SPANISH HORROR FILM

ANTONIO LÁZARO-REBOLL

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Antonio Lázaro-Reboll

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TRADITIONS IN WORLD CINEMA

General editors: **Linda Badley and R. Barton Palmer**
Founding editor: **Steven Jay Schneider**

Traditions in World Cinema is a series of textbooks and monographs devoted to the analysis of currently popular and previously underexamined or undervalued film movements from around the globe. Also intended for general-interest readers, the textbooks in this series offer undergraduate- and graduate-level film students accessible and comprehensive introductions to diverse traditions in world cinema. The monographs open up for advanced academic study more specialised groups of films, including those that require theoretically-oriented approaches. Both textbooks and monographs provide thorough examinations of the industrial, cultural, and socio-historical conditions of production and reception.

The flagship textbook for the series includes chapters by noted scholars on traditions of acknowledged importance (the French New Wave, German Expressionism), recent and emergent traditions (New Iranian, post-Cinema Novo), and those whose rightful claim to recognition has yet to be established (the Israeli persecution film, global found footage cinema). Other volumes concentrate on individual national, regional or global cinema traditions. As the introductory chapter to each volume makes clear, the films under discussion form a coherent group on the basis of substantive and relatively transparent, if not always obvious, commonalities. These commonalities may be formal, stylistic or thematic, and the groupings may, although they need not, be popularly identified as genres, cycles or movements (Japanese horror, Chinese martial arts cinema, Italian Neorealism). Indeed, in cases in which a group of films is not already commonly identified as a tradition, one purpose of the volume is to establish its claim to importance and make it visible (East Central European Magical Realist cinema, Palestinian cinema).

Textbooks and monographs include:

- An introduction that clarifies the rationale for the grouping of films under examination
- A concise history of the regional, national, or transnational cinema in question
- A summary of previous published work on the tradition
- Contextual analysis of industrial, cultural and socio-historical conditions of production and reception
- Textual analysis of specific and notable films, with clear and judicious application of relevant film theoretical approaches
- Bibliograph(ies)/filmograph(ies)

Monographs may additionally include:

- Discussion of the dynamics of cross-cultural exchange in light of current research and thinking about cultural imperialism and globalisation, as well as issues of regional/national cinema or political/aesthetic movements (such as new waves, postmodernism, or identity politics)
- Interview(s) with key filmmakers working within the tradition.

INTRODUCTION

Contemporary contexts of horror, psychotronic and paracinema fandom in the US, UK and Spain have been crucial in the circulation and treatment of Spanish horror films past and present. As a fan, reader and consumer of American alternative publications such as *The Psychotronic Encyclopedia of Film* and *Video Watchdog* and of Spanish fanzine *2000maniacos* in the early 1990s, my own positioning, taste and subcultural capital in relation to Spanish and international horror cinematic traditions and, by extension, the wider cultural field of horror are informed by paracinema and psychotronic culture. In his fan publication *The Psychotronic Encyclopedia of Film* (1989), Weldon described psychotronic movies as exploitation films that have been 'treated with indifference or contempt' by critics but that have been sought after and celebrated by fans because of their bizarreness, unclassifiability or portrayal of 'violence, sex, noise, and often mindless escapism' (Weldon 1989: xii). A significant number of Spanish horror films produced in the heyday of European exploitation in the late 1960s and early 1970s are included in Weldon's global A to Z of psychotronic film, among them *La residencia / The Finishing School* (Narciso Ibáñez Serrador 1969), *La noche de Walpurgis / The Shadow of the Werewolf* (León Klimovsky 1970), *La noche del terror ciego / Tombs of the Blind Dead* (Amando de Ossorio 1972), *Pánico en el Transiberiano / Horror Express* (Eugenio Martín 1973), *No profanar el sueño de los muertos / The Living Dead at Manchester Morgue* (Jorge Grau 1974) and, above all, the films of the doyen of Spanish exploitation filmmaking, Jesús Franco (*El secreto del Dr Orloff / Dr Jekyll's Mistresses* (1964); *Drácula contra Frankenstein / The*

Screaming Dead (1971); *Las vampiras / Vampiros Lesbos* (1971)). Many of these films would also fit Sconce's critical category of 'paracinema', as articulated in his influential article '"Trashing" the Academy: Taste, Excess and an Emerging Politics of Cinematic Style' (1995). Here Sconce focuses on a cinematic subculture, of which *The Psychotronic Encyclopedia of Film* is a prime example, characterised by the valorisation of 'just about every other manifestation of exploitation cinema' through

> a particular reading protocol, a counter-aesthetic turned subcultural sensibility devoted to all manner of cultural detritus. In short, the explicit manifestation of paracinematic culture is to valorize all forms of paracinematic 'trash' whether such films have been either explicitly rejected or simply ignored by legitimate film culture. (1995: 372)

Sconce emphasises the role that paracinephiles play in their opposition to film theory and criticism within academia, for they introduce 'a dispute over *how* to approach cinema as much as a conflict over *what* cinema to approach' (1995: 380, author's emphases); more broadly, their opposition indicates that the differing reading strategies of fans and critics serve to expose and challenge the limits of film theory and historiography.

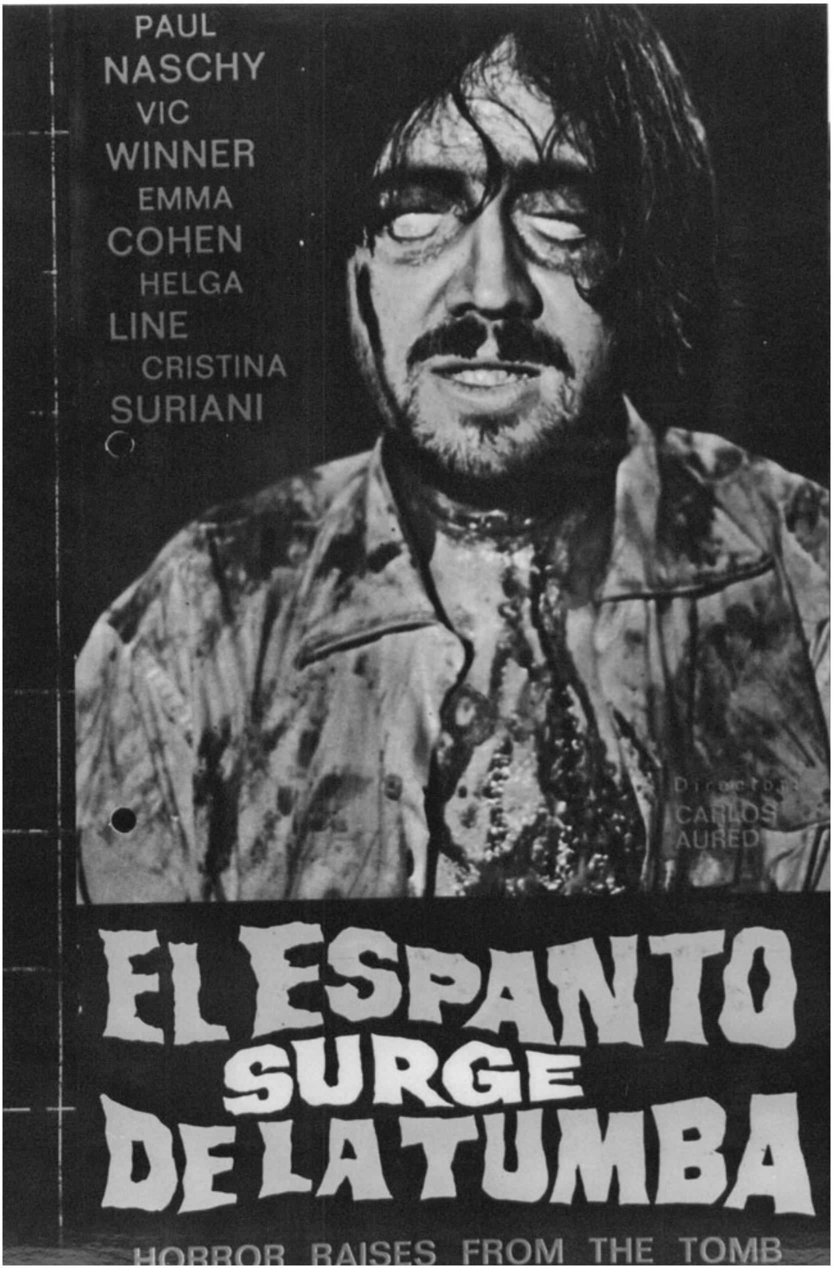
In Spain, the fanzine culture surrounding psychotronic cinema in all its elastic generic and subgeneric strands is typified by what is very possibly Europe's oldest fanzine publication, *2000maniacos* (1989 to the present). Contributors to *2000maniacos*, for example, would describe themselves as *cinéfagos* (cinéphages), where the suffix '-phage' is an indication of the way in which they engage with and, above all consume, films. Pedro Calleja, editor of Spanish fanzine *Serie B* in the early 1980s and a regular presence in *2000maniacos* for the last two decades, makes a distinction between 'cinéphiles' and 'cinéphages':

> All cinéphages have a cinéphile inside, but not all cinéphiles have a cinéphage inside. The term cinéphage started to be used in publications such as *Starfix* and *Mad Movies* in the late eighties, [which were] two of the most influential French magazines among lovers of cinéma fantastique and entertainment cinema. In Spain it was popularised through the film review sections of [popular film magazine] *Fotogramas*, the monthly [film specialist magazine] *Fantastic magazine* and the fanzine *2000maniacos*. A cinéphage is a cinéphile without prejudices. Somebody, as filmmaker John Waters once put it, with an exquisite bad taste. (2003b: 156)

Many contemporary North American and British genre magazines and fanzines (*Fangoria*, *Rue Morgue*, *Shivers*), mail-order catalogues and websites

(Sinister Cinema, European Trash Cinema, Something Weird Video, Anchor Bay), and internet forums (The Latarnia Forums, The Cinehound, Cult Laboratories Film and TV Forum) also affect and influence (re)configurations of Spanish horror film. For example, Spanish horror film is usually categorised and discussed as part of a wider 'Eurohorror' tradition, which more often than not intersects quite loosely and messily with the term (s)exploitation. These classificatory labels come together, for instance, in the work of Pete Tombs for Titan Books and for UK TV Channel 4. His work *Immoral Tales. Sex and Horror in Europe 1956–1984* (1995), co-authored with Cathal Tohill, contributed to the dissemination of European (s)exploitation traditions and gave prominence to the Spanish case. Similarly, his TV series *Eurotika!* (Channel 4, UK, 1999), created with Andy Starker, introduced British audiences to the horrific worlds of Paul Naschy, Amando de Ossorio, Jorge Grau and others, in the episode 'Blood and Sand'. Another episode was solely devoted to 'The Diabolical Mr. Franco'.[1] As the female voiceover seductively declares at the opening of 'Blood and Sand', 'Spain, the playground of Europe in the sixties, became a hotbed of horror in the seventies, turning out several hundred lurid shockers.' This initial contextualisation is then followed by a culinary metaphor pertaining to strong cinematic tastes: 'Spanish horror had a special flavour: it was earthy and primal.' This crude and visceral 'Spanish flavour' continues to captivate genre journalists and fans alike. *Fangoria*'s special 300th anniversary issue, devoted to the compilation of 'the mother of all horror-movie lists', selected *Horror Rises from the Tomb* (see Figure 1) and other Spanish titles for the 'earthy, innocent charm' viewed as characteristic of such 'messy or sleazy early-70s Spanish horror' (Alexander 2011: 43). A cursory look at internet forums devoted to the discussion of the international world of horror cinema reveals that Spanish horror film is frequently debated under the category or thread of 'Eurohorror', as in, for example, The Latarnia Forums (latarniaforums.yuku.com), which feature the popular and highly participatory message boards 'The Spanish Horror Film', 'The Paul Naschy Forum' and 'The Franco Lounge'.[2]

Over the last forty years, horror film has formed a significant part of Spain's local and transnational filmic production and is part and parcel of the international and global circulation, reception and consumption of horror cinema. It has produced its own auteurs, stars and cycles, which have reached the status of cult movies within contemporary contexts of horror fandom. Like any other traditions of horror cinema, it has contributed to the formulas, themes and motifs of a genre conventionally characterised by product differentiation and familiar patterns of reception and consumption. Certainly, any critical history of Spanish horror film must extend beyond histories of Spanish cinema and must be seen as part of transnational cultural flows and international traditions of horror cinema. Building on and establishing a dialogue with existing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DE LA TUMBA
HORROR RAISES FROM THE TOMB

Figure 1 Products such as *El espanto surge de la tumba / Horror Rises from the Tomb* (Carlos Aured 1973) have come to define Spanish horror film for many horror fans across the globe.

re-evaluations of the horror genre at an international level (Hawkins 2000; Schneider 2003; Schneider and Williams 2005; Hantke 2004; Jancovich 2002; Hills 2005; Hutchings 2008; Conrich 2010), *Spanish Horror Film* functions as a case-study for discussing current debates on how to think and write about a genre which has been excluded from dominant accounts of Spanish cinema. In relation to the academic field of Spanish film studies, one of the aims of the volume is therefore to reassess the place of the horror genre in dominant histories of Spanish cinema and reintegrate marginalised filmic and cultural practices into Spanish film history by considering and examining constructions of the field of Spanish horror film. Such a project inevitably forms part of the critical remapping of Spanish cinema history undertaken in recent studies on popular cinema and genre (Triana-Toribio 2003; Lázaro-Reboll and Willis 2004; Marsh 2006; Beck and Rodríguez-Ortega 2008). This critical history therefore examines Spanish horror film in relation to canonical histories of the genre and the role that specific cultural agents play in constructions of the canon and of Spanish film history, the shifting terrains of genre classification and taste, the impact of changing technologies in developments of the genre, and the ways in which different types of fandom write about Spanish horror film.

As Mark Jancovich argues in relation to the horror genre, 'different social groups construct it in different, competing ways as they seek to identify with or distance themselves from the term, and associate different texts with these constructions of horror' (2002: 159). Differing narrative histories of Spanish horror film, which act as cultural platforms for constructions of the genre and its canon, are bound up with cultural assumptions, tastes and values. In this respect, dominant critical frameworks for discussions of the genre have tended to focus on production and accord the individual author a central role in the development of Spanish horror film. While my study investigates key directors and films, *Spanish Horror Film* argues for a more inclusive cultural geography of horror which takes into account the institutions and technologies, genre users and consumers that shape and participate in the process of genre classification and (re)configuration.

For decades, horror has been the outcast genre of Spanish cinema. As Beck and Rodríguez-Ortega observe in *Contemporary Spanish Cinema and Genre*, 'the view of genre [in the case of Spanish film scholarship] has almost exclusively been constructed negatively' (2008: 5). The so-called 'horror boom' of the late 1960s and early 1970s was reviled by contemporary critics, film historians and scholars, who consigned horror titles to the margins of Spanish film history. Román Gubern's introductory remarks in the 'Foreword' to the first critical study devoted to genre cinema, *Cine español, cine de subgéneros* (1974), have held sway until very recently. The specific critical and ideological operations at stake in Gubern's writing are discussed in detail in Chapter

1. Briefly put, Gubern saw contemporaneous Spanish horror film as wholly derivative of authentic American and European horror traditions. 'This insubstantial Spanish filmic production', he prophesied, 'will never make it into histories of Spanish cinema, unless it is dealt with in a succinct footnote' (1974: 16). And yet Spanish horror film of this period, as I argue in the first five chapters of this volume, was a dominant and indeed crucial part of the film culture available during this period, intersecting in dynamic and productive ways with contiguous subgenres (fantasy, suspense, thrillers) and other media (comics, pulp and television). The crossover between genres, cross-media interaction or the synergies between cinema and television are aspects that are addressed at various stages in the book.

The opening lines of a recently edited collection of essays on international horror, *Horror Zone: The Cultural Experience of Contemporary Horror* (2010) – 'the horror film is arguably the most robust, pliable, and successful of genres within contemporary cinema' (Conrich 2010: 1) – are equally applicable to the Spanish horror context. The 1990s and the 2000s have witnessed the commercial, critical and cultural renaissance of the horror genre in Spain. For many commentators, this resurgence is associated with a new generation of filmmakers who have revitalised the genre and attracted mainstream audiences. It might be argued that the box-office and critical success of such films as *El día de la bestia* / *Day of the Beast* (Álex de la Iglesia 1995), *Tesis* / *Thesis* (Alejandro Amenábar 1996), *Los sin nombre* / *The Nameless* (Jaume Balagueró 1999), *El laberinto del fauno* / *Pan's Labyrinth* (Guillermo del Toro 2001) and *El orfanato* / *The Orphanage* (Juan Antonio Bayona 2007) has made the academic study of contemporary Spanish horror critically acceptable.[3] The vitality of the contemporary field of Spanish horror, however, cannot be accounted for solely in terms of changes in industrial and production practices and the work of individual directors. The fanzine scene, non-Spanish-language specialist genre publications, and the specialised film festival circuit in and beyond Spain have been the life force of the genre throughout the last two decades. As specific sites of cultural and taste formations, alternative publications and horror-themed film festivals play a significant role in acting as cultural and industrial platforms for the international, cross-generic and multifarious dimension of the genre. They also provide a key site for the social processes of classification of the horror and fantasy genres through the discursive activities of genre users.

Three well-informed and superbly illustrated histories of Spanish horror and fantasy film emerge out of this context: *Cine fantástico y de terror español. 1900–1983* (1999a), *Cine fantástico y de terror español. 1984–2004* (2005), both edited by genre critic and journalist Carlos Águilar in collaboration with the San Sebastián Horror and Fantasy Film Festival, and *Profanando el sueño de los muertos* (2010), written by critic and current Director of the Sitges

Festival, Ángel Sala. Águilar and Sala offer general readers and fans alike an invaluable catalogue of films, directors and actors, as well as information about trends associated with Spanish horror and fantasy throughout the last century. Above all, their edited collections demonstrate the vital role of festivals and fans in recording the twists and turns of a popular genre which had been overlooked and ostracised by mainstream critics and academic scholars.

Unlike the above anthologies, which take a much-needed encyclopedic approach to the subject, *Spanish Horror Film* proposes an archeology of the genre which draws upon recent theorisations of the horror genre within film studies, cultural studies, and historical and reception studies, to understand the larger cultural field of Spanish horror and its cultural experiences. In other words, the volume considers how the field of horror 'intersects with other fields, for example, journalism, academic subcultural production, literary, television and film production, and fan subcultural production' (Hills 2005: 168). Each chapter therefore integrates the discursive practices of genre journalism (specialist magazines) and fan writing (fanzines), the synergies between horror film and other forms of popular culture, and the significance of new technologies (video, digital technology and the internet) for genre production and consumption. In order to produce close readings of specific texts and figures, the volume brings promotion and advertising material (pressbooks, posters and trailers), multiple forms of reviewing (trade publications, critical reviews and fan writing) and legal documents (censorship files and film policies) into the analyses. These materials shape the analysis of the discursive structures through which Spanish horror film is produced, circulated and consumed – a critical, historical and methodological approach which has informed my work to date (2004, 2005, 2009, 2012).

As the chronological references in the chapter titles indicate, the volume is organised following a linear order. A glance at the table of contents reveals that more attention is given to the early period – the 1960s and 1970s era – than to the contemporary context. However, the rationale for structuring the volume in this manner reflects the fluctuations in the development of Spanish horror film, as well as wider industrial, cultural and socio-historical changes in the conditions of production and reception. Unquestionably, the highest point in production was the period 1968 to 1975. The production of horror in the late 1970s and during the 1980s decreases dramatically for several reasons: firstly, the boom in historical and political films during the early years of the democracy; secondly, the so-called Ley Miró (film legislation established by the Socialist government in 1983), which privileged the production of high-quality films, based mainly on literary or historical sources; and, thirdly, changing habits in the consumption of audiovisual material. It is not until the late 1990s and the early 2000s that Spanish horror reaches another production peak. Contextually, the examination of the historical period covered in the volume is firmly located in relation to broader shifts in recent Spanish history: namely, late Francoism, the end of the dictatorship with the death of Franco on 20 November 1975, the transition to democracy from the end of 1975 to the first democratic elections in June 1977 and the ensuing democratic period. The horror genre in the 1960s and 1970s provided, in common with other international counterparts, a barometer of the ideological, institutional and social contradictions and tensions of the times. While many horror films offered resistance to a repressive and homogenising mainstream, others presented reactionary themes, characters and narrative resolutions. Equally, some contemporary Spanish horror production continues to give voice to cultural anxieties at the turn of the twenty-first century: the role of the media in society and its representation of violence, as present in *Tesis* or the *[•REC]* franchise, or filmic representations of the Spanish Civil War and its legacy, such as Guillermo del Toro's *El espinazo del diablo* / *The Devil's Backbone* (2001) and *El laberinto del fauno*, which lend themselves to a more allegorical and political reading though their engagement with memories and histories that have been erased from official discourses on contemporary democratic Spain.

The volume is organised into seven chapters. Chapter 1 examines the so-called Spanish 'horror boom', the peak period in the production of Spanish horror films between 1968 and 1975. This commercially popular, yet critically derided, tradition is explored in relation to other contemporary popular genres and dominant aesthetics, as well as to institutional practices such as censorship and film legislation. The chapter addresses the diversity of production and the discrepancy between consumption and exhibition practices and praxes of critical reception in order to dispel homogenising views of the period and to provide a broad overview of the riches of the genre.

The following three chapters look at specific Spanish figures, films and horror creations. Chapter 2 provides a discussion of Dr Orloff, Jesús Franco's addition to the mad scientist movie tradition; the lycanthrope Waldemar Daninsky, the creation of actor, scriptwriter and director Jacinto Molina and his on-screen alter ego Paul Naschy; and the Knights Templar, the zombie-like medieval knights conceived by Amando de Ossorio. These horrific creatures serve as examples of the movement of transculturation inscribed in Spanish horror film, whereby Spanish filmmakers produced their own horror films following international genre products and established monster traditions populating movies, comics and pulp fiction while simultaneously translating them and imbuing them with a certain local flavour and relevance. Notwithstanding the popularity and cult status of the likes of Franco and Naschy among contemporary horror and psychotronic fans, the most culturally prominent image of horror in Spain from the mid-1960s to the mid-1970s was Narciso Ibáñez Serrador, due to his horror–suspense series *Historias para no dormir* / *Stories to Keep You Awake* (1966–8) on Spanish television. Chapter 3 provides a detailed analysis of Ibáñez Serrador's TV production, as well as his successful transition to the big screen with the films *La residencia* / *The Finishing School* and *¿Quién puede matar a un niño?* / *Who Can Kill a Child?* (1976). Ibáñez Serrador is a fascinating case which, on the one hand, enables us to delve into the creative, dynamic and productive cross-media relationships between pulp fiction, television, film and radio; on the other hand, it also raises questions about the cultural status of television and popular cinema and the vexed issues of quality TV and quality cinema. Chapter 4 also turns its attention to the work of a specific director, Eloy de la Iglesia, with particular emphasis on his body of work during the early 1970s, *El techo de cristal* / *The Glass Ceiling* (1971), *La semana del asesino* / *Cannibal Man* (1972), *Nadie oyó gritar* / *No One Heard the Scream* (1972) and *Una gota de sangre para morir amando* / *Murder in a Blue World* (1973). De la Iglesia's engagement with the horror genre and other related ones throws up remarkable questions of gender identity and representation, as well as genre and generic affiliations. His films are worthy of analysis for they speak to contemporary audiences about changing contexts of reception and authorship.

Chapter 5 moves away from a discussion of films to focus on the discursive activities of genre users and sites of fandom. Here I look at specialist genre publications and fanzine production from the early 1970s to the present day in order to provide a broader definition of the cultural field of Spanish horror. Two subcultural publications, *Terror Fantastic* (1971–3) and *2000maniacos* (1989–present), form the backbone of the chapter, although it places them in relation to their respective contemporary publishing scenes; *Terror Fantastic* was a genre magazine which specialised in horror and science fiction in the early 1970s, thus providing a prime site for the reception of national and international genre products, while *2000maniacos* is a fanzine covering the low end of the horror and porn markets, providing its niche readership with a wealth of archival and collector information on international psychotronic culture. Through an examination of these publications, the chapter discusses the cultural capital developing from and around horror cinema and the emergence of specific horror fan cultures in Spain from the early 1970s to the present. Furthermore, the broad historical coverage of publications devoted to the horror genre functions as a bridge between the two major periods covered in the volume.

The last two chapters examine contemporary Spanish horror production. Mirroring the contextual approach presented in the first chapter, Chapter 6 offers an overview of genre output from the 1980s to the 2000s, attending to the positioning of directors, films, trends and cycles in the local and international marketplace. While some products and filmmakers harked back to horror traditions embedded in the 1960s and 1970s, younger filmmakers respond to the new media landscape (for instance, the productive relationship between cinema and television with the arrival of private TV channels in the mid-1990s) and exploit long-established traditions and tropes in novel ways to accrue artistic credentials and auteur status, without relinquishing their aim to reach wider audiences.

The works of contemporary directors Nacho Cerdà, Jaume Balagueró and Guillermo del Toro reach a wide horror audience transnationally through their distinctive takes on the genre. Their horror auterism is the subject of the final chapter. The book concludes with a brief discussion of *[•REC]* as a further stage in the development of the transnational reach of Spanish horror film.

Notes

1. The Franco episode was broadcast on 11 December 1999.
2. By the time this volume had gone to press, these forums listed over 2,000 topics and 25,000 messages.
3. Publications on Spanish horror film are limited to a few articles and chapters in books, among them Willis (2003, 2004), Pavlović (2003), Tierney (2002), Rodríguez-Ortega (2005), Jordan (2008) and Acevedo-Múñoz (2008).

1. THE SPANISH HORROR BOOM: 1968–75

In a résumé of Spanish cinematic activity in 1973, published in the film review yearbook *Cine para leer*, the country's filmic production was described with the following graphic visual image: 'There was a time when Spanish cinema was tinged with red . . . bloody red' (1974: 21). It could well characterise the period 1968 to 1975, when the Spanish film industry went into horror overdrive, producing around 150 horror films, which accounted for more than a third of the national industry's output. 'Our producers, scriptwriters and filmmakers', the review reads, 'have released a whole "vile rabble" of sadists, traumatised victims, prostitutes, homosexuals, lesbians, werewolves, vampires, tramps, schizophrenics, fetishists, nymphomaniacs, necrophiles and people of dissolute life', populating our screens with the 'grossest depictions of physical, moral and sexual violence' in a 'maelstrom of crime, orgy and erotic morbidness' (1974: 21). Attempting to account for this ghoulish invasion and the sexual perversions generated by contemporary Spanish horror films, the reviewer wonders whether this horror boom is a desire on the part of the Spanish film industry to 'synchronise with a certain type of world cinema' or is simply a crude form of 'escapism, which unconsciously reveals the [repressive] social situation of the country' (1974: 22), concluding, in an explicit reference to Franco's dictatorial regime that, with the passing of time and with hindsight, this popular form of cinematic production might come to reflect 'an ideology of repression, terror and silence' (1974: 22).

Spanish horror film was certainly synchronous with a variety of horror products emerging from other national contexts, in particular Great Britain, Italy and the United States. Producers and distributors all over the world were interested in horror films, no matter where they came from. The changes occurring in European low-budget filmmaking during the 1960s and the 1970s allowed the production of horror films in Italy, France, Germany, Great Britain and Spain, as well as co-productions between the different countries. Equally valid is the reviewer's association of escapism with repression. The ideological interpretation of contemporary Spanish horror – 'an ideology of repression, terror and silence' – is a sign of the times and a statement informed by psychoanalytical and Marxist ideas about social repression and unconscious desires,[1] as a close examination of contemporary critical reception in the second section of this chapter shows. Spanish horror films provided, in common with the genre's counterpart in the Hollywood of the 1950s, a barometer of the decades' contradictorily overt conformism and latent dissent, a time when the repressed was on the verge of making a return, in monstrous form.

Spanish horror's extensive repertoire of monsters – and response to international traditions of horror cinema – is reflected both in the titles of many films and in the heterogeneity and variety of horror production. Although hardly scratching the surface of genre production, a partial overview of titles reveals takes on classic monsters (*La marca del hombre lobo / Frankenstein's Bloody Terror* (Enrique Eguíluz 1968), *El Conde Drácula / Count Dracula* (Jesús Franco 1969), *La maldición de Frankenstein / The Erotic Rites of Frankenstein* (Jesús Franco 1972)), as well as monstrous encounters which followed the tradition of Universal multi-monster narratives of the 1940s (*Los monstruos del terror / Assignment Terror* (Hugo Fregonese and Tulio Demicheli 1969), *Drácula contra Frankenstein / The Screaming Dead* (Jesús Franco 1971), *Dr Jekyll y el hombre lobo / Dr Jekyll and the Werewolf* (León Klimovsky 1972)). The exploitation of the latest international horror cycle success, such as the *Night of the Living Dead* (George Romero 1968) formula or *The Exorcist* (William Friedkin 1973) phenomenon, spawned Spanish offspring (for example, *No profanar el sueño de los muertos / The Living Dead at Manchester Morgue* (Jorge Grau 1974) or *Exorcismo / Exorcism* (Juan Bosch 1975)).[2] In true exploitative manner, some titles promised more titillation than they delivered (*La orgía nocturna de los vampiros / The Vampires' Night Orgy* (León Klimovsky 1972), *La orgía de los muertos / Terror of the Living Dead* (José Luis Merino 1973)). In fact, as a contemporary journalist claimed in the popular film magazine *Cine en 7 días*, 'in this genre once you have the title, the rest – the actual making of the film – is a cinch' (García 1973a: 16). And horror film was so commonplace by the early 1970s that it was prime fodder for spoofing, this same journalist suggesting a series of alternative titles based on topical news stories in his weekly column: 'Dracula at the United Nations', 'Frankenstein vs Moshe Dayan', 'Watergate Zombies' or 'The Mummy in the Europe of the Nine' (1973b: 10), to mention just a few. Many a sneering critic resorted to culinary analogies in the opening paragraphs of their reviews, reducing horror films to a list of ingredients which would allow almost anybody to concoct ‘una de vampiros’ (a colloquial expression in Spanish for a horror movie); as the opening lines of a less than favourable review for *La noche de Walpurgis* instructs, ‘take an abandoned monastery, a werewolf, a devil countess, a stormy night, one or two skeletons, some fake fangs and a few litres of thick, red liquid . . .’ (A. M. O. 1971).

Spanish horror film of the 1970s is commonly associated with filmmakers such as the prolific Jesús Franco, Argentinian-born León Klimovsky and Amando de Ossorio, among others. While most of their films were low-budget, having low production values and short shooting schedules, there is a general misconception that all Spanish horror films of this period were cheap and cheerful exploitation fare; Franco and Aured, for example, had respectable budgets to finance some of their films, *99 mujeres / 99 Women* (1969) in the case of the former and *El retorno de Walpurgis / Curse of the Devil* (1974) in the case of the latter. This presumed homogeneity is soon dispelled by looking at the middle-brow genre projects of directors as different as Narciso Ibáñez Serrador, whose films are the subject of Chapter 3, and Juan Antonio Bardem. Ibáñez Serrador, a household name in Spanish television, had 40 million pesetas at his disposal for his first feature film, *La residencia*, which spearheaded the ‘boom’, whereas Bardem, an established auteur associated with oppositional filmmaking throughout the 1950s and the 1960s, had more than 50 million pesetas and Spanish star Marisol to distinguish his *La corrupción de Chris Miller / The Corruption of Chris Miller* (1973) from contemporary low-brow horror. The period also offers the isolated incursions of up-and-coming art-house directors moving into commercial production, such as Vicente Aranda (*La novia ensangrentada / The Blood-Spattered Bride* (1972)), Claudio Guerín Hill (*La campana del infierno / Bell of Hell* (1973)) (see Figure 2) and Jorge Grau (*Ceremonia sangrienta / Bloody Ceremony* (1973) and *No profanar el sueño de los muertos*). Experimental filmmaker Javier Aguirre made commercial genre products *El gran amor del Conde Drácula / Count Dracula’s Great Love* (1972) and *El jorobado de la morgue / Hunchback of the Morgue* (1973) in order to be able to finance his more radical, underground projects. There are also one-off, experimental reflections on the vampiric nature of filmmaking, such as *Vampir Cuadecuc* (Pere Portabella 1970), an experimental documentary shot in 16 mm during the making of Franco’s *Count Dracula*, which combines disconcerting editing (scenes from the film, on-set footage, images of the cast and crew) and a dissonant soundtrack,[3] and collaborative projects like *Pastel de sangre* (1971), in which four young filmmakers offered their personal vision of the genre.[4] And, arguably, other films, *El bosque del lobo / The Ancine Woods* (Pedro Olea 1970) (see Figure 3) and *El espíritu de la colmena / The Spirit of the Beehive* (Víctor Erice 1973), which are not readily

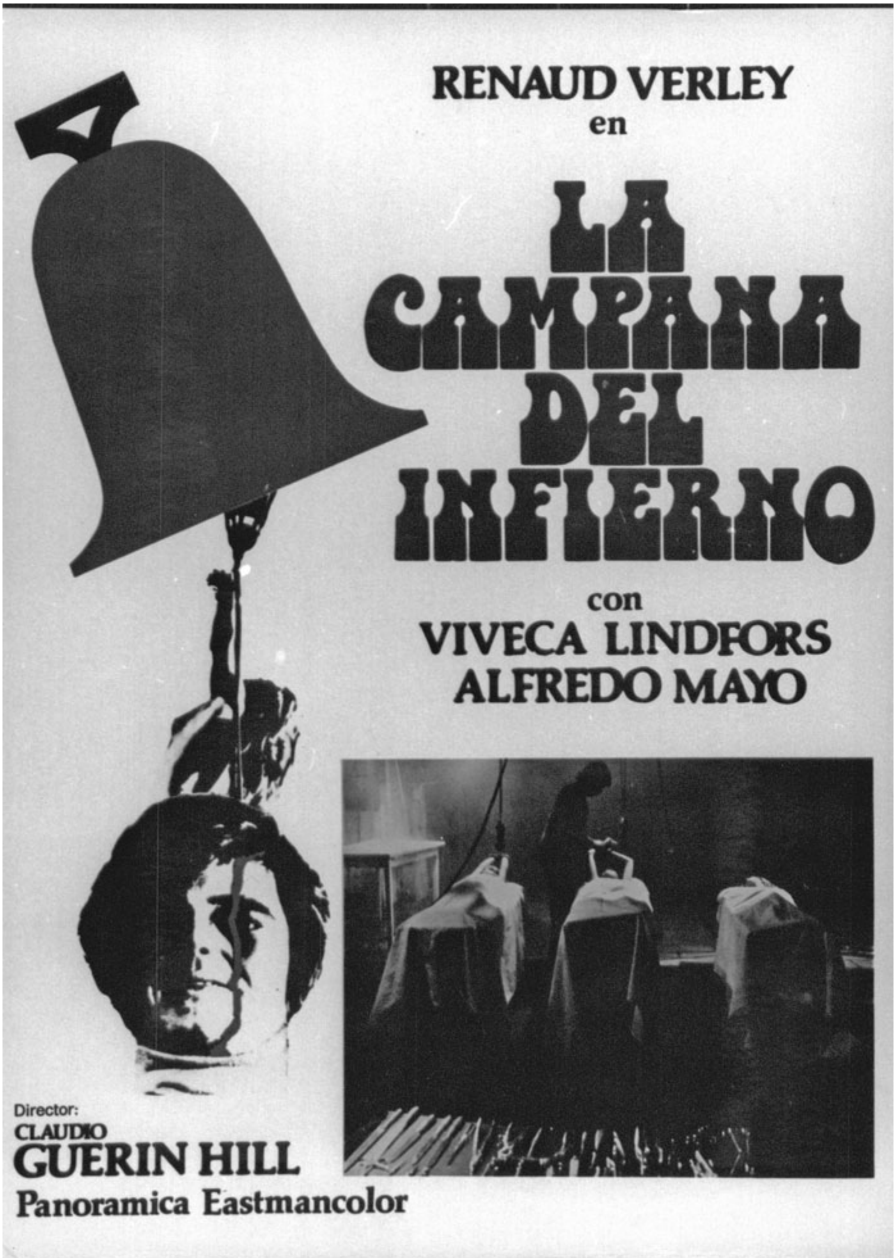
RENAUD VERLEY
en
LA CAMPANA DEL INFIERNO
con
VIVECA LINDFORS
ALFREDO MAYO
Director:
CLAUDIO
GUERIN HILL
Panoramica Eastmancolor

Figure 2 *La campana del infierno* was directed by Claudio Guerín Hill, a director with ‘art-house’ film credentials.

Figure 3 Spanish actor José Luis López Vázquez played a lycanthrope in *El bosque del lobo*, a story rooted in anthropological studies of the myth.

associated with the horror genre, form part of the same industrial and cultural milieu.

Spanish horror therefore came from different directions and was made in a variety of budgetary conditions. With the exception of Profilmes S. A. and some short-lived production companies, many producers financed one or two films and then disappeared from the market.[5] Such was the case with Eva Films (*El jorobado de la morgue*), Galaxia Films (*Odio mi cuerpo / I Hate My Body* (León Klimovsky 1974)) and Huracán Films S. A. (*El asesino de muñecas / Killing of the Dolls* (Miguel Madrid 1975)). There were a few companies whose names were linked to various horror projects. Plata Films was the name behind two commercial successes – *La noche de Walpurgis* (co-produced with the German Hi-Fi Stereo) and *La noche del terror ciego* (with Portuguese InterFilme P. C.); Maxper Producciones Cinematográficas produced two werewolf films – *La marca del hombre lobo* (co-production with the German Hi-Fi Stereo) and *La furia del hombre lobo / The Wolfman Never Sleeps* (José María Zabalza 1972) – and returned to the genre some years later with *El colegio de la muerte / School of Death* (Pedro Luis Ramírez 1975); Ancla Century Films were involved in the production of three Amando de Ossorio films (*El ataque de los muertos sin ojos* (1973), *El buque maldito / The Ghost Galleon* (1974) and *La noche de las gaviotas / Night of the Seagulls* (1975)), as well as a Paul Naschy project (*Inquisición / Inquisition* (1976)); Janus Films and Lotus Films also produced commercial vehicles for Paul Naschy – the former produced *El gran amor del Conde Drácula*, the latter *El retorno de Walpurgis* and *La venganza de la momia / Vengeance of the Mummy* (1973)). Established names in film production and distribution, like Arturo González, who specialised in comedies and spaghetti westerns,[6] also had a slice of the horror market, mainly through his distribution arm Regia Arturo González, selling commercial hits such as *La residencia*, *Dr Jekyll y el hombre lobo* and *Una gota de sangre para morir amando*. Co-productions with other European countries, mainly Italy, Germany and France, were the norm.[7] As for the distribution of horror films, there were no major players and the market was divided up into small companies (Belén Films, D. C. Films, Exclusivas Floralva, to name but a few) and established commercial firms (Hesperia Films, Mercurio, Hispamex) which exploited the horror film bonanza. This cursory overview of production and distribution companies reflects the fragmentation of the Spanish film industry in general and the lack of a sufficiently strong industrial infrastructure to create specialist genre companies.

The only attempt to develop and sustain a company with a profile in horror came from a Barcelona-based company called Profilmes, S. A., managed by Ricardo Múñoz Suay (1917–92), a figure well versed in the intricacies of the Spanish film industry,[8] and José Antonio Pérez Giner, in the capacity of executive producer. Múñoz Suay's commercial *savoir-faire*, his publicity skills and his connections within the industry were put at the service of genre filmmaking. With a capital of 100 million pesetas, Profilmes was a calculated commercial venture aimed at producing low-budget movies in a variety of genres, with an annual target of seven films. This chapter concludes with a detailed look at Profilmes' output and its international projection in pressbooks. At a time when Hammer House of Horrors was in decline and no longer a dominant force in the European horror market, Profilmes was one of a number of European production companies feeding the international demand for horror. Indeed, in industry magazines and in his writings for *Nuevo Fotogramas*, Múñoz Suay promoted and publicised the company as the 'Spanish Hammer'. Profilmes not only had the domestic market, mainly neighbourhood cinemas, in mind, but primarily intended its product for international distribution and consumption on specialised exploitation circuits as far away as the US or Hong Kong; as Múñoz Suay admitted, sales abroad amply recouped the production costs, and box-office takings in Spain were a welcome bonus. Between 1972 and 1975, Profilmes produced a significant number of horror, action and adventure movies. As we will see later on in this chapter when we examine

Profilmes' pressbooks, it is possible to argue for a Profilmes 'look', since there was some continuity in the production strategies and marketing tactics with the presence of recognisable national and foreign genre actors and actresses, the recycling of sets and locations, and the exploitation of successful commercial cycles of the early 1970s.

Profilmes horror films, like the bulk of the low- to medium-budget Spanish horror films, were the staple of the 'cines de barrio' (cheap neighbourhood cinemas), whose core audience was mainly a male, urban working class. Many horror films were released for double-bill programmes, Saturday matinees and the circuit of 'cines de verano' (summer cinemas), aimed mainly at a teen and youth audience. Films with considerable financial support, like *La residencia* and *La corrupción de Chris Miller*, on the other hand, were premiered in first-run and mainstream cinemas, and delivered well above the average Spanish commercial films at the box office: *La residencia* 104 million pesetas and 2,924,805 spectators and *La corrupción de Chris Miller* 62 million pesetas and 1,237,013 spectators. They were also widely promoted and distributed in Europe by Cinespaña. The vast majority of Spanish horror production regularly attracted audiences of 300,000 to 500,000 spectators, and averaged box-office takings of between 5 million and 13 million pesetas.[9] Bankable autochthonous horror stars like Paul Naschy proved to be commercially successful, with regular takings over the 13 million mark and reaching up to 40 million pesetas. As far as distribution abroad is concerned, Spanish horror films were not only fully exploited by the European co-producers and let loose on the European horror circuit, but also roamed the American exploitation circuit at the drive-in, where foreign distributors retitled them, dubbed them into English, added nudes and sexually suggestive scenes, cut scenes or reels for marketing purposes, and repackaged them as Euro-horror. Many 1960s and 1970s Spanish horror movies therefore form part of the global history of exploitation and sexploitation, and their distribution histories are common currency in genre magazines and fanzines, as well as DVD extra features.

The following pages focus on the national context of their production and reception. An initial look at the cinematic context in which Spanish horror film production emerged considers the circumstances that led to the proliferation of horror films in the late 1960s and early 1970s, a time which corresponds to crucial changes in Spanish society and culture – economic boom, consumerism and the last years of Francoism – and situates the genre in relation to other cinematic trends: namely, other popular genres and art-cinema. The first section of this chapter argues how Spanish horror film departs from the norms and ideals of contemporary Spanish cinema: on the one hand, from traditional forms of Spanish popular cinema production such as comedies, melodramas or folkloric films (known as *españoladas*), and, on the other, from the auteurist-led production philosophy promoted by the government, in particular what was to be labelled as 'Nuevo Cine Español' (New Spanish Cinema, NCE). A look at the industrial and cinema policies, led by José María García Escudero, Director General de Cinematografía, establishes how the production of horror films is shaped by a number of economic, legislative and aesthetic considerations affecting the film industry between the mid-1960s and the early 1970s. Like other international horror film traditions before (American and British), Spanish horror cinema had to contend with the institution of censorship, and filmmakers adopted a number of formal and stylistic strategies to avoid the censor's scissors. The second section of the chapter focuses on critical attitudes towards horror, which were profoundly influenced by the aesthetic and cultural views of figures such as García Escudero, pioneering critics such as Juan Manuel Company and Román Gubern, and mainstream review journalism. By judging horror according to their own standards and perceiving it as commercialising film culture, these critics not only neglected other rich areas of enquiry, such as how Spanish horror films of the period engaged with international examples of horror or how their consumption is linked to the development of a horror subculture; they also, more importantly, hampered the critical development of the genre in subsequent histories of Spanish cinema. While any critical study of Spanish horror film ought to consider the local context of production, the analysis must acknowledge the commercial realities of the genre, which are exploited at the level of marketing, publicity and consumption. The last section of the chapter turns to the examination of some of the cinematic riches of Spanish horror film of the period, relating marketing and publicity tactics to a long-standing tradition of exploitation and consumption practices of popular genre films.

Departing from the Norms and Ideals of Spanish Cinema

The arrival of José María García Escudero as Undersecretary of Cinema (1962–8)[10] at the 'Dirección General de Cinematografía y Teatro' (Secretariat of Cinema and Theatre) brought key changes to the Spanish film industry: namely, the restructuring of the economy of commercial cinema, the introduction of censorship norms and the promotion of the NCE, which aspired to compete aesthetically with other new European film waves of the 1960s. García Escudero's measures were directed against foreign film, the impact of television, and the declining audience numbers for national film in an attempt, on the one hand, to protect an ailing film industry and, on the other hand, to create the institutional conditions to improve the quality of Spanish cinema through the production of a 'cine de calidad' (quality cinema). Other policies involved the granting of 'Cine de Interés Especial' awards (Special Interest Films) to those films which offered sufficient quality in their inclusion of relevant moral, social, educative or political values, the regulation of co-productions, the introduction of box-office controls in 1966, the opening of

'Salas de Arte y Ensayo' (Experimental Arts Cinemas), and the promotion of the work of graduates from the 'Escuela Oficial de Cinematografía' (Official Film School, EOC).[11] In his own writings on Spanish cinema, in particular *El cine español* (1962), García Escudero 'lays out the critique of Spanish [popular] cinema which he had been expounding in contemporary articles and through his political decisions' (Triana-Toribio 2003: 66): namely, 'a market-driven production (the absence of good producers [. . .]), a deficient subsidy system (well meaning but inept [. . .]), and a bad audience in its majority' (2003: 67). The first two critiques would be addressed through a number of economic and legislative policies, whereas his views on popular audiences and tastes would influence the subsequent critical reception of horror films, as I demonstrate in the next section of this chapter. As Triana-Toribio has persuasively argued, 'García Escudero (and his followers) does not allow for any measure of agency in its public, nor for the pleasures these texts gave, and certainly not for the resistant readings that they might conjure up in their audiences' (2003: 69).[12]

The economic measures introduced in August 1964 encouraged the financial restructuring of the Spanish film industry:

> each Spanish film was granted one million pesetas in medium-termed credit from a Protection Fund which the Banco de Crédito Industrial could increase to up to 50 per cent of the production budget. All films received a grant equal to 15% of their box-office takings. 'Special Interest' films received 2 million pesetas credit, 30% of box-office takings, and counted as two normal Spanish films for the purpose of distribution and screen quotas. The State subsidy could be increased to 5 million pesetas (with a ceiling of 50% of a film's budget), only repayable from the 30% of box-office takings; and if commercial performance did not allow repayment, it was waived. (Hopewell 1986: 64)

This costly production system, however, led with the passing of time to delays in the payment of government subsidies to producers and exhibitors, leaving the administration with a debt of more than 250 million pesetas; this eventually provoked the dismissal of García Escudero from his role as Undersecretary of Cinema in 1968. The economic failure of the NCE and the impact of television in the country (in 1960, for instance, only 1% of households had a TV set, but by 1976 90% owned one), as well as the new position of cinema within the leisure industry, accentuated the crisis in film production and consumption. Between 1968 and 1975 the Spanish film industry – never very healthy – was witness to the closure of one-third of its total number screens (in 1968 there were 7,761 screens, by 1975 5,076) and a decrease in the sector's income.[13] By 1968, therefore, the Spanish film industry was in a critical state, the 'Dirección General de Cinematografía y Teatro' was replaced by the 'Dirección General de Cultura Popular y Espectáculos', and the NCE was practically defunct. As film historian John Hopewell has pointed out, 'only a few forms of film-life survived and festered in such an economic climate' (1986: 80). The survivors were the lowly 'genre' or 'subgeneric' films, the most commercially successful being the Iberian sex comedy and the horror film, which could easily recoup production costs and which consistently drew audiences to the cinemas. While the sex comedy was intended only for internal consumption, addressing as it did a series of issues related to the Spanish society of the late 1960s and early 1970s, the horror genre was intended for both internal and external markets and competed with other European productions. The Spanish audience continued to consume the squeaky-clean, censored versions of films whose more explicit originals were exported for international consumption, following a late 1950s policy whereby double versions were produced for home and overseas.

In addition to the economic and cultural changes engineered by the Dirección General de Cinematografía y Teatro, García Escudero also legislated on the ideological and moral values that would govern Spanish cinema until the end of the dictatorship by establishing official guidelines on film censorship. Although censorship had existed since the beginning of the dictatorship, the creation of the 'Junta de Clasificación y Censura' (Board of Classification and Censorship) in September 1962, the compulsory official examination of all film scripts from February 1963 onwards, and the establishment of a set of censorship rules established what was acceptable and what was not.[14] Modelled, to a certain extent, on the Hollywood production code, the thirty-seven norms covered a wide spectrum of subjects and situations, codifying the acceptable and the unacceptable, although in a very ambiguous and arbitrary manner, as we will see in the case of individual films. In theory, the 1963 norms codified the borders between the acceptable and the forbidden, the orthodox and the transgressive, and good and bad taste, but in practice some norms were ambiguous on paper and their application was highly inconsistent.

Keeping Spanish screens free from explicit political content was relatively easy. However, the limits put on sexual and violent images had to adjust constantly to more 'liberal' attitudes to sex across the Western world in the 1960s and 1970s and, above all, to the economic demands of the market. In the context of the later part of the Francoist regime, the realities of the dictatorship – political repression, strict control of sexuality through Catholic morality, strict control of cultural production through censorship – ran parallel to an intense process of socio-economic transformation, facilitated by tourism revenue, foreign investment and the influence of those Spanish emigrants who had witnessed change abroad, that begins to align Spain with Western consumer society and introduces a changed set of values in moral and religious attitudes. Horror participates in various ways in the representation of these complex and contradictory changes. In a film like *La noche del terror ciego*,