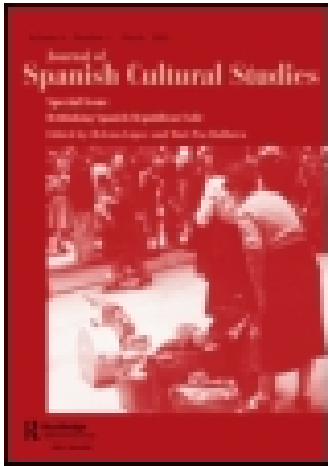


This article was downloaded by: [Vicente J Benet]

On: 31 August 2015, At: 01:07

Publisher: Routledge

Informa Ltd Registered in England and Wales Registered Number: 1072954 Registered office: 5 Howick Place, London, SW1P 1WG



## Journal of Spanish Cultural Studies

Publication details, including instructions for authors and subscription information:

<http://www.tandfonline.com/loi/cjsc20>

### Spanish archetypes in transnational cinema: a comparative study of iconography

Vicente J. Benet<sup>a</sup>

<sup>a</sup> Departament de Ciències de la Comunicació, Universitat Jaume I, Castelló de la Plana, Spain

Published online: 11 Aug 2015.



CrossMark

[Click for updates](#)

To cite this article: Vicente J. Benet (2015): Spanish archetypes in transnational cinema: a comparative study of iconography, Journal of Spanish Cultural Studies, DOI: [10.1080/14636204.2015.1042322](https://doi.org/10.1080/14636204.2015.1042322)

To link to this article: <http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/14636204.2015.1042322>

PLEASE SCROLL DOWN FOR ARTICLE

Taylor & Francis makes every effort to ensure the accuracy of all the information (the "Content") contained in the publications on our platform. However, Taylor & Francis, our agents, and our licensors make no representations or warranties whatsoever as to the accuracy, completeness, or suitability for any purpose of the Content. Any opinions and views expressed in this publication are the opinions and views of the authors, and are not the views of or endorsed by Taylor & Francis. The accuracy of the Content should not be relied upon and should be independently verified with primary sources of information. Taylor and Francis shall not be liable for any losses, actions, claims, proceedings, demands, costs, expenses, damages, and other liabilities whatsoever or howsoever caused arising directly or indirectly in connection with, in relation to or arising out of the use of the Content.

This article may be used for research, teaching, and private study purposes. Any substantial or systematic reproduction, redistribution, reselling, loan, sub-licensing, systematic supply, or distribution in any form to anyone is expressly forbidden. Terms &

Conditions of access and use can be found at <http://www.tandfonline.com/page/terms-and-conditions>

## Spanish archetypes in transnational cinema: a comparative study of iconography

Vicente J. Benet

*Departament de Ciències de la Comunicació, Universitat Jaume I, Castelló de la Plana, Spain*

Bullfighting is one of the most typical icons that brings to mind Spanish culture. It served as a narrative and iconographic motif for nineteenth-century Romantic travelers and remained central to the representation of what was considered the essence of Spain for writers and artists of the twentieth century; it continues to be a significant, albeit controversial, marker of Spanish identity in the present. As a modern phenomenon, bullfighting has had a close relationship with cinema. This article aims to analyze, from a cinematic perspective, the use of symbols, iconographies and narrative themes that have served to construct a Spanish national imaginary. Beginning with the recordings of bullfights made by the Lumière company, it goes on to analyze different versions of *Blood and Sand* and concludes with the movie *Blancanieves*, moving through a wide range of phases in the historical trajectory of the filmic representation of bullfighting. The article takes a transnational perspective, paying particular attention to films and coproductions made outside of Spain and showing the tension between transnational models – in which the notion of Spanishness is endowed with exoticism and “otherness” – and specifically Spanish formulations. The article addresses cinema’s contribution to the past construction of the iconic paradigm of Spain and to its continuing validity today.

**Keywords:** Bullfighting in cinema, nationalism, banal nationalism, vernacular modernism, Spanish iconography.

In a recent essay, the historian José Álvarez Junco concludes: “Y terminaron, al menos entre las generaciones jóvenes, los debates sobre el ‘ser de España’; las discusiones sobre esencias identitarias quedaron reservadas para la Real Academia de la Historia (RAH) y para los nacionalismos periféricos” (“Historia y mitos” 53). This categorical statement appears, surprisingly, amid a glut of recent books giving questions and answers on the topic of Spanish identity. The crop of titles on this topic in 2013 alone was especially abundant.<sup>1</sup> A common line taken in these books is to see the political construction of a nation as a product of historical and social processes – a perspective that has driven much contemporary cultural production in Spain. This is due, in part, to the challenges to national identity posed by peripheral sectors, especially in Catalonia and the Basque Country but also in Galicia. The myths, biased readings of history, symbols and ancestral voices that have served to construct nations over the last two centuries are emerging from these communities revitalized, commercialized and ready for media circulation. But we should be careful not to simplify such a complex phenomenon by seeing it as a mere reaction to tensions generated from the periphery. More generalized processes also exist that, in my view, respond to two questions. One is that of the traumas and tensions involved in Spain’s transition to modernity in the course of the twentieth century; the second concerns this transition’s relationship to the most decisive historical events in

Spain's past century: the civil war and the Franco dictatorship. Enormous pressure was exerted by the Franco regime to ensure universal conformity to a model of Spain derived from nineteenth-century reactionary thought, whose symbols and values were effectively associated with the dictatorship. Partly because of this, the question of Spanish identity was set aside, if not swept under the carpet, in most historical studies of the transition to democracy and the 1980s. Several symptomatic moments reveal the battle of signs that accompanied the birth of democracy in Spain. One of the most notable was when the Communist Party, one week after its legalization in April 1977, abandoned its traditional symbols (such as the red-yellow-purple Republican flag) and accepted the monarchy and its red-and-yellow flag. As the new democratic state became consolidated, the recently created autonomous governments institutionalized new historical narratives and iconographies. In view of this, new theories were postulated – for example, that of Spain's "weak nationalization" (De Riquer 97–114) – which gave rise to prolific debates among historians (Archilés 291). The debates have intensified recently, leading to the current proliferation of essays and articles on the topic of national identities – Spanish as well as peripheral – that appear with persistent regularity not only in academic publications but also in the mass media.

We should also bear in mind the phenomena related to the configuration of the contemporary world, especially since the fall of the Berlin Wall and the end of the millennium. At this time, a new and rather symptomatic concept took hold in academia: "postnationalism." The idea of postnationalism derives, naturally, from observing how transnational relations are ever more permeable, motivated by the logic of large transnational corporations and financial markets, together with the consolidation of supranational frameworks that determine relations between countries. At the same time, domestic social structures and cultural references are becoming increasingly heterogeneous, propelled by immigration and multiculturalism (Koopmans and Statham 653–7). No less important is the flow of images, stories and information circulated by the media and the multiplicity of screens that surround us, as will be discussed below. In these conditions, it probably no longer makes sense to think of the idea of a nation as something formed out of homogenous structures and political projects, or to consider the hegemonic and cohesive stories typical of modernity to be the center of current sociological and historical debates (Archilés 330).

However, in the case of Spain there are a series of phenomena – we could call them "symptoms" – that do not entirely fit the context described above. The younger generations referred to by Álvarez Junco have, in fact, continued to reappropriate the old symbols and narratives, but they use them in a new context and for entirely different ends. Traditional national imaginaries mix freely with new commercial icons, thereby taking on new political meanings that no longer respond to the conventional idea of a modern nation, but rather to marketing formulas that are more effective in catching our attention. It is no coincidence that within the context of globalization, Spanish national identity tends to be conflated with the concept of a "brand" (*marca*). The omnipresent *Marca España* in current political discourse reflects, among other things, the decline of traditional icons and narratives, and their conversion into objects that can be integrated into the market following a consumerist logic. *Marca España* was created when José María Aznar was the prime minister of Spain, through cooperation between public organizations and large Spanish companies.<sup>2</sup> The foundational document stating *Marca España*'s objectives, published in 2003, declares its aim as being to "comunicar y 'vender' la nueva realidad de España" (Díez Nicolás). But of course this does not occur

only with Spanish identity. In Catalonia, for example, a veritable industry has arisen from marketing products – from motorcycle helmets to personalized watches, candy or flip flops – bearing the emblems of Catalan independence.<sup>3</sup> When Michael Billig coined the term “banal nationalism” in 1995, his aim was to make us aware of how national symbolism was used to unite the masses. The socialization and herd behavior he analyzes has become even more prominent in the last two decades. The cohesion of the masses is no longer attached to patriotic rituals, historical commemorations or solemn ceremonies. Rather, a combination of celebrations and festivities has been accompanied by abstract political claims (in Catalonia for example, the slogans “the right to decide” or “the human chain for independence”) aimed at securing an unquestioned consensus. The sports events, the rituals instilled at school and the use of evocative, emotional language highlighted by Billig have become an essential part of our understanding of the contemporary idea of the nation. Such resources make it possible to construct imagined communities that no longer depend on traditional print media like the press and that are thus open to the powerful influence of new media and emerging technologies of open access to information, including of course social networks.

A good example of how the use of icons and images has changed is found in certain symptomatic expressions involving the Spanish flag. In celebrating a sports victory, for example, the crowd cheering on the victorious athletes wave Spanish flags with the official coat of arms replaced by the famous bull designed by Manolo Prieto for the Osborne sherry company (the bull emblem has even been used on the flags mounted on the vehicles of Spanish troops at sites of international conflict). This bull design has been assimilated as a national symbol and a 2005 ruling by a Seville court even allowed souvenir sellers to use it, despite a complaint filed by the Osborne sherry company.<sup>4</sup> We should also mention here that the large billboards of the bull that dot Spanish highways have been taken down in Catalonia and have frequently been defaced by separatist groups.

The symbiosis between national symbols and commercial branding is a sign of our times, eloquently revealing contemporary values, aspirations, anxieties and uncertainties. The battle of icons is fought out within a framework that is, indeed, quite banal, but unquestionably important if we wish to fully comprehend the means used today to shape the masses into cohesive groups.

The aim of this article is to analyze, from a cinematic perspective, the use of symbols, iconographies and narrative themes that have served to construct a Spanish national imaginary. Beginning with the origins of cinema, it will analyze how their function and meaning have been transformed up to the present, focusing specifically on motifs drawn from bullfighting. I will trace the construction of a bullfighting imaginary both in Spain and overseas, since one of its first iconographic particularities in the case of cinema is that it almost immediately took on a transnational dimension. I place special emphasis on the historical moment when bullfighting iconography became established in film: the 1920s and 1930s, the era of “vernacular modernism” as defined by Miriam Hansen (“Fallen Women” 12). Vernacular modernism refers to the establishment of specific cinematic paradigms in different countries; analysis of these paradigms reveals the tensions between (more or less invented) traditional, local cultures and transnational, cosmopolitan tendencies related to the “Americanization” of the world at that time. These tendencies can be found as much in the cinema of the Soviet Union (Hansen “The Mass Production”) as in that of Shanghai (Hansen “Fallen Women”) – and, I would add, in the cinema of any country that, like Spain, had an established film industry around 1930,

no matter how precarious. The interplay between the national and the transnational remains in force today in the construction of new iconographic formulas that respond to contemporary values. Consequently, I will devote most of this article to examples of Hollywood and European films that allow us to observe the transnational dimension of the bullfighting topos, which has basically been defined through a “foreign” lens.

Bullfighting and cinema are two phenomena currently in decline and, while obviously not identical, comparisons between them are illuminating. Cinema is currently undergoing a transformation with the digital revolution, affecting the industry’s structure and control (Bordwell 130). In particular, the digital revolution is definitively changing modes of film consumption, audiences’ experience of film (Aumont 76–90) and the very nature of the medium (Rodowick 26). Bullfighting, for its part, is affected by other kinds of problems. First, contemporary sensibilities interpret the violence of the *corrida* as torture inflicted on animals. Second (and not unrelatedly), the identification of bullfighting with the exaltation of Spanish nationalism has led to its sudden disappearance from areas such as Catalonia. Symbols and forms of entertainment that were cultivated by the masses in the twentieth century are losing their unifying force in today’s globalized world. What has happened to their capacity for constructing allegories of our time?

### **Bulls, cinema and modernity**

Like cinema, the world of bullfighting is a product of modernity. The modern conception of the bullfighting spectacle – from the establishment of the stages of the fight to its basic regulations, even the design of the matador’s dazzling outfit (*traje de luces*, literally “suit of lights”) – found its first written form in the book *Tauromaquia completa* attributed to Francisco Montes (known as Paquiro), published in 1836. Since the previous century, bullfighting had gradually become increasingly popular; this book appeared at precisely the time it became firmly established as a mass spectacle. As Adrian Shubert has argued, bullfighting is a modern phenomenon, a culture industry and a form of mass commercial entertainment (24). Shubert demonstrates, for example, that, as early as the eighteenth century, interest in bullfighting began to present problems in Spain with regard to the working day, with the scheduling of bullfights regulated accordingly (this is noted by Théophile Gautier in the book inspired by his 1840 visit to Spain). Shubert examines the expansion of bullfighting from a business perspective, as a ritual conceived to fascinate the modern masses and as an enterprise that could be used for political interests. From its initial solid foundation during the times of Goya, by the last third of the nineteenth century it had become fully consolidated as a totally modern industry (Shubert 25). Bullfighting brought with it the development of planned systems of cattle rearing; networks of representatives, agents and promoters and the construction of permanent bullrings, etc. It is calculated that around 1860 there were approximately 400 bullfights per year in Spain. By the beginning of the twentieth century, the number had doubled (Nuñez Florencio 441).

The relationship between bullfighting and modernity led to a recurrent debate in Spain. For a broad sector of the intellectual, enlightened strata of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, bullfighting was a manifestation of barbarity resulting from the country’s profound backwardness. This view, held by several members of the Generation of 1898, grew in the course of the twentieth century, with the ceremony rejected by wide sectors of the population. However, bullfighting had its defenders, who were fascinated by its mystique, its imbrication with an idealized, essentialist vision of the popular and its

condensation of values understood as genuinely Spanish (Núñez Florencio 441–7). This vision was partly shared by several nineteenth-century travelers, such as Prosper Mérimée or Théophile Gautier, who went to Spain looking for thrilling, exotic experiences. Going to a bullfight was one of the best ways to do this. An interesting example is Édouard Manet, whose gusto for adventure complemented his love for Goya, particularly his *Tauromaquia* series. In a letter Manet sent to Charles Baudelaire about his 1865 trip to Spain, he wrote: “One of the most surprising and terrible spectacles that one can see is a bullfight. When I return, I hope to capture on canvas the brilliant, dazzling, yet dramatic bullfight I attended” (57). The spectacle of “movement and death” (González García 87) would decisively influence his painting and introduce the bullfighting motif to Paris salons. At the turn of the century, all things Spanish, especially those related to bullfighting, were disseminated via the world fairs, quickly becoming a global phenomenon. There are some very telling examples. At the 1889 World Fair in Paris, a bullring was installed in the Bois de Boulogne and enjoyed immense success. At the 1904 World Fair in St. Louis, a bullfight was programmed in tandem with a Wild West spectacle. A large audience impatiently awaited the show; however, the state governor ultimately decided to suspend the spectacle and arrest the promoter and bullfighters (Shubert 24). That same year, a bullring seating 15,000 spectators was built in Budapest as part of a profusion of events celebrating Spanish culture and customs (Vari 143).

There was a worldwide vogue for all things Spanish in the first two decades of the twentieth century. But this was not just the passing off of archetypes and rituals as something authentic and ancestral; there was a certain sense of modernity as well. This Spanish craze was partly due to the mass exhibitions in New York and Chicago of the paintings of Joaquín Sorolla and to the success of flamenco troupes and *copla* singers at venues ranging from Montmartre to Broadway. The attraction of the modern masses to the exotic, thrilling dimension of bullfighting was also felt by artists and high-cultural writers in the inter-war period. From Picabia to Picasso, the iconography connected with bullfighting tended toward “excess,” to use Ángel González García’s term (92), appealing to avant-garde artists in their challenge to artistic tradition. In *Histoire de l’oeil (Story of the Eye, 1928)*, Georges Bataille takes excess to an extreme in the culminating scene where the bullfighter Manuel Granero is gored in the ring. Evidently, another important disseminator of this post-romantic vision of Spanish bullfighting-related exoticism was Ernest Hemingway’s first successful novel, *The Sun Also Rises (1926)*. While it is not possible to go into either of these works in greater depth here, there is no doubt that the transnational fascination with bullfighting in the first third of the twentieth century spread as much through mass culture and spectacle as it did through high-cultural aesthetic proposals.

In this context, which coincides with the international expansion of cinema as a new entertainment phenomenon, it is not surprising that bullfighting became an important motif in the first films made in Spain. Among the first images collected by the Lumière agents who presented the *cinématographe* in Madrid in May 1896 is that of matadors entering the capital’s bullring. In just three years, between 1896 and 1899, the Lumière catalog incorporated 24 bullfighting scenes – a relatively high number for the time – and bullfighting became one of the favorite spectacles for the Lyon-based company (Lecoite 167). This is particularly interesting because capturing the emotion of a bullfight pushed the technical and expressive capabilities of filming to its limit. In a certain sense, the filming of bullfights forced early cameramen to explore cinematic *mise en scène*. In spite of all the difficulties, these early films reveal the attempt to transmit the emotion of the

bullring through specific techniques: keeping the matadors and the bull in the field of vision, at an appropriate distance to allow the risk and spectacular nature of the fight to be perceived; highlighting the key ritualistic moments and synthesizing in a single take the ceremony's culminating moments.

However, the film that established the iconography and narrative forms of bullfighting on a transnational scale was Fred Niblo's *Blood and Sand* (1922), thanks especially to the leading role of its major star, Rudolph Valentino. The film was based on a 1908 novel of same the title by Vicente Blasco Ibáñez, already a bestselling author; Hollywood's taking up of the novel was the logical culmination of this success. Indeed, Rex Ingram's *The Four Horsemen of the Apocalypse*, also based on a novel by Blasco Ibáñez, had turned Valentino into a star overnight the year before. To continue this winning formula, a story was sought with a Spanish bullfighting setting able to showcase Valentino's exuberant masculinity. Let us not forget that *The Four Horsemen of the Apocalypse* was also partly identified with the "Hispanic" through its opening sequence set in Argentina, and additionally through the suggestive tango that Valentino dances in the film. The plot of Blasco Ibáñez's *Sangre y arena*, which he had himself adapted for cinema in 1916, is somewhat reminiscent of the Spanish Don Juan and Carmen myths. That is, it alludes to sexual promiscuity, subjugation by passion and death as the endpoint of a tormented trajectory, albeit toned down to conform to the conventions of melodramatic literary serials and certain naturalistic tendencies. Blasco Ibáñez's vision, in his novel as well as in the film version he made himself in 1916, did not differ much from that of those who viewed bullfighting as a brutal, savage phenomenon. He accordingly elaborates a strong critique of what he sees as the ritual's true "beast": the bloodthirsty public. His novel, and especially its Hollywood adaptation, created a series of narrative and iconographic motifs that would become almost standard fare in future productions. On the narrative plane, a recurring feature would be a love plot driven by two contrasting female figures: the *femme fatale* who leads the bullfighter to his demise and the self-sacrificial wife and/or mother. The protagonist's journey would often include the rise from poverty (in some films incorporating social commentary) to triumph and wealth. And typically, when the bullfighter, at the crucial point in his trajectory, is subjugated by the *femme fatale*'s passion, he experiences fear and weariness, accompanied by an imminent financial ruin. The story comes to an end when he dies tragically in the ring, usually accompanied by his wife, who serves to intensify the melodramatic emotion of the moment. The iconography and visual regime regularly incorporate liturgical aspects of the bullfighting world: admiration of the *traje de luces*, showing all the details of the matador getting dressed; the atmosphere in the bullring and the rituals pertaining to the performance (the matador's prayer; the moments prior to the matadors' ceremonial entrance); and, above all, the public's contemplation of the masculine body in danger and images of their reactions. These types of scenes emphasize an active, desiring female gaze directed at the bullfighter: that of the *femme fatale* whose eroticism has been aroused by the danger of the bullfight.

The image of Spain constructed by Hollywood in Niblo's *Blood and Sand* contains characteristics of the romantic exoticism mentioned above. However, the film also suggests aspects of modernity, incarnated in the great transnational Hispanic icon of the 1920s: the Latin lover. Miriam Hansen, in her study of Valentino (*Babel* 245–294), gives a detailed description of how the archetype, which would prevail till the advent of sound, became established. Its most representative figures are Ricardo Cortez, Ramon Novarro and Antonio Moreno. At this early stage it was essential to define Latin "otherness,"



which fused exoticism with the passionate eroticism associated with Hispanic ethnicity (recall Don Juan and Carmen). But there was also a marked “sexual otherness” that emphasized a certain ambiguity in the protagonist that was very typical of the 1920s. Traits that were traditionally taken as feminine were attributed to the male character: refinement, sensitivity, sophistication, he was cultured and “continental.” These were, in short, values that conveyed a certain effeminacy, sparking some controversy. In the opening scene of *Blood and Sand*, for example, Valentino lovingly kisses a friend who dies in his arms after being gored by a bull. These narrative components were associated with Valentino’s private life and would feed into fan magazines and the press (Hansen *Babel* 264).

These stories also contain another essential element referred to above: the independent, active, desiring woman who, in moments of dramatic climax, directs her gaze at the male body exposed to risk or violence – another leitmotif in the erotic construction of the Latin lover that tends to appear in all of these movies. The positioning of the object of sexual contemplation is sublimated through the *mise en scène*. Accordingly, objects that normally carry a functional role in the story become fetishistic: pistols, swords, whips and rifles and above all the phallic consistency of the actor himself as an object of desire – which of course implies someone gazing at him. In *Blood and Sand*, Valentino’s matador outfit, covered in sequins, frills and embroidery, expresses this rather baroque sexual ambiguity, corresponding perfectly to an exotic and erotic celebration of the male body accompanied by fetish objects in a ritual where death is always present. The representation of the female character’s desiring and blatantly erotic gaze is one of the novelties in the 1920s Latin lover formula that derived from Hollywood’s adaptation of Blasco Ibáñez’s novel.

### **Bullfighting and nationalized mass culture**

The eroticization of Hispanic exoticism and the fascinating complexity of the Latin lover’s “otherness” connect to other aspects of modernity that coincide with the reconfiguration of the bullfighting world in Spain during the 1920s. In the previous decade, several bullfighters, thanks to the influence of the press and the media, had become mass phenomena. The rivalry between fans of the matadors Juan Belmonte and José Gómez (“Joselito”) reached emotional extremes until it was interrupted by Joselito’s death, gored by a bull, in 1920. The passion for bullfighting crossed borders, its impact exceeding even that produced by the turn-of-the-century World Fairs. In January 1925, *Time* magazine devoted its cover to Belmonte, an international phenomenon who had also made a name for himself in the Mexican bullfighting circuit. Prestigious writers and journalists like José Bergamín, Julio Camba and Manuel Chávez Nogales commented on his life and analyzed his style. The transnational expansion of bullfighting, supported by the media, coincided with the program to “nationalize the masses” of General Primo de Rivera’s dictatorship (1923–1930). The dictator intensified the commemorative activities and political liturgies introduced by Restoration governments at the century’s start with the aim of uniting the country after defeat in the Spanish-American War of 1898 and consequent loss of Spain’s last colonies. The process of nationalization “from above” was implemented through government education policies, military indoctrination and a national-Catholic ideological program disseminated by the pro-government media (Quiroga 67–68). The dictatorship offset, as it were, this conservative ideological base (for the most part taken from nineteenth-century reactionary thought) by promoting

Spain's modernization, chiefly through large-scale communication and transport projects aimed at updating administrative procedures and public infrastructure. Some propagandistic undertakings, such as the 1929 Barcelona International Exposition and its Pueblo Español, were representative of this aim of constructing a modern image of Spain that dovetailed with the demands of the tourist industry (Mendelson 23–5). Thus, despite a social and political context marked by dictatorship in the 1920s, the period saw a cultural blossoming, christened the *Edad de Plata*, represented by a brilliant generation of writers, artists, thinkers and scientists who helped to shape an idea of modernity – a modernity that would in 1936 find itself under attack with the outbreak of civil war.

Many of these modern thinkers demonstrated their acceptance of bullfighting as a phenomenon linked to popular expression. José Ortega y Gasset, Federico García Lorca and José Bergamín were among the key intellectual figures who supported bullfighting. Even if General Primo de Rivera's "nationalization from above" was not all that successful in influencing the masses, we can nonetheless claim that an unquestionable "nationalization from below" did occur in the 1920s and 1930s, resulting in the association with Spain of a whole repertoire of narrative topoi, musical forms and iconographies – associations that would last till at least the end of the twentieth century. The term "españolada" was coined to describe films or spectacles that propagated a clichéd or stereotypical image of Spain. Although the term normally has a negative connotation, that is not my intention here. The term refers, first and foremost, to the nineteenth-century fascination with Spain disseminated, as already mentioned, by travelers, writers and painters. Although it first attained widespread use in France – encouraged, in part, by the court of Napoleon III and his Spanish aristocratic wife, Eugenia de Montijo – with reference to nineteenth-century images, dance forms, music and stories about Spain (such as Prosper Mérimée's hugely popular *Carmen*, made into an opera by Georges Bizet), I refer here to a different, innovative meaning of the term "españolada" that results from the "nationalization from below" that crystallized in the 1920s, giving birth to the cinematic *españolada*. The portrayal of a national identity "from below" was a response to new cultural references relating to urban life, spectacles, modes of entertainment and forms of sociability in a society that was undergoing a profound transformation (Benet *El cine* 97–110).

The phenomenon of the *españolada* emerged in connection with the growth of the mass media and the culture industry, both of which were extremely important for the construction of a new "popular culture." A fundamental example is music. Two typical forms that enjoyed huge success among the masses, the *copla* and the *paso doble*, emerged at the beginning of the twentieth century and were immediately integrated into popular (especially urban) fairs and festivals, and also, evidently, into the bullfight as the high point of the celebrations. The dissemination and impact of this music was closely interconnected with other essential features of modernity, all playing a part in the construction of a national image: radio, sound recordings and of course cinema – above all sound film but silent film too – which adapted *zarzuelas* or turned to famous *copla* singers (the principal stars of the time). Cinema and the media would be crucial to the consolidation of these new musical modes – through costume design, dance forms, choreography, *mise en scène*, etc. – as national spectacles that would ultimately become models for a "nationalized mass culture" (García Carrión 131).

In sum, during the first third of the twentieth century the *españolada* created a frame of reference through symbols, spectacles, music and iconography for a modern (or so it was understood) reading of the past, folklore and traditions. In addition, the *españolada*

became a critical element in the process that I identify with “vernacular modernism.” Vernacular modernism is defined by a tension between two poles. At one end are the cosmopolitan tendencies that define dominant, homogenous styles that become assimilated by the masses on a global scale. In other words, hegemonic, iconic worldviews are disseminated transnationally and become consumed by audiences quite naturally. In terms of cinema, Hollywood and its conception of cinematic spectacle undoubtedly operated as an integrating, homogenizing force through its stylistic, narrative, scenic and editing conventions that spread worldwide. For example, during a trip to Japan, Blasco Ibáñez was astonished to see the impact Valentino and *Blood and Sand* had had there, and that his novels had inspired several Japanese films (George). At the other end of the pole, although converging with the above, vernacular modernism also contains local features that refer to social practices, iconography, musical forms, and aspects of national culture that were more or less “invented” with modernity. These traits define a paradigm that would become decisive in the configuration of modern national identities (Hansen “The Mass Production” 60). In this respect, the local custom of bullfighting becomes translated into a key icon in the transnational circulation of Spanish identity.

### A transnational spectacle

Bearing in mind the iconographic and thematic conventions discussed thus far, we can see that bullfighting made a considerable transnational journey. The quintessential example of the bullfighting paradigm is, beyond doubt, Rouben Mamoulian’s 1941 Technicolor version of *Blood and Sand*. It has the obligatory exotic setting, along with passionate eroticism intricately fused with danger and death. Mamoulian’s treatment of the rituals surrounding the male body being eased into the matador’s tight-fitting outfit gives these images a pictorial dimension. In an iconographically powerful scene, Juan Gallardo (Tyrone Power) is dressed by his helper, surrounded by admirers. When the admirers leave the room, Gallardo’s wife Carmen (Linda Darnell) appears unexpectedly to bid him farewell before he goes out to the ring. The two of them are alone and she contemplates him as if he were a work of art. He holds a pose, in his suit and cape, noticeably proud of his image, followed by a camera movement that completes the tableau effect. The point of view corresponds to Carmen’s gaze: warm, admiring and loving, but lacking the intense, visceral desire<sup>5</sup> that Gallardo’s lover Doña Sol (Rita Hayworth) will project in the ring shortly afterward. The story’s eroticism has a circular structure (Pirolini 119) in that Doña Sol’s desire turns Juan into one more in her long string of lovers, while also entailing a tragic dimension since Juan, like his father, will die in the ring.

This film also intensifies the original story’s social component. Its opening connects the young Juan Gallardo’s economic destitution to the fact of his father’s death, and the storyline reflects his consequent dual motivation: to emulate his father and, at the same time, escape extreme poverty. The social component (which would become fundamental to treatment of the bullfighting theme in the 1960s, as we shall see) is signaled by the detail of the opulent pair of earrings with which Juan Gallardo is obsessed, and especially by his relationship with Doña Sol. More than just a voluptuous *femme fatale*, she has a cosmopolitan air of aristocratic refinement. Following the paradigm created by Blasco Ibáñez in his novel, she is the one who takes the sexual initiative. The encounter with Doña Sol produces the decisive change in Juan Gallardo’s characterization, expressed through a narrative motif that becomes increasingly prominent: fear. We see how fear is

instilled in Gallardo by the “praying mantis” with whom he lives, who devours his youthful, masculine energy. But there is also the sense that his social triumph in society is ephemeral and that at any moment he could lose it all – a sense reinforced through the character of his mother Doña Angustias (Alla Nazimova, an actress who incidentally American audiences associated with Valentino during his Latin lover days). In other words, it is at the peak of the bullfighter’s success and social ascent that the fragility of his entire trajectory is revealed. What endures however (following Blasco Ibáñez’s novel) is the crowd of bloodthirsty spectators. There is a sense in which Doña Sol is a synecdoche of the spectators, of this modern mass in need of emotions and for whom romantic characters, drawn to their tragic destiny like Juan Gallardo, are no more than an entertaining spectacle.

In terms of bullfighting iconography, Mamoulian’s film develops a character type that departs radically from the melodramatic sensibility of the Latin lover. The ambiguity and refinement surrounding the figure in the 1920s are replaced by a social dimension. The representation of eroticism is also more direct: Doña Sol’s sexual domination of Juan Gallardo is carnal and explicit, and their sexual dependency is the underlying, instinctive dimension that motivates their behavior. The “otherness” elaborated here, synthesizing the exotic with overt sexual tensions (occasionally contextualized by social commentary) will continue in future bullfighting films. An example of a film that descends almost directly from Mamoulian’s *Blood and Sand* is Henry King’s 1957 *Fiesta!*, an adaptation of Hemmingway’s *The Sun Also Rises*, also starring Tyrone Power.

Mamoulian’s cinematic treatment of these narrative and iconographic features exploits a fantasized, exquisitely exotic image of Spain, inspired at certain climactic moments by the chromatic tones and chiaroscuro of baroque painting. Indeed, in the same year that the film was released Mamoulian published a celebrated article about the film’s dramatic use of color, in which he notes that color should not be oriented toward a mimetic or “realistic” representation of the environment, but rather toward a pictorial and imaginative recreation of it. According to his argument, the atmosphere will be “authentic” to the extent that it responds to the viewer’s imagined “poetic” construction of it (Mamoulian 17–18). The innovative treatment of color in this film, under the direction of Ernest Palmer and Ray Rennahan, was also recognized by Siegfried Kracauer, who noted how it responded to expectations of opulent mass spectacle appropriate to a “chromatically fertile Spain” (Kracauer 142). The updated narrative and iconographic motifs emerging from Mamoulian’s stylized treatment of bullfighting became a model for the transnational construction of the topic in the two decades to follow.

The most noteworthy Hollywood director in terms of his persistent use of the bullfighting theme is Budd Boetticher. He made three films about bullfighting, the first two in the Hollywood industrial complex though they were not big-budget films: *The Bullfighter and the Lady* (1951) and *The Magnificent Matador* (1955). These films still feature inner conflicts involving the bullfighter’s fear, weariness and doubts, together with destructive amorous passions, but with a much more subdued tone that distances them from melodramatic paradigms. Boetticher, however, was dissatisfied with Hollywood fiction-film conventions and decided to return to bullfighting with a documentary centered on Carlos Arruza, one of the great Mexican bullfighters of the time. Although Boetticher began to shoot his project at the end of the 1950s, he was not able to finish it until over a decade later. *Arruza*, together with the Mexican film *Torero* by Carlos Velo (1956), are the most interesting efforts to divest the bullfighting world of the clichéd themes and icons that had taken hold with *Blood and Sand*. One of the most noteworthy

techniques adopted in Boetticher's film is the elimination of all contextual elements (the crowd in the bullring, poverty, fear) so as to center on bullfighting's ritual, artistic dimension. To that end, Boetticher attempted to exclude everything extraneous to the confrontation between the bull and the matador, in a ring that looks much like the Sahara desert (Assayas and Krohn 43). Velo's film, by contrast, pays particular attention to the bullfighter Luis Procuna's family and his everyday life. In this film, fear, the fragility of triumph and the imminent possibility of losing everything are constant motifs. Yet both films seek an almost anthropological veracity in the confrontation between man and animal that distances them from the melodramatic and emotional parameters typical of Hollywood fiction cinema. The *ciné vérité* approach of these documentaries can be related to several films of the 1960s, as we shall see.

Nonetheless, a more conventional romantic paradigm also prevailed in the 1950s. This is particularly evident in certain Spanish-French coproductions, particularly noteworthy examples being *Sang et lumières (Beauty and the Bullfighter)*, Georges Rouquier and Ricardo Muñoz Suay, 1954) and *El torero* (René Wheeler, 1954). In both films it is easy to detect the traces of Blasco's model, albeit updated and, in the latter case, nuanced by featuring a bullfighting star of the time, Pepín Martín Vázquez. A predictable repertoire characterizes both movies: the *femme fatale*, the bullfighter's self-sacrificial wife/mother, the rituals surrounding the performance, the "exoticism" and "otherness" of Spain as a country whose rituals reduce the characters to the passionate, instinctive dimension craved by French audiences. The use of a bullfighting star in the leading role of a coproduction was also an evident lure for Spanish audiences, keen to see their idols on the big screen. Although the topic of bullfighting films specifically addressed to a Spanish public lies outside the scope of this article, I will mention a few key examples from the 1960s when such films started to have a certain international reach. Particularly noteworthy are those made by Ladislao Vajda: as well as being very popular, they also made some impact at international film festivals such as Berlin and Cannes. I refer here to *Tarde de toros* (1956), one of the first color films made about bullfighting in Spain, featuring the matadors Antonio Bienvenida and Domingo Ortega, and *Mi tío Jacinto* (1956), a demythifying melodrama that introduces a new narrative motif: the story of a failed bullfighter who has sunk into alcoholism and abject poverty.

In a way, *Mi tío Jacinto* anticipates the social focus that would be developed further in bullfighting films of the 1960s. Many filmmakers who became politically aware under the Franco Dictatorship would use the bullfighting theme to pursue a narrative related to the original paradigm: bullfighting as a means of escape from poverty. However, these films do not center on the protagonist's individual social ascent but rather on description of the related social and environmental factors. This focus is evident in several 1960s Spanish films, such as *A las cinco de la tarde* (Juan Antonio Bardem, 1961), *El espontáneo* (Jorge Grau, 1964) and the documentary *Cincuenta y dos domingos* (Llorenç Soler, 1965).

The film that best represents this tendency from a transnational perspective is, undoubtedly, another coproduction, this time with Italy: Francesco Rosi's *Il momento della verità (The Moment of Truth)*, 1965). The film insistently connects the protagonist with the environment that determines his trajectory: the wild, barren, asphyxiating landscapes of the countryside; the lower-class neighborhoods, cheap nightclubs and destitution of the city. A *ciné vérité* approach is evident in all these settings, through techniques and stylistic effects borrowed from documentary cinema. The film shows no interest in offering a nuanced or profound characterization of its protagonist, the aspiring bullfighter Miguel Romero (Miguel Mateo, known as "Miguelín"). Rather, it centers on

his surroundings and the social context. Even the conventional love story disappears. There are no *femmes fatales* or self-sacrificial wives; indeed, this film allows no space for love. The film's personal relationships revolve around social and political issues, such as the protagonist's exploitation by his manager, or the competition between aspiring bullfighters to triumph or simply find a job.

The documentary style is an aesthetic choice that remains consistent throughout the film, even in the bullfighting scenes. In these, the camera barely registers the ornaments or solemnity of the ritual. On the contrary, the images focus on physical effort, on bullfighting as a job, on blood and fatigue, on the ultimate dismemberment of the bull. Consequently, the movie responds to a stylistic project radically opposed to that seen in Mamoulian's film. Devoid of melodrama, it stresses social critique and an existentialist approach to the emptiness and meaning of life. In keeping with this transcendental dimension, the film is constructed as an allegory that conveys the sense of a circular trajectory. The film's start and end depict scenes from Holy Week processions in all their dramatic spectacularity. Of course the sculptures, images of Virgins and motifs of the passion of Christ are present not only to invite a religious interpretation.<sup>6</sup> This baroque, tragic vision of Holy Week as a framework to Miguel Romero's story conveys the image of a country trapped in rituals from the past and repressed by the totalitarian and reactionary values of the Francoist Dictatorship, in which religious oppression played a significant role. This allegorical interpretation mapped well onto the political cinema of the time, when political allegories criticizing the Franco Dictatorship were typically welcomed at international film festivals. Indeed, the film participated in the official competition at Cannes.

The last important bullfighting film made under Francoism, *Currito de la Cruz* (Rafael Gil, 1965), was released the same year as Rosi's film. It marks the culminating point in a local tradition of movies made for Spanish bullfighting fans, based on narratives and representations of *corridos* more in tune with their expectations.<sup>7</sup> The bullfighting theme would quickly lose relevance in the Spanish film market as well as in transnational cinema circuits. The reasons lie in the social and economic processes that brought about Spain's rapid modernization beginning in the 1960s. Certain factors were crucial at this moment of huge change. One was mass tourism, for which bullfighting was an inevitable attraction. With tourism, new customs and forms of sociability rapidly transformed the country. Even more important was the positioning of bullfighting as a business fully integrated into the media industries, as seen in the emergence of new matadors who competed in the tabloids as much as in the ring. As the media transformed the *corrida*, it quickly and successfully found a place on television. In short, the passage to modernity meant the definitive loss of the exotic dimension, the "otherness" that had defined Spanish identity since Romanticism. Mystery, eroticism, ritual and death either dissipated as iconic motifs or were transmuted into commercialized products that since the 1960s have been dependent on the culture industry. The spectacularization of bullfighting, even in its tragic form, reached a fever pitch with the televised retransmission of the death of the bullfighter Francisco Rivera (known as "Paquirri") in 1984. The media phenomenon extended to the story of his widow, the famous *copla* singer Isabel Pantoja, and his two children, creating a melodrama that has been fodder for Spanish magazines and television shows from that date to the present. In the 1990s new television channels, especially Canal +, produced sophisticated retransmissions using multiple resources and technical innovations to create an impressive spectacle. But the changed sensibilities toward bullfighting continued to gain an ever greater hold. With the

death of Franco and the advent of democracy, Spain became increasingly less exceptional, less “different” as the tourist publicity of the 1960s claimed, and more and more comparable to its neighbors. Thus national iconic paradigms specific to Spain (or, for that matter, to any major Western country) ceased to be based on rituals or traditions pertaining to a more or less modern past.

The best demonstration of this change with regard to bullfighting is the evident failure since the 1980s of bullfighting films addressed to an international audience that follow a traditional narrative and iconographic mold. Many of these movies repeat clichés and commonplaces of the genre. For example, a new version of *Blood and Sand* (Javier Elorrieta, 1989) with an international cast that included Sharon Stone (before she became a global star for her role in *Basic Instinct*), as well as a recent biopic *Manolete (A Matador's Mistress*, Menno Meyjes, 2008) with Adrien Brody and Penélope Cruz, have raised practically no interest. The same is true of movies geared toward the domestic market, such as *Belmonte* (Juan Sebastián Bollaín, 1995). Neither the lure of big stars nor digital technology's ability to make the on-screen performance more dramatic is sufficient any more: we no longer operate under the same parameters that gave meaning to bullfighting and cinema in vernacular modernism.

### The survival of the past

The general decline of bullfighting culture makes its occasional resuscitation in recent films particularly interesting, above all because there is a distinct departure from the generic molds discussed above. Two movies from the post-dictatorship period stand out for their significant international impact. Both reinterpret some of the fundamental values of vernacular modernism. They combine national icons and narrative motifs with universal stories, with the aim of constructing cultural products that speak about the present on a transnational scale. The first of these films is Pedro Almodóvar's *Matador* (1986). This film proposes a specific view of Spain at a moment of transition and change. Some have claimed that the film's use of bullfighting iconography reveals how archetypes and rituals from an earlier time do not work in modern society (Morris 165). In any case, what is evident is that the movie utilizes these archetypes and rituals in a way that is entirely dissociated from their previous meanings. Elements from the bullfighting tradition are stripped of their ritual function and take on value as fetish objects; that is, they become sublimated artifacts associated with sexual encounters and eventually death. In fact, there are no scenes shot in the bullring; the bullfighting iconography comes more from the film's design and art direction (for example, the actresses' costumes are somewhat reminiscent of bullfighters' capes) than from the rituals of the *corrida* itself. Indeed, the violence and cruelty traditionally presented through the rituals of bullfighting are re-contextualized within the parameters of genres that had become widely popular at that time: splatter movies and horror films which, notably, the movie's main character, the retired bullfighter Diego Montes (Nacho Martínez), watches on television while masturbating.

But this film, like B or Z movies, also seeks to dialogue with other, more “respectable” cinematographic models, specifically with *Duel in the Sun* (King Vidor, 1946) and *In the Realm of the Senses (Ai no korîda*, Nagisa Ôshima, 1976), but also with *Psycho* (Alfred Hitchcock, 1960) and other films (Evans; Herrera).

One element that connects the film with the modernist tradition is its use of sexual ambiguity. In *Matador* this ambiguity is connected to the homosexual drives that recur



through the film and coalesce in the character of Ángel (Antonio Banderas; Smith 71–73). It is interesting to note that Antonio Banderas may come closest to the figure of the Latin lover in today's transnational film scene, even as a parody (Perriam 61; Benet 2014). In any case, the correspondence is only superficial. The story's driving force comes from the deep-seated self-destructive impulse of the main characters. Diego Montes and the lawyer María Cardenal (Assumpta Serna) prepare a trajectory that will inevitably lead to their ritual murder/suicide. The reference to the bullfighting universe serves as an allegory of that destructive drive. The scene that condenses the meaning of the film's bullfighting iconography occurs near the beginning, when Diego Montes teaches a group of young apprentices how to kill the bull. This scene parallels another in which María Cardenal seduces a stranger on the street, takes him to a house to sleep with him and kills him with a well-aimed stab of a hairpin at the moment of orgasm. Again, the theme of the femme fatale, the devouring praying mantis, or the strong woman (Morris 162) who controls her desire and actively uses men as sexual objects brings us back to the traditional motifs of the genre, though on a decidedly different level that has nothing to do with the romantic passions that sustained the melodramatic and exemplary tone of the bullfighter's standard trajectory. We find ourselves faced here with the extreme moral vacuity of one of the most characteristic film heroes of our time: the psychopath driven by a death wish.

As a postmodern movie, *Matador* activates narrative and iconographic motifs to give them a new meaning. It deconstructs the formulas of melodrama through hypertrophy; it combines heterogeneous and incompatible iconographic resources (bullfighting-related objects, horror films, classical cinema, literary references, the world of fashion [Dapena 505] as well as advertising); and the only binding agents in this amalgam of disparate elements are pastiche (Sánchez-Biosca 62–65) and the film's visual design. However, this seems to be an effective way of representing the values and anxieties of this time of change and uncertainty in Spain. And in spite of everything, the movie revived a bullfighting iconography that had been neglected for two decades. Indeed, Almodóvar used it again in *Hablé con ella* (2002), in this case using as his starting-point some of the commonplaces of the genre, like the ceremony in which the bullfighter gets dressed or the scene of the bullfight itself. In practice, he creates a new situation: the bullfighter is a woman, played, interestingly, by the popular singer Rosario Flores. We should bear in mind that, at the time the film was made, the media was paying much attention to a celebrated female bullfighter named Cristina Sánchez. In any case, the bullfighting motifs and icons in *Hablé con ella* remain subject to pastiche and the amalgamating power of melodrama typical of Almodóvar's style. The most important scene connected to bullfighting in the film shows the matadora Lydia González in a very visually stylized production of the *corrida*, filmed in slow motion, with meticulously edited montage and compelling special effects. Surprisingly, a sentimental Brazilian song plays over this scene, shifting its connotations toward the emotional depth of melodrama.

The other important movie from recent years is Pablo Berger's *Blancanieves* (2012). This film proposes a recovery of traditional bullfighting iconography and narrative motifs, although it echoes other present-day paradigms. Berger's stylistic choice is quite radical. *Blancanieves* is a silent movie filmed in retro-style black and white, while using sophisticated digital technology. Once again, the visuals are used in pastiche mode. There are references to 1920s-style collages, and structural montage, framing and narrative strategies that recall the conventions of silent cinema, an ironic use of intertitles and a particular photogenic treatment of the characters – all of which appeal to a past that



viewers familiar with cinema history and its great classics can enjoy. However, there are other uses of the camera and montage that are thoroughly contemporary, and these two very different registers are unified by the integrative capacity of digital manipulation. Sometimes these effects reach a degree of saturation, as in scenes where the crowds go to a bullring above which a zeppelin is floating. What interests me here is that the past referenced in the film is a very specific moment: the 1920s, the most intense period of “vernacular modernism,” the point at which cinema and bullfighting unquestionably became mass phenomena. Moreover, they were phenomena that brought into focus very powerful iconic paradigms, as much through the creation of stars and public figures (the matador, the Latin lover) as through the fusion of national identity with cosmopolitan modernity. The film also references a moment of decisive change: the advent of sound. For the most part the movie’s time frame is set around 1929, as we can observe from certain details. In this sense, the film recreates a high point and transition in cinema history.

*Blancanieves* is symptomatic of the contemporary debate regarding what cinema was in the past and what it is today. It conveys a sense of melancholy or nostalgia for the long lost film-object as explained by Aumont (70). In *Blancanieves*, this is complicated by its storyline – based on the fairytale *Snow White* by the Brothers Grimm – which is also a transnational iconographic referent. Incidentally, let us not forget, as Thiesse (66) explains, that the erudite, historical, juridical and cultural work of the Brothers Grimm constituted “the great nineteenth-century international reference for all identity constructions based on a national language and literature” (Thiesse 66). Berger uses the logic of this classic fairytale to create a framework that merges with the basic structure of vernacular modernism: a transnational story that can be perfectly understood by almost any spectator in the world. *Blancanieves* recovers the Brothers Grimm tale, embracing the strength of its archetypes and endowing them with sophisticated, contemporary psychological facets. Indeed, Berger chooses to offer the spectator an Oedipal reading of the Snow White tale that seems to unquestioningly follow Bruno Bettelheim’s celebrated analysis of the storyline (199). It follows, then, that the relationship between father and daughter should be sublimated, becoming an essential dynamic in the narrative trajectory.

The ingeniousness of the film’s variation on the Brothers Grimm story lies in the motivation underlying the narrative trajectory of Snow White (Macarena García) as an adult. The story essentially consists of an investigation into her identity. Yet her search, her need to know who she is, can be extended to the medium of cinema itself, in two ways. It does so first through the subject of bullfighting which, as we have seen, had ceased to have transnational relevance in cinema more than four decades before. In this time of postnationalism and/or banal nationalism, *Blancanieves* shows the limitations – beyond parody or nostalgia – that current cinema faces in sustaining icons of national identity. Second, the film’s search addresses the nature of the medium itself: what is (or was) cinema? (Rodowick 26). The answer it gives is troubling. Snow White triumphs in the bullring, recovers her identity and receives recognition from her father, who contemplates her from heaven. But at her moment of triumph, she bites the apple and falls into a state of near death. Consequently, she becomes a necrophiliac fairground attraction, enclosed in her glass coffin, with no apparent possibility of a Prince Charming freeing her from the spell. In spite of everything, one of the dwarves takes care of her, applies her makeup and lies down next to her in the coffin every night. On this melancholy note, the movie closes on the shot of a digitally created teardrop welling up in

Snow White's eye and running down her cheek. As a metaphor for the state of the art of cinema today, she is almost dead, almost alive, metamorphosed into a new digital configuration.

The digital consistency of *Blancanieves* has a historical dimension. The survey I have offered in this article assumes that the culture of modernity is constituted by the interaction of two permanent forces. One is transnational, overriding local cultural features and fusing them in a dynamic of commercialization and exchange. The other force – national or regional – operates in communities created by social groups that recognize themselves as such. The transnational tendency allows cultural products to circulate, travel, interrelate and be consumed across the whole planet. Some of these products become hegemonic at specific historical moments, fundamentally because of the public's acceptance of them. At the same time, these models are adopted and adapted by local cultures, which customize them according to their own specific traditions and values.

The cosmopolitan as much as the national is at the core of the cultural reach of bullfighting, a mass spectacle of modernity that was critical to the construction of an iconography and thematic motifs that would be identified transnationally with what was considered authentically Spanish. Historical analysis allows us to observe that those transnational processes reached a culminating moment with the arrival of film. The era of vernacular modernism, from the 1910s to the 1930s, established powerful iconographic archetypes and narrative motifs whereby Spanish identity was linked to rituals of passion and death, exotic landscapes and specific social environments. These motifs took on a new dimension with the social criticism of the 1960s, a time when political debate forcefully entered international cinema. The process of Spain's modernization during the final years of the dictatorship and the early years of democracy eroded the element of "otherness" and exoticism that had so effectively accompanied the transnational construction of bullfighting iconography and its narratives. At present, those models do not seem very operational for the public outside the realms of nostalgia, pastiche, and irony. However, they remain latent and occasionally burst through with a clear allegorical force for the attentive spectator, perhaps because, as Walter Benjamin said, allegory clings to ruins.

### Disclosure statement

No potential conflict of interest was reported by the author.

### Notes

1. The most important academic titles are: Moreno Luzón and Núñez Seixas; Morales, Fusi, and de Blas; Álvarez Junco *Las historias*; Moreno Luzón and del Rey.
2. The major sponsors of *marca España* include BBVA, Iberia, Sol-Meliá Hotels and Unión Fenosa, while some of its more noteworthy public collaborators include the Instituto Español de Comercio Exterior and the Real Instituto Elcano de Estudios Internacionales y Estratégicos. The initial report of *Proyecto Marca España*, directed by Juan Díez Nicolás, can be found at <http://www.realinstitutoelcano.org/publicaciones/informe.pdf>. Accessed 11 Feb. 2014.
3. This industry takes the form of itinerant fairs geared to political mobilization but also to the sale of all kinds of products; see, for example, [www.estelania.cat](http://www.estelania.cat). Cramer (145–157) noted the sociological and historical bases of this process some time ago.
4. <http://www.elmundo.es/elmundo/2005/09/23/cultura/1127472839.html>. Accessed 11 Feb. 2014.

5. This de-eroticization of conjugal love is reflected in a dialogue that culminates in the scene described above, when Juan asks Carmen, "Well, how do I look?" She responds, "Like a king ... or a little boy ... all dressed up for a party."
6. The allegorical dimension of Holy Week in the bullfighter's narrative trajectory was already present in Blasco Ibáñez's original novel; much of chapter 7 is devoted to this.
7. *Currito de la Cruz* was based on a 1921 bestseller of the same title by Alejandro Pérez Lugín. The melodramatic story recounts the rivalry between two bullfighters, both in the bullring and for a woman's love. The novel has seen four Spanish film adaptations: the 1925 version directed by Pérez Lugín himself, the 1936 version directed by Fernando Delgado and the 1949 version directed by Luis Lucia with the bullfighter Pepín Martín Vázquez, in addition to the 1965 version by Rafael Gil discussed here.

### Notes on contributor

**Vicente J. Benet** is Professor of Film Studies at the Universitat Jaume I (Castelló de la Plana, Spain). His most recent book is *El cine español, una historia cultural* (Paidós 2012). His essays on film history have been published in various edited collections and in journals such as *Hispanic Review*, *Peace Review*, *Cinemas* and *Archivos*. Email: [benet@com.uji.es](mailto:benet@com.uji.es).

### References

- Agencia EFE. "El toro ya no es de Osborne." *El Mundo* (23 Aug. 2005). 11 Feb. 2014 <<http://www.elmundo.es/elmundo/2005/09/23/cultura/1127472839.html/>>.
- A las cinco de la tarde*. Dir. Juan Antonio Bardem. Perf. Francisco Rabal, Núria Espert, Enrique Diosdado. Uninci. 1961. Film.
- Almodóvar, Pedro, dir. *Matador*. Perf. Nacho Martínez, Assumpta Serna, Antonio Banderas. 1986. Film.
- Almodóvar, Pedro, dir. *Hable con ella*. Perf. Javier Cámara, Rosario Flores, Leonor Watling. El deseo. 2002. Film.
- Álvarez Junco, José. "Historia y mitos nacionales." *Ser españoles. Imaginarios nacionalistas en el siglo XX*. Ed. Javier Moreno Luzón and Xosé M. Núñez Seixas. Barcelona: RBA, 2013. 21–56.
- , ed. *Las historias de España. Visiones del pasado y construcción de identidad*. Barcelona: Crítica, 2013.
- Archilés, Ferrán. "Melancólico bucle. Narrativas de la nación fracasada e historiografía española contemporánea." *Estudios sobre nacionalismo y nación en la España contemporánea*. Ed. Ismael Saz and Ferrán Archilés. Zaragoza: Prensas Universitarias de Zaragoza, 2011. 245–330.
- Assayas, Olivier, and Bill Krohn. "Entrevista." *Cahiers du Cinéma* 334–335 (1982). Repr. in Budd Boetticher. Dossier de Filmoteca Española. Madrid: Filmoteca Española, n.d. 38–47.
- Aumont, Jacques. *Que reste-t-il du cinéma?* Paris: Vrin, 2012.
- Bataille, Georges. *Story of the Eye*. 1928. New York: Urizen Books, 1997.
- Belmonte*. Dir. Juan Sebastián Bollaín. Perf. Achero Mañas, Natalia Menéndez, Mónica Molina. 1995. Film.
- Benet, Vicente J. *El cine español. Una historia cultural*. Barcelona: Paidós, 2012.
- . "Stars transnacionales et image "latino": une étude d'iconographie comparée." *Histoire et culture à l'épreuve du cinéma espagnol*. Ed. Pietsie Feenstra and Vicente Sánchez Biosca. Paris: Armand Colin, 2014. 26–37.
- Berger, Pablo, dir. *Blancanieves*. Perf. Macarena García, Daniel Giménez Cacho, Maribel Verdú, Ramón Barea. 2012. Film.
- Bettelheim, Bruno. *The Uses of Enchantment*. New York: Vintage, 1977.
- Billig, Michael. *Banal Nationalism*. London: Sage, 1995.
- Blood and Sun*. Dir. Fred Niblo and Dorothy Arzner (uncredited). Perf. Rudolph Valentino, Nita Naldi, Rosa Rosanova, Lila Lee. Paramount. 1922. Film.
- Blood and sand*. Dir. Rouben Mamoulian. Perf. Tyrone Power, Rita Hayworth, Linda Darnell. 20<sup>th</sup> Century Fox. 1941. Film.
- Blood and Sand*. Dir. Javier Elorrieta. Perf. Chris Rydell, Sharon Stone, Ana Torrent. 1989. Film.
- Boetticher, Budd, dir. *Arruza*. Perf. Carlos Arruza. 1972. Documentary Film.

- Boetticher, Budd, dir. *The Bullfighter and the Lady*. Perf. Robert Stack, Joy Page, Gilbert Roland. Republic Productions. 1951. Film.
- Boetticher, Budd, dir. *The Magnificent Matador*. Perf. Maureen O'Hara, Anthony Quinn, Manuel Rojas. 1955. Edward Alperson Productions. Film.
- Bordwell, David. *Pandora's Digital Box: Films, Files, and the Future of Movies*. Madison, WI: The Irvington Way Institute Press, 2012.
- Cramer, Kathryn. "Banal Catalanism?" *National Identities* 2.2 (2000): 145–157.
- Currito de la Cruz*. Dir. Rafael Gil. Perf. Francisco Rabal, Arturo Fernández, Soledad Miranda. Coral Producciones 1965. Film.
- Dapena, Gerard. "Making Spain Fashionable: Fashion and Design in Pedro Almodóvar's Cinema." *A Companion to Pedro Almodóvar*. Ed. Marvin D'Lugo and Kathleen M. Vernon. Chichester, UK: Wiley-Blackwell, 2013. 495–523.
- De Riquer, Borja. "La débil nacionalización española." *Historia Social* 20 (1994): 97–114.
- Díez Nicolás, Juan, ed. *Informe. Proyecto Marca España*. 2003. 11 Feb. 2014. <<http://www.realinstitutoelcano.org/publicaciones/informe.pdf>>.
- Duel in the Sun*. Dir. King Vidor. Perf. Gregory Peck, Jennifer Jones, Joseph Cotton. David O. Selznick Productions. 1946. Film.
- El espontáneo*. Dir. Jorge Grau. Perf. Luis Ferrín, Anabel Jordá. As Films. 1964.
- El torero*. Dir. René Wheeler. Perf. Danielle Darrieux, Pepín Martín Vázquez, Silvia Morgan, Laurent Guirard. 1954. Film.
- Evans, Peter. "Almodóvar's Matador: Genre, Subjectivity and Desire." *Bulletin of Hispanic Studies* 70.3 (1993): 325–335.
- Fiesta!* Dir. Henry King. Perf. Tyrone Power, Ava Gardner, Mel Ferrer, Errol Flynn. 20<sup>th</sup> Century Fox. 1957. Film.
- García Carrión, Marta. "Lugares de entretenimiento, espacios para la nación. Cine, cultura de masas y nacionalización en España (1900–1936)." *Ayer* 90.2 (2013): 115–137.
- Gautier, Théophile. *Viaje a España*. Madrid: Cátedra, 1998.
- George, David R. "Blasco Ibáñez en el cine japonés." Conference paper (3 July 2013), Valencia. Forthcoming in *Revista de Estudios sobre Blasco Ibáñez*.
- González García, Ángel. *El resto. Una historia invisible del arte contemporáneo*. Bilbao/Madrid: Museo de Bellas Artes de Bilbao/MNCARS, 2000.
- Hansen, Miriam. *Babel and Babylon: Spectatorship in American Silent Film*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard UP, 1991.
- . "Fallen Women, Rising Stars, New Horizons: Shanghai Silent Film as Vernacular Modernism." *Film Quarterly* 54.1 (2000): 10–22.
- . "The Mass Production of the Senses: Classical Cinema as Vernacular Modernism." *Modernism/Modernity* 6.2 (1999): 59–77.
- Hemingway, Ernest. *The Sun Also Rises*. 1926. London: Arrow Books, 2004.
- Herrera, Javier. "Almodóvar's Stolen Images." *A Companion to Pedro Almodóvar*. Ed. Marvin D'Lugo and Kathleen M. Vernon. Chichester, UK: Wiley-Blackwell, 2013. 345–363.
- In the Realm of the Senses. Ai no korída*. Dir. Nagisa Ôshima. Perf. Tatsuya Fuji, Eiko Matsuda. Argos Films, Oshima Productions. 1976. Film.
- Kracauer, Siegfried. "A Few American Films" (1941). Repr. in *Siegfried Kracauer's American Writings: Essays on Film and Popular Culture*. Ed. Johannes von Moltke and Kristy Rawson. Berkeley: U. of California P, 2012. 142.
- Koopmans, Ruud and Paul Statham. "Challenging the Liberal Nation-State? Postnationalism, Multiculturalism, and the Collective Claims Making of Migrants and Ethnic Minorities in Britain and Germany." *American Journal of Sociology* 105.3 (1999): 652–696.
- Lecoq, Thierry. *Le Cinématographe Lumière dans les arènes (1896–1899)*. Nîmes: Union des Biliophiles Taurins de France, 2007.
- Mamoulian, Rouben. "Controlling Color for Dramatic Effect." *The American Cinematographer* 22.6 (June 1941). Repr. in *Hollywood Directors 1941–1976*. Ed. Richard Kozarski. New York: Oxford UP, 1977. 288–293.
- Manet, Édouard. *Viaje a España*. Madrid: Museo del Prado, 2003.
- Manolete. A Matador's Mistress*. Dir. Menno Meyjes. Perf. Adrien Brody, Penélope Cruz. 2008. Film.

- Mendelson, Jordana. *Documenting Spain: Artists, Exhibition Culture and the Modern Nation, 1929–1939*. University Park: Pennsylvania State UP, 2005.
- Morales, Antonio, Juan Pablo Fusi, and Andrés de Blas, eds. *Historia de la nación y del nacionalismo español*. Madrid: Galaxia Gutenberg, 2013.
- Moreno Luzón, Javier and Fernando del Rey, eds. *Pueblo y nación. Homenaje a José Álvarez Junco*. Madrid: Taurus, 2013.
- and Xosé M. Núñez Seixas. *Ser españoles. Imaginarios nacionalistas en el siglo XX*. Barcelona: RBA, 2013.
- Morris, Meggie. “Blood and Bravado.” *Screening the Dark Side of Love: From Euro-Horror to American Cinema*. Ed. Karen A. Ritzenhoff and Karen Randell. New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2012. 159–168.
- Núñez Florencio, Rafael. “Los toros, fiesta nacional.” *Ser españoles. Imaginarios nacionalistas en el siglo XX*. Ed. Javier Moreno Luzón and Xosé M. Núñez Seixas. Barcelona: RBA, 2013. 433–463.
- Perriam, Chris. *Stars and Masculinities in Spanish Cinema*. Oxford: Oxford UP, 2003.
- Pirolini, Alessandro. *Rouben Mamoulian*. Milan: Il Castoro Cinema, 1999.
- Psycho*. Dir. Alfred Hitchcock. Perf. Anthony Perkins, Janet Leigh, Vera Miles. 1960. Film.
- Quiroga, Alejandro. *Haciendo españoles. La nacionalización de las masas en la Dictadura de Primo de Rivera (1923–1930)*. Madrid: Centro de Estudios Políticos y Constitucionales, 2008.
- Rodowick, David N. *The Virtual Life of Film*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard UP, 2007.
- Rosi, Francesco, dir. *Il momento della verità. The moment of truth*. Perf. Miguel Mateo, Linda Christian. As Films, 1965. Film.
- Sánchez-Biosca, Vicente. *Una cultura de la fragmentación. Pastiche, relato y cuerpo en el cine y la televisión*. Valencia: Textos de la Filmoteca, 1995.
- Sang et lumières. Beauty and the Bullfighter*. Dir. Georges Rouquier and Ricardo Muñoz Suay. Perf. Daniel Gélin, Zsa Zsa Gabor. 1954: Film.
- Shubert, Adrian. *A las cinco de la tarde. Una historia social del toreo*. Madrid: Turner, 2002. 433–463.
- Smith, Paul Julian. *Desire Unlimited: The Cinema of Pedro Almodóvar*. London: Verso, 2000.
- Soler, Llorenç, dir. *Cincuenta y dos domingos*. 1965. Film.
- Thiesse, Anne-Marie. *La Création des identités nationales*. Paris: Seuil, 2001.
- Torero*. Dir. Carlos Velo. Perf. Luis Procuna. 1956. Film.
- Vajda, Ladislao, dir. *Mi tío Jacinto*. Perf. Pablito Calvo, Antonio Vico. Chamartín Producciones. 1956. Film.
- Vajda, Ladislao, dir. *Tarde de toros*. Perf. Domingo Ortega, Antonio Bienvenida, María Asquerino. Chamartín Producciones. 1956: Film.
- Vari, Alexander. “Bullfights in Budapest: City Marketing, Moral Panics, and Nationalism in Turn-of-the-Century Hungary,” *Austrian History Yearbook* 41 (2010): 143–169.