

Spaniwood? English Language Spanish Films since the 1990s

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Is there such a thing as “Spanish identity?” If so, what are the characteristics that best define it? In the area of Spanish post-Franco cinema, Barry Jordan identified what he called “the Almodóvar effect,” which projected the image of the happy, promiscuous and sexually liberated Spaniard.¹ To a certain degree, this image still persists outside of Spain, despite the movement by the early 1990s toward young Spanish directors interested in making a different kind of cinema that departed markedly from the lighthearted *landismo* of the 1970s and, later, the indulgent *almodovarismo* of the 1980s.²

These new directors—as well as producers and actors—are interested in reaching out to wider audiences, in and outside of Spain. The internationalization they pursue comes, in many cases, with an adoption of the English language in their works, a cinematic phenomenon that could be identified as the product of a new “Spaniwood” characterized by a Hollywoodization of Spanish cinema. Such Spaniwood contributions include, among others, *Two Much* (1995) by Fernando Trueba, *Dance With The Devil Perdita Durango* (1997), *The Others* (2001) by Alejandro Amenábar, *My Life Without Me* (2003) and *The Secret Life of Words* (2005) by Isabel Coixet, and *The Oxford Murders* (2008) by Álex de la Iglesia.

This multicultural cinema presents a dilemma: what characteristics define a “Spanish” movie? We have generally labeled these movies as “Spanish” because their directors are Spanish. However, is it the director’s vision alone that makes a movie Spanish, or are other factors such as the choice of language equally paramount? How should English-language Spanish productions or co-productions

such as *The Machinist* (2004) by Brad Anderson, *Sahara* (2005) by Breck Eisner, and *Basic Instinct 2* (2006) by Michael Caton-Jones be classified? Should the participation of internationally known Spanish actors such as Javier Bardem, Antonio Banderas and Penélope Cruz be factored into the equation? What role does the use of Spanish cultural themes play when it comes to denominating a movie as “Spanish”? What account should be made of English-language remakes of indisputably Spanish films such as *Abre los ojos* (*Vanilla Sky*, 1997) by Amenábar—reformulated as *Vanilla Sky* (2001) by Cameron Crowe? Conversely, how should films be handled when the reverse is true, as in the case of Coixet’s *My Life Without Me*—an adaptation of the 1987 book *Pretending the Bed Is a Raft* by North American author Nanci Kincaid?

Any narrow definition of what makes a film Spanish belies the true complexity and character of the modern cinematic landscape, and these various considerations highlight the futility of simple classification into a “national cinema” when analyzing post-Franco movies. As Burkhard Pohl and Jörg Türschmann point out,

La nacionalidad de una película constituye, paradójicamente, una categoría muy controvertida y a la vez uno de los rasgos imprescindibles de la comunicación cinematográfica, de manera que se suele hablar de películas “alemanas,” “españolas,” “francesas” o “inglesas” ... La colaboración de productoras de distintas nacionalidades, por un lado, y la diferenciación regional—el cine vasco, el cine catalán, p. ej.—, por el otro, indican las dificultades de determinar las fronteras exactas de un cine nacional en España.

The nationality of a movie paradoxically constitutes a very controversial category while at the same time presenting an essential feature in film circles. We usually speak of “German,” “Spanish,” “French,” or “English” movies ... The collaboration of production companies of different nationalities on the one hand, and the regional differentiation—the Basque cinema, the Catalan cinema, etc.—on the other indicates the difficulties of determining the exact boundaries of a national Spanish cinema. (15)³

Many critics such as Svetlana Boym, Yingjin Zhang, Pohl and

Türschmann prefer instead the term “glocal cinema,” which, given the inclusion of the local with the global, is very fitting for Spanish movies of today. Additionally, if we pay particular attention to the subset of Spanish movies shot in the English language since the 1990s, it may be asserted that the Spaniwood phenomenon emerges as a form of globalization, along with both the positive and negative consequences that implies.

I will investigate these issues along with the question of what characteristics should be considered to define a unique or expanded view of Spanish cinema, with special attention to the English-language Spanish films of the 1990s.

1. Spanish Director = Spanish Movie?

Peter William Evans states that, “While the reputation of Spanish cinema had to rely, at first, on the names of Buñuel and Saura, and then on Almodóvar and perhaps to some extent Bigas Luna ... it now enjoys greater exposure largely thanks to a new “New Spanish Cinema” of emerging talent” (“Introduction.” *Spanish Cinema* 2). He explains that this “New Spanish Cinema” is basically an auterist cinema, that is, a very personal cinema in which the director is frequently also the writer of the script. Examples of auterist directors include Amenábar (*Tesis* ‘Thesis,’ 1996, *Abre los ojos* ‘Open Your Eyes,’ 1997, *The Others*, 2001, *Mar adentro* ‘The Sea Inside,’ 2004), Icíar Bollaín (*Hola, ¿estás sola?* ‘Hi, Are You Alone?’, 1995, *Flores de otro mundo* ‘Flowers From Another World,’ 1999, *Te doy mis ojos* ‘Take My Eyes,’ 2003, *Mataharis* ‘Mataharis,’ 2007), Coixet (*Demasiado viejo para morir joven* ‘Too Old To Die Young,’ 1989, *A los que aman* ‘To Those Who Love,’ 1998, *My Life Without Me*, 2003, *The Secret Life of Words*, 2005, *Paris, je t’aime*, 2006), Julio Médem (*Vacas* ‘Cows,’ 1991, *La ardilla roja* ‘The Red Squirrel,’ 1993, *Los amantes del círculo polar* ‘Lovers of the Arctic Circle,’ 1998, *Lucía y el sexo* ‘Sex And Lucia,’ 2001), and Trueba (*Belle Epoque*, 1992, *Two Much*, 1995, *La niña de tus ojos* ‘The Girl Of Your Dreams,’ 1998, *El embrujo de Shanghai* ‘The Shanghai Spell,’ 2002). However, in addition to being an auterist cinema, the “New Spanish Cinema” Evans refers to is also a cinema that includes movies often shot in English, and moreover includes a director’s personal mark that is not always

strictly related to the exploration of Spanish cultural topics. This observation is evident in the works of Amenábar, Coixet and de la Iglesia. In Amenábar's case, even though his movies present topics of interest for Spaniards such as death and euthanasia, among others, these topics cannot be considered as "Spanish" because they are of equal interest to an international audience, regardless of geographical barriers and viewer nationality. Rosanna Maule explains:

Amenábar's films address universal and transnational themes and problems, even though they are set in Spain and deal with nationally specific topics and events. Amenábar's oblique representation of Spanishness reflects a tendency of many new Spanish filmmakers aiming to produce films suitable for the international film market. (109)

The international nature of Amenábar's work is underscored in his choice of English for the movie *The Others* (2001), a tactic that Juan José Bigas Luna had already used in his 1987 movie *Anguish*, which makes the auteristic form of this cinema different from that of Almodóvar.⁴ While *The Others* is a horror movie set on the island of Jersey after World War II, in terms of actual film content, the fundamental ghost story it relates could have taken place at any location or in any period in time. This reality, along with his choice to cast one of the best known Hollywood movie stars (Nicole Kidman) in the lead role, further reveals the international character of Amenábar's cinema and defies simple labeling of his work as "Spanish" while simultaneously appealing to a global audience.

Contrary to what one might think, this international mark in Amenábar's cinema was welcomed by the members of the (Spanish) Goya Awards committee, who honored *The Others* with eight Goyas, including for Best Film, Best Director and Best Screenplay. This was significant, as it marked the first time the Goya Awards Committee clearly endorsed an English-language movie as "Spanish," despite the confusion in Spanish audiences that this distinction often creates. For example, María Luisa Hernández, referring to *The Secret Life of Words* by Coixet, states that

He ido a ver la película *La vida secreta de las palabras* y cuál no se-

ría mi sorpresa al tener que ver una película española en inglés y con subtítulos. ¿Qué pasa? ¿No estamos en España? Las películas españolas, en español, y luego el que las quiera ver en otra lengua que se las traduzca. ¿O es que eso es ahora más fino?

I went to see *The Secret Life of Words* and was very surprised that I had to watch a Spanish movie in English with subtitles. What is going on? Are we not in Spain? Spanish movies must be in Spanish, and then those who wish to watch them in other languages must have them translated. Or is it that using English is more classy now? (1)

This sentiment reveals a prejudice that is commonly shared in Spanish (and even wider) audiences: if a movie has been labeled as “Spanish” with a Spanish director, then it follows that the movie will take place in the Spanish language. It is therefore particularly noteworthy, in the case of Coixet, that her English-language adaptation of a North American novel shot in Canada, *My Life Without Me*, was recognized in 2003 with a Spanish Goya for Best Adapted Screenplay.

One of the characteristics of the universal repertoire of themes in cinema is that those themes can be applied to different historical contexts, which allows for the interpretation of movies according to the historical and socio-political realities of any specific country. Isabel Maurer Queipo explains that

Aunque la película de Coixet esté rodada en Canadá los temas son universales. Así, el contexto histórico de España, el pasado cruel de este país natal de Coixet sirven para subrayar la crítica de Coixet contra las injusticias sociales todavía existentes. La película indica con delicadeza las características heredadas, aparentemente superadas de un pasado represivo como la intolerancia, la ignorancia, la marginalización, la discriminación, los mitos de la España eterna del machismo, de la apología de la familia.

Even though Coixet’s film was shot in Canada, the themes are universal. Thus the historical context of Spain, the cruel past of Coixet’s native country serve to underscore the criticism against

social injustices in today's world. The movie delicately shows the inherited characteristics of an apparently overcome repressive past of intolerance, ignorance, marginalization, discrimination, the myths of the eternal machismo of Spain, the apology of the family. (259)

In this sense, to argue that Coixet's movies are not "Spanish" would not be fair or accurate. Coixet's films can be Spanish and, at the same time, European, Canadian and American, among others.

As we can see, Coixet's cinema has in common with Amenábar's the use of international themes and English language. In addition to this international aspect, Coixet's case represents a landmark in contemporary Spanish cinema, as in addition to being one of only a few successful Spanish women directors, she holds the distinction of being the only one who is currently shooting successful movies in English. This distinguishes Coixet's cinema from that of her notable peers such as Bollaín, whose movies to date (*Hola, ¿estás sola?*, 1995, *Flores de otro mundo*, 1999, *Te doy mis ojos*, 2003, *Mataharis*, 2007) have been shot in Spanish, produced in Spain, and with a mostly Spanish cast. Furthermore, although Bollaín's movies contain themes that can be peripherally related to similar situations in other countries, they are more specifically linked to Spanish realities (e.g., the unique immigrant situation in *Flores de otro mundo*, the particular nature of the domestic violence in *Te doy mis ojos*). Similarly, Chus Gutiérrez, with the exception of her first film *Sublet* (1991)—shot in English but with a plot that centers around a Spanish protagonist (starring, coincidentally, Bollaín)—has chosen to explore identifiably Spanish topics more narrowly through a more exclusively Spanish product. Examples include *Alma gitana* ('Gypsy Soul', 1995), about the relationship between gypsies and *payos* in Spain, *El calentito* ('The Calentito', 2005), about a Spanish adolescent girl and her relationship with her family during the *movida madrileña*, and *Poniente* ('Poniente', 2001) and *Retorno a Hansala* (*Return to Hansala*, 2008), both dealing with the topic of immigration in Spain.

A third Spanish director who uses English without necessarily exclusive "Spanish" themes is de la Iglesia. In contrast with Amenábar and Coixet, de la Iglesia's personal mark lies in his pre-

dilection for horror, violence, sex and crime, combined with a dark humor, often resulting in characterization of his work as “cult films.” Two examples of this are *Dance With the Devil* (1997) and *The Oxford Murders* (2008). The first of these films tells the story of the criminal couple Perdita Durango (Rosie Pérez) and Romeo Doloresa (Bardem) as they travel between the United States and Mexico in pursuit of fulfilling a dark dream. The second relates the story of Martin (Elijah Wood), a North American student from the University of Oxford, and his professor Arthur Seldom (John Hurt) in their search for answers regarding a series of murders. The fact that neither of these movies contain typically “Spanish” cultural topics, nor do they take place in Spain, further emphasizes the geographically non-Spanish nature of both films.

While the geography of a movie does not automatically determine its nature as “Spanish” or not, it is certainly considered a contributing factor, as Spanish directors have been criticized for “selling out” to Hollywood due to their choice of location in addition to the lack of sufficiently and unambiguously “Spanish” themes and choice of English in their movies. In *Cine para dos* the viewers are informed that, regarding Coixet, “Le han hecho ofertas en Hollywood y ... algunos le comentan que hace películas en inglés para llegar al mercado internacional, pero que no, que si ella quisiera hacer megablockbuster, ya las habría hecho” ‘She has received offers from Hollywood and some tell her that the reason she makes movies in English is because she wants to reach the international market, but no, if she wanted to make mega-blockbusters she would have already made them’ (7). In “Interview with Isabel Coixet. Making Films in English” Coixet explains that the reason she makes movies in English is because

I realized I really need some distance to tell a story. ... For instance, I live in Barcelona, but the reality of Barcelona, the daily life is too present and ... for me, making films is a challenge ... and I don't have an explanation about why ... , my next film is going to be in Japanese, so there you go. I don't know, I guess I'm attracted ... , to travel. That's the only reason ... I can find out.

The issue of geography is further confused by those films that

are produced and filmed in Spain but using sets that have been modified by the production team to resemble other locales. This is the case, for example, of *The Machinist* (2004) by Anderson, shot in Barcelona but in locations adjusted to make the viewers believe that the story took place in Los Angeles. Similarly, Amenábar's *The Others* is presented as taking place on the Island of Jersey but was actually shot in Cantabria and in Madrid. Thus we have two movies with universal themes, both of which are Spanish productions filmed in Spain using the English language, but only one of which was led by a Spanish director. How, then, should these movies be classified? Does the nationality of the director make one of these movies Spanish and the other not, or must their connection with Spanish production companies make them both Spanish, or their choice of story location and language make them neither?

2. Spanish Productions, Co-productions and Remakes: How Spanish is the Film?

Spanish productions of otherwise apparently non-Spanish films present a particularly interesting case. Ira Konigsberg defines “production” as it relates to film as

(1) The various stages of putting the story on film after preproduction planning and before the final editing. These stages include all the physical preparations for shooting (e.g., construction of sets, lighting, and rehearsal) and the actual shooting itself. When the film is “in production” it is actually being shot. (2) The term is sometimes used to include the various stages of editing, mixing, and special-effects photography, along with those operations listed in (1). (310)

In addition, a movie's producer is also responsible for securing its financing.

Issues of production cost and financing sometimes explain the production of English-language foreign-setting movies in Spain, as was the case with *The Machinist*. Anderson has explained in the commentary accompanying the DVD release of his film that constructing outdoor settings in Barcelona to emulate Los Angeles was

not a choice of preference but rather was a necessary and inconvenient consequence of the marriage with the Spanish company Filmax and Castelao Productions that was brought about by the simple need for financing: “We spent probably two and a half years going to various companies in the United States looking for financing for *The Machinist*.” Actor Christian Bale further confesses in the same commentary that “nobody thought when reading *The Machinist* that we’d be filming in Barcelona!” However, the union turned out to be a positive one, with the director noting that working “with Filmax has been... they’ve been incredibly supportive and, unlike a lot of American studios, they have allowed me to realize a film my own way and that’s been ... a real ... great thing.”

The case of *The Machinist* illustrates the question: how Spanish must a Spanish production be? One may argue that since *The Machinist* was produced by Spanish producer Julio Fernández of the Spanish company Filmax and Castelao Productions and shot in Barcelona that the movie must be considered a Spanish product. However, others may argue that the movie is American, as the setting, language, and artistic creation are clearly American, with no overtly Spanish elements embedded in the story itself other than the nationality of one of the main actresses (Aitana Sánchez-Gijón). Movies such as *My Life Without Me* further obscure the situation, having been co-produced by Almodóvar’s Spanish production company El Deseo but alongside the Canadian company Milestone Productions, and directed by the Spanish director Coixet but shot in Canada and in English. Similarly, Coixet’s English-language *The Secret Life of Words* was also a co-production, this time financed by the Spanish companies El Deseo and Mediapro in partnership with the North American company Focus Features and shot mostly in a studio in Madrid and on location in Belfast. Both of these movies feature the Canadian actress Sarah Polley in the lead role, an additional factor that will be discussed at more length in the third section of this paper. Should these movies be considered as any more or less Spanish than her previous films *A los que aman* and *Demasiado viejo para morir joven*? Similarly, how should Amenábar’s film *The Others* be viewed, being the English-language result of a Spanish-French coproduction (of José Luis Cuerda and Fernando Bovaira with the French Studio Canal) shot by a Spanish director in Spain

(Cantabria) but to resemble a different location (the Island of Jersey). Is *The Others* more Spanish than *The Machinist*, and to what extent does the nationality of the director affect the national labeling of such a production?

Remakes of previous films add yet another dimension to this question. Let us consider Crowe's *Vanilla Sky* (2001), a remake of Amenábar's *Abre los ojos* (1997). Crowe adapted Amenábar's original film to suit the taste of a more American audience to such an extent that critics have commented on the vast differences that exist between the two movies. To this respect Sandra Robertson states that "the remake (copy, translation, theft) of *Abre los ojos* into *Vanilla Sky* is not an instance of transcultural reinscription, but rather one of transnational divestiture" (62). With "transnational divestiture" Robertson is referring to the de-Spanishization of *Abre los ojos* in *Vanilla Sky*, because, as Robertson puts it, *Vanilla Sky* included

Icons of commercial mass media and pop/rock culture as cultivated over the past forty years in the United States in general, and most particularly in southern California. Hence the look and feel of what Crowe calls his "adaptation" of *Abre los ojos*. Apparently you can take the director out of the country, but you cannot take the country out of the director. (58)

Although the extensive de-Spanishization of *Vanilla Sky* goes hand in hand with its Hollywoodization, the film is nevertheless based on the original script by Amenábar and Mateo Gil and the essential elements of this script remain. Thus, while clearly stripped of Spanish culture in form, should we nevertheless consider *Vanilla Sky* to be Spanish in origin if not character? If so, then to what degree can we support such classification? Should we accept the presence of the Spanish actress Cruz in *Vanilla Sky* as a legitimate mark of Spanishness in the film? Nancy Berthier describes *Vanilla Sky* as an "Americanization" of the original *Abre los ojos*, one that involves a *deslocalización* 'delocalization' and a *desnacionalización* 'denationalization' of the story and even of the movie production itself (339). In Berthier's words,

Desde el punto de vista del equipo técnico, fuera de la presencia

en los títulos de crédito de Mateo Gil y de Alejandro Amenábar (“based upon the film *Abre los ojos*, written by AA and MG”), al final de la película, en *Vanilla Sky*, la mayor parte de las personas que trabajan en la película son técnicos fuertemente vinculados con el cine norteamericano que lo sirven, aunque se integre también a personas con distintas nacionalidades o procedencias nacionales, en la mejor tradición *hollywoodiense*. Pero ninguno de los técnicos de *Abre los ojos* fue invitado a colaborar en *Vanilla Sky*. Desde este punto de vista, este “*remake* transnacional” no ha sido concebido como una posible oportunidad de intercambio artístico o económico. La americanización del filme de Amenábar ha supuesto una americanización del equipo encargado de llevarlo a cabo materialmente.

From the technical team’s point of view, apart from the reference in the credits to Mateo Gil and Alejandro Amenábar (“based upon the film *Abre los ojos*, written by AA and MG”), at the end of the movie, the majority of people working on *Vanilla Sky* are technicians strongly associated with North American cinema, even if they integrated people of different nationalities in the best Hollywood tradition. But none of the technicians of *Abre los ojos* were invited to collaborate on *Vanilla Sky*. From this point of view, this “transnational *remake*” was not seen as a possible opportunity for artistic or economic exchange. The Americanization of Amenábar’s film meant an Americanization of the production team. (342)

Following this analysis, we would conclude that while the *Abre los ojos* source is “Spanish,” the *Vanilla Sky* derivative is American.

Regarding Cruz as a possible mark of Spanishness in *Vanilla Sky*, Berthier interprets the appearance of a Hispanic actor/actress as being consistent with nothing more than recent trends in Hollywood cinema. As Berthier puts it,

La integración de Penélope Cruz en el reparto de *Vanilla Sky* se puede relacionar con una tendencia creciente del cine norteamericano en los últimos años: la asimilación de actores hispanófonos, con orígenes españoles o hispanoamericanos (Javier Bar-

dem, Salma Hayek, y Jennifer López, de origen puertorriqueño, nacida en EE.UU.). La actuación de Penélope Cruz en *Vanilla Sky* se vincularía por consiguiente con la lógica propia del cine norteamericano contemporáneo y como tal no sería contradictoria con la operación de “nacionalización” llevada a cabo en este *remake* transnacional.

Pero se puede interpretar también de otra manera, complementaria. ... existe una categoría de remakes, definidos como “self-conscious remake” por Ginette Vincendeau, ... que juegan con la película original y cuya adaptación se puede interpretar como un auténtico homenaje ... En el caso de *Vanilla Sky*, la presencia de la actriz Penélope Cruz, que interpreta el mismo papel que en la película original, con el mismo nombre de ficción, Sofía (mientras que otros personajes han cambiado de nombres), y una misma nacionalidad, que delata su fuerte acento cuando habla inglés, así como unas pocas palabras de español que pronuncia (su voz abre la película, la oímos decir en español “abre los ojos”), es uno de los elementos que permiten clasificar la película en la segunda categoría, la del “self-conscious *remake*”.

The casting of Penélope Cruz in *Vanilla Sky* can be interpreted as an increasing tendency in recent North American cinema to assimilate Spanish speaking actors of Spanish or Hispanic-American origins (Javier Bardem, Salma Hayek, and Jennifer López, born in the Unites States but of Puerto Rican origin). Therefore the acting of Penélope Cruz in *Vanilla Sky* is related to the logic of contemporary North American cinema and as such does not contradict the active “nationalization” of this transnational *remake*.

But it can also be interpreted in another (complimentary) way. ... there exists a category of remakes defined as “self-conscious remake” by Ginette Vincendeau ... that play with the original movie and whose adaptation can be interpreted as an authentic homage ... In *Vanilla Sky*'s case, the presence of Penélope Cruz, who revises her role in the original movie and with the same fictional name, Sofía, (while other characters have changed names), and nationality, given away by her thick accent when speaking

English and the few Spanish words she speaks (her voice opens the movie with the words “*abre los ojos*”), is one of the elements that allows us to classify the movie in this second category, that of the “self-conscious *remake*.” (344)

While either interpretation as a “self-conscious remake” or as a reflection of nothing more significant than current Hispanic appeal in Hollywood seems plausible, it is clear that the Hispanic allure in current Hollywood cinema almost certainly played a strong role in the casting of Cruz in *Vanilla Sky*, as evidenced by her exploding popularity in Hollywood in general. We will refer to this phenomenon as the “Hispanic factor,” which, as we will discuss shortly, can also be observed in other Spanish actors such as Banderas and Bardem.

3. Spanish Actors and Actresses Gone Hollywood?

When thinking of Spanish actors and actresses in today’s cinema, Banderas, Cruz and Bardem are among the first names that come to mind to most people. Each of these actors attained both national and international fame with their work, the latter due to their English-speaking roles in movies out of Hollywood. This fact has been criticized by many, who argue that these actors have sold out to Hollywood. However, it can also be argued that their participation in English-language movies is a natural response to an increasingly global and transnational market. It is doubtless that this is also an economic strategy, since English-language movies usually reach a wider audience and Hollywood movies in particular have a higher potential to become box office hits and generate more money. What credentials of Spanishness do these internationalized actors retain, and does their internationalization necessarily preclude or contradict their involvement in more traditionally Spanish cinema?

If by Spanish cinema we indicate exclusively Spanish-language films directed by Spanish directors, then their participation would appear to be both consistent and seamless. However, as these actors become increasingly recognized global commodities, might their participation undermine the Spanish labeling of a movie, or might instead their participation be viewed as confirmation of a Spanish

character, such that even their English-language films be considered at least in part Spanish? Although there are exceptions such as *Two Much* by Trueba, in most cases it would appear that the latter does not hold true, with English-language films starring Spanish actors being considered Hollywood movies. However, quite often production and distribution companies do capitalize on the cross-cultural nature of these actors, exploiting the exotic “Hispanic appeal” that these actors bring to market the film. In the United States this “Hispanic factor” is well received by the public, no doubt due at least in part to the fact that, according to current US Census Bureau figures, 15% of the population of the United States is Hispanic.

In accordance with this “Hispanic appeal,” it is the very Spanish identity of these actors that ironically accounts for much of their English-language appeal. Banderas, for example, has been cast in most of his Hollywood movies due largely to his Hispanic sex appeal. His roles in *The Mambo Kings* (1992) by Arne Glimcher, *Desperado* (1995) by Robert Rodríguez, *The Mask of Zorro* (1998) by Martin Campbell, and even Trueba’s *Two Much* (1995) all involved roles that capitalized on the exotic in general and, typically, Hispanic (though not necessarily Spanish) specifically (Banderas played a Cuban in *The Mambo Kings* and a Mexican in both *Desperado* and *The Mask of Zorro*). Similarly, Cruz and Bardem have been cast in English-language films due largely to their Hispanic allure and, like Banderas, have played non-Spanish Hispanic characters: Cruz a Mexican in *All The Pretty Horses* (2000) by Billy Bob Thornton and in *Bandidas* (2006) by Joachim Ronning and Espen Sandberg, and Bardem a Mexican in *Dance With the Devil* (1997) by de la Iglesia and *Collateral* (2004) by Michael Mann, and a Cuban in *Before Night Falls* (2000) by Julian Schnabel, just to name a few.

Thus, the “Hispanic factor” adds another layer to the question of an actor’s contribution to the Spanishness of a movie: in addition to debating the level to which the participation of a Spanish actor might influence the Spanish character of the movie, we must further consider the question of whether such a discussion is even appropriate when the actors portray non-Spanish characters. To a large part of the non-Hispanic North American audience this is not a conscious issue, since they often mislabel all Hispanics under the rubric “Spanish” without distinguishing the differences between Spanish-

speaking cultures or accounting for the great cultural diversity that exists among them.⁵ This lack of distinction certainly contributes to the non-Spanish roles these international stars are offered, and further blurs the boundaries of Spanishness while only heightening the relevance of the very question of Spanishness in these films. While these distinctions are obvious to Hispanics, there nevertheless similarly exists what Carlos Heredero calls a “proceso de hispanización” ‘process of hispanization’ (11) in recent Spanish cinema with movies such as *Cuarteto de la Habana* (*Havana Quartet*, 1999) by Fernando Colomo and *Flores de otro mundo* (1999) by Bollaín that uses the terms “Spanish,” “Hispanic” and “Latino” interchangeably to refer to all Spanish-speaking actors and the characters they play. Might this sub-globalization be a form of globalization itself? If we define globalization as a cultural Americanization of the world or, in Sherif Hetata’s words, “a hegemonic pyramidal world where culture is decided and globalized in the boardrooms of multinational media companies and other institutions” (286), classifying all Spanish-speaking cultures under a generic umbrella would serve to limit, homogenize or, in other words, globalize their differences.

To conclude, in this respect Pohl and Türschmann claim that Roland Robertson’s term “glocalization” best describes the situation in today’s Spanish cinema, since the local is inextricably linked to the global in the film industry:

Cine *glocal* ... es el producto de la relación entre estrategias cinematográficas hegemónicas en expansión, y las (re-)construcciones de lo local, regional y nacional, por parte tanto de los mismos actores globales, como de los actores locales, regionales y nacionales, en competencia por la supremacía económica y cultural. La transnacionalización del cine, bajo esta perspectiva, forma parte de los procesos de *glocalización*. Precisamente la afirmación de lo propio es una estrategia para obtener una atención fuera del ámbito cinematográfico nacional.

Glocal cinema is ... the product of a relationship between expanding hegemonic cinematographic strategies and the (re-) constructions of the local, the regional and the national, on the part of the global actors but also the local, regional and national

ones, all competing for economic and cultural supremacy. Under this perspective, the transnationalization of cinema is part of the *glocalization* processes. The assertion of the local is precisely a strategy to attract international attention outside of one's own national cinematographic environment. (19)

We could then talk of a Hollywoodization on a small scale or a “Hispaniwood” that is the homogeneous representation of Hispanic cultures in Hollywood cinema. This “Hispaniwood” is, at the same time, a consequence of “Spaniwood,” which has already been defined as the increasing process of Spanish directors, producers and actors working in English-language films due to the Hollywood predominance throughout the world. However, this “Spaniwood” process results not only in the use of the English language over Spanish, but also allows Spanish filmmakers to show their often universally themed films on the international market. As Maurer Queipo puts it, the cinema of many of the present Spanish directors is a *cine personal* ‘personal cinema,’ a *cine comprometido* ‘committed cinema’ (264), and at the same time a *cine transnacional* ‘transnational cinema’ and *con temas universales* ‘with universal themes’ (264). At the same time, it is a “glocal” cinema that can also depict local or national topics through an international production process.

Given these various factors and trends, I conclude that it no longer makes sense to speak in terms of national cinemas. In the case of Spain the term *national cinema* is ambiguous and relegated to an illusion, with film theorists and critics being unable to come to a consensus definition of the term for the modern case. Thus, the question if a Spanish movie in our current world cinema can be in English, with non-Spanish actors and directors, not necessarily produced in Spain, and still be Spanish, emerges as pointless. Instead we should frame movies within the world cinema sphere while correspondingly defining clear notions of the new, plural and inclusive forms of Spanishness evident today.

Notes

1 For additional information on “the Almodóvar effect” refer to Jordan’s article “How Spanish Is It? Spanish Cinema and National Identity.”

2 The term *landismo* refers to the comedies starring Alfredo Landa in the late years of the Franco dictatorship and the first years of the transition to democracy (1969-78). Examples include *No desearás al vecino del quinto*, *Vente a Alemania*, *Pepe*, etc. In these comedies Landa often played the role of the sexually repressed Spaniard who constantly harassed women, which became a stereotype for Spanish men. For *almodovarismo* we understand the sexually liberated and happy Spain of the 1980s as depicted in Pedro Almodóvar's films from this decade (i.e. *Pepi, Luci, Bom y otras chicas del montón*, *Laberintos de pasiones*, etc.).

3 Unless otherwise noted, all translations are mine.

4 But when we refer to the international nature of Amenábar's cinema, this does not mean that the international mark makes his cinema a less Spanish cinema. In fact, the marks "international" and "Spanish" are not exclusive but inclusive. In this respect, Nancy Berthier explains that while in *Vanilla Sky*—the remake of *Abre los ojos*—we witness a "proceso de americanización" 'Americanization process' (341), "Con *Mar adentro*, al contrario, asistimos a una forma de 're-nacionalización' con una producción esencialmente española y con unos equipos técnico y artístico locales como en tiempos de *Tesis* o de *Abre los ojos*. Pero a ello se añaden unos componentes sean formales, sean estéticos, sean temáticos que, lejos de 'volver su mirada hacia Hollywood' asumen claramente ya no una mera 'nacionalidad' sino hasta podríamos decir que cierto 'localismo' que se sitúa en las antípodas del universo de sus primeras películas. Esta película es, paradójicamente, la que le ha permitido al joven cineasta ganar un Oscar a principios de 2005, claro que el de la mejor película extranjera, pero algo es algo" "To the contrary, in *Mar adentro* we witness a "re-nationalization" with an essentially Spanish production and with local technical and artistic teams, just like in the times of *Tesis* or *Abre los ojos*. Additionally, we also have some formal, aesthetic or thematic components that instead of "looking back at Hollywood," assume not only a mere "nationality" but even a certain "localism" that can be found in Amenábar's first movies. This movie is, paradoxically, the one which gave him an Oscar at the beginning of 2005, a Best Foreign Film Oscar, but at least this is something' (Berthier 346).

5 For further information on the diversity of Spanish-speaking cultures see Sánchez-Conejero's "From Iberianness to Spanishness: Being Spanish in 20th-21st Century Spain."

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