French theaters (Aguinaga 10).

¹³ Idoate Iragui, Florencio. “Brujerías En La Montaña De Navarra En El Siglo XVI”. *Hispania Sacra*, 4(1951):301-321. Print.

¹⁴ Caro Baroja, Julio. *The World of the Witches*. Chicago, Ill: University of Chicago Press, 1964.

¹⁵ Gil del Rio, Alfredo. *La Brujería Y Sus Personajes En La Rioja: Historias, Leyendas Y Procesos Célebres En Un Mundo Fantásticos Y Mitológico*. Zaragoza: Tipo-Línea, 1975. Print.

¹⁶ These are the very powers that were attributed to witches in their historical accounts interpreted by Caro Baroja (Caro Baroja 1965, 176).

¹⁷ 91,172,760 pesetas (Roldán 195).

¹⁸ The time of the premiere of the film coincided with one of the most violent years of terrorism in Spain, as Terrorist group ETA had killed three people -including military, policemen and ETA splitters- during the first two months of 1984.

¹⁹ As it appears in the web site of the Spanish Ministry of Culture, the film is listed as bearing Spanish nationality.

“Torquemada.” *Base de datos de películas calificadas. Ministerio de Cultura*. Web. 21 March 2011.

<http://www.mcu.es/bbddpeliculas/buscarDetallePeliculas.do?brscgi_DOCN=000020935&brscgi_BCSID=3b73b072&language=es&prev_layout=bbddpeliculasResultado&layout=bbddpeliculasDetalles>.

²⁰ Despite the lack of sources and interviews with Stanislav Barabas, I venture to point to a possible reaction be linking the Inquisition and the Nazi regimes, as Paco Rabal stated

that Barabas' Polish family was subject to repression of the Nazi regime (E.F.E. 1989, 59).

²¹ Taken from George Orwell's *1984*.

²² 15,427 pesetas. Base de datos de películas calificadas, Ministerio de Cultura de España.

²³ Forman and Jean Claude Carriere, though, stated that they had finished writing the script months before the Abu Ghraib tortures were exposed on the media (interview in Salvador 40).

²⁴ As Camarero Gómez explains, there exists a vague resemblance between the Inquisitor play by Javier Bardem and the composition of Antonio Llorente is his portrait by Franco Goya in 1810 (31).

²⁵ 328,309 tickets were sold in Spain, earning 1,669,791.81 Euros.

²⁶ 9,448,082 dollars. "Goya's Ghosts." *Box Office Mojo*. Web. March 29, 2011.

<<http://boxofficemojo.com/movies/?page=intl&id=goyasghosts.htm>>.

²⁷ Its lack of distribution and reception, along with scarce of materials found for the analysis of the motivation of this film, impairs reaching a conclusion in this regards.

CHAPTER V

***ALATRISTE*: EXPECTATION, FRUSTRATION, AND INNOVATION IN SPANISH PERIOD FILM**

To conclude this study of Early Modernity in the Spanish period film, I will analyze the historical construction and reception of the film *Alatriste* (Agustín Díaz Yanes, 2006). The reason for choosing this film as the last period film of this dissertation lies in a combination of factors that determine its representative nature within national period cinema.

Through the last chapters we have gone through different approaches and different topics represented by Spain as it is portrays the Early Modern Era in film. They have shown different conceptions of filmmaking (small budget, versus. theater influence), different trends of conception of history (local vs. national history, infrahuman history versus new history), or even the nature and earned support and/or rejection from the audience. But, there is no film that places itself within all of these traditions. *Alatriste* is indeed a rare case in Spanish film, as it combines elements from opposite traditions of Spanish period filmmaking: on the one hand, it embodies all of the commercial and promotional features that the big-budget production has experienced in Spain: the largest budget for a national film at the time, an international cast starring a foreign star, its support from the State and media of the time, its high expectations as a film able to break through to international markets, only never to be met due its lack of commercial success. On the other hand, unlike its past counterparts, *Alatriste* presents

different ways of rendering history that link it to a smaller tradition of Spanish period films which portray collective representations and mental structures of societies. Rather than approaching history only through the development of great events, *Alatriste* prefers to present it through its society by displaying its culture and mentality (in the same way as, for instance, the already covered *El Rey Pasmado* and *Akelarre*, and also another historical film not included in this dissertation *El vent d'Illa* by Gerard Gormezano (1988)). My contention is that in understanding *Alatriste*, we can achieve not only a clear picture this film's representation and interpretation of the past, but we can place it into a larger context -the evolution of this genre in Spanish cinema- and illustrate the state of its acceptance among Spanish audiences.

GESTATION OF A FILM LARGELY DESIRED - STAGE OF INTERPRETATION OF THE SPANISH PAST

Although *Alatriste* is not the first case of cinematographic adaptation of a historical novel in this research, the close relationship between novel and film in their recreation of history and reception requires a brief introduction on the original literary series in order to understand the nature of the existing intertextuality in *Alatriste* in its development.

The literary saga *Las aventuras del Capitán Alatriste* / *The Adventures of Captain Alatriste* (1996-present day), became a best-selling novel in Spain and all over the world, being translated into twenty eight languages and having sold more than four million volumes. Set in the 17th century, the novel's tale recounts the story of Diego de

Alatraste, swordsman and soldier who survives in Madrid and bitterly witnesses the crumbling of the Spanish Empire through the corruption of its customs, ideals, and leaders. An empire under the view of the memoirs by Íñigo Balboa, Alatraste's adopted son, who looks back to its military glories and sees in its veteran old military the only remaining trace of its days of glory. Widely popular in Spain and well-known overseas, the literary saga had been, and is, commercially exploited while earning positive results: it had been adapted into graphic novels, merchandising, and even role-play-games.

The series, which to date remains incomplete, was more than a swashbuckler novel, as the novels were conceived by Pérez Reverte as a way to teach young people about the Spanish Empire and Golden Age, and an understanding the Spanish present. This was a result of how, by 1996, Pérez Reverte reacted to what he had interpreted as the lack of references to Early Modernity in the conception of the Spanish nation as a result of *desmemoria* or historical amnesia of the Spanish imperial past. According Pérez Reverte, the historical amnesia as to the national imperial past was caused by the demagogically instructional project of Francoism, and because it had been forgotten by the education reforms by Socialist Ministers Solana and Maravall in the 1980s (Walsh 49). Reverte is pointing here to the abandonment of the old curriculum of Francoist education which had prioritized memorizing events and personalities of Spanish Modern history, in favor of a more pedagogical curriculum that included the diversity of nationalities and peoples in Spain. Yet, whether Reverte's statement is true or not,¹ it is undeniable that his words point to a controversial debate that deals with a much larger issue than the question of Spanish Early Modernity in school textbooks.

Early Modernity has played an instrumental role in the shaping of the historical-national consciousness in Spain. Just like other political contingencies in Spanish history, Francoism had glorified Spain's imperial past as a mobilizing myth of historic national superiority. But, the abuse of the Spanish imperial past by the Francoist educational curriculum on the Spanish Golden Age and the Early Modern Period as the historical reference for the development of the Spanish nation, along with its programmatic usage by Falange Española, caused Early Modernity in all of its manifestations (The Empire, the Spanish Golden Age) became identified with the Francoist dictatorship. Aurora Morcillo states that "while far removed from time, the baroque and Francoism were ideologically, politically, and above all religiously close" (33).

Even though the lack of works specifically addressing this subject does not allow us to determine without a doubt the effects on popular memory of this identification between Early Modernity and Francoism, it is possible to detect some of its traces in the debate on the identity of the Spanish nation since the 1978.

The arrival of democracy brought swift changes to the organization and identity of the state. The necessity to forge a new sense of national identity that found its historical roots not in the glories of the Spanish Empire and a centralist Castilian-inspired history (as Francoism did) but in other historical periods, became instrumental to accommodating and reinventing the idea of the Spanish nation into the new organization of the Spanish State wherein different cultures, languages, and nationalities became official in the Constitution of 1978.

Thus, the old official Unitarian history of a glorious imperial past was replaced by a new interpretation of the Spanish nation. But the strengthening of the regional identities was perceived by conservative sectors as a sign that identity of Spain as one nation grew fainter versus other strengthened identities such as the Basque, the Catalanian, and the Galician nationalism (Fox 209). Even in academic circles, historian Carlos Barros stated that in 1995 this situation reached even the historian community, for whom Spain ceased to be geographical framework for research and historiographic reflection, to such an extent that even the noun “Spain” was used instead of the more administrative substantive “Spanish State” (121).

Whether the concept of a Spanish nation is disappearing or not, it is unquestionable that there exists an established perception of the Spanish nationalism based on a triple identification of Early Modernity-Francoism-Conservatism in Spain. In 2001, historian Álvarez Junco attributed the inexistence of a solid Spanish nationalism that could challenge regional nationalism to this very triple identification. Spanish nationalism did not prevail over its regional counterparts because it had not managed to distant itself from Francoism and its historical myths:

El futuro de la idea de España depende de su asociación con el patriotismo constitucional, y no con una forma de contar la historia, no se entiende por qué seguir respetando sus viejos mitos, por qué aceptar su línea argumental ni su insistencia en unos hechos más que en otros. / The future of the idea of Spain depends on its association with constitutional patriotism, not in the ways of telling history. It is not easy to understand why we must respect its old myths,

why must we accept its storyline or its insistence on some facts above others.

(Junco quoted in Ridaio n.pag)

The fixation by conservative sectors in Spain on recovering and preserving a cohesive national identity was much of the political debate that characterized the last years of the 1990s and early 2000s in Spain. In the 1996, the arrival of conservative Partido Popular to power had stirred the debate on the role of history in shaping of Spanish identity. Controversial statements by Esperanza Aguirre, minister of Education and Culture, for whom the history of Spain had disappeared from the history curriculum, indirectly pointed to the abandonment of the Francoist curriculum of history and the implementation of new pedagogical policies in the 1980s as the reasons for the loss of Spanish identity. For Aguirre, history teaching reduced itself to cover only present history rather than “escuchar una sola vez una lección sobre Julio César o sobre Felipe II / listening for a one time a lesson on Julius Caesar or Philip II” (quoted in Valls Montés 2004, 142).

The ruling conservative Partido Popular passed in 2000 the Decree for the Reform of Humanities as an attempt to block “the excesses of the local mystifying histories of the peripheral nationalisms” (Bermúdez 351, my translation). The decree was a legislative example of the policy of the ruling party towards what was understood as the recovery of the Spanish past. In 2000 the Royal Academy of history wrote a controversial report of the history curriculum in middle and secondary school, “Informe sobre los textos y cursos de Historia en los centros de enseñanza media,” which joined

the controversy by claiming that including local and regional history as part of the curriculum had disrupted a Unitarian understanding of Spanish history claiming that

[...] se había pasado de una época caracterizada por la exaltación del nacionalismo español a otra en la que los elementos comunes del proceso histórico parecían a punto de perderse. / they had moved from a period characterized by the exaltation of Spanish nationalism to another period in which elements common to the historical process seemed about to be lost. (in Valls Montés 2004, 145)

The historical re-construction of Reverte in *Captain Alatriste* entered into this polemic by presenting the Imperial past of Spain as a historical milestone in the shaping to the identity of Spanish history. Combining a sense of immersion into to the past with adventure entertainment, the literary series brings together some of conventions of the genre (the action focuses on a hero moved eventually by the simple plot of achieving a goal or mission above all of other back actions) with other non-canonical elements (such as the novel's constant references to future and past events, retrospective insights on the place of Spain and the Spanish people in world history). These strategies are combined with profuse and detailed historical references to the harsh living conditions in the 17th century, the re-creation of fictional characters depicted in a close and humane way, and constant reference to battles and military glories that confers the novels and the film with a heroic character to the Spanish people that aims to transcend the actions of the characters. Thus, featuring a strong patriotic yet critical, sense of re-claiming the Spanish past, the series of *El Capitán Alatriste* (*El Capitán*, hereafter) presented a way of

addressing the Spanish past, to approach it in a manner without binding it to any particular contemporary ideological ascriptions. *El Capitán* features a story that patriotically claims the Spanish past while it criticizes it, far from drawing an embellishing portrayal. This is why for specialists on Perez Reverte's work, the saga by Perez Reverte is interpreted by some as a rescuing novel (Walsh 68), insofar as it brings Early Modernity to the public without being linked to Francoism.

This was one of the main attractions for some sectors in adapting *El Capitán* to film, and the film adaptation of the adventure novels by Arturo Pérez Reverte became a long-time potential project rumored in radio and TV programs since 2001. Due to the excellent commercial results and the popularity of Pérez-Reverte's novels, many media and political leaders² stated the commercial and patriotic potential lying in the possibility of a film series of the saga that would help Spanish cinema rise and be on a par with international big-budget productions, such as the adventure sagas of *Lord of the Rings* and *Harry Potter*.

A joint production between Estudios Picasso, Origen P.C, and NBC Spain, with the participation of TV channel Telecinco, *Alatriste* set the highest budget for the time at more than 25 million of Euros. The project was commissioned to Spanish filmmaker Agustín Díaz Yanes, who had earned success for his first feature film *Nadie hablará de nosotras cuando hayamos muerto / Nobody Will Speak of Us When We're Dead* (1995). Having adapted five of the novels into one script, in 2003, Díaz Yanes announced that he had completed the script with the approval of Pérez-Reverte. Shooting of the film began in January 2004, and it took two years to complete. It would be then, in 2006, when an

advertising campaign would be launched featuring an unprecedented complete support from the main media groups in Spain, advertising companies, and exhibits in Madrid and Barcelona, accounting for 2 million Euros invested in promoting the film (Tácido 28). The two magazines with the largest distribution in Spain, *El Semanal* and *El País Semanal*, dedicated a cover and a fully-illustrated article to the film, its historical setting and characters (Urabayen 52).

The tone and content of *Alatriste*'s advertising campaign prove instrumental in understanding the later reception of the film among Spanish audiences and film press. Encouraged by the presence of star Vigo Mortensen³ and the success of Pérez-Reverte novels overseas, *Alatriste* was presented as the panacea of Spanish cinema and as an adventure film that would allow Spanish film to break through to international markets. The director himself participated in this optimistic trend and built up hopes that his film would inspire future productions, stating the film's quality was similar to that of US adventure film (E.F.E 2006, n.pag; G.S 56). Yet, as the following analysis will illustrate, the film which is produced along with audience reception will not match the preconceived expectations of the film, the intentionality of the filmmaker, and the final commercial results.

IDEOLOGIES, PATRIOTISM, AND THE SPANISH NATION IN *ALATRISTE*

The film plot takes place in Spain during the first half of the 17th century. Diego Alatriste is a skilled swordsman and soldier at the service of King Philip IV, and he offers his services to those who can pay for them. During a campaign against the Dutch

rebels in Flanders, his friend Lope de Balboa is killed and has Diego promise to take care of his son, Íñigo de Balboa. Alatrisme returns to Madrid and takes a job from royal secretary Luis de Alquézar to assassinate two foreign travelers, only to back out from the job once he finds out that they are the Prince of Wales and the Duke of Buckingham. Íñigo falls in love for Arquézar's niece, Angélica, and both begin a tumultuous relationship that will go on for the rest of their lives. Having been advised by the duke of Olivares to leave the country, and facing the revenge of his former employers of Emilio Bocanegra and Luis de Alquézar, Alatrisme and Íñigo enlist and return to Flanders to take part in the siege and rendition of the instrumental bastion of Breda. Years later, Íñigo is now a grown man and works at palace while Alatrisme works for the favorite of Philip IV by carrying out black-ops. Captain Alatrisme's relationship with actress Maria Castro, lover of the king, causes him to lose the old favor of the earl of Guadalmedina and that of the king. Íñigo Balboa's love for Angelica is not corresponded. When Angelica agrees to marry Guadalmedina, he falls into a self-destructive pattern but is rescued by Alatrisme. Later, Íñigo is accused of treason and sentenced to the galleys. Alatrisme does, however, use his influence on Olivares and achieves a pardon for Íñigo. Released from the galleys, Íñigo joins Alatrisme and both set out for the war again. The film ends in May 1643 with the Battle of Rocroi in which Alatrisme gets killed by French troops.

The intertextual differences between novel and film prove to be determinant in the shaping of the recreation of history in the film. If the novel featured a patriotic tone on Spain, it owed a great deal to the existing retrospective and prospective comments by the character of Íñigo. In the novel, the storytelling unfolds in a double perspective, one

in real time that allows for the development of the action scenes, but more importantly, one in retrospective and prospective that references a glorious military past of battles along with a strong sense of historical recognition of Spain in world history. This narrative strategy was abandoned in the film in favor of a visual concern for the present action -what happens on screen in real time-, thus eliminating what Walsh defines as extratextual ingredients (73) or what Reverte stated as his goal in the novel, the goal that by “knowing the past, we better understand the present” (72). But the absence of the patriotic perspective and prospective narrator provoked the film to differ from the novel’s original patriotic message, and eventually it clashes with the expectations which were raised for the film.

These differences are not insignificant, insofar as they pose the greatest difference in tone from the novel: the omission of the patriotic references to battles, and retrospective and prospective historical accounts. This structural difference moves the film to present us with a different rendering of history, one that strikes on the action in real time and loses the “patriotic flavor” of the novel by presenting a succession of unconnected episodic sequences. This is true, as the film presents a recurrent disconnection between sequences and scenes, and a number of unconnected scenes -a consequence of eliminating 40 scenes planned in the original script⁴ that had already compressed five novels into one- resulting in a fast-paced succession of scenes that jolts the audience to different scenarios in place and time, thus hindering the extraction of a specific historical message.

Despite these narrative inconsistencies in its unfolding of storyline, it is possible to state that *Alatriste* conveys its own interpretation of history. *Alatriste* presents a pessimistic, not-so-contemporary sensibility and a historical “class struggle” approach in representing the life in the 17th century that, unlike the novel, awards no concessions to idealized heroism or patriotism. This allows the film to cast a much darker mood on the recreation of the scenes, combining with raw cinematography in depicting the harsh living conditions of the people in the 17th century to reach a greater truth in the film: a story of Spain understood as an exaltation of a good people without a good master, a topic that dated back to the classics of the Middle Ages in *El Cid* and of the Golden Age, such as Lope de Vega’s *Fuenteovejuna*. It had become a tradition in Spanish political identity: the idea of Spain, as a nation of peoples who find in general deception and disillusionment, “el buen pueblo y mal gobierno” (the good people punished by a bad government), a recurrent theme and cry for justice that has appeared repeatedly in Spanish culture: from the mentioned Golden Age drama by Lope de Vega to 19th century writers, such as Ildefonso Manuel Gilm (Ruiz Soriano 74).

If the absence of the narrator becomes the greatest difference between film and the novel, they both share the same the minute reconstruction of the language, and the detailed description of places where action takes places. Both the film and the novel feature the same type of main character, a caustic character that lives by and fights for narrow codes, a special type of hero that Pérez-Reverte defines as “tired heroes” (Walsh 74), men who carry their duty and protect their own, but only speak when necessary and do not indulge in tales of idealized heroics.

The story *recounted* in *Alatriste* is the life of a fictional soldier who survives as a hired-sword in the court of the most powerful nation in the world. The actor who plays Alatriste (Vigo Montersen) presents us with a severe man whose actions speak for themselves, whose brief dialogs refer to a pessimistic, yet loyal, attitude to life and that of the nation in which he lives. He portrays a series of values that appear close: haughtiness, loyalty, poorness, resourcefulness. The broader historical context, the decadence of the 17th century, is presented through its clash against these values. As De la Pava explains, the insertion of a character like Alatriste within the narrative context projects the life and inner conflict of the character onto a more external conflict such as the historical circumstances of Spain in the 17th history (33). Alatriste is a man who answers to the stereotypical ordinary man capable of extraordinary deeds for his family and nation, a hero who lives by a code in a time of corruption and treason, a rare quality that turns the character into an extraordinary character who is “adrift in a world that makes no sense” (Walsh 74).

This very world is the Empire that forms a backdrop for the human drama that unfolds around the personae of Iñigo and his parental model Alatriste. *Alatriste* is a film that, in sharing the tone of its literary origins, acts as a revisionist negative print that inverts the stereotypical relations of power relations of Empire on film. The character of Alatriste is a negative view of the situation of Spaniards of the time, presented through an approach to the soldiers who fought for the Empire at the expense of misery and suffering. The Empire, though splendidous in arts through what is understood as the Spanish Golden Age (such as Lope de Vega’s drama represented in one of the scenes of

the film, or the reference to painting master Diego de Velázquez) is nothing but a nation full of poverty, subject to the religious intolerance of Inquisition and the economical, moral, and physical abuse of the high upper class (the nobility and royalty). In this sense, *Alatriste* employs a certain quasi-Marxist interpretation of history from the standpoint of class struggle in confectioning this canvas of the life of Spain. It is within this clash between splendor and penury that the plot of the film can be extracted. There is an inversion of power relations, insofar as it is the lower class who presents rectitude -in their own way- while the powerful take advantage of it, such as when Angélica de Cortázar abandons Iñigo to marry Spanish Grandee Guadalmedina, or when a caustic Alatriste philosophizes to his agonizing friend, whom he just killed while carrying out the king's orders, that “¿Te das cuenta [Martín] que al final acabamos matándonos los unos a los otros?... mierda de vida. / Do you realize [Martin] that in the end we end up killing one another? ... Life is a bitch.”

Regardless of whether the film is Marxist or not, and setting ideology aside for the moment, *Alatriste* is not only a film about the Spanish Empire but a film about the people who sustain the very empire and its wars. Diego Alatriste is an ordinary man, who regardless of heroic and extraordinary deeds, lives by a code. A code put into question by his adopted son Iñigo, who, when lectured by Alatriste, calls attention to the controversy in the Captain's own creed: “¿Qué reglas? ¿Las de un capitán que no es capitán o las de un soldado que se convirtió en matarife por cuenta ajena, que incluso mata a sus amigos?” Employing a certain history from below approach, the film *interprets* that all of the glory of the Empire is possible thanks to the sacrifice of these

soldiers. A sacrifice that manifests itself not on the battle field but rather in their homes, as all of Alariste's friends of arms die at home as a result of crime, being prosecuted by the Inquisition, their own greed, and at war, but rather their incapability to lead a normal life at home, becoming dispossessed, a fact that turns them into thieves in order to survive.

Reminiscent of the tradition in depicting the 17th century as a time of general - economic, social and ideological- decay, the characters of *Alariste*, (Alariste, Quevedo and later in his later life, Íñigo) embed this consciousness of crisis by displaying a strong sense of disillusionment about the time the decadence which they must live. Yet, they serve to protect it in their best capacity despite their awareness of the problems. This is an example of *patriotic nihilism* that already allowed the novel to distant itself from the idealized conception of the Spanish past and steers clear of the contemporary political conditioning factors in dealing with this historical issue. It is a form of patriotism and skepticism that already writers, such as Francisco de Quevedo in the 17th century, displayed in their writings while witnessing the decadence and crumbling of the Spanish Empire. Yet, if in the writings of Quevedo (Cereceda 627) and the novel by Reverte, a past of military glories and skepticism blend, the former does not appear in *Alariste*. Quite the contrary, the lack of reference to a glorious past turns the pathos of the film into a form of nihilist patriotism among characters. This nihilist portrayal of the warrior may also be interpreted not only as a consequence of the narrative strategies by Díaz Yanes, but also a direct influence from other films that convey a similar attitude in their

characters such as the *The Deer Hunter* (Michael Cimino, 1978), as filmmaker Yanes stated in an interview his preference and influence from Michael Cimino (Scola 57).

Alatriste resorts to different ways of justifying this view of Spanish affairs. The voice over at the beginning attempts to account for the universality of *Alatriste* and the figure of the soldier, “one of the soldiers that along with the gold from the American colonies sustained the Spanish Empire”, but also the moment of economical, religious and social crisis by reading the poem *Memorial* generally attributed to Quevedo in which the poet accuses Olivares, the king’s favorite, of all of the problems that plague Spain. The clash between the poverty of the lower class and the splendor of high culture is visually justified in scene transitions that show the disparity between both levels: for instance, in the scenes depicting the harsh living conditions in which soldiers fight at the siege of Breda and their abrupt contrast with the idealized past in the painting by Diego Velázquez, such as the dissolve of the end of the siege battle with the painting *The Surrender of Breda* (1934-35), or the contrast with the Golden Age dramatic classics represented in the film.

STRATEGIES OF REPRESENTATION

In order to render a dark portrayal of Spain in the 17th century, *Alatriste* employs a series of strategies of representation that work on a double level of narrative and visual storytelling. In order to flesh out its interpretation of social struggle and nihilism, *Alatriste* recurrently visually employs the chiaroscuro and enclosed spaces, which acts as a metaphor to strengthen the clash between the ethical issues of the character within a

closed narrow society, as well as conferring an aura of authenticity to defend Diaz Yanes' interpretation of the 17th century. Though clearly influenced by the usage of computer graphics in enhancing primal elements such as blood in sword fighting, the cinematography relies on elements such as dark atmospheres, filth, and dust in order to expose the harshness of the living conditions in the era. In this sense, the film displays a minute attention to historical detail in rendering the era visually: the costumes and weaponry of the characters reach such a level of detail that they blend perfectly with the absence of backdrops by using real shooting locations in the towns of Baeza and Ubeda. Even the resemblance between the main historical figures (Olivares, Philip IV, and Quevedo) and their dramatic counterparts is remarkably faithful to that found in canvases of the time.

Indeed, the film's cinematography *emulates* the paintings of the 17th century, especially concerning the illumination of the scenes by mimicking the style of *tenebrismo*, which helps highlight certain objects and people in the foreground that are important for the composition of the shot, leaving in a penumbra secondary objects in the background: for instance, in the shot below compared is one of the scenes of the film with a painting *The Calling of St Matthew* (Caravaggio, 1599-1600). Also, in terms of composition and texture of the scenes, the film presents a strong influence from the *bodegon* still life paintings by Diego Velázquez and Francisco Zurbarán. These strategies convey a veil of credibility on the film and reinforce its historical continuity, as Figure 8 shows:



Figure 8. Comparison between a captured frame from *Alatriste* (Yanes) and Caravaggio's *The Calling of St Matthew* (1600).

The *alterations* of the film refer mainly to the characterization of the main historical figures such as Quevedo, Olivares and Philip IV; they all play their part in depicting an obscure image of Spain. By presenting Quevedo, one of the cornerstones of the Spanish Golden Age, the film is not only conveying a warmer portrayal of the poet champion of Conceptism, free from any pedantic connotation, but rather an echo of the directness, simple and vulgar vocabulary, and witty metaphors of his poetry. As in the novel, this re-creation of historical figures allows, as Walsh defines it, to “humanize and demystify” these characters (Walsh 74) and therefore bring them closer to the audience. Another level, less humanizing, refers to the role of the Count Duke of Olivares. It is highly unlikely that Olivares, a man of State would have vouched for Alatriste, a penniless fortune soldier, but in doing so, the film brings Olivares closer to audience. It is interesting to find that the figure of Philip IV remains mystified (he does utter a word in the film) therefore reinforcing his role as a distant monarch, far from the problems that afflict the populace. The contact between Alatriste and these higher figures, obviously fictionally idealized, serves the purpose of highlighting the gap existing

between the lower and higher class. These higher figures contribute to the creation of an image of the common Spaniard subject to the rule of corrupt leaders.

The *inventions* of the characters place the latter within this very same interpretation. The fusion between reality and fiction allows an invented character to the recreate events that happened in history (De la Pava 38). The invented characters in Alatríste present a contemporary interpretation of the events that help bring them closer to the audience but also convey a contemporary interpretation of the film: the same nihilism, a empty spirituality which borders on atheism (especially among assassins, as Íñigo reminds Malatesta before killing him: “¿Sabes que despues de esto no hay nada? - You know that after this there is nothing, don’t you? To which the Italian resignedly replies: Sí, ése es el problema / Yes, that is the problem.”) helps strengthen the aura of pessimism among the lower class, which makes these characters more credible to 21st century audiences. This becomes especially clear in the case of Alatríste, who bears a skeptical image on the religion that he fights for on the battlefield: “No hay Dios, sólo muerte. Después, todos muertos / There is no God, only death. Everybody will be dead.” The invention of a dark Grand Inquisitor, Fray Emilio Bocanegra, can only be interpreted as an act of mockery against the Inquisition, because this act matches the lack of naturalness in the suddenly forced appearance of the Inquisition to arrest a fellow soldier accused of being a Judaizer.

RECEPTION ON THE FILM

A lost opportunity, *Alatriste* was and has been interpreted by many critics and film connoisseurs as such. As I have explained before, the commercial success of the literary saga, along with the campaign to promote the film prior to its release, conveyed an impression among the public that *Alatriste* had to meet what was understood as an American large-budget adventure film: a fast-paced presentation of events, a simple storyline which fits within a cohesive storyline.

With a 25 million euro budget, the film earned only 16.7 million euros,⁵ with limited international earnings of 1.4 million euros. The analysis of the film's reception in the film press and on the internet shows the initial interest of cybernauts in the creation of a film saga featuring several sequels. Yet, Díaz Yanes' narrative approach to the story distanced *Alatriste* from what audiences expected and highly likely determined its commercial results.⁶

These facts prove that the film was far from reaching the success that its commercial campaign announced, but the reaction of the public was far more complex. Out of 118 film reviews consulted for this research, 85 account for a tepid response from the public. At first glance, positive reviews pose the majority of them, they account for 41 reviews, classified as good/fair (30) and excellent (11), whereas the negative ones only amount to 36, classified as average (18), poor (16), and bad (2). But of the rest of them, 8 present mixed reviews that highly praise the film for its formal qualities but reject the episodic narration of events. Despite the slight difference, it must be noted that, with a few exceptions, the majority of the reviews that rate the film positively do

not actively engage the historical discourse of the film. It is the negative and mixed reviews that refer to the film's lack of construction of an historical discourse.

Another perspective, apparently free from the ideological bonds of media groups,⁷ is provided by the reviews published in websites not belonging to press or media. In this sense, the analysis of 26 websites and blogs on film with posts, published during the first month of the release of the film, point to a negative reaction among cybernauts, with only two clearly positive reviews and 6 mixed reviews, while the rest of the reviews rated the film either as bad (6), or poor (10).

About 90% of the film reviews criticize the lack of a cohesive storyline that would have allowed the film to better communicate its message. The analysis of both sources of reception point to an overwhelming recurrent criticism against the fragility of the story told in the film, with special emphasis on the narrative structure of the film, even among most of the positive reviews. In this sense, the majority of the film reviews (about 85%) tackle only formal features of the film, and only superficially deal with the representation of history in the film. Rather the reviews mention the quality of the film and the great realism of the time, focusing on other aspects such as the cinematography of the film and the acting of the cast.⁸ *Metro* and *Correo Farmacéutico* defined the film as a succession of adventures and historical portraits which did not articulate any dramatic tale that the spectator could join in order to extract a truth (“Hoy criticamos” 23; F. Fernández 11 Sep 2006, 30).

The same percentage points to the excellent cinematography of the film that conveys a raw image of the 17th century far from an idealized aseptic past, as most

reviewers focused their discussions on the graphical aspect of the decadence rather than the sociological aspect of its decay itself, further blurring the line between representation and reality. Critics take and resort to the same aura of authenticity that Díaz Yanes employed in the film to defend their version of historical truth: the mud, the filth; striking on primal crude elements such as rain and humidity (Mariló Montero 6), shadows, mud, obscurity and filth (Sánchez 7) seem proper to these critics in order to highly portray the decadence of the era.

When it comes to analyzing the interpretation of this choice by Díaz Yanes, the reaction of the reviews is divided between a majority of puzzlement (Vergara 8), and even anger (Tácido 28). Film critic Carlos Colón even hinted at the reason for this lack of narrative cohesiveness, suggesting missing un-shot scenes from a larger script (C. Colón 2006, 56). *La Vanguardia* interpreted the film's lack of agile narrative as an echo of the slowly paced films made by film studio CIFESA 60 years earlier (Caminal 47), while other film critics point to the novelty of the narrative approach by Yanes in comparison to the tradition of period filmmaking in Spain (Palos 28), making it a film politically incorrect for defying the conventions of the adventure film genre (Zarzalejos 3).

Concerning the reception of the historical interpretation of the era in the film, it becomes plausible to ascribe certain ideological points of view to specific reactions. In this sense, the analysis of both the film critics and the web pages points to the existence of two principal reactions in the reading *Alatriste*. First, the degree of potentiality of the film in becoming a recoverer of the past of Spain and to revitalize the Spanishness of the

forgotten Golden Age was only discussed by the main conservative media. In this sense, the topic is only covered by newspapers *ABC* and *El Mundo*, and critically by the right-wing newspaper *La Razón*. An ardent editorial in the monarchist newspaper *ABC* praised the film for featuring a character -*Alatriste*- that embodied the Spanish individual and nation by exposing them in such an unusual form as cinema. In this article, *ABC* Chief editor Zarzalejos also makes a call for making more films such as *Alatriste* in order to fight against “the evaporation of Spanish” provoked by politics (3). A similar interpretation can be extracted from another conservative newspaper *El Mundo*, which praises the film for having succeeded in breaking the taboo regarding the popular association of the Spanish Golden Age with Francoism by exposing a critically raw, yet Spanish image of the past (Villena n.pag). More critically, *La Razón* zealously accused the film for “destroying the greatest gifts of Spanish adventure and the largest budget in Spanish cinema” (Tácido 28).

Second, a more dominant trend of interpretation of *Alatriste* engages the historical discourse of the film by describing the film as a social film rather than an adventure film (Quintana 44), which embeds a liberal interpretation of history that portrays the 17th century from the perspective of class struggle in which the lower classes are subject to the injustice by the powerful (nobility, clergy, royalty) (Bermejo 8 Sep 2006, 24; Ferrer 66; Palomo 87), *Alatriste* being not an action hero but a social hero who clashes against the high upper-class (Gistaín 4).

Sharing this perspective, some reviews even drew parallels between the decadence of the Spanish Empire and its social economic consumption and saw in the

war in Flanders a resemblance with the U.S. interventions in Iraq (Insausti 5 Sept 2006, 50; López 22; Quintana 44) and Vietnam (Rey 22). Fewer reviews point to a contrast between the indigency of the lower class and the brighter cultural background in painting, drama, and poetry (Palomo 87).

All of the reviews affirm the harshness of the living conditions of Spain back in the time, assuming the validity of the filmic discourse in portraying the common Spaniard as subject to the corruption of the powerful, the religious intolerance of the Inquisition and the delusions of grandeur of the politicians (Losilla 28), without questioning the accuracy of this historical reality. A few exceptions such as *Correo Farmacéutico* criticized the plausibility of such a dark Spain (F. Fernández 11 Sep 2006, 30), or accused the film of employing a certain black and white mentality that forgot gray areas (“España y el XVII” 67), especially regarding the fact of mocking the Church by choosing an actress for the role of Grand Inquisitor (Rey 22).

It is also noteworthy that the majority of these more elaborated reviews coincide with the evolution of the box office of *Alatriste*. For the first four weeks, the film led the top place in the box office, but after its fourth week in theaters, it would come to a standstill. During the first week, one million tickets were sold⁹ with 4.7 million Euros earned (“La taquilla” 8 Sept 2006, 84; Bosch 10) while in the second week, it had earned (“La taquilla” 16 Sept 22006, 83) 7.2 million euros (Vicente 14) with 1.7 tickets sold,¹⁰ reaching 13.7 million by the end of the month.¹¹

An example in the evolution of the reception is given by the reviews published by Basque newspaper *El Correo Español*, which published over 4 reviews in the month

of September, and while the first three weeks the film critics of the newspaper highly rated *Alatriste* (Belategui 6 Sept 2006, 71), in the last week of the month, they criticized the film for its lack of cohesive script (Lezea 12). Newspaper *La Razón* pointed to this act of patriotism among film press during the week of premiere of the film “initially most of the film critics patriotically supported the film only to criticize it weeks later (Tácido 28).

CONCLUSION

As the analysis of reception shows, *Alatriste*'s narrative flaws and cryptic script determined the lack of acceptance among viewers. Coincidentally, this was the same reason that affected prior blockbusters in Spain, *Alba de América* and, a film not included in this research, *El Dorado* (Carlos Saura, 1989). These facts point to a recurrent cycle of big budget in the history of period cinema in Spain, but we have to ask ourselves the question: is *Alatriste* a film destined to be remembered for being a déjà vu of commercial failure in Spanish film? Although this interpretation can be supported by raw figures (the film's earnings at the box office did not come even close to the its budget) and now five years since its release, one must not only point out that *Alatriste* indeed has become a commercial failure, but that it has become a forgotten topic within cinema circles.

But *Alatriste* not only participates in the evolution of commercial flops in Spain, but also in the tradition of films such as *El Vent d'Illa*, *El Rey Pasmado*, or *La Reina Isabel en persona*, a tradition of period cinema that that aims to create its own manner of

representing history, far from the static cut-outs commonly found in big-budget film, adopting a freer view on the past, unbound from the conventions of an epic film genre. The reception of the film demonstrates that *Alatriste* had -and still does- a multivalent political appeal to patriotic critics and viewers who saw in it an accurate representation of the Spanish essence and the dilemmas of what being Spanish is, whereas less conservative media praised its implicit critique of the glorious days of the Empire and its myths. While some insist that his view of life at that time is too dark, no one questions the *mise en scene*, the locations, the dialogues, or the use of subtle details that make the film look and feel real, make *Alatriste* one of the most realistic -in visual terms- attempts to create a vision of Early Modernity.

NOTES

¹ This matter, the question of the role of history in shaping the Spanish identity, is far from being considered over in Spanish society.

² Jose Maria Aznar, president of Spain, had also publicly expressed his admiration for the character of Captain Alatriste. In this sense, the project received at least nominal governmental support, as Secretary of State Luis Alberto Cuenca, "... [había] alentado los intentos para conseguir que el personaje del Capitán Alatriste (creado por Arturo Pérez-Reverte) se lleve al cine" y que pretendía que "se convirtiera en el *Harry Potter* español / had nurtured the idea of bringing the character of Captain Alatriste (as created by Arturo Perez-Reverte) to the big screen, fostering the idea that he would "become the Spanish Harry Potter" (E.P. n.pag).

³ Who had recently gained international recognition because his starting in commercial hits such as the trilogy of *Lord of the Rings* (Peter Jackson, 2001-2003), *Hidalgo* (Joe Johnston, 2004) and *A history of violence* (David Cronenberg, 2005), thus becoming by 2005 one of the most representative faces in international cinema.

⁴ I have reached this conclusion after comparing the film's scenes with the official script published by Origen in 2006: Díaz, Yanes A, and Arturo Pérez-Reverte. *Alatriste; Guión Cinematográfico De Agustín Díaz Yanes*. Madrid: Origen, 2006.

⁵ 16,715,741.56 € “Alatriste.” *Base de datos de películas calificadas. Ministerio de Cultura*. Web. 21 May 2011.

<<http://www.mcu.es/bbddpeliculas/cargarFiltro.do?layout=bbddpeliculas&cache=init&language=es>>.

⁶ The international market was always seen as one of the potential markets for *Alatriste* by choosing Vigo Mortensen, but the film grossed 1,419,910 million euros outside Spain. One further addendum that highlights the failure of the film's international distribution is that fact that *Alatriste* still remains undistributed in the United States by any domestic video or internet provider in the country, i.e. Neither Netflix nor Blockbuster list it as available to date. “Alatriste.” *Boxofficemojo* 2008. Web. 21 June 2011.

<http://boxofficemojo.com/movies/intl/?page=&country=FR&wk=2010W19&id=_fALATRISTE01>.

⁷ Which does not account for any form of objectivity but rather the ultimate example of freedom of expression.

⁸ Even though it is not relevant for this research, among the negative reviews, there is a recurrent criticism about the foreign whispering accent of Vigo Mortensen in Spanish (Matensanz 38).

⁹ 1,164,411 Euros.

¹⁰ 7,255,908 Euros.

¹¹ Box office results dated September 28, 2006. "Alatriste." *Novedadesdecine* 26 September 2006. Web. 1 June 2011. <<http://www.novedadescine.com>>.

CHAPTER VI

SUMMING UP AND CONCLUSIONS

Having come the time to summarize how these films have constructed and represented early modern history in Spain, the very distance among them as regards their thematics, timeframe, budget and distribution make extracting any general conclusions difficult. But, in spite of their differences, the feature films herein analyzed offer a series of common aspects which allow us to approach them in terms of interpretation, representation, and reception of the early modern Era in film.

HISTORIOGRAPHICAL TRENDS IN THE INTERPRETATION OF THEMES

Among the sources employed in the original conception of the period, there is a certain predilection for literary adaptation. Of the 17 films considered here, only 5 are original works without any literary referent. Moreover, among the 17 feature films analyzed, we have called attention to the existence of three recurrent themes, which in order of their frequency are the Inquisition, politics of the court, and royalty. In each one of these themes, the majority of the films base their interpretation on myths and historiographical interpretations which at least superficially have their origins in the 19th century: 9 films with these origins, 7 of which correspond to myths of Romanticism, and 3 of which correspond to images of the Inquisition's Black Legend.

This influence from 19th century sources is visible in the feature films, for example, as Hispanic historicism in *Alba de América* or *La Leona de Castilla*, and even

as dramatic love story in *La Princesa de Éboli*. They turn to studies from the 1950s which in turn have their origins in the 19th century. Only *Akelarre* turns exclusively to historical interpretations completely situated in 20th century historiography.

It is, then, interesting to note the commonality existing between the historical sources used by a film and the dominant historiographical trends of the time. In spite of the numerous critiques which period film receives for its lack of historical fidelity, it is meaningful to point out how these films are entities which are not so autonomous with respect to scholarly history as it is practiced in academic and non-academic circles. Even if on several occasions the cinematographic representations differ from what academic history offers as factual and statistical, the filmic interpretations of the period in question do not end up offering a view of the period being filmed which completely distances itself from its academic interpretation.

What is certain is that Spanish period film does not challenge the academic view of the early modern Era, rather it molds itself to that view. This type of synergy is evident in the majority of the films produced during the Francoist period with examples like *La Princesa de los Ursinos*, and *La Princesa de Éboli* which, besides any ties they might have with the regime's propaganda needs, present a view of the early modern Era which clearly responds to the postulates of the most conservative branch of historiography of their time. This synergy continues with democracy, as with the case of *Esquilache* and its adscription to one of the interpretative branches of the conspiracy, and above all with *Akelarre* in its use of witchcraft and the Inquisition in Navarra in the 17th century. It is also the case more recently with *La Conjura de El Escorial*, with its

reinterpretation of the Escobedo affair according to the most accepted current studies. Even films created by foreigners and made for not just Spanish markets, like *That Lady*, *Torquemada* and *Goya's Ghosts*, respond to a dark interpretation of the history of the Inquisition which has its historiographical roots in the 19th century and continues to dominate not only popular imagination, but still counts followers within the academic world.

HISTORIOGRAPHICAL INTERPRETATIONS IN THE CINEMATOGRAPHIC REPRESENTATION OF HISTORY

If we keep in mind that film historian Ángel Luis Hueso explains how one of the consequences of the romantic historiographical tradition is its transposition to literature in the form of love stories and adventure stories “como motor de la actividad de los protagonistas / as narrative engine of the acts of the characters” (Hueso 1991, 16), continuing their synergy with 19th century tradition, these films present us with the constant existence of recourse to stories represented in novelized or dramatized form. The canons of sentimental melodrama and adventure genre are present in the early films (*La Dama del Armíño*) as well as in the more recent (*La Conjura de El Escorial*).

Historicism, which, understood from the Rankian point of view that sees history as an unfolding from the past towards reality, is visibly present in projects to legitimize the present like the period feature films made during Francoism. Some of the films made by CIFESA during Francoism (*Princesa de los Ursinos*, *Alba de América*, *Leona de*

Castilla) fit into a teleological view of the past with a view to legitimizing the history of the Spanish nation being defended by Francoist institutions.

Much smaller is the number of other films which approach the postulates of history of beliefs or Nouvelle histoire. Within this group fit those feature films that seek to reconstruct a period, not through great events, but rather through a view of society in the past in terms of its mindset, its problems and artistic achievements, its moral and political-philosophical principles, in other words, the way of understanding life in a period. The clashes among sexuality, morality and politics in *El Rey Pasmado* show us insights into an era without the need to break the anonymity of its characters. Another example of the use of history of beliefs is *Alatriste*, which opts for the narration of a fictitious character and his evolution through several decades with the objective, not of portraying one historical moment, but rather a whole period and country.

In this sense, within these historiographical postulates in historical-cinematographic representation, there stands out a preference for the presentation of very concrete, very specific events of any period. This is especially significant in the case of the biopic, in which there is partial coverage given to the reigns of Isabel I de Castilla, Juana I and Juan de Austria, which are approached in a partial way through what is referent to the lives of their protagonists. In this way, early modern history is presented by taking thematic episodes as the point of departure, and restricting the timeframe to a few years, which on occasion are reduced to even a few hours (*Esquilache*). The result is the generalization of a short-term focused history as in opposition to other postulates with a wider temporal perspective. In this regard, the case of Rafael Gordon's *La Reina*

Isabel en persona is exemplary in as much as it is the only film in this study which focuses on the interpretation of one reign from a present-tense perspective that covers all personal and political aspects of the reign and the life of a historical character.

PURPOSES AND USES OF EARLY MODERN HISTORY IN SPANISH FILM

As we previously opined, early modern history is used in these films for diverse reasons that range from strictly pure entertainment to the reaffirmation of contemporary political values. While it may be true that the commercial nature of film may indicate that all films must respond to the first of the purposes, that of entertainment, in reality the politics of subventions and state financial help to film along with the presence and activity of censorship, went along way during Francoism to determining that films would enter into a synergy with many of the underpinnings of the regime: moral and Christian family values, Hispanity, the central role of Castile in the early modern Era, and a noticeable chauvinism. And, in the way, we are presented with an idealized past, one in which figures a nation (Spain) which has a date with history (*Alba de América*), which acts as a repository for unique spiritual essences (*La Princesa de los Ursinos*), defended by generations of kings and princes dedicated to and sacrificing for the nation, and one faith (*Jeromín, La Princesa de Éboli*) whose integrity is defended by rectitude and benevolence on the part of the Church and the Inquisition (*La Dama del Armíño*). Nevertheless, with the exception of special cases (*Alba de América, La Princesa de Éboli*), the Francoism-period film relationship does not translate into a direct intervention of the state dictating the contents of scripts for these productions. Perhaps

this fact, tied to the lack of film industry network, is what explains the absence of films dedicated to one of the archetypes of Francoist historical myths: the empire. The imperial past of military deeds becomes the great theme which is absent from these productions because, although it is alluded to in some films (*Jeromín*, *La Princesa de Éboli*), is never shown in its entirety.

The use of the early modern Era takes a radical turn with the arrival of democracy to Spain. Having been the object of use and abuse as an historical referent to official history by the previous regime, the early modern Era loses its active role in the conformation of the Spanish nation. As we have seen in *Alatriste*, the implementation of autonomous states in Spain means the end of the predominant traditionalist conception of the Spanish nation, and that the concept of nation comes to our time as one of continuous construction and lack of consensus. One of the consequences in film is the disappearance from period films of the embellishment of the past, and the proliferation of films which examine previously idealized institutions (Church, Monarchy, Inquisition, Nobility) from the crudest and most critical, at times ferocious, of perspectives possible (De España 27). With the limits to a filmmaker's creative and interpretive freedom imposed by censorship gone, one detects how early modern history continues to inspire the making of films, on occasion even internationally. But the relative unanimity of the interpretation of the past which characterized the films of Francoism will give way to a proliferation of disparate, no longer condescending images which are critical of the history of Spain. Thus, the country appears dominated by the corruption of its highest political (*La conjura de El Escorial*) and ecclesiastical (*El*

Segundo Poder) figures, and ravaged by the power of a Church (*El Rey Pasmado*) and Inquisition (*Torquemada, Goya's Ghosts*) and the instability of popular masses susceptible to being used by elements reactionary to needed reforms for the country (*Esquilache*); or prisoner of an inescapable nihilist patriotism, the country has no choice but to beware of the dictates of its corrupt who govern (*Alatriste*). Perhaps one of the explanations that can be offered for this filmic critique of the past is that the directors are still looking to distance themselves from that very idealization which characterized Francoist films.

RECEPTION AS MORE THAN A LACK OF GENERAL ACCEPTANCE

The analysis of the reception of these was done on the basis of formal written reactions to the films from different sources: film press reviews, box office results, censorship archives, and provincial delegate reports. When it comes to answering some of the questions posed in the introduction of this dissertation, the disparity in the quantity and quality of the film reviews encountered for each of the films makes it hard to draw general conclusions which might be applied to each of the filmic texts analyzed. However, over the more than 60 years that separate *La Dama del Armuña* from *La Conjura de El Escorial* some patterns concerning the reception of these films can be extracted, in the area of box office and press, which may themselves allow at the same time the establishment of a series of patterns in the evolution of reception.

The first fact to state is that films set in the early modern Era have produced a few box office and public successes. To date, *Locura de Amor, Juana la Loca, Akelarre*

and *El Rey Pasmado* remain as the only examples of popular and commercial success which can counterbalance the flops of *Alba de América*, *Esquilache*, *Alatriste* and *La Conjura de Escorial*. There exist some films that were barely distributed (*Torquemada*) and/or never released on DVD (*La Reina Isabel en Persona*) to date.

The second fact is the existence of fan evolution and some constants in the existing expectations among the press for this genre from the 1940s to our time. Out of 17 films, 9 were unquestionably well received by the press¹, while the rest received a tepid response (5) or openly negative (3). While in the second half of the decade of the 1940s the Francoist and non-Francoist press clearly supported and enthusiastically welcomed the boom in period productions, it is certain that the timid critiques found towards the end of the decade in the press as well as in provincial delegate and censorship reports give rise to a critical attitude which will explode with the premieres of *La Leona de Castilla* and *Alba de América*, and extend into the 1950s with other period films like *Correo del Rey* (Ricardo Gascón, 1951). Another point of evolution in the reviews of films produced in the first 15 years of the Francoist regime is the progressive loss of patriotic enthusiasm and a progressive critique of formal issues. The initial fascination for the wide display of the genre's modes of expression (set design, costumes, etc.) seen as an undoubted example of the capacity of Spanish film to compete on equal footing with international productions, ends up focusing on a second plane where there is a rigidity and lack of rhythm in this type of film. As an example of this type of rejection, although not all originating from this context, is the use of derogatory aphorisms like "cartón piedra" "acartonado" (papier-mâché), or "figuras grises" (stiff

figures) or the very name of the production company CIFESA, are forever linked with this genre by film critics, even to this day: “ese cartón-piedra que ilustra nuestras ficciones históricas desde las producciones Cifesa de Juan de Orduña y demás estajanovistas del simulacro / that cliched cartoon that shows our historical fictions from Juan de Orduna’s Cifesa and the other Stanislavsky-like filmings on” (Losilla 28). As film critic Hidalgo wrote in 1989, “en España sufrimos un empalagoso atracón de cine histórico en los años cuarenta [...] el cine español abandonó su historia / in Spain in the 1940’s we suffered the sickening attraction for historical film” (Hidalgo 9). Indeed, rejection of the genre continue among sectors of film critics, and it seems as if Spanish historical film may not be able to free itself the negative label created by Francoist film. In this sense, a review done about the film *La Conjura de El Escorial* summarizes in just a few lines the feeling against historical film among film critic sectors:

[...] *Alatriste* y *Los Borgia*, ambas de hace un par de temporadas, buscando [...] ser cierre de ciclo del cine histórico español contemporáneo. Si comparásemos sus resultados artístico e ideológicos con los de *La Princesa de los Ursinos* (1947) y *Jeromín* (1951) de Luis Lucía; y con *Locura de Amor* y *Alba de América*, de Juan de Orduña de 1948 y 1951 respectivamente, podríamos comprobar lo lento que va esto / Both *Alatriste* and *Los Borgia* from a couple of seasons ago, seeking to close the current cycle of Spanish historical film [...] If we were to compare their artistic and ideological achievements with those of Luis Lucia’s *Princess of Ursinos* and *Jeromin* and those of Juan de Orduna’s

Locura de Amor and Alba de America, we would appreciate how slowly this moves. (Torregrosa 16)

Yet, Torregrosa's article does not represent a total reticence towards the period genre, nor as rejection or lack of confidence in the genre. The persistence of a sector of critics who link the historical films overshadows the popular success of some of the period films in the past, such as *Locura de Amor*, but also ignores the artistic development of the genre.

Yet, in 1980s another sector the film critic began to notice and praise the evolution of the genre into and which distanced from the historical film model of the CIFESA super-productions of the past. As we have seen films such as *Akelarre* and *El Rey Pasmado* receive positive critics while producing films that did not spark the same clichéd criticism that binds period film to past failures. This trend has continued to date and it does reflect that though limited, early modernity on film is not only well received but also desired. Indeed, the pessimism of some sectors is also balanced by another constant in the history of film criticism: there is a fact that continues to point to the relevance and general interest in the genre. Hope springs up among critics and cinephiles every time a new film focusing on the modern Era is produced, and that this, as in the case of *Alatriste* o *Alba de América*, could become the one to crack open international markets to Spanish film. This recurrent optimism for historical super-productions is tied to the success which some recent productions have shown. This is the case with the recent showing of the television miniseries *Serrallonga* by TV3 and the four successful seasons of the swashbuckler *Águila Roja* -which is currently still being shown in reruns

by Television Española-, or the recent premiere of the film *Lope* (Andrucha Waddington, 2010). All of these show, in spite of a long history of commercial failures, that the early modern Era will continue to be a model of inspiration and a source of subject matter for filmmakers of the future.

NOTES

¹ These being the following titles: *La Princesa de los Ursinos*, *Locura de Amor*, *Jeromín*, *Akelarre*, *El Rey Pasmado*, *Juana la Loca*, *La Reina Isabel en Persona*.

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