

Spanish Spaces

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Spanish Spaces

Landscape, Space and Place in
Contemporary Spanish Culture

ANN DAVIES

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who were with me in the early years.

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All translations from Spanish and French are my own.

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CHAPTER ONE

Introduction

The rain in Spain stays mainly in the plain.

Alan Jay Lerner

Despite all you may have heard to the contrary, the rain in Spain stays almost invariably in the hills.

Michael Flanders

This book derives from my readings from the field of cultural geography in an attempt to reflect on the terrain of the entity known as Spain, through the prism of my scholarly interest in contemporary Spanish cinematic and literary texts. A further motivation is the difficulties I and others wrestle with in Hispanic Studies as we try to investigate questions bounded by an idea of nation, in an era when the whole notion of a nation is open to dispute and indeed discredit. Some scholars now talk of an era of ‘post-nationalism’ and sometimes by implication post-nation-ism, but the concept of nation, including that of the Spanish nation, still has some currency. As Joan Ramon Resina puts it, ‘political subjects themselves continue to correlate with their national foundation in ways that cannot simply be bracketed out of the political discourse’ (Resina 2002: 377); the same could be said of cultural discourse as well. To take just one example, the field of Spanish film studies increasingly encounters difficulties over the now strongly questioned concept of a Spanish national cinema as if the latter simply reproduced an essential, authentic Spain within its films and were impervious to outside influence. Guarding against the impulse to be normative as to what Spanish cinema is has proved vital, particularly in an era of co-production and the ever-pervasive influence of American cinema (as first among other cinemas), but it does then raise questions as to what Spanish cinema actually is, and also it complicates the process of writing about the topic while trying to pick one’s way through a normative minefield. I have great difficulties with the idea of a cultural text simply acting as a surface which we can scrape away to find an essential Spain underneath, thus the avoidance of essentialism in Spanish film studies as well as Spanish cultural studies more widely is something I find welcome; but it

sometimes conflicts with not only my desire but my academic responsibility to write about something called 'Spain'.

A similar difficulty arises when talking of Spain in terms of cultural geography. Landscape in particular (I will talk later about definitions of landscape as well as of space and place) can come to function as a surface which points to a national or regional entity lying behind it. As Mike Crang observes, 'landscapes may be read as texts illustrating the beliefs of the people. The shaping of the landscape is seen as expressing social ideologies, that are then perpetuated and supported through the landscape' (Crang 1998: 27). If a landscape – or other spaces and places – can be read as a text, the same danger of essentialism lies behind it. Yet the desire persists to endow landscape, space and place with specific meaning, including that of national and/or regional specificity. 'Spain' as a term may be heavily compromised, to the point of cliché at times, but it must still mean *something*. Yet Spain is an intriguing case in this regard. We could, for instance, define Spain according to its territorial borders; but those borders have shifted over the years and continue to be contested today (most specifically in the Basque Country, some members of which look to independence from Spain). Or we could take the internationally familiar touristic spaces – beaches and bullrings – as quintessentially Spain, for Spaniards as well as tourists, since the Spanish stand to make tourist income from such spaces. But this neglects the fact that much of daily life in Spain does *not* take place in such spaces, that Spain has a varied terrain, that historically the *meseta* rather than the beach has been understood within Spain to represent the Spanish character (of which more below), showing a discrepancy in what the essential Spain might be depending on whether you are inside or outside it.

Or, indeed, we might consider the two phrases with which I headed this chapter. One is more accurate about the relationship of climate to landscape than the other, but neither comment attempts in fact to define Spain for us in any way. The first phrase, from Lerner and Loewe's musical *My Fair Lady*, is simply an exercise in English elocution, and geographical accuracy be damned: nonetheless the phrase makes sense even if it is inaccurate (one of the difficulties of life on the *meseta* is a paucity of rain), and endows Spain with some sort of meaning. The second phrase, part of the Flanders and Swann singing duo's comedy routine, clearly riffs off the first. It is geographically more accurate, and yet correcting an erroneous impression of Spanish geography is hardly its point. Its purpose is to raise a laugh precisely by confounding a clichéd expectation. Yet in both cases the play on words evokes a notion of Spanish terrain with which we can interact if we wish. Indeed, the comments suggest that Spain can become a free-floating signifier which can be made to carry almost any meaning and weight. And with this we are back at the challenge of giving the term 'Spain' specific resonance while nonetheless allowing for it to be a flexible signifier if

not a free-floating one. A subject (Lerner and Flanders in this case) may use 'Spain' for his or her own ends which do not directly relate to the affirmation of the nation, but that nation is nonetheless evoked as a trace, and a trace that can be carried across texts.

It is this trace of Spain evoked in different ways, sometimes ways far removed from the easy equation of Spain with beach, bullring and *meseta*, that interests me here. The two quotations with which I began use the term 'Spain' specifically for their own purposes which have nothing to do with geographical representation, yet in doing so they call to mind myriad potential meanings and evocations which all coalesce around 'Spain' and have to do with its representation as territory, and as landscape, space and place. If we require a more scholarly example of the passing invocation of Spain we can find one on the opening page of Derek Gregory's *Geographical Imaginations* (Gregory 1994: 3), where he begins with a quotation from Antoine de Saint-Exupéry's account of his Spanish geography lesson and the construction of a map of Spain. Spain is incidental to the points Gregory wishes to make and he never refers to it again, yet it is conjured up by his use of the example nonetheless, and indeed in ways which coincide with the ideas I will draw on here. Antoine de Saint-Exupéry talks of Spain becoming his friend and of its transformation into a fairyland as he maps it: this suggests the ideas I will draw on below, wherein the subject avows a desire of association for a Spain always in the process of becoming (like de Saint-Exupéry's map), and the landscape of Spain as a space wherein the subject's own desires can be realised, like a fairyland. My intention in this book is far from that of endowing 'Spain' with an essential meaning, but it is more tentatively to examine some examples of how others have used Spanish spaces in which 'Spain' comes to trace itself across more personal desires and motivations. The examples here suggest how landscape, space and place become the means by which texts, through their negotiations with these spaces, conjure up different meanings on the word 'Spain'.

Dreams of presence and the desire of association

The undergirding theoretical strand from cultural geography I intend to use here has been elaborated by Mitch Rose. Rose finds that generally the body of scholarship on landscape as a cultural construct 'has been conceptualised as simply a representation of culture and cultural ideologies, and the aim of landscape studies has been to read the landscape for a fuller understanding of the cultural system it reflects' (Rose 2006: 538). In order to develop an alternative theory, Rose borrows a term from Jacques Derrida to talk of 'dreams of presence', which 'mark both an imagination of, and a movement towards, presence. [Dreams of presence] are indicative of a fundamental inclination

towards association, from which other conceptions of presence are derived and sustained' (ibid.). He goes on to define these 'dreams of presence' further:

Dreams of presence emphasise not only the imaginative quality to culture (that is, an 'imagined' or 'dreamt' system of coherent, self-evident inherited fixtures) but, more importantly, its illusory realisation ... dreams of presence, like all dreams, are impossible possibilities. They signal things named, invested in, nurtured and cared for through a *moving towards*, rather than through a holding of. Thus, culture, as a dream of presence, is only present from a distance. It presents a set of possibilities held out towards us, clear from afar but always-already unattainable. To talk of dreams of presence, therefore, is to talk about the work of culture – that is, the movement of holding and caring, the performance of closure and encirclement, and the inclination to turn away from alterity. It is the 'again and again' desire for full presence that never arrives. (Rose 2006: 545)

Elsewhere he talks of dreams of presence as 'our dreams of being a subject, our dreams of living in a world of constancy and transparency, our dreams of predictable expectations and outcomes, our dreams of being immune to the forces that constantly shift our desires' (Rose 2004: 465). Thus dreams of presence do not assume, as givens, subjectivity, society, nation, but they do assume our desire for them to a greater or lesser degree. If it is impossible ever to give full meaning to ourselves as subjects or to the nations or regions in which we live, nonetheless we retain the desire to make ourselves and themselves mean something.

Landscape, in Rose's terms, becomes both 'an unfolding plane of sensory, affective, or perceptual markers registering and, thus, effecting the emergence ... of subjectivity' and also the 'active depositing of those markers' (Rose 2006: 547). For my purposes, then, the landscape, space and place of Spain is not something off which we can read Spanish culture and ideology, but an entity that gestures towards an explicit or implicit desire to bestow 'Spain' with meaning, simultaneous with the emergence of subjectivity, even as that desire and meaning can vary. A particular advantage of Rose's theorisation from my point of view is that it bypasses the temptation sometimes to be found in Spanish textual studies to scrape away the surface of the text – or indeed the landscape – and find the real Spain underneath, yet still allows the term 'Spain' to resonate with meaning. Spanish landscapes, spaces and places are not 'a reflection of deeper cultural forces' but 'a consequence of the various practices surrounding and investing in the resources it [the landscape] provides' (ibid.: 550). Rose's 'call to care' 'is defined by its direction – that is, by its orientation towards attachment – rather than in terms of where it arrives (culture, community, nationality, etc.)' (ibid.: 543). 'Spain', then, is a constant cultural process of becoming that is conjured up by 'care' – in the case of Spain, a 'commitment' to it, perhaps presupposed by considering oneself as Spanish but always presupposed by a subject's desire.

'Spain', in this sense, never arrives, never becomes fully formed: it becomes an impossible possibility or a dream.

The idea of a Spain that is a promise never quite fulfilled may seem on one level nonsensical; Spain is not a term of potential but of actuality, expressing a concrete reality of a politically understood territory bound by the Pyrenees and France to the north and the Mediterranean to the south and east, with Portugal to its west: to enter this Spanish space you must go through some form of border control. It has cities and towns, landmarks, we recognise as belonging to Spain: Spain is where you will find them. If Spain has France and Portugal on its borders, the term 'Spain' serves nonetheless to distinguish it from France and Portugal. Such raw geographical data, however, take no account of the subjective desires from which arise the interrelation of Spanish space and place with the trace of 'Spain' invoked by those desires. Rose goes on to argue that 'although cultural theory explains what we care for and how care transpires, there is no explanation or recognition of the call of care itself – that is, of the desire to associate and attach that is heeded through such performative gestures' (Rose 2006: 544). What this book aims to do is to consider this 'desire to associate and attach' as it plays itself out across Spanish spaces through cultural texts. The role of landscape – and, by extension, I would like to argue, space and place more generally – is to 'engender investment not by having or, much less, by "naturalising" meaning but by gathering other narratives, practices, and encounters around them' (ibid.: 549). And, further, such landscape 'speaks to people, beckoning them to care. In this sense, it engenders dreams of presences (expressions of care) that allow those living within the landscape to imagine, cultivate, and move towards their world (and their place within it) as present and, in the process, to experience it more intensively' (ibid.).

Landscape: that with which we see

This particular idea can be taken in conjunction with John Wylie's notion of the landscape as 'that with which we see'. Wylie observes that 'landscape might best be described in terms of the entwined materialities and sensibilities *with which* we act and sense' (Wylie 2007: 215) and, further, 'Landscape ... is a perceiving-with, that *with which* we see, the creative tension of self and world' (ibid.: 217). The landscape, spaces and places I will discuss here are a means by which Spain can be perceived as an object of commitment. By this I do not mean that the people who move through these spaces necessarily demonstrate some sort of overt patriotism: indeed, the question of commitment in this book includes a chapter on the question of Basque nationalism, the implicit (or explicit) notion that Spain should be constituted or even shaped differently. Commitment here entails a sense of attachment to the spaces and places through which

the characters I discuss move and act, a sense of association that never quite materialises but always hovers as a possibility, a trace within the many interpretative possibilities of Spanish space. It is an invocation or trace of Spain that echoes back and forth between landscape and subject, whether that echo carries positive or negative resonance for the latter. Wylie's mention of self and world implies a subjectivity that previously came under scrutiny and into disrepute in landscape studies, since it could imply the subject as 'master of all he surveyed', the masculine gender here being appropriate as the landscape itself was considered as feminine, open to the male gaze (as critiqued, for instance, in Gillian Rose 1993). But Mitch Rose's and Wylie's theoretical frameworks bring the subject back in, but in a way that does not necessarily mean that the subject possesses the space (though it does not preclude it): the subject shows commitment to the space, and yet it is through that space that the subject demonstrates commitment, both to Spain as a term with meaning but also to other, personal desires.

Both Rose and Wylie stress the role of what Wylie calls 'landscape writing' – personal, biographical and narrative accounts of the landscape, which, he argues, have recently burgeoned (the examples he mentions are all from the British Isles: Wylie 2007: 207). Such 'writing', Wylie argues, emphasises 'the continuing trace of the subject, of subjects, howsoever ghostly, or embodied, relational and contingent' (ibid.: 213). By this he means people's narratives of their own encounters with spaces – encounters that are direct, active and engaged. An example is Wylie's earlier account of his walk on Glastonbury Tor, that walk providing his own landscape 'text' (Wylie 2002). Elsewhere, he talks of co-presence, landscape and self together, which requires bodily presence in the landscape, of being- and becoming-in-the world (Wylie 2009: 279). As the saying goes, you had to be there. That is not what I offer here: instead we are looking at texts in which some people account for *other* people's encounter with Spanish spaces; and these others are usually – but not always – fictional. We are not therefore talking of bodily presence in the sense Wylie means, but a multiplicity of levels within which the subjects of the narrative are 'present', but we are not. But Wylie also helps us to account for absence, drawing on Derrida's notion that "the body" and its sensibilities are always a matter of prosthetics, augmentations, displacements, substitutions – different "appearances of flesh" (ibid.: 277). Although Wylie uses Derrida's ideas in a different sense to what I intend here, these ideas nonetheless account for the layered experience that involves textual characters as well as both the producers and consumers of these characters. Wylie argues that Derrida's questioning of the idea of presence can provide 'a sort of ghosting and dislocating ... that thus entwines *landscape* with *absence*' (ibid.: 280). If, as Wylie has said, landscape is that with which we see, ghosting and dislocation use landscape, space and place with which to see without us necessarily being bodily present.

Not only this, but textual landscape, space and place enhance our awareness of the multiplicity of ways in which the desire to bring ‘Spain’ into existence traces itself across the personal desires of subjects. Henri Lefebvre would argue against this in terms of film at least, commenting that film and images promote ‘error’ and ‘illusion’ over space, fragmenting it, detaching space from lived time, ‘everyday time’ (Lefebvre 1991: 96–7). On the other hand, Doreen Massey argues for space as ‘the sphere of the possibility of the existence of multiplicity/difference’ (Lury and Massey 1999: 231), and argues, referring back to Lefebvre, that if space is the product of spatial relations, then ‘for there to be relations there must be coexisting multiplicity’ (ibid.: 232). Karen Lury in the same piece argues that ‘Space and place are therefore useful as a way of understanding how film makes social relationships visible, or how they are articulated through the visual and aural capabilities of film and television’ (ibid.). Texts, then, including film and images, allow for this multiplicity to become apparent: experience of textual space is also in any case a part of our lived daily experience. ‘Seeing’ Spain, understanding Spain as a cultural process of always coming into being but never fully realised, involves not only people’s own personal experiences but also what others make of those experiences. This allows us, then, to draw on our own direct texts and as well as on those of others. But, further, the concept of fictional narratives, which I will largely be dealing with here, allows a further demonstration of a call to care by the fact that these are projections in the imagination of a negotiated sense of belonging; and because they are fiction they also suggest Rose’s emphasis on the *desire* to attach and associate. They are promises of community that are always coming into being but never quite arrive. They also point to what Graeme Harper and Jonathan Rayner describe as the performative aspect of landscape, space and place (Harper and Rayner 2010: 22).

Robert Rosenstone, writing about film and history, discusses Jill Godmilow’s film *Far from Poland* (1983), which deals with the Solidarity movement, and observes that if the director

cannot tell *the real story*, she learns why nobody else can tell it either – for there is no real story to tell, but only a series of ways of representing, thinking about and looking at the Polish movement. Yet for all the open admission of the personal stake of the filmmaker–historian in the outcome of the work and the problematic of representation and knowledge that the film underlines, *Far from Poland* ends up by making strong claims for the importance of the history of Solidarity (about which we do learn a good deal). (Rosenstone 1996: 208)

I would suggest that Godmilow and Rosenstone’s way of presenting history on film could also apply geographically. In the case of Spain, there is only a ‘series of ways of representing, thinking about and looking at’ it, but despite the problems of representation and knowledge and the standpoint of the people

who create texts and narratives about Spain, we can still learn something about it and the desire to associate with it expressed through the movement of people across its terrain.

A bifocal geography of commitment

This book, then, will offer case studies from contemporary Spanish culture, drawn primarily from film and literature, in which we can explore how characters use the space and place with which they interact to show a call to association with the nation to some degree, a desire to shape, perhaps even possess, space as nation according to their lights, so that Spain becomes a promise of a certain fulfilment that never quite comes to fruition. I intend to draw out some of the meanings, some of the different desires to associate, that cluster around Spain. In this I cannot and do not aim to be comprehensive. Rather, I intend to demonstrate how *some* of these clusters of desires to care and association might form: there are, of course, others. The case studies I have selected arise from my own personal interests, sometimes drawing on previous research.

If my own personal interests are called into play, the question then arises: what stake do *I* have in talking about Spanish landscape, space and place, and textual negotiations of them? What of my own subjectivity? I agree with Gregory that ‘one of the implications of contemporary cultural studies is that we are all trespassers now’ (Gregory 1994: 134), but while Anglophone study of Spain must acknowledge and embrace the notion of trespass as both justification and warning, I do not want to leave it at that. I take further support from Gregory when he says that: ‘To assume that we are entitled to speak only of what we know by virtue of our own experience is not only to reinstate an empiricism: it is to institutionalize parochialism’ (ibid.: 205). It is hard to calculate how far I could arguably be said to *know* Spain even as a Hispanist, and whether I know more and better than the people in Spain who undergo in reality the textual problems and questions I discuss. But I believe my position as somebody studying these texts can also be included in the cultural geographical theorisation posited here. I talked above of the stake that people may have in a desire to associate in some way with a geographical entity that either is, or makes up part of, Spain. I also talked of Wylie’s idea of ‘landscape writing’, of the subject’s textual encounter with the landscape. This book, surely, is my own landscape writing; and yet my own position is inevitably compromised. Part of my ‘stake’ is quite simply a professional need to write books, to analyse cultural texts, preferably within a given theoretical framework. But that is – fortunately – only part of the story, for my choice of research field implies its own call to care. I find it hard to conceive of an encounter with a landscape that can be as direct as in Wylie’s suggestion of co-presence (all our encounters must be mediated in

negotiation with the ideas and previous experiences we bring to the encounter), and firmly believe that many of our encounters of space and place are *not* experienced directly and are none the worse for that. I do, however, have to account for the fact that I, as I research and write, am often some distance away from the object of my study. But Wylie's use of Derridean ghosting may allow me to do precisely this. While Rose talks of a desire for association, Wylie conceives of what he calls a 'geography of love' – at first blush a puerile-sounding term, but in fact both apposite and conceptually important for what I wish to do; for Wylie talks of love in terms of separation or space between:

Love may commonly be conceived in terms of *fusion*, of self with other, with self, even with place and landscape ... But it is actually this fusion of self and landscape, person and place, that love shatters ... the geographies of love might instead describe a separation or rupture – another articulation of distance, absence, dispersal.

To put this more positively, perhaps, the geographies of love would describe a certain *exposure* to the other. The gap, fracture or absence that is their original equally and always entails an openness, an originary exposure of the self to externality and alterity. (Wylie 2009: 284)

And, in support, Wylie quotes John D. Caputo: 'to love the other on this model requires always to respect that distance, which means that love is not the desire to have the other for oneself or to get something back from the other in return, but the unconditional affirmation of the other' (*ibid.*: 285).

While Rose stresses direction towards a desire to belong and to fuse with the object of the call to care, even as he acknowledges its impossible realisation, Wylie gives greater emphasis to distance, a gap between. While 'love' may be too emotive a word to describe my academic orientation towards Spain, we could perhaps see it as a geography of commitment that embraces distance and separation as well as a desire for association embodied in applying oneself to a field of study coterminous with a particular geographical area, in this case Spain. I can perceive myself as a 'ghost' (an intriguing idea for an academic), absent yet present in using the landscape, space and place with which both the textual characters, as well as the producers of those characters and thus myself, see Spain. John Durham Peters' concept of seeing bifocally may also help here:

The space that we have to discern and portray as bifocal readers of culture – as scholars and citizens – is thoroughly Kafkaesque. The world beyond the local exists as a visible totality only in discourse and image, though its fragmentary and scattered effects are all too evident in the lives of flesh-and-blood people. If we are to criticize it or falsify it, our only tools are more representations. (Peters 1997: 91)

The idea of layer upon layer of representation – and only representation – is surely accurate if a little depressing initially, but we can also understand it

more positively when understood alongside Derrida's ghosting and dislocation that Wylie incorporates into his geographies of love. Peters' reference to Kafka concerns the levels of paranoia in Kafka's character K's world in which we cannot tell if what K perceives is real or his own paranoid projection. Kafkaesque paranoia reflects to some degree the anxiety reflected by any researcher in commenting on any entity of which they are not a direct part – how to do justice to that entity while nonetheless acknowledging the impossibility of being totally true to it.¹ Rose, in commenting on Wylie's concept of the geographies of love, suggests that he and Wylie are standing in the same place but 'not so much shoulder to shoulder but back to back, seeing the same situation but interested in different things' (Rose 2009: 142). For me the Janus-like image of the two theorists standing back to back allows for a crucial corrective – to retain the dream of presence but also its Kafkaesque qualities. Since much of this book will deal with film, it is also useful that Wylie's idea works against Mike Crang's concern that the 'flickering images' of film might 'suture the viewer into the impossible plenitude of a complete (self-present) subjectivity' (Crang 2002: 17). While both Rose and Crang recognise the impossibility of and yet the desire for plenitude – the coming into being that never arrives – Wylie's stance suggests the loss and separation that work against the illusion of suture. Wylie allows us to recognise desires without illusions.

Definitions of landscape, space and place

In my title and discussion I refer frequently to the concepts of landscape, space and place: terms that I believe overlap but which are not necessarily synonymous. The underlying idea I hold here is that trying to distinguish too precisely between the terms is unhelpful when it comes to discerning a dream of presence of Spain which is always in process: it stands to reason then that the geographical entities of space, place and landscape that go to make up this Spain are also always in the process of becoming while never being fully formed – and thus fully fixed. The definition of landscape, for example, often implies scenery, something gazed upon by a viewer who commands a panoramic perspective – the paintings of Caspar David Friedrich are often mentioned in this regard. Jean Mottet argues that 'to be a landscape, the space must be organized into a coherent unit', and this unit is created through distance (Mottet 2006: 65). But the relationship of the viewer who gazes can rapidly change from observation to a desire for attachment, in which case the definition of landscape turns out to be more slippery: it becomes converted into place. Kenneth Olwig draws on Yi-Fi Tuan to argue that landscape masks place: 'A visual image of place as thing, of landscape as scene, has thus appropriated the socially defined place of people in the political landscape' (Olwig 2002: 220). The possibility to look

behind the scenery (and Olwig is playing here with a concept of scenery as a theatrical construct used on stage and simultaneously other representational ideas of landscape) is denied us. Defining landscape along these lines, however, draws us into the danger of assuming that there is a ‘real’ country, a ‘real’ place – in this case, Spain – under the surface, if only we could look behind or beneath that surface to find it. Olwig also draws on the Merriam–Webster dictionary to note the tension between the different definitions of landscape as either scenery without boundaries or a bounded region; but apparently it cannot be both. A similar tension exists between space and place (ibid.: 222–3). But, as Martin Lefebvre argues, there is no reason why landscape and territory cannot be terms applied to the same specific space: it is for him a ‘pragmatic’ matter and depends on the subject’s relation to the land (Lefebvre 2006b: 54).

Place and space may not necessarily be synonymous: Tuan, for instance, sees place as subsumed under space by means of its specificity, a location ‘to be understood from the perspectives of the people who have given it meaning’ (Tuan, cited in Olwig 2002: 215). Erica Carter, James Donald and Judith Squires, like Tuan, also distinguish between space and place in terms of identity:

If places are no longer the clear supports of our identity, they nonetheless play a potentially important part in the symbolic and psychical dimension of our identifications. It is not spaces that ground identifications, but places.

How then does space become place? By being named: as the flows of power and negotiations of social relations are rendered in the concrete form of architecture; and also, of course, by embodying the symbolic and imaginary investments of a population. Place is space to which meaning has been ascribed. (Carter, Donald and Squires 1993: xii)

On this basis we could argue that the desire to associate with a community known as ‘Spain’ involves turning spaces into places, but the issue is not so clear-cut. Michel de Certeau, for instance, also draws on a space–place binary but gives a greater positive value to space:

A place (*lieu*) is the order (of whatever kind) in accord with which elements are distributed in relationships of coexistence ... The law of the ‘proper’ rules in the place ... [and] implies an indication of stability.

A *space* exists when one takes into consideration vectors of direction, velocities, and time variables. Thus space is composed of intersections of mobile elements. It is in a sense actuated by the ensemble of movements deployed within it. ... In contradistinction to the place, it has none of the univocity or stability of a ‘proper’.

In short, *space is a practiced place*. (de Certeau 1984: 117)

De Certeau’s definitions imply that if Spain cannot essentially be fixed for all time, then it must be a space and not a place, because its status of always becoming goes against the fixity of place.

W. J. T. Mitchell, however, calls for us to avoid a binary use of the notions of space and place, arguing that often we use the terms fairly indiscriminately along with the term landscape (Mitchell 2002: viii) and that a triadic structure would function better (ibid.: x). He observes that – as is common with the use of binaries – one term in the space–place binary acquires negative resonances. If de Certeau sees place as constricting and confining while space allows for movement, space can also be seen as abstract and imprecise while place resonates with lived experience (ibid.: ix). A general negative meaning for any of these terms is something I wish to avoid, though in saying this I do not preclude the possibility that a desire for association can manifest in negative ways such as exploitation and exclusion. But I also wish to use the three terms as fluid – because, as Mitchell notes, that is how we use these terms in practice. It is the fluidity of these terms that I feel is important when it comes to Rose and Wylie’s theories. For our purposes, following Rose’s theory of a desire to associate or care, the term used to describe a particular location may pivot around the specific form of that desire. If we add to this Wylie’s concept of the landscape (or space, or place) as that with which we see, then the term used for this location may be not so important as the resultant visualisation – the form – of the desire.

Other theorists take one term and subdivide it. Marc Augé famously distinguishes between place and non-place: he observes that ‘If a place can be defined as relational, historical and concerned with identity, then a space which cannot be defined as relational, or historical, or concerned with identity will be a non-place’ (Augé 1995: 77–8). As regards the non-places, Augé has in mind here the airport and the supermarket (ibid.: 78), places that look everywhere the same and follow a similar globalised pattern; airports have generic spaces such as seating areas, shops, check-in desks and restaurants that repeat themselves in style and substance across the globe without any local cultural values impinging. But this does not preclude the desire to co-opt such spaces into our own personal, regional and national histories and identities. On even a most basic level an airport can signal national or regional identity simply by using particular languages that demonstrate a desire for association: a visitor passing through Barcelona’s Prat airport will see signs in Catalan as well as Spanish and English. The ability to read or recognise the signs will depend on how far this visitor is aware of and subscribes to ‘Catalanity’, but for those who do to any degree this non-place becomes a place in Augé’s terms, even if that recognition only applies to an association of language with place without necessarily being able to understand the former. It can even work negatively: the visitor who disapproves of the efforts to protect Catalan and believes that Spanish is being marginalised is still expressing a personal conception of Catalonia and its relation to Spain. We shall see more about how these conflicting visions

of Spain can still be thought of as dreams of presence – a desire for Spain to become – in the next two chapters as we consider how the landscape offers very contrasting ideas of Spanish history. It is hard not to see Augé's theorisation as nostalgia for a past way of life where place was unaffected by the increased circulation of goods and people. He remarks that “‘Anthropological place’ is formed by individual identities, through complicities of language, local references, the unformulated rules of living know-how; non-place creates the shared identity of passengers, customers or Sunday drivers’ (ibid.: 101), and ‘The space of non-place creates neither singular identity nor relations; only solitude and similitude’ (ibid.: 103). But he ignores our impulse that Rose has rightly identified, to *want* to make place out of non-place, to give it meaning. As Marcus Doel has observed, ‘Place and placelessness are no longer opposed, as the humanistic geographers believed. Hereinafter, a place is both NowHere and NoWhere ... Placement, like spacing, happens on a Möbius strip’ (Doel 2000: 124).

Alternatively some theorists subdivide the concept of space, and here we arrive at the seminal theorisation of Henri Lefebvre, who proposes three different types of space: spatial practice (the space we perceive), representations of space (the space we conceive of) and spaces of representation (lived space) (Lefebvre 1991: 38–9; also Soja 1996: 65). Edward Soja uses these ideas as the basis for his own definitions. Spatial practice, which Soja terms Firstspace, is what we perceive ‘straightforwardly’, it is what society works at to have us presuppose when we see a landscape, what Soja describes as ‘materialized, socially produced and empirical space ... directly sensible and open, within limits, to accurate measurement and description’ (Soja 1996: 66). Representations of space, or Soja’s Secondspace, are where the meanings of the Firstspace are conceived and produced: spaces of power and ideology, and of surveillance (ibid.: 66–7). Spaces of representation – Soja’s Thirdspace – are distinct from the previous two but also include them. Power is made manifest but for that very reason they are also counterspaces that resist the prevailing ideology (ibid.: 67–8). Both theorisations are bound up with ideas of power, and that incorporates state power as regards the national space: ‘state power endures only by virtue of violence directed towards a space’ (Lefebvre 1991: 280). One more example of splitting definitions of space comes with the smooth and striated spaces of Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari in *A Thousand Plateaus*. Striated spaces are those where the state has sway: they are controlled, mapped and organised spaces. Smooth spaces are the interstices between striated, organised spaces, interstices which the state targets for striation: ‘One of the fundamental tasks of the State is to striate the space over which it reigns, or to utilize smooth spaces as a means of communication in the service of striated space’ (Deleuze and Guattari 1988: 385). Deleuze and Guattari further define smooth spaces as nomad space while striated is sedentary (reminiscent of de

Certeau's distinction between space and place discussed above). The two sorts of spaces can in fact mix and converge, translate into each other (ibid.: 474).

These concepts all divide space in terms of power over it, and in consequence some spaces are preferred over others as spaces of resistance or freedom from dominant powers and ideologies. In what follows in subsequent chapters, power is hardly irrelevant: in particular, the conflict between the Spanish state and Basque nationalists over whether or not the Basque space forms part of Spain invokes these negative senses of power as state control. These concepts do not, moreover, preclude the fluidity of power across these spaces. As Cara Aitchison, Nicola E. MacLeod and Stephen J. Shaw observe, 'If social and cultural geographies teach us anything ... it is that power can be viewed as contested and fluid. The spatial representation and manifestation of power can change over time, be disrupted across space, and even transgressed within the same space or in the betweenness of space' (Aitchison, MacLeod and Shaw 2000: 24). However, these concepts of power do not fit neatly on to Rose and Wylie's frameworks that I intend to use here. Power is certainly bound up with the issues that they mention – desire becoming but never fully being, the ghosting of absence – and will certainly feature in the subsequent cases I discuss; but desire for association, the desire to bridge the gap between the subject and the object of commitment, a desire that nonetheless acknowledges the distance – these issues are not simply about power but also about other hopes, plans and emotions, the different ways in which subjects use landscape to invoke their own definition of the term 'Spain'.

The Spanish case

James W. Fernandez attempts to define space and place specifically in terms of the Iberian peninsula: space becomes 'any bounded and self-contained subject of thought, such as a book, or a geophysical part of the world, such as the Iberian Peninsula, which is itself subject to geometric dimensioning (Fernandez 2008: 271), the peninsula here meaning Spain but also Portugal. He continues,

A place is more than that! It is a space that is culturally constructed and invested with particular meaning in more than a diagrammatic or collocational sense. The Iberian Peninsula, a space, for example, can be constructed, as it is by some, as a bridge to the North African world and Islamic Culture. Spanish Culture, hence, is seen as a mediating culture between conflicting civilizations. Or it can be constructed by others, as it is by the EU, as a farthest outpost of European civilization and a bulwark of defense against African and Islamic incursion and emigration into Europe! There are, of course, various intermediate cultural constructions of any space. (Fernandez 2008: 272)

Fernandez clearly valorises place above space because for him places are that which are both framed by and which carry cultural resonance. Space on these

terms is culture free. This, however, neglects the notion of space as bounded and self-contained – who or what placed those boundaries? In the case of Spain many of its boundaries are impelled by physical geographical features, but the boundary of Spain and Portugal has not always been so fixed. His definition of place likewise skates over some of the more negative views of Spain as primitive other as seen from outside, as we shall see in Chapter 8. Spain's noble purpose, on the other hand – the use of the word 'civilisation' is double-edged – is not coterminous with but nonetheless carries resonances of the unified Francoist Spain dreaming of the recuperation of its empire and standing firm against Communism.

Fernandez's definitions, while not drawn on further in this book, nonetheless demonstrate an occasion when Spain – or Iberia – is defined in cultural geographical terms. Fernandez writes from the perspective of cultural anthropology: the survey by Sharon Roseman and Shawn S. Parkhurst (2008) concerning Spain and Portugal as foci for cultural anthropological work demonstrates a rich tradition of discussing Spain in terms of space and place (however defined). But if cultural anthropology takes an interest, Anglo-American cultural geography rarely does, beyond Spain's intermittent appearance in (unsurprisingly) tourism studies. Lacking either the picturesque landscapes or the industrial history of, for example, Great Britain, Germany or the United States, while also having fallen by the wayside as a long spent superpower, seen for many years as underdeveloped in comparison to other Western European countries, neglected for years as an embarrassment in democratic Europe during the Franco years, outside the loop of twentieth-century history because it did not participate in the two World Wars, possessing a lengthy literary and artistic tradition that has nonetheless not been widely known beyond Spain – all these would be reasons why cultural geography, as part of the wider move towards cultural studies, has neglected Spain. Within Spain itself, cultural geography has not as yet taken root: a wider interest in social geography is intermittent, because it has never, as Maria Dolores García-Ramón, Abel Albet and Perla Zusman observe, 'been understood as a potential driver of epistemological change in human geography, re-orientating human geography's underpinnings as with the cultural turn in Anglo-American geography' (García-Ramón, Albet and Zusman 2003: 419). More specifically, cultural geography is conspicuous by its absence: 'not a single reflection or elegy has been devoted' to it (*ibid.*). Since these authors wrote their survey, a few individual articles are beginning to emerge: Agustín Gámir Orueta and Carlos Manuel Valdés, for example, offer an analysis on cinematic space but refer to Spanish films only rarely (Gámir Orueta and Manuel Valdés 2007). It is nastily tempting to see cultural anthropology as to some extent perpetuating the notion of Spain as still the primitive other to be observed, while landscape studies for its part has simply not seen the Spanish landscape as worth looking

at (or possessing, given some of the early stances in landscapes studies of the geographer as masterful observer and, by implication, possessor). Such observations are overly reductive but they have some small resonance in the presence of Spain as an object of study in one field and its absence in the other: the full explanation of this situation must necessarily be more complex and I do not attempt it here. But I refer once again to Rose's notion of the desire to associate which includes the desire of academic association, as well as Wylie's landscape (and space and place) being that with which we see. It is unsurprising that I as a Hispanist select Spain as my field of study. But its presence or absence in other fields does conjure up questions as to when, how and why cultural anthropologists and geographers use space and place to see.

Although Spanish landscape, space and place have not resonated in the field of cultural geography to anything like the same extent as Anglo-American landscapes, Spain does have a landscape tradition of the land as hard and unforgiving, where its natural world is the red one of tooth and claw. The stark, empty landscapes of the Black Paintings of Goya did much to foster this idea, and it has been repeated in, for example, Federico García Lorca's Andalusia of *Bodas de sangre* (Blood Wedding, 1933), where the inhabitants struggle to grow anything, the dry land of Vicente Blasco Ibáñez's *La barraca* (The Hovel, 1898), where the inhabitants fight over the scarce resource of water, or Buñuel's *Las Hurdes: tierra sin pan* (Land Without Bread, 1933). If, as Denis Cosgrove argues (Cosgrove 1998), landscape is linked to economic exploitation, this may explain why Spain is not readily associated with a landscape tradition in the way that Italy, Great Britain, the Netherlands and Germany are. The more barren landscapes did not invite themselves to visual representation as Cosgrove posits it. A tradition of deliberate landscaping was also for the most part wanting (Kamen 2008: 219). Landscape photography as an indigenous practice (as opposed to a form of pictorial colonialism) did not establish itself until the late nineteenth century at the very earliest (Fontanella 2005: 174), but to some extent cinema in the twentieth century has helped Spain catch up in representing its geography – or, at least, selected elements of this geography – to itself. What these spaces and places consisted of over the years would, as Marvin D'Lugo observes, shift in both meaning and emphasis according to developments in Spanish communities (D'Lugo 2010: 128). For example, the positive emphasis accorded to the countryside in the early Francoist period, according to Jesús González Requena (González Requena 1988: 19–20), shifted to an emphasis on provincial towns (ibid.: 23) as the ideological preference for the countryside on the part of Franco eroded in the face of improved communications that reduced distances between town and country as well as the need to open up to outside influences in terms of both politics and economics. Later, as an industrial drive took hold (which encouraged many workers to move from

the country to the city), films from the early 70s suggest a complex interrelation between city and country (ibid.: 24).

Katherine Kovács asserts that certain Spanish landscapes and locations 'occupy a privileged position in the cinematic narrative, rivalling, and sometimes even surpassing, character and plot in importance' (Kovács 1991: 17). When she argues, however, that this arises because of the importance of Spanish geography in shaping its history, her argument neglects the question of why a visual tradition of landscape, space and place did not develop to the same degree as in other countries. In terms of literature, the *costumbrismo* genre developed in the nineteenth century, and its emphasis on rural settings and customs continued to some extent into the twentieth century in some social realist novels after the Civil War. Of the spaces and places that comprise Spanish terrain, the barren plains of Castile have come to occupy a prominent role in cultural representations, particularly when nineteenth-century writers came to perceive Castile as 'an expression of the soul of Spain' (Kamen 2008: 220; see also Kovács 1991: 19). The plain or *meseta* is explicitly the focus of Kovács' article, as the title 'The Plain in Spain' punningly tells us. Such an emphasis is quite reasonable given her analysis of key films before and during the dictatorship. As Tom Whittaker contends, 'this iconic landscape has emerged as the timeless, spiritual center of the nation, a marker of authentic Spanishness' (Whittaker 2010). However, as Kovács notes, in the democratic era film-makers began to film other spaces: she focuses only on woodland, however, and her discussion links back to the period of the war and dictatorship through the depiction of resistance to Franco's regime in *Furtivos* (Poachers; José Luis Borau, 1975) and *El corazón del bosque* (Heart of the Forest; Manuel Gutiérrez Aragón, 1979) (Kovács 1991: 34–41). She does not comment on the increasing importance of urban space in Spanish cinema and literature, in particular through the oeuvre of Pedro Almodóvar, deriving from the urban-based *movida* culture of the early 1980s (sadly Kovács did not live to see Almodóvar's rise to international prominence above all other Spanish directors) and the *novela negra* as an expression of disenchantment (*desencanto*) after the initial high expectations upon the return to democracy. Neglected, too, is what I perceive to be an emphasis on coastal and border regions, while the absence of, for example, and in particular, the Basque rural tradition, suggests the persistence of the conflation of Spain with a timeless Castile, even as, as Fernandez observes, we have witnessed for some time now 'a panorama of displacements as the developing autonomous governments seek to separate their identity from the national identity and centrality of Madrid by focusing on their own place in the peninsula, thus reconstructing the realities of their own cultures and polities' (Fernandez 2008: 286). Other writers are now beginning to address some of these lacunae. Whittaker (2011) observes the shift of focus in film of the 70s to the landscapes of northern Spain

and more specifically the Basque Country, Nathan Richardson (2002) has also addressed rural landscapes in texts from the latter half of the twentieth century, while Sally Faulkner has written of the country–city divide in film adaptations of Spanish novels (Faulkner 2004: chap. 3). Paul Julian Smith took up spatial theories – in particular those of Lefebvre – to discuss both intellectual and social spaces within the Basque Country and the cities of Spain (Smith 2000: 75–132), while specific Iberian cities have also been the recent focus of critical attention (particularly in Resina 2001).

So what will this book cover? As I mentioned above, this book intends not to be comprehensive in its coverage of Spanish spaces, but to select case studies which seem to me particularly redolent of Rose's desire for association. These desires, in each case, manifest themselves differently through the landscape and they 'see' Spain in different ways. They also cohere around specific political and cultural concerns that have become prominent in contemporary Spain. Chapters 2 and 3, for example, coalesce around the question of memory that has recently taken on heightened political overtones in Spain with the passing in 2007 of the *Ley de memoria histórica* or Law of Historical Memory that aimed to help preserve the memories of those who were the losers in the Spanish Civil War. Chapter 2 considers the use of national landscapes to visualise a national and local call to care within a transnational product – Guillermo del Toro's highly successful *El laberinto del fauno* (Pan's Labyrinth, 2006) and his earlier film *El espinazo del diablo* (The Devil's Backbone, 2001). *El laberinto* and *El espinazo* offer landscapes of fantasy and horror generic to international and particularly Hollywood cinema, yet they simultaneously offer an opportunity to invoke a call to care through the desire to rewrite history as if the losers of the Spanish Civil War had in fact been the winners. A Spain with such a history can never in fact 'be', but it can in one sense become through the call to care for a Spain that ought to have been otherwise. A similar process can ironically be seen through those who originally won the Civil War, as I elucidate through the work of the maverick writer Gonzalo Torrente Ballester, who had a noted if problematic relationship with the Franco regime once the Civil War was won. The ludic and malleable landscapes which provide the setting for his novels also invoke a Spain that could be otherwise fashioned differently. In an era which now sees the right-wing legacy of the War and the subsequent dictatorship as unsurprisingly tainted, Torrente Ballester's landscapes demonstrate a wish that Spain could be constantly refashioned to suit the desires of the subject, but that such wishful thinking still has a tie to a 'real' Spain – the landscapes of Torrente Ballester's home region of Galicia.

Galicia, as one of Spain's 'historical nationalities', with an autonomous government and its own language and culture, has its own awkward and potentially conflictive position as regards Spain: currently politically within Spain's

territorial borders but on some level claiming a distinction from Spain. If the question inevitably arises as to how a desire to associate with Spain can coincide with a desire to be distinct from it, how much more so in the case of the Basque Country, the subject of Chapter 4. In the cases of the autonomous communities we see a call to care for something other than Spain, but Spain is still invoked in this process and is given varying meanings in so doing: in addition, it is conjured up in the distancing and gap of Wylie's geography of love. Love, here, given the ongoing hostility and suspicion in some sectors of both Spain and the Basque Country, seems an anachronistic term at best: nonetheless, through the use of space and place to express discomfort with, distance from and denial of uncomfortable political and personal realities, Spain traces itself uncannily across the Basque landscape as an implicit other that must always be taken into account in the Basque Country. On the other hand, Spain itself may also deny uncomfortable realities about Basque history that also trace themselves across the landscape; and thus Spain and the Basque Country are locked in an uncomfortable and uncanny embrace.

Chapters 5 and 6 consider different aspects of another way in which the nation is constantly coming into being but never fully forms itself: the law and the breaking of that law. National law powerfully implies a nation that lies behind it; but the law also inevitably incorporates the possibility that laws can be broken, through criminal activity. Spain thus functions as a problematised trace in crime thrillers: the nation is constantly being remade as the law is continually and simultaneously broken and restored. In Chapter 5, I consider how the landscape reveals the constant oscillation between two forms of desire for association expressed through the breaking and restoring of the law. The restoration of law and order clearly shows a call to care in the re-establishment of the nation as conceived by law; but criminal activity shows a more malign form of a call to care by rendering Spain as vulnerable and thus open to exploitation for the subject's own criminal desires such as illegal gain. Chapter 6 continues with the theme of crime but focuses more closely on a specific group of people who take it upon themselves to restore order: female detectives. With this chapter we move towards a consideration of cityscapes through which the women move; and these landscapes render concrete the claim of women to subjectivity through detection: their own desire for association comes through their claiming of this subjectivity.

Women are also the focus of Chapter 7, on tourism. Much of cultural geography has written about tourism from the point of view of the tourist – quintessentially, for instance, in the case of John Urry's tourist gaze (Urry 2002). This chapter, however, examines the local population as subjects rather than objects of the tourist gaze, as they juggle the tensions between the beach as the site of Spanish tourism *par excellence* and the hinterland that forms their home

space. These spaces, through the characters' movement within and between them, come to negotiate the complex desires to render Spain precisely as home space; yet Spain can never come fully into being as home space precisely because of the functioning of these spaces as places of tourism. The gendered aspect of these characters' occupation of those spaces also brings into play the various functions of women as objects of the tourist gaze and the attempts of these women to turn this into subjectivity whereby they attempt to realise their own desires. Chapter 8 considers a different aspect of Spain as seen from both inside and outside, that of immigration. The desire for association expressed through the landscape here revolves around an association that excludes, where the nation is defined by who belongs to it and who does not; and such a desire obviously carries malign possibilities depending on how subjects wish to define their Spain. The immigration considered in this chapter is specifically that of immigration from Africa, which brings into play Spain's uneasy position as a frontier between Europe and Africa: as some Spanish subjects desire to reinforce Spain's Europeanness by excluding those from Africa, 'Spain' also carries the trace of being seen itself as virtually a part of Africa, a more primitive place distinct from civilised European values (particularly those of the French).

As Doreen Massey has posited,

Instead ... of thinking of places as areas with boundaries around, they can be imagined as articulated moments in networks of social relations and understandings, but where a large proportion of those relations, experiences and understandings are constructed on a far larger scale than what we happen to define for that moment as the place itself, whether that be a street, or a region, or even a continent. (Massey 1994: 154)

Spain may be thought of as a series of articulated moments like these. Since these moments continue to come into being so Spain is a continuous, never to be completed process that is nonetheless recognisable as something called Spain.

Note

- 1 I am grateful to Dr Ian Biddle for his helpful suggestions on this point.

CHAPTER TWO

Memory: landscapes of the past in Guillermo del Toro's Spanish films

This and the next chapter emphasise one of the key contemporary political and cultural issues in Spain today, that of the recuperation of memories of the Spanish Civil War and its aftermath. Spain's transition from dictatorship to democracy in the late 70s and early 80s was assumed to be based on a *pacto de olvido* (pact of forgetting) that did not call to account those who played a leading role in the previous Franco regime. In particular, those on Franco's side who committed atrocities against their opponents benefited from an implicit amnesty for their crimes. However, as democracy consolidated itself, more explicit moves were made to remember those who suffered as a result of being on the losing side in the War. In particular, relatives of soldiers and political prisoners who died during the War or its immediate aftermath began to call for the remains of these people to be located and given formal burial. This often entailed uncomfortable acknowledgement of those who were responsible for shooting and giving indiscriminate burial to political prisoners, and resistance began to build against the attempts to recuperate the bodies of family members. Then in 2007 the Zapatero government passed the *Ley de memoria histórica* that stipulated the cooperation of local and regional governments and councils with the efforts of relatives to track down buried victims, making available records and documents that some governing bodies had hitherto tried to keep hidden. Furthermore, it prohibited any form of memorialisation that lauded Franco, including the banning of Francoist rallies at the dictator's grave at el Valle de los Caídos, although this has not stopped the controversy over the recuperation of memory.

Long before this, however, literature and film had contributed to recuperating not simply the memories but the lived experience of the losers under the Civil War, albeit allegorically through now classic Spanish films such as *La caza* (The Hunt; Carlos Saura, 1966) and *El espíritu de la colmena* (The Spirit of the Beehive; Víctor Erice, 1973). Films set during the War and the dictatorship continued to appear during the 80s and 90s, many of them literary adaptations: for example, *Si te dicen que caí* (If They Tell You That I Fell; Vicente

Aranda, 1989), *Tu nombre envenena mis sueños* (Your Name Poisons My Dreams; Pilar Miró, 1996), *La lengua de las mariposas* (Butterfly's Tongue; José Luis Cuerda, 1999), *Libertarias* (Freedom Fighters; Vicente Aranda, 1996). Some later books and novels notably foregrounded the process of recuperation of memories of this earlier time, such as Javier Cercas' novel *Soldados de Salamina* (Soldiers of Salamis, 2001) and its cinematic adaptation by David Trueba (2003). Academics have duly followed with analysis of such films in their Civil War context. More recently, however, they have also joined in the debate about the recuperation of memory, and examined the rationales and methodologies that have previously been used to conduct investigation into how Spain's past is remembered culturally. Included in this is a critique of how academics, particularly in countries outside of Spain and thus at one remove from the political context in which recuperation is being carried out (or not), conduct their analysis of the relevant cinema and literature. Jo Labanyi notes her discomfort with textual analysis of representations of the war that pay little or no heed to public debate that impacts on production and reception (Labanyi 2008: 120). I agree that more nuancing is required concerning the intricate imbrications between text and context, although I am concerned at the opposite danger into which critics sometimes also fall, of seeing the text merely as a veneer for Spanish history to the extent that they do not 'see' the text itself, so eager are they to disinter the history beneath. However, recuperation does not simply go on at the national level: while the writings of academics are themselves part of this exercise, if a problematic one, other texts point to attempts to recall and negotiate this memory from beyond Spain. This is a 'desire of association' for Spain in which both locals and foreigners are caught up in Rose's process of becoming. As we saw in the previous chapter, this call to care may arise from, and for, all manner of reasons: academic advancement is certainly one, but so, in the case of film, at least, is the desire to tell a story that resonates both within and across national borders while perhaps taking advantage of good co-production arrangements. In this chapter, I do not address Labanyi's concerns directly: in what follows one of my underlying concerns in considering the desire for association with recuperating Civil War memories is quite simply the possibility of multiple standpoints whereby subjects might invoke Spain through a consideration of the landscape. This does entail consideration of potential international reception and interpretations as well as local ones, as well as the fact that the 'author' of the texts in question is not himself Spanish. But more particularly the chapter opens up to one of the widest considerations of how subjects – and audiences – might invoke Spain as a dream of presence, a country and its forgotten history that is forever in the process of becoming, a history in process of recall but which can never be fully remembered. And this process of invocation of a specific country's history, through its geography,

does not end at Spain's borders but overlaps with other processes of memory, that further facilitate various standpoints from which a subject might desire to invoke Spain as a term with historical resonance. These desires do not have to be benign: they include the possibilities of mis-remembering and distorting history, possibilities that will certainly have something to do with the texts in question.

The most mainstream of recent films that hark back to the Civil War and its aftermath are two films by Mexican director Guillermo del Toro, *El espinazo del diablo* (The Devil's Backbone, 2001) and *El laberinto del fauno* (Pan's Labyrinth, 2006): while the former proved a cult art house success, the latter got wide international attention and was considered a shoo-in for the Oscar for best foreign film, though in the event it lost out to *Das Leben der Anderen* (The Lives of Others; Florian Henckel von Donnersmarck, 2006). *El espinazo* is set during the time of the Spanish Civil War, but it is not ostensibly about the war, and the film aims in part at the horror genre. *El laberinto*, on the other hand, is set during the time of *maquis* resistance to Franco's regime in the 1940s: it uses for one of its story threads a style of fantasy adventure that was proving popular in the wake of Peter Jackson's adaptation of *The Lord of the Rings*, to the extent that it came as no huge surprise to find the director of *El laberinto* hired to direct the *Lord of the Rings* prequel *The Hobbit* (though del Toro has subsequently withdrawn from the project). What is more surprising, perhaps, is that *El espinazo* and *El laberinto*, with their specifically Spanish background, were directed by a Mexican. In terms of setting throughout his filmography, del Toro has proved transnational: while his first film *Cronos* (1992) was set in Mexico City, his English-language films – *Mimic* (1997), *Blade II* (2002), *Hellboy* (2004) and *Hellboy II: The Golden Army* (2008) – have ranged around in terms of location, moving from New York City to Europe to Ireland and so on. His two films set in Spain, however, seem in one sense rooted in time, demonstrating a historical fixity that contrasts sharply with all his films except perhaps *Hellboy* (where one sequence is set during the Second World War). Yet, for all their apparent fixity of time, place – landscape – is generic and unidentifiable.

The link between landscape and memory has become well established in cultural geography and beyond: as Don Mitchell notes, 'the strongest focus of landscape research in the past few years [is] landscape as a concretization and maker of memory' (Mitchell 2003: 790). Pierre Nora's 'lieux de mémoire' project, a record in seven volumes, has become widely known (and widely used and critiqued: see Legg 2005): its purpose was to explore how different sites encapsulated memories – specifically, French memories of France and its history. Stephen Legg observes that for Nora modern media have now become the place where collective memory lies (ibid.: 484) and have 'replaced the state in being able to define a national past' (ibid.: 490). The move to media, of which

film would be one example, as a guardian and gatekeeper of memory is not a positive one in Nora's terms, steeped as his project is in a nostalgic concept of the nation as a unitary entity which does not allow for alternative memories, counter memories and different conceptualisations of the nation. The devalorisation of mass media as a vehicle for perpetuating memories tends to underscore the importance of bodily presence and experience of concrete sites of memory. Yet this neglects the possibility of being elsewhere and still remembering. Remembering implies a distance from events not dissimilar to the gap in Wylie's geographies of love mentioned in the previous chapter, a theorisation derived in the first instance by Wylie from meanings to be extracted from memorial benches, personal memorials to individuals in which a collective can nonetheless come to share (Wylie 2009). Simon Schama likewise considers, as an act of love, the experience of landscape as a discovery of memory: he describes his project as 'a way of rediscovering what we already have, but which somehow eludes our recognition and appreciation. Instead of being yet another explanation of what we have lost, it is an exploration of what we may yet find' (Schama 1996: 14). It is also an explanation of how the past veneration of nature informs the present, though the memories that are commemorated, etched into the landscape, are not always pleasant ones, as Schama acknowledges (*ibid.*: 18): some of the memories invoked by his explorations are those of the Holocaust and atrocities of the Second World War. Schama emphasises individual agency in the construction of landscapes of memory, those who demonstrated a love – a call to care, indeed – for a particular landscape or environment and in so doing reinforced the intricate connection between landscape and memory. Schama's book is itself a lyrical celebration of such a connection. It is Wylie, however, no less lyrical himself at times, who posits absence as an integral part of remembering (Wylie 2009: 278). If Nora and Schama come to stand, however reductively, for a body of scholarship insisting on the importance of the bodily or individual subject in the nexus between landscape and memory, which I do not have the space to explore further here, then Wylie will here stand for that body of cultural geography that writes of spectral geographies, the geographies of haunting (*ibid.*: 279). Jo Labanyi has drawn on hauntology when writing on the memories of the Spanish Civil War, and the need to restore the ghosts of the past to their rightful and proper place, 'accepting the past as past' and acknowledging a history 'that allows one to live with its traces' (Labanyi 2000: 66). Wylie himself still seems to require some sort of bodily presence in his geography of absence: he argues that 'Landscape and place may commonly be matters of involvement and immersion' and his entire argument is initially drawn from his personal experience (at Mullion Cove in Cornwall). Nonetheless, his argument that landscape and memory may be thought of 'in terms of absence, distance, displacement and the *non-coincidence* of self and world'

(Wylie 2009: 279), as discussed in the previous chapter, allows us to conceive of cinematic landscapes of the Civil War as precisely this spectral geographical memory.

The play on presence and absence becomes vital in consideration of del Toro's apparently generic landscapes. The landscape of *El espinazo* is basically a flat, arid plain on which sits the children's home that is the centre of the film's action (Fig. 1). Nothing else can be seen for miles; and the hardness of the landscape is accentuated by the hard sun that bakes the ground. The home is cut off from the outside world due to the long distance needed to travel to the nearest village; and it is indeed this remoteness and hardness of the land that mitigate the happy outcome of the final confrontation at the end of the film. After the boys of the home have defeated their enemy Jacinto (Eduardo Noriega) – the home's caretaker and himself once an inmate of the home as a child – they are now alone, with no adult left to protect them. Our last shot of them is as they leave the home to set out to the village, making their way as best they can (some are wounded) into the dusty plain, the first faltering steps to what must be a long trek to the village. We are uncertain as to whether they will survive this journey. Even if they do, their fate as sons of Republicans will be uncertain in the village, where Dr Casares (Federico Luppi) earlier observed Republican prisoners being shot. On this reading, the landscape figures the hostility to the boys of a Spain fast being taken over by right-wing forces.

In *El laberinto* we have a landscape that offers at first glance a total and lush contrast: a verdant forest where the trees are so tall that the sky above is barely visible, rarely appearing in shot (as opposed to the skyline of *El espinazo* that dwarfs the orphanage). On the one hand, the thick forest can be perceived as



Figure 1 The orphanage and plain in *El espinazo del diablo*

claustrophobic, giving a sense of being trapped, that certainly chimes with the difficult situations of the three female characters Ofelia (Ivana Baquero), Carmen (Ariadna Gil) and Mercedes (Maribel Verdú), oppressed by the control of Vidal (Sergi López) and unable to escape it. On the other hand, the trees also protect, allowing the *maquis* to carry out their operations of resistance and eventually defeat the fascist forces led by Vidal. It is furthermore a landscape of enchantment as far as the protagonist Ofelia is concerned, not least with the labyrinth of the film's title, as well as the underground cave beneath the large tree. But it shares with the landscape of *El espinazo* a sense of isolation, a lack of access to the outside world. Historical events both do and do not impinge on the landscapes of del Toro's Spanish films. In both films events play out in microcosm the historical events of the Spanish Civil War and afterwards, although del Toro does play around with our notion of who the eventual victors are, a point to which I will return. Yet both landscapes serve to cut the characters off from the wider Spanish context.

The isolation and lack of specificity about these landscapes serve to de-nationalise and internationalise them, which coincides with Antonio Lázaro-Reboll's discussion of *El espinazo* in terms of transnational reception. According to Lázaro-Reboll, the original setting for this film was to be Mexico, and only later did the setting shift to Spain and the Civil War (Lázaro-Reboll 2007: 42), implying that although later the Civil War setting might prove to be a better fit than anything envisaged in Mexico, the bare bones of the story would adapt to contexts beyond the national specificity of the director (and writer) himself. The fuzziness of the film's locations matches that of del Toro himself. Lázaro-Reboll comments: 'del Toro's cinema not only refuses to be categorized as national cinema, but is also refused the status of national cinema by the Academia Mexicana and by the critical establishment, on the grounds that it does not respond to certain perceptions of Mexicanness' (ibid.: 44). Isabel Santaolalla takes a slightly different approach in positing *El espinazo* as 'una reescritura desde una perspectiva distanciada e internacional, pero esencialmente hispanoamericana, del gran conflicto que enfrentó a los españoles, colocando al fantasma postcolonial en el centro de la historia, concediéndole un papel activo y exigiendo que éste sea recordado y reconocido' (a rewriting, from a distanced and international perspective, but essentially Hispano-American, of the great conflict which Spaniards faced, placing the ghost of postcolonialism in the centre of the story, giving it an active role and insisting that it be remembered and acknowledged; Santaolalla 2005: 225). The Hispanic American ghost takes the form of Argentinian actor Federico Luppi as Casares, who becomes 'un observador forastero' (an outside observer; ibid.: 223) of the specifically Spanish events. Casares literally becomes a ghost, tacitly assisting the boys in their conquest of Jacinto and, as we discover at the end

of the film, recounting events, since the beginning and the end are framed by what proves to be his voice musing on what it means to be a ghost. Spain's colonial past was itself a factor in the Civil War: Franco was attempting at least to recover the glory of Spain's imperial past of which Latin America was its jewel in the crown; while the last efforts to hold on to colonial possessions in Latin America and North Africa provoked class conflict and ideological rifts to open wider in Spain, and these in turn fuelled the move towards civil war. A similar position to a lesser extent might be argued for *El laberinto* given that Luppi plays a cameo role as the king who reigns over the lost kingdom which Ofelia is trying to re-enter through her magical quest: the king does indeed welcome her back to her rightful place as princess of his kingdom, but it is at the cost of her life in the 'real' Spain. Luppi gives the opening voice-over that talks of the magic kingdom, and the closing dialogue in which he speaks of the way in which the Spanish landscape still carries the memory of Ofelia. Not only does the king frame events as Casares does, but he rules over a kingdom that appears connected in some way to Spain but also separate from it, a structure that could if we wished be calqued on to the relationship between Spain and Latin America (and we should not forget the fact that many who opposed Franco were forced to go into exile, often to Latin America, their lives in Spain abandoned for new lives in new lands – lives often less enchanted than Ofelia's, it must be acknowledged). As Casares stands guard over the territory of the children's home (to an accompaniment of Carlos Gardel's tangos), so the king rules over the 'lost' kingdom.

We could perhaps argue that the involvement of both Luppi and del Toro himself in these texts suggests a dislocated desire for association, a call to care that acknowledges both the association of Spain with Latin America and the distance and dislocation of it (to say nothing of its difficulties: the association of Latin America with its former colonial master has not always, or ever, been an equal one). Describing the relationship as 'love' or 'care' might seem strange given Spain as oppressor, but a desire for association is more neutral: it invokes Spain as constantly becoming, acknowledging its colonial past and post-colonial present but with links to its former colony in constant associative flux. However, other desires of association can also be posited. If, as Lázaro-Reboll suggests, del Toro himself presents us with an indeterminacy as to his status as specifically Mexican director, then both his films arguably share in an indeterminacy of Spanishness. Annabel Martín cites Pedro Almodóvar as an example of a productive dialogue between global and local as he converts Hollywood melodrama to local specificities (Martín 2005: 42): perhaps we can argue these films the other way around to say that del Toro converts local specificities to a globalised form. Certainly these films coincide with a crisis of confidence in the production of specifically Spanish cinema, as Román Gubern posits: 'lo que

domina es un tipo de cine apátrida, que más que inspirarse en la realidad del país, se inspira en los modelos que llegan de Hollywood, París o Londres. Son sobre todo modelos de género' (what we mostly get is a sort of deracinated cinema which takes its inspiration from models coming from Hollywood, Paris or London, rather than from the reality of Spain. They are genre templates before anything else: quoted in Steiner 2007: 312). Gubern's opposition of Spanish cinema and *patria* – the notion of Spain as fatherland, which also had its part to play in Civil War ideology – is intriguing for us here: the implication is that by resorting to horror and fantasy, both well-established international genres, del Toro is somehow deracinating the specifically Spanish historical backdrop to these films. It is also intriguing, however, that genre cinema is, according to Gubern, antithetical to national cinema. This is a position with which I would not agree at all: it is not only, as I will argue in this and other chapters, that Spanish traces can still be found in an apparently de-nationalised landscape, but that it leaves untouched the question of what a specifically Spanish film actually consists of. Gubern's comments reflect a wider tendency among Spanish critics to disparage Spanish attempts at genre cinema. On the other hand, it could be argued that genre – and genre here would appear to be horror, fantasy, film noir, thrillers and the like (as opposed to comedy and *cine social*, which are more easily recognised as specifically Spanish) – opens Spain and its history to an outside gaze more than most film formats. This is a call to care that invokes Spain to those outside Spain as well as inside: although this invocation may recall those of Lerner and Flanders in the previous chapter, in that genre entertainment rather than the history of a specific country might lie at the root of this desire for association, the memory of Spain's past is invoked nonetheless. Such a move, in which genre takes precedence over memory, is perceived negatively by some critics. Ulrich Winter, for instance, comments

Es importante señalar ... que la reciente fase reconciliadora coincide con una creciente mercantilización de la literatura y de la conmemoración en general. Los límites entre reconciliación y nostalgia, entre estética, política de la memoria y estrategia de *marketing* se desdibujan a medida que la conmemoración se convierte en un fenómeno de interés general. (Winter 2006: 12)

It is important to point out ... that the recent phase of reconciliation coincides with an increasing commercialisation of literature and of commemoration in general. The limits between reconciliation and nostalgia, between aesthetics, the politics of memory and marketing strategies become blurred to the extent that commemoration becomes a phenomenon of general interest.

Winter goes on to quote the popular Spanish television series *Cuéntame cómo pasó* (Tell Me How it Happened) as an example of the banal recuperation of memory (including the consumption of Coca-Cola). Naomi Greene also points to the dangers of the recuperation of memory via cinema:

just as cinema lends itself to the expression of dreams, so, too, is it a powerful medium for the transmission of historical and political myths that, frequently, soften or obscure the most brutal or unpalatable of historical truths even as they give rise to compelling visions of the national past. (Greene 1999: 6)

Greene's comments add a useful note of caution that will become very pertinent when it comes to considering the ending of *El laberinto*, which I shall do below. However, claims to the banality or simplification of recuperated history through the demands of cinematic genre cannot gloss over the need of both history and memory for narrative, as Labanyi observes: 'The study of the past can never, however scrupulous it is in its use of documentary sources, get beyond narrative constructions of the past to reach a realm of pure factuality' (Labanyi 2008: 121). Collective memory, she argues, is not an actual act of remembering, but the construction of social frameworks and narrative structures which both facilitate and guide individual acts of remembrance (ibid.). These frameworks and structures are highly likely to include elements from elsewhere in any case: with the use of genre cinema elements of narrative structure are inevitably shared across national boundaries but that is not in their disfavour necessarily. It increases the scope of structures to incorporate different forms of memory and different ways of perceiving and recounting it: and while banality and simplification are risks, they are not overcome simply by eschewing commercial media forms such as del Toro's films. The generic landscapes of our two films here may coincide with the internationalisation of Spanish film through genre, but they also demonstrate how memories tied to specific places can still be invoked even when the place of the film is not in itself specific. Indeed, the landscapes of *El espinazo* and *El laberinto* offer an imbrication between personal and genre-specific histories derived from horror and fantasy and a wider historical background within which Spanish history takes place. Personal memories and stories are, after all, never *just* about national history.

But even if the international and thus deracinated stance posited by Lázaro-Reboll and Santaolalla risks us understanding the Civil War at one remove (thus a distance in place as well as time), that history is nonetheless specific and local as well as global, and as such it resonates with meaning. Here I find the ideas of Stuart Hall helpful. In an interview with Kuan-Sing Chen, Hall remarks that

globalization must never be read as a simple process of cultural homogenization; it is always an articulation of the local, of the specific, and the global. Therefore, there will always be specificities – of voices, of positioning, of identity, of cultural traditions, of histories, and these are the conditions of enunciation which enable us to speak. We speak with distinctive voices; but we speak within the logic of a cultural-global, which opens a conversation between us, which would not have been possible otherwise. (Chen 1996: 407)

Hall is talking here of the history of cultural studies, and in his interview he returns time and again to the idea of translation, the use and reinterpretation of cultural studies in local terms. He understands translation in this sense as ‘a continuous process of re-articulation and re-contextualization, without any notion of a primary origin’ (Chen 1996: 393). Now, the question of a primary origin has its difficulties here, because arguably there is one (a specific historical event and its aftermath, occurring in a specific place, as opposed to a set of theoretical concepts): nonetheless, Hall’s ideas suggest to me a way of understanding the process of re-presenting stories deriving from the Civil War at a distance while still allowing for local interpretations and recuperations. A similar idea comes from Jeff Menne in his article on contemporary Mexican cinema: drawing on Appadurai, Menne argues that ‘The national ... might serve as the arrayed resources of heterogeneity, or the archives for imagination’ (Menne 2007: 87). While Menne only mentions del Toro in passing in his article, and while Spanish history may not be exactly what Menne had in mind, nonetheless memories of the Civil War and afterwards can become a resource on to which other meanings may be grafted. Thus genre may talk to us in globalised terms but carry within it local voices and identities – and memories; or, alternatively, local histories offer meanings and narrative structures beyond the locality. There are traces of specifically Spanish memories as a version of Spanish history plays itself out across the landscape – and yet this history has itself been re-internationalised to speak to a global as well as a local audience. As Lázaro-Reboll observes that ‘Plot, story and characterization contribute to a transnational comprehension of the historical background for audiences, and lend themselves to a universal symbolic reading’ (Lázaro-Reboll 2007: 42), so both *El espinazo*, about which Lázaro-Reboll is writing, and its successor *El laberinto* can offer a localised and globalised potential to recuperate memory. Both forms, I would further argue, are not neatly distinct, and this I will explore in my discussion below of how both films use their landscapes. Lázaro-Reboll comments that ‘Through the creative strategies deployed in his first “Spanish” film, the Mexican director consciously politicizes his intervention in modern Spanish culture engaging with memories and cultural fragments that have been erased from official homogenic discourses on contemporary democratic Spain’ (ibid.: 50). Thus, far from the simple position of distance that *El espinazo* and its companion film purportedly offer, they aid reflecting and refraction of those memories back at a Spanish audience, who in turn reinterpret those memories through frameworks that originated outside, in terms of genre films (and indeed through landscape motifs that infer both Spanish and international cultural texts). And we should not forget that the Spanish audience is in turn multifaceted and will include younger generations who did not experience the conflict directly but who may draw on interpretative frameworks that come

from outside, because these, rather than a more direct understanding of their own history, may be the most obvious frameworks for interpretation, precisely since much of this history has been suppressed for so long.

When Labanyi, then, talks of her wariness as regards critical interpretations that pay no heed to public debate, as quoted above, her concern, justified as it is, leaves out the question of international reception and the internationalisation of memory that simply cannot always fully take into account the debate in the country of origin. There is an undoubted risk in del Toro's fictionalisation of historical memory, which maps perhaps a little too easily on to memories of the Second World War in which the fascists were defeated. It can allow for a sense of resolution that jars with the tense debate still ongoing within Spain about how to remember this period in their history. There is also a risk in that such internationalisation softens local traumas and thus does them a disservice (as Greene warns us above): it seems uncomfortable to think that one person's tragic memories serve as raw material for another's fantasy entertainment. But, quite apart from the fact that these are also Spanish films for Spanish consumption, del Toro reminds audiences further afield that Spain has something to remember. Outside audiences, too, participate in the act of recuperating memory. Del Toro does not act in a patronising manner to rescue memories that the Spanish themselves have struggled to recover: like the Latin American ghost of Casares he reminds us that Spanish memories, though a matter for the Spanish in the first instance, are also a concern for others. But the question arises as to how the Spanish conflict is remembered abroad, and the possibility of conflation with the Second World War, a possibility that *El laberinto* touches on in particular: while both films remind the world outside Spain that a civil war took place, the outcomes of both films in which the Right appears vanquished suggest a historical outcome that exactly reflects the outcome of the Second World War, in which the fascist Axis powers were also defeated. Del Toro's endings skate over the fact that in Spain the exact opposite occurred, and that the consequences were bloody reprisals and repression. But, as Hayden White observes, 'what is at issue here is not the facts of the matter regarding such events but the different possible meanings that such facts can be construed as bearing' (White 1996: 21), and these possible meanings pivot around Rose's call to care, a desire to see a Spain rescued from fascism that can be felt from both within and without Spain. It is a dream of presence of Spain, a Spain with a remembered history but which people wish to remember otherwise – to rewrite, as it were. As Labanyi notes, 'memory is always constructed from the vantage point of the present. To reject memory as an unreliable witness to the past is to miss the point, for what memory reveals is present-day attitudes to the past' (Labanyi 2008: 12). And included in the recuperation of history and memory is the desire to rewrite them.

All these ‘translations’, to go back to Stuart Hall’s term, are available within these two films; and who is to say what is the original? Is the original the history belonging to the Spanish, or does the original belong with del Toro and Mexico? Casares’ ghost suggests the indeterminacy of origin in more ways than one. These translations, I will now go on to argue, imprint themselves on the landscapes that del Toro uses as setting for both his films, the plain of *El espinazo* and the wood of *El laberinto*; translations that suggest a trace of Spanish specificities but also wider interpretative frameworks. The plain reminds us of a desert in a Western, the wood an unidentified forest that could come just as much from the above-mentioned *Lord of the Rings* as from a Spanish film. In some ways these landscapes function as stock settings that globally have resonance beyond Spain, and here we encounter again the international dimension encompassed by del Toro, and the filmic references that speak to film traditions well beyond Spain – the horror story, fantasy, the Western (as recognised by Santaolalla (2005: 224) in her reference to John Ford’s *The Searchers* of 1956), the Second World War movie. As already noted above, in addition, the empty plain of *El espinazo* and the woodland of *El laberinto* are both apparently disconnected from the rest of Spain: these are spaces devoid of Spanish specificity. Any possible connections to places elsewhere seem fragile, uncertain and vulnerable: while it is clearly quite a trek to get from the orphanage of *El espinazo* to the nearest village, in *El laberinto* the train line that appears to be the only link to the outside world is blown up by the *maquis*, thus isolating Vidal and his troops. Their isolation and thus lack of context add to our sense of these spaces as generic spaces rather than landscapes that evoke Spain. The sense of the forest in *El laberinto* as an unspecified space beyond the realm of ordinary human experience can be considered in the light of Gaston Bachelard’s ideas on the woodland from his *The Poetics of Space* (Bachelard 1994). His theorisation marks out the wood as beyond specificity both historical and geographical: ‘We do not have to be long in the woods to experience the always rather anxious impression of “going deeper and deeper” into a limitless world. Soon, if we do not know where we are going, we no longer know where we are’ (Bachelard 1994: 185). And ‘who knows the temporal dimensions of the forest? History is not enough ... forests reign in the past’ (ibid.: 188). The fact that we never see beyond the wood itself in *El laberinto* reinforces this idea not exactly of Bachelard’s limitless world but certainly the notion that the wood *is* the world: anything outside it is hearsay and indeed fantasy. When Ofelia climbs out of the car into the wood, her first action is to stare up at the trees, whose tops we cannot at this point see (suggesting the limitlessness that Bachelard touches on above), a ‘contemplation [that] produces an attitude that is so special, an inner state that is so unlike any other, that the daydream transports the dreamer outside the immediate world to a world that bears the mark of infinity’ (ibid.: 183). And thus Ofelia transports herself outside

her own painful immediacy – caused by the events of the Civil War that mean that she and her mother must entrust themselves to a hated Fascist – to her own fantasy realm where eventually she will reign alongside her parents, a realm beyond anything we ourselves can recognise except as the stuff of fairytales, nationally non-specific. *El laberinto* emphasises the woodland as enchantment, but it does not only function at Ofelia's level of the fairy story. The adults map a different story/history on to it, and one that itself is a fantasy, where the right people win, as it were – which did not happen in reality. As Bachelard says, history is not enough; as T. S. Eliot put it in his *Four Quartets*, 'What might have been and what has been | Point to one end, which is always present': thus the wood of a contemporary fantasy includes not only an awareness of how things were but also how they ought to have been or might have been.

Some of these spaces, in addition, function as transnational spaces: the people who occupy them are not automatically to be taken as Spanish. In *El espinazo* the Spanish inhabitants of the orphanage are never seen to get to the far-off village: only the Argentinian Casares is seen to occupy that space. While there, he catches sight of one of the Republican soldiers who deposited Carlos at the orphanage, but, immediately he sees him, that soldier is placed against a wall and shot. Also shot are foreigners fighting for the Republic; Canadians and a Chinese soldier (while a bystander wonders about the presence of a Chinese soldier in Spain), suggesting the village as a transnational space. If the events within the children's home are a microcosm of events within Spain as a whole, as the sons of Republicans do battle with their oppressor, then the landscape emphasises how remote events are from the rest of the world, but also that some foreigners get caught up in those remote events. Likewise, in *El laberinto*, foreigners do not intrude into the wood, but we are aware of their presence and their relation to events. While the *maquis* hide out in the woods they read of the progress of the Second World War: the *maquis* struggle was partly carried out in the hope of an Allied victory which the participants believed would sweep Franco from power (they were sadly mistaken). Vidal, on the other hand, is reminiscent of a Nazi officer from many a film set in the Second World War, dressed in field grey: this reference dissipates the historical and geographical specificity of the conflict in the film, but it also reminds us that the Spanish Civil War and the Second World War were connected events, particularly with the participation of Hitler's German forces on Franco's side during the former.

Nonetheless, the landscape for all this still carries traces of Spanish specificity. John Berger has remarked:

Landscapes can be deceptive.

Sometimes a landscape seems to be less a setting for the life of its inhabitants than a curtain behind which their struggles, achievements and accidents take place. For those who, with the inhabitants, are behind the curtains, landmarks are no longer geographic but also biographical and personal. (Berger, quoted in Cosgrove 1998: 271: italics in original)

The notion of the curtain might imply the idea of the surface behind which the 'real' Spain can be found, an idea which I questioned in the previous chapter. Nonetheless, the concept of landscape as part of personal experience reminds us of Wylie's discussion of landscape writing. We could argue from what I suggested above that the landscape does in fact act like a screen to hide the very specificity of del Toro's stories, but I would claim that simultaneously the landscape becomes intricately bound up with the personal narratives of these films, which do not make sense without it. D'Lugo remarks on the previous use of the wood to speak to Spanish specificity, as in the case of *Furtivos* (Poachers; José Luis Borau, 1975), in which the wood 'is a deceptive space of covert violence and transgression, thus providing another politically charged spatial metaphor for Spanish society' (D'Lugo 2010: 124), and *El corazón del bosque* (Heart of the Forest; Manuel Gutiérrez Aragón, 1979), in which the wood contains 'harsh memories of fratricidal struggle, but which [is], as well, endowed with the allure of magic' (D'Lugo 2010: 125). Similarly, while the landscape of *El laberinto* can be interpreted in generic terms as fantasy woodland, it can also be interpreted in biographical and personal – and thus also historical – terms. Ofelia's use of the wood and the labyrinth within it as the basis for her quest suggests the limitless possibilities indicated by Bachelard, but this includes the rewriting of history itself, in which the hero(ine), banished from home, is recognised once more, just as those apparently excluded from Spanish history are beginning once more to find their place there. Note that it is not just a question of recuperating collective memory but also a question of Ofelia recuperating the memory of what she once was. The possibility of erasing individual memories is also raised, as for instance when Ofelia partly fails in her second quest, disobeying the faun's orders and allowing two of his fairy messengers to get eaten: when the faun finds out, he says furiously that her disobedience means that her memory will be erased from her original kingdom. (In a similar manner, when Vidal asks Mercedes to tell his son at what time he died, she responds that she will ensure the son has no memory of him.)

The woodland acts not simply as a venue for recuperation on more than one level, however, but is actively involved in the process. Ofelia's quest starts when she plucks stones from the forest paths and inserts them into the eye sockets of a nearby statue: as she does this the wood seems to come alive, through the motif of the insect that will be her initial guide. When she encounters the faun, he tells her that he is the woods and the mountain, thus the landscape personified and animated. Ofelia later tells Mercedes that the faun smells of earth, reinforcing this link between the faun and the land. Likewise, Ofelia's first quest is to find the key hidden inside a large toad that lives under the roots of the tree, which entails her burrowing under the tree and becoming coated with mud in the process. The quest's movements in and out of the fabric of the



Figure 2 The maquis in the woods in *El laberinto del fauno*

landscape, in parallel with the second quest wherein Ofelia moves through the fabric of the house, suggest the imbrication of the recovery of memory in the landscape itself, a process not unlike the real excavations of the bodies of Civil War victims currently under way, as well as the use of landscape markers to identify burial sites.

Mercedes Camino (2009: 48) reminds us of the strong identification of the *maquis* with the landscape through which they move. The woodland of *El laberinto* bears traces of the *maquis* as they carry out their struggle: Vidal's soldiers find antibiotics and a lottery ticket they left behind. As Vidal and his soldiers walk away from the scene the *maquis* rise up from where they were hidden, very close by in the undergrowth (Fig. 2). Del Toro in this way makes explicit the notion of Berger's deceptive landscape acting as a curtain: the generic landscape nonetheless contains people that can be perceived not only in general terms (a resistance against fascism) but also in terms of a specific time and place (the resistance against Franco in the 1940s). Their traces are ones that can be read by those who wish to read them in historical terms. But the landscape also indicates the divisions in Spain: the trees and the house structures (floors, ceilings, Ofelia's bath) are used as screen wipes that not only aid the switch between different levels of narrative, Ofelia's fantasy quest and the *maquis* struggle, but also between Vidal's fascist troops and Ofelia as a focal point of resistance against Vidal. The notion is also apparent in the motif of Ofelia's new green dress, which Carmen makes for her so as to make her presentable at a polite dinner party and thus in turn acceptable to her stepfather. But Ofelia goes walking in it through the forest: she removes it and leaves it on a tree branch in order to go underground and perform her quest of removing the key from

the toad. The dress gets blown on to the ground and covered in earth while she is away: meanwhile, underground, her new shoes get covered in mud. The landscape thus renders Ofelia unacceptable to Vidal: it actively contributes to the opposition between the two characters.

If *El laberinto* offers a landscape from which we can read traces of Spanish history if we are so minded, then *El espinazo* does likewise. Just as the film can be perceived both as an allegory of the deep social rifts in Spain that led to the bloodshed of the War, and as a horror film *tout court*, so can the landscape be read in terms of Spanish memory as well as a more generic Wild West plain. There is less emphasis on landscape in *El espinazo* since we do not have the lush greens and foliage of the forest, but, as mentioned above, there are long shots of the plain that serve precisely to isolate the orphanage and its inhabitants, almost like the last pocket of resistance before the cultural desert of Francoism. Antonio Gómez López-Quiñones argues that

la violencia de la Guerra Civil presenta un aspecto tan extendido espacial y temporalmente que parece difícilmente representable en una novela o en un film. Ante esta imposibilidad, queda una sola opción: reducir el tamaño de dicha violencia, concretizarla y arrancarla del espacio de lo sublime. (Gómez López-Quiñones 2006: 193)

the violence of the Civil War offers such a broad perspective in terms of space and time that it seems difficult to represent in a novel or film. In the face of this impossibility only one option remains: to reduce such violence in size, make it specific, and drag it out of the sphere of the sublime.



Figure 3 Conchita looks at the threatening plain in *El espinazo del diablo*

And he goes on to suggest that *Espinazo* uses this strategy. Certainly the use of the ghost story and the isolated and contained location of the home serve in part as a microcosm of the wider events of the Spanish Civil War. However, the plain in itself suggests the sublime, being without end, overwhelming, its sheer vastness making it almost impossible for little boys to cross (hence Carmen's advice to Carlos that running away is not to be recommended). In this sense the landscape is not so much a microcosm as an endless vastness in which the fates of the boys are frozen at the end: as Casares watches them struggle away towards the horizon their unknown fates merge into the wider memories – and the wider disappearances – of the Civil War. D'Lugo comments on the use of the plain in *El espíritu de la colmena* as a setting that isolates its inhabitants, an example of 'protagonists immobilized in confining spaces [that] help to create a symbolic space of action that appears as the result of the ominous effects of the unseen dictatorship' (D'Lugo 2010: 124). The plain of *El espinazo*, like that of *El espíritu de la colmena*, threatens to overwhelm the children in its vastness that hides terrors and monsters, although the monsters of *El espinazo*, Santi and Jacinto, are not 'out there', as the child imagines in *El espíritu*, but within. Nonetheless, just as the plain of *El espíritu* carries its own traces of the War, with the man on the run hiding out in a ramshackle hut, so the movements of the War are reflected in the movement of children and adults across the landscape. Just as Ofelia arrives by car through the wood, so our first glimpse of Carlos is as he is, unknown to him, driven to his new home across the plain. And the blood that issues from Santi's head is repeated on the landscape after the explosion at the home: as Jacinto stands on the plain looking back at the home, a plume of smoke arises that reminds us of Santi's plumes of blood. In this way, personal history (Santi's death) is linked to political violence (the threat to the children's home from outside forces with which Jacinto will ally himself).

Santaolalla observes that : 'son especialmente significativas aquellas tomas en las que la cámara capta la tensión entre el interior y el exterior, recogiendo, desde el interior, el mundo "salvaje" del exterior' (those takes in which the camera captures the tension between inside and outside, gathering up, inside, the 'wild' world outside, are particularly significant; Santaolalla 2005: 224). On this reading the tensions of inside and outside bleed into each other, part of that tension being precisely the sense of entrapment within the house (particularly on the part of Jacinto) that comes about precisely because of the unfriendly terrain of the outside. Although the busyness of the children's home, and Carmen's fear that they cannot house or cope with another child (on the occasion that Carlos arrives), contrasts with the emptiness and stillness of the plain outside, the tension occurs because of the close proximity of the two, both literally and figuratively, as well as because of their distinctiveness. Yet there is, too, a sense of opposition between the home and the plain that surrounds it, as

the film proceeds to its climactic events. As the occupants pack to leave the home, fearing the threat of fascist power that may come to them from outside, and endanger them, Conchita (Irene Visedo), suspecting something is wrong, steps outside the house and looks around the plain, now a landscape with a very real menace within it (Fig. 3). That threat for her will prove all too real, since not only does her excursion into the landscape herald the return of Jacinto after he has been thrown out, but later the landscape will frame in extreme long shot her death at his hands. She falls to the ground and disappears into the landscape. Similarly, Casares watches out for Jacinto and his colleagues to return, on guard facing the window through which we see the plain stretch itself out. It is as if Casares is directly confronting the landscape. The strong sense of opposition of inside and out embody the fate of many of those linked to the Left as the Civil War ran its course: trapped with nowhere to go, and awaiting an uncertain fate. The plain itself comes to embody the threat of political violence. We do not have to read it that way, as I have said elsewhere (Davies 2006), but the trace is there if we wish to invoke it, and thus Spanish history – and Spain itself – is invoked in so doing.

If we wish – such a phrase reminds us of the role of the subject in invoking the call to care and thus bringing Spain into a process of being. In del Toro's films the wood and the plain are, on one level, mere setting in that they are the place where something happens, and the wood and the plain serve narrative purpose in isolating the inhabitants of each so that no outside rescue is possible. But del Toro also draws our attention to the landscape as landscape, moving backwards and forwards between a narrative mode and a spectacular mode wherein we are encouraged to perceive the landscape as a thing in itself. As Martin Lefebvre argues (drawing in turn on Sergei Eisenstein), only thus can it convey emotion (Lefebvre 2006a: xii), and thus we can see through it a form of Rose's call to care: there is something more to these landscapes, they are in excess of mere setting, and in excess of its narrative function as the space in which events occur. On the other hand, Lefebvre also argues that 'in mainstream cinema, natural or exterior spaces tend to function as setting rather than landscape in the vast majority of cases. It is the place where something happens, where something takes place and unfolds'. Thus, 'the contemplation of filmic *spectacle* depends on an "autonomising gaze". *It is this gaze which enables the notion of filmic landscape in narrative fiction (and event-based documentary) film; it makes possible the transition from setting to landscape*' (Lefebvre 2006b: 24, italics in original). The contrast of landscape between the two films is also in itself redolent of an underlying fascination with landscape (and we may remember in del Toro's *Hellboy II: The Golden Army* how the standing stones in Ireland literally take on life). Even in films as deeply plotted as these two are, we can exercise what Lefebvre thinks of as a cultural habit of being able to perceive a landscape even where the artistic

genre is not automatically asking for this; we can always adopt a 'landscape gaze' (ibid.: 48). How we do this, however, will depend on the sort of Spain we wish to invoke: indeed, wish to see.

Labanyi writes that many Spanish texts dealing with the Civil War and its aftermath display 'a traumatic crisis of memory related to a geographical displacement or "loss of place"' (Labanyi 2000: 67): for her, the way to resolve this crisis is to learn to live with the spectral traces of ghosts (ibid.: 80), and thus they 'find their place' again. But different people will live with these ghosts in different ways. Labanyi evokes elsewhere in her essay Walter Benjamin's cultural historian, whose role is not simply to reconstruct the past but to reassemble it, 'to create new meanings through the dialectical confrontation of fragments that are normally separate' (ibid.: 70) – someone who 'defamiliarizes the maps made by official surveyors (whose function is to put everything in its "proper place") in order to create an alternative, fantasmagorical topography that can recover, not just things, but the dreams and desires attached to them which did not find realization as "fact": that is, popular history' (ibid.).

When watching del Toro's two Spanish films we can invoke these ghosts in new ways that do not necessarily insist on their Spanish specificity, but within which, as with Lerner's and Flanders' invocations of the previous chapter, Spain itself is conjured up as a ghostly presence. We can, however, if we wish, give more emphasis to this phantasmagorical landscape as specifically Spanish. Lefebvre comments that 'possession is not a required trait for representing space as a landscape, insofar as we understand it in aesthetic terms; whereas it is required when space is represented as "territory"' (Lefebvre 2006b: 53). I would prefer Rose's 'desire for belonging' rather than Lefebvre's 'possession', which allows a potentially more benign role for the subject; but Lefebvre's comments remind us of the importance of that subject in invoking Spain as the object of a call to care. Nonetheless, whether the subject sees these landscapes as landscape or as territory, Spain and the ghosts of her past are invoked. And these invocations can be translated, and resonate with those who are not themselves Spanish – as they clearly have done for the Mexican del Toro. For these people Spain may never be more than de Saint-Exupéry's fairytale land, or a place of ghost stories – but, for all that, the ghosts of the Spanish past trace themselves across the Spanish terrain for us to make what story or history of them that we will.

CHAPTER THREE

Forgetting: the landscapes of Gonzalo Torrente Ballester

In Gonzalo Torrente Ballester's novel *Yo no soy yo, evidentemente* (I Am Clearly Not Myself), a German character makes the following remark:

Sobre este mundo real ... hemos montado otro imaginario para nosotros mismos, un mundo que no nos engaña, pero que nos divierte y en el fondo nos satisface: La Alemania como debió ser, un país y una sociedad en la que tendríamos cabida. Quizás vaya en ello un poco de nostalgia de lo que se perdió para siempre. (Torrente Ballester 2008: 421–2)

We have erected for ourselves on top of this world another imaginary one, a world of which we have no illusions but which amuses us and deep down satisfies us: Germany as it ought to have been, a country and a society which would have had room for us. There is in that, perhaps, a little nostalgia for what was lost for ever.

This quotation from one of Torrente's later novels encapsulates much of what I am going to discuss in this chapter, focusing on Torrente's use of landscape, space and place in his work as a way of expressing the desire of association with a Spain that he wishes were otherwise. As with the previous chapter, we find a suggestion of Spain and its history as it ought to have been – history and memory as malleable fantasy – but now seen from the other side, the side of those who were the victors of the Civil War. Landscape, space and place become a means of wishing away past historical allegiances in favour of an imaginary land – but linked to the real one – where one fits in.

We are talking about forgetting, rather than rewriting, the history of Spain, since Torrente's aim is in part to undermine the link between the written word and historical truth. Torrente has been hailed by many scholars as a writer of metafictional novels which draw attention to their own construction and make explicit the authorial process. But they also draw attention to the processes of historical writing. Jo Labanyi argues for Torrente as an author 'concerned to demythify official versions of history not because such versions are mythical but because they attempt to pass themselves off as history: that is, because they take history seriously' (Labanyi 1989: 179). For Torrente, 'history is equated with repression, and myth with liberation' (ibid.). Throughout his work Torrente has

taken a debunking attitude to history and has treated it in what has become his trademark whimsical, playful approach: as David Herzberger says, Torrente ‘enjoys the game of fiction and plays it better than most’ (Herzberger 1989: 38). What has been neglected for the most part in this approach is that Torrente takes an equally playful approach to geography. Only Ángel Loureiro, to the best of my knowledge, has devoted serious concern to the role of space, arguing that ‘En la obra de Torrente el espacio trasciende un papel funcionario para adquirir características peculiares que le otorgan una dimensión especialmente activa’ (In Torrente’s work space transcends a functional role to acquire peculiar characteristics that provide it with an especially active dimension; Loureiro 1990: 229). In the trilogy of Torrente’s best known-works, *La saga/fuga de J.B.* (The Saga/Fugue of J.B., 1972), *Fragmentos de apocalipsis* (Fragments of the Apocalypse, 1977) and *La isla de los jacintos cortados* (The Island of Cut Hyacinths, 1980), the spaces and places are malleable, open to manipulation by favoured characters in the novels (Loureiro 1990: 229–30). The trilogy also offers secret spaces wherein lies some historical key, or indeed something to tell us that history and myth have been manipulated (ibid.: 230): thus for Loureiro a playful attitude to time or history cannot be conceived of without a similarly playful approach to space. For ‘tanto el tiempo como el espacio pueden ser maleables en la ficción’ (time as well as space are malleable in fiction; ibid.: 214). This ludic plasticity is readily apparent with the levitating town of Castroforte del Baralla, the setting for *La saga/fuga*: the novel ends with the final and terminal levitation of the town away from Spanish *terra firma*. In *Fragmentos* the cathedral city of Villasanta is ultimately a construction of words that is easily destroyed at the whim of the narrator. Likewise the island of *La isla de los jacintos cortados* is able to move itself about like a boat, and towards the end the novel takes on the role of a warship sailing out to battle. In terms of history, Herzberger argues that

the past springs forth as liquefied matter able to flow into one narrative structure or another, changing shape or meaning as it forms and reforms in unending patterns of deviance. Writing the past thus becomes a twofold endeavor: it is a way to write and act against the grain, as well as a means to develop narrations that allow (and even compel) the opening of history to divergence. (Herzberger 1995: 2)

Herzberger has in mind here the blurring of not only fiction and history but fiction and historiography and the notion that history, too, is a form of narrative. But the idea of liquefied matters applies to uses of geography, too: landscapes, too, can change shape or meaning in order to write against the grain.

My aim in this chapter is to consider Torrente’s efforts to make geography ludic and to problematise the link between geographical signifier and signified, with the aim of once again seeing Spain through its landscape, spaces and places as a ‘dream of presence’, always in the process of becoming in response

to desire, but never fully realised. But also – bearing in mind Loureiro’s link of Torrentian space and time – I wish to explore the geographical and historical implications of the nostalgic imaginary world that Torrente posited in *Yo no soy yo*, a ‘world that has room for us’. And I do this in the light of a recent paper by Ana Gómez-Pérez that explores Torrente’s own suspect past. Torrente was known for having links to the Falange in the early years of the Franco era: despite signs later on of dissidence from the Francoist position, he refused to make a public admission of guilt for belonging to the Falange. Instead he ‘remained evasive and began to elaborate a very personal theory of literature that denied the relationship between fiction and reality so he might continue to develop as a writer without the constant reminder of his earlier ideological commitments’. But he subsequently found that a trap, too, and tried to escape through the use of metafiction (Gómez-Pérez 2005: 100). Other scholars have tried to smooth over Torrente’s political past. Janet Pérez talks of his association with Falangist intellectuals as a way of covering over his previous *galleguismo* (and thus protecting his family). Pérez presents him as caught between two stools, disillusioned with Francoism, persecuted by the latter for protests against censorship but ignored by the opposition precisely because of his earlier political taint (Pérez 1988: 157). Labanyi, too, notes the ambiguity of the author’s political affiliation over time: writing for an anarchist paper while a member of the Falangist literary scene, later disaffected from the regime and censured for his signing a letter demanding censorship reform (in 1961) (Labanyi 1989: 214). Gómez-Pérez herself notes his increasing marginalisation by both sides, a position exacerbated by the fact that he was not in tune with left-wing literary trends of socialism realism (Gómez-Pérez 2005: 103) until his development of a ludic style coincided in the 1970s with the Latin American wave of magical realism. What intrigues me here is the concept Gómez-Pérez implies of a retreat into precisely the ‘mundo imaginario’ explicitly referred to in *Yo no soy yo*, a world in which Torrente might have had his place. In this sense, this retreat to an imaginary world with its own geography is a process of forgetting: ‘Torrente subjects literature and literary criticism to a process of constant destruction, and from then on feels free to create at will without reference to the ghosts of his past’ (Gómez-Pérez 2005: 116). Or, as the editors put it in the collection in which Gómez-Pérez’s essay appears: ‘Following the official demise of Franco’s regime, this writer felt profoundly guilty about his political affiliations which, coupled with his subsequent social rejection, worked to create a personal literary theory that distanced his creative work from reality and any type of political ideology’ (Merino and Song 2005: 19). This chapter argues that this desire to forget the past manifests itself through the use in his novels of imaginary landscapes and places that defy location: in particular, the levitating town of *La saga/fuga de J.B.*, the cathedral city of *Fragmentos de apocalipsis* and the

difficulties of mapping territory in another of his novels *La rosa de los vientos* (The Compass Rose, 1993). The chapter considers these novels to demonstrate how landscape, space and place, being apparently indeterminate, function as sites of literary play. Nonetheless, as metafictional texts, I believe that they also draw attention precisely to their status as texts of forgetting, and that this too comes into play when considering Torrente's playful geography. Paul Ricoeur comments that 'The imagination, freed from its service to the past, has taken the place of memory' (Ricoeur 2004: 66). The imaginary world does not deceive us, as Torrente tells us in *Yo no soy yo*, but it allows for an alternative reality that replaces what really happened, the world as it ought to have been rather than as it really was. But it is not an alternative space whereby lost or hidden memories may be recuperated, as with the previous chapter, but rather a retreat from the more uncomfortable associations with the past, a space wherein history might not be re-remembered but undone, dissolved – a space, perhaps, where historical guilt can be done away, where there is room for an association with Spain that lacks any history.

The question – or problem, depending on your point of view – of what to do with the Francoist cultural legacy has recently come into view as Hispanic scholars debate how we remember the past. Merino and Song wish to 'demonstrate the artificiality of the break with the past, that is, Franco's death, as a paradigmatic moment of change, a historical narrative, of the end of Francoism': they argue that there are still links between the Francoist past and the democratic present (Merino and Song 2005: 15). Jordi Gracia argues, in the same volume,

Half a century is plenty of time to allow us to turn to the past and look at it ourselves, not through the lenses of others who experienced the difficulties of anti-Franco militancy or were forced to modify their readings and criteria so as to avoid playing up to a power or counter-power. We have started to read Spanish fascist literature using criteria that are less biographically conditioned and thus freer from the hostility personal experience previously projected on it and its practitioners. (Gracia 2005: 279)

I am not so sure that hostility to the positions sometimes or always embraced by authors such as Torrente is eroding so simply. Hostility is also a memory that can be passed to new generations, and also at one remove to scholars educated about such memories. Nonetheless, if, as in the previous chapter, I talked of a geography of memory, it seems fair to talk also of a geography of forgetting. Imagined geographies are commonplace as a daydreamer's escape of more mundane or even traumatic realities: the efforts to reconsider the role of Francoist cultural texts means that we might consider the possibility of personal traumas even for those on the winning side in the Civil War. That last clause was one I found personally difficult to write: how to compare Torrente's own personal difficulties with the starvation and poverty, unjust imprison-

ment and execution undergone by many in the Franco era? It is a question to which I have no easy answer. Nonetheless, it is not at all clear that Torrente's 'world as it ought to have been' coincides precisely with a Francoist Spain: I believe it to be a place where history – any history, including a Francoist one – can be escaped and thus forgotten. I believe Torrente's position to be that any imaginary geography, including his own, can be deconstructed and destroyed, but that while it lasts it gives pleasure free from the constraints of history, and those geographies that he imagines are places where he or his characters can conceive themselves as belonging. And this use of geography to 'forget' history is, I think, worth exploration. In doing this, I wish to bear in mind Alison Ribeiro de Menezes' warning when she criticises the simple binary opposition of remembering and forgetting 'as if the two terms are mutually exclusive' (Ribeiro de Menezes 2010: 8). Torrente shares with del Toro the desire to tell stories beyond the constraints of history and in that sense they are both writing history as if it were otherwise that goes beyond a Manichaean split between left and right or losers and winners. Torrente's desire to retreat into fiction posited by Gómez-Pérez is hardly a posture of triumphalism, for all that during the dictatorship he had a voice not afforded to those who supported the losing side. But, furthermore, the use of a ludic geography to erase history is not the simple forgetting that we might suppose, because Torrente's landscapes are haunted by a real referent, that of Galicia, Torrente's homeland. It is not that the places that Torrente writes about *are* Galician necessarily, or that he is in effect trying to reproduce elements of the region, but I do suggest that even in the process of forgetting, such a process implies a memory ghosting behind.

Torrente himself claimed an indeterminacy for Galician landscape, which we can easily detect in his work:

En Castilla, un árbol es un árbol, una piedra es una piedra, y lo mismo una casa o un castillo. En Galicia no sabemos lo que es nada. El castillo puede ser casa o puede ser la joroba de un gigante, y evidentemente los pobladores de los bosques son muchos más de los que se ven. Es decir, existe una indeterminación, una vaguedad, que nos impide ser dogmáticos. De manera que la primera diferencia notable frente al dogmatismo castellano es la ambigüedad del gallego. (Torrente Ballester 1989: 2)

In Castile, a tree is a tree, a stone is a stone, and likewise a house or a castle. In Galicia we do not know what anything is. The castle could be a house or it could be a giant's humpback, and obviously the inhabitants of the woods are many more than we can see. That is, there exists an indeterminacy, a vagueness, which prevents us from being dogmatic. So that the first notable difference in the face of Castilian dogmatism is the Galician's ambiguity.

In this essay Torrente makes reference at various points in his essay to his own 'poetic geography' that nonetheless corresponds to towns and cities in Galicia,

so that Santiago becomes Villasanta de la Estrella in *Fragmentos* as others have also noted, while he implies that Castroforte of *La saga/fuga* corresponds to Pontevedra (Torrente Ballester 1989: 9). The quotation above, however, not only suggests play and fantasy (references to giants and castles) but an imprecision which significantly excludes dogma (a dogma specifically defined as Castilian). And yet there is still some connection to a 'real' Galicia, although that reality is not in itself precise and concrete: it appears to Torrente to be malleable in a manner akin to the landscapes of his own novels. It is this elusive Galician referent that, I will argue, complicates the notion of forgetting as far as the use of space and place is concerned, as regards the two major novels *La saga/fuga de J.B.* and *Fragmentos de Apocalipsis*. I have selected these novels because their geographies are in a sense paired: Castroforte de Baralla, the location of the first novel, is opposed and hostile to Villasanta de la Estrella, the setting of the second. But both towns are subject to manipulation and dissolution by certain privileged characters contained within them; and both carry traces of Galician landscape markings. I will then move to another novel, less well known and discussed, *La rosa de los vientos*, to consider Torrente's use of geography in terms of mapping and cartographic ideas, where the question of real referents, although still touching on Galicia on occasion, opens up more widely to reinforce the notion of geographical hauntology even as Torrente uses landscape to create a space outside history.

Two opposed towns: Castroforte and Villasanta

Torrente's best-known imaginary space is without doubt the levitating town of Castroforte del Baralla in *La saga/fuga*: it levitates when all the townspeople are thinking of the same thing, an ironic form of Benedict Anderson's imagined community (Anderson 1991). We are informed that Castroforte is the capital of Galicia's fifth province (Torrente Ballester 1995: 52), thus giving a clear link to the region, but the town does not appear on Spanish maps – the result, argues the character Belalúa, of a deliberate suppression by Spanish Prime Minister Cánovas (ibid.: 53). Torrente's many references to historical figures such as Cánovas, as well as the writers Miguel de Unamuno and Ramón de Maeztu in their turn, both of whom acknowledge the town and thus by implication the fact that it exists, ironically confer on the town a concrete existence. The town's rivalry with neighbouring Villasanta de la Estrella does likewise, adding a further irony in that the latter town will itself be shown to be nothing but words in *Fragmentos*.

The town levitates when everyone is thinking the same thing, but more than that: when the city '*vivió el mismo ensimismamiento, vivió como si el resto del mundo no existiera*' (it lives the same self-absorption, it lives as if the rest of

the word does not exist; *ibid.*: 218, italics in original). It literally and figuratively becomes detached from the rest of the world. The protagonist Bastida argues that ‘cuando Castroforte del Baralla se ensimisma hasta cierto punto, un punto máximo, claro, la cima del ensimismamiento, asciende en los aires, en una palabra, levita, y no desciende hasta que deja de pensar, de interesarse por algo suyo y piensa o se interesa por algo ajeno’ (when Castroforte del Baralla reaches a certain point of self-absorption, a maximum point, of course, the height of self-absorption, it ascends into the air, it levitates, in a word, and it does not come down until it stops thinking, stops being interested in something about itself and thinks or becomes interested in something else’; *ibid.*). Thus it is not just the unity of thought but the thinking of things relating only to the town that cause the phenomenon, a forgetting of life outside the town: and only by remembering the latter does the town return to earth. When Bastida experiences this levitation himself, the town is foggy, a fog that is ‘opaca, impenetrable’ (opaque, impenetrable; *ibid.*: 248), a fog very reminiscent of Galicia. The fog further emphasises the detachment of the town from the rest of Spain, absorbed in its own Galician mist. The fog, the levitation, are signs of forgetting. When Jesualdo Bendaña, returned from the USA, asks, ‘¿es más hermoso Castroforte envuelto en sus nieblas habituales o a la luz de un sol crudo y desmitificante?’ (is Castroforte more beautiful wrapped in its usual mist or in the light of a hard, demythifying sun?; *ibid.*: 425), implicitly he would prefer the latter, since he brings with him a reputation for destroying much cherished beliefs as well as a ‘taint’ of scientific thought from his American exile. His point of view is not accepted by the inhabitants of Castroforte. The fog, however, also brings with it not only the possibility of forgetting but also the spectral presence of Galicia’s climate.

Loureiro describes Castroforte as ‘incapaz de actuar, está ya sólo limitado a reflexionar y fantasear sobre sí mismo: un pueblo ensimismado, cuya búsqueda de un tiempo perdido, le sitúa, paradójicamente, fuera del tiempo’ (incapable of acting, it is now simply confined to reflecting on and fantasising about itself: an insular people, whose search for a lost past paradoxically positions it outside of time; Loureiro 1990: 152–3). This further reminds us the possibility of forgetting, or of seeking an alternative time. Castroforte becomes a lost space as well as a lost time, a space out of time and out of history. When Bastida first becomes aware of the town in the process of levitation, he leans over the side of the town as it rises, and sees the following:

vi, allá abajo, como seguramente podrá verse desde un aeroplano, el contorno de la ría, las tierras donde debiera hallarse Castroforte, algo así como la carne desgarrada de un cuerpo al que se le ha arrancado un brazo. Yo estaba, indiscutiblemente, en Castroforte, pero Castroforte no se hallaba en su sitio. (Torrente Ballester 1995, 249)

I saw down below, as could surely be seen from a plane, the contours of the river, the ground where Castroforte ought to have been, rather like the torn flesh of a body from which an arm has been ripped. I was, undoubtedly, in Castroforte, but Castroforte was not where it was supposed to be.

This detachment from the rest of Spain is no easy matter, given the suggestion of injury by the displacement, in the image of the arm ripped off. Nonetheless, the fog's Galician specificity offers the spectral possibility of the real Spain from which Castroforte can detach itself, thus reintroducing a sense of attachment if only to a certain degree, given Galicia's own semi-detached geographical position north of Portugal, out on a limb as it were. Galicia is, as Labanyi reminds us, a Finisterre (Labanyi 1989: 218): we can consider this as a place where the land ends, ceases to be, but its own materiality is still implied in the term. Pérez claims Castroforte as 'a microcosm of Galicia', with elements of Santiago, A Coruña, use of Galician myths, and a 'satire' of Francoist policy towards regions such as Galicia, given the town's lack of official existence (Pérez 1984: 104). Alicia Giménez¹ suggests the final levitation of Castroforte as possibly even a final escape from the *godos* (the town's members who are not *nativos* and who are associated with Madrid), and that it has unified all the people together in its own self-absorption (Giménez 1981: 76). Since the *nativos* are also associated in the novel with an uprising and bid for independence in the nineteenth century, this offers a possibility of seeing the town's levitation in terms of independence from the rest of Spain. Labanyi, however, suggests that the novel satirises both Galician regionalism and Falangism: 'Castroforte ... has indeed levitated in the sense that it has lost touch with reality' (Labanyi 1989: 220). Lynne E. Overesch-Maister also notes links to Galician regionalism in the blame that Castrofortians attribute to Cánovas for their 'geo-political inexistence' (Overesch-Maister 1989: 130–1): she further argues that 'Torrente's works often deal with characters whose actions do not transcend the local level, albeit they embody national or even international trends of thought in a highly idiosyncratic mind-set' (ibid.: 127). However we wish to read these traces of Galicia – and the possibility of different interpretations itself suggests the ambiguities of hauntology – the complex imbrications of an imaginary space with a real referent suggest both the possibility and impossibility of forgetting.

If the levitation of Castroforte away from the Spanish mainland is a communal act, the destruction of Villasanta de la Estrella in *Fragmentos* is, in contrast, an act of the narrator's imagination. The narrator calls space into being through words and words alone:

He nombrado al torre, y ahí está. Ahora, si nombro la ciudad, ahí estará también. Entonces, digo: catedral, monasterios, iglesias, la Universidad, el ayuntamiento, el palacio de arzobispo; y digo: rúas, plazas, travesías, la carrera del Duque, el callejón de los Endemoniados ... (Torrente Ballester 1997: 37)

I have mentioned the tower, and there it is. Now, if I mention the city, there it will be too. So then, I mention: cathedral, monasteries, churches, the university, the town hall, the Archbishop's palace; and I mention: streets, squares, crossroads, the Duque road, the Passage of the Endemoniados ...

And so on and so on. But in the same way he created Villasanta simply by calling it into being, he can and does destroy it simply through words. The role of words – and who controls the words – in the creation of Villasanta is crucial. Giménez argues that ‘Torrente ha querido llegar a la composición de un mundo regido únicamente por las reglas literarias de la ficción y que encontrará en sí mismo la propia razón de su existencia’ (Torrente has aimed to achieve the composition of a world governed only by the literary rules of fiction, and which will find within itself its own reason for being; Giménez 1981: 84). Loureiro observes that these are spaces created only with words, so that in the original planned ending to the novel it was only the words rather than the city that was destroyed (Loureiro 1990: 233–4). The final version simply sees Villasanta collapse into a pile of dust while the narrator begins to think of something else, but an appendix gives an alternative version:

donde yo había escrito ‘torre’, se desvaneció la torre, y si haba dicho ‘magnolio’, el magnolio se descompuso en tronco, en ramas, en hojas, en flores, que, a su vez, se quebrantaron y dejaron volar los elementos constitutivos, así los sonoros como los gráficos, pero de tal manera descoyuntados que por un lado iba el sonido y por otro el signo escrito, de suerte que el A no correspondía con el A, definitivamente separados. (Torrente Ballester 1997: 440)

where I had written ‘tower’, the tower disappeared, and if I had said ‘magnolia tree’, the tree divided into trunk, branches, leaves, flowers, which, in their turn, broke up and let their constitutive elements fly away, in the same way the sounds and the letters, but dislocated in such a way that the sound went one way and the written sign the other, so that A did not correspond to A, definitively separated.

Like words, geography too can collapse and be emptied of meaning. Gómez-Pérez for her part argues that the author is ‘always insisting that the existence of this entire world depends directly on his own will and word’ (Gómez-Pérez 2005: 109); an insistence, ultimately, that Torrente himself has control of his spaces. The novel itself confirms all these ideas in the key phrase: ‘Nada de lo que escribo ni de lo que he escrito tiene que ver con la realidad. Su espacio es mi imaginación ...’ (Nothing of what I am writing nor of what I have written has anything to do with reality. Its space is my imagination; Torrente Ballester 1997: 33). The last sentence confirms the crucial role of the author’s or narrator’s mind in the creation of space: but the notion that such space has nothing to do with reality is also intriguing, particularly as regards the temptation to equate Villasanta’s cathedral with the real cathedral at Santiago de Compostela, perhaps the best-known Galician landmark. The desire for control over space

and time together and the possibility of controlling meaning are akin to the desire to forget, rewrite or even unwrite: but Galicia continues to haunt the process. Nil Santiáñez Tió in his preface to the Destino edition of the novel argues that the narrator/secret agent ‘construye un laberinto de palabras para encerrarse en él y esconderse así de sus perseguidores’ (constructs a labyrinth of words in order to shut himself up in it and thus hide from his pursuers). And ‘el laberinto que es la novela tiene como objective refugiar a su narrador’ (the labyrinth that is the novel aims to give its narrator refuge; Torrente Ballester 1997: lii). This reminds us of Torrente’s retreat into his own fiction as posited by Gómez-Pérez. But the spectre of Galicia traces itself in the labyrinth: the trace of a real location means that the labyrinth is possibly locatable and thus not a total refuge.

Santiáñez Tió notes that the labyrinth ensures that no one has a stable point of reference for orientation (Torrente Ballester 1997: liv), and the notion that stable points of reference are missing points towards the problems of mapping and navigation that we will encounter in *La rosa de los vientos*. The lack of referents recurs when the narrator discovers that someone else is invading and using his narration – a reminder that the desire for association with a specific space or place is not monolithic but can relate to a variety of different purposes on the part of different subjects. But it is the disappearance of referents to which I wish to draw attention here:

Se nos ofrecían a la vista ciudades incompletas, las que yo había visto o imaginado, y, entre ellas, Villasanta de la Estrella, más que ciudad, fantasma, pues nada en ella había de preciso y claro, ni de ordenado, sino un montón de cosas en espera de que alguien las colocase en su sitio. (Torrente Ballester 1997: 232)

Incomplete cities lay open to our gaze, cities I had seen or imagined, and among them was Villasanta de la Estrella, a ghost more than a city, since nothing in it was clear and exact, nor orderly, but a pile of things waiting for someone to put them in the right place.

This ghosting of Villasanta works both to render it indistinct – lacking specific landmarks whereby one might orientate oneself – but also to remind us that it has a real referent both in the narrator’s own mind and also outside it. Even an imaginary world still needs a sense of place. Thus the narrator draws attention to the idea that even the fictional characters he creates must move through place, and indeed he insists on it. As the anarchists walk through Villasanta for a clandestine meeting, he stresses the different routes they must take (*ibid.*: 186). Elsewhere, the narrator talks of the possibility of writing out the anarchists’ plans to blow up a church (only to find, when they investigate, that all the churches are worth saving): this will give the narrator a chance ‘de describir indirectamente lugares y rincones’ (to describe indirectly places and corners; *ibid.*: 335). While the narrator confuses too easy an association of Villasanta

with the real Santiago by listing the latter as one of the cities from which delegates will attend the Villasanta anarchists' conference (ibid.: 336), the mere naming of Santiago introduces it as a spectre once more, alongside the naming of other real Galician towns which link this imaginary place to a real referent once again. Herzberger observes that Villasanta's cathedral is 'a space for play and irony', an impossible space in which its architect goes forward in time to see it and to bring back its design through time (Herzberger 1995: 125). This playful and impossible space encompasses the whole of Villasanta; but play and irony, too, have little meaning without at least some connection to real referents. Loureiro views this play between imagination and reality as smoke and mirrors (Loureiro 1990: 236), but elsewhere notes, perhaps in contradiction, that imagination does not reign supreme in Torrente's novels but is counterbalanced by the weight of everyday reality (ibid.: 68). But perhaps the strongest encapsulation of the play between imagination and real referents comes with Torrente's own description of Santiago's cathedral: 'El ser de Compostela es este hacerse y deshacerse en juego interminable' (The essence of Compostela is this creation and dissolution in a never-ending game; Torrente Ballester 1998: 21).

When Wylie, as mentioned in the opening chapter, talks of landscape writing he is emphasising the importance of the subject and of personal referents in engaging with landscape, space and place. Torrente's two towns suggest the possibility of landscape un-writing as well as landscape writing, which in turn implies the crucial nature of subjectivity. They are pliable imaginary spaces that bend to the needs of the subject, but that subject cannot but draw in turn on ideas that correspond to real referents. These are spaces of forgetting and of retreat, of detachment from the real Spain and its real history; but the trace of Galicia to be found in both Castroforte and Villasanta suggest a semi-detached position that once again evokes Spain as both the place to retreat from and the place with which a final, total rupture suggests the trauma of being unable to come to terms with the less pleasant ghosts of the past.

Mapping in *La rosa de los vientos*

Having briefly considered spatial aspects in these two major novels in Torrente's work, I now turn to a lesser-known novel, *La rosa de los vientos*, which has as its settings one of those imaginary countries suggested by the narrator of *Fragmentos*, a country that cannot be located on any map. The protagonist of *La rosa* is the Gran Duque Ferdinando, now in exile, having been deposed from power after his cousin, the great imperialist el Águila del Este (the Eagle of the East), conquered his land. From his exile Ferdinando reflects on the events that led to his loss of power, basing his tale on a variety of documents which may or may not be authentic. In her essay on the novel, Pérez suggests that Torrente is

undermining our usual reliance on documented history: she observes the difficulty in establishing not only the historical events but also the probable falsity of many, if not all, of the documents on which the story is based (Pérez 1989: 81–2). Pérez's essay aims to tease out the instability of memory, the falsification of documentary evidence, the fact that history is written by the winners and not by the losers, such as el Gran Duque, and the fact that chroniclers have their own biases and predispositions.

But this instability applies to geography, too, and the geographical parallel to documentary evidence on which history is based is the act of cartography, of mapping. If we cannot trust historical documents, why should we trust in geographical data? With this dilemma we return once again to the lack of geographical fixity to be found in Torrente's work, and in this light it is worth first considering the relevance of the novel's title, *La rosa de los vientos*, or the compass rose, which immediately brings to mind ideas of ships and the sea, of navigation – of geographical movement. The compass suggests simultaneously fixed points whereby location can be pinpointed, and the freedom of movement, of navigating, between these points. It is, not incidentally, worth remembering that the ideas of north, south, east and west that the compass brings to mind are to some extent in the mind and location of the beholder (thus reintroducing once more the importance of the subject): for me, for instance, writing this in the north of England, Spain is a country to the south, while for someone in Africa or Australia, it is to the north. The cardinal points are in fact mutable terms. Given all this it is surprising that Pérez does not realise the significance of the novel's title and the notion of geographical mutability. She observes the significance of the wind as a motif in Torrente's novels, and says,

Wind and compass are ... both symbolically related to creation, a coincidence which is interesting primarily in relation to the novel's title, for while wind is fairly important in *La rosa de los vientos*, the compass is not; there is only one allusion to it, in the context of a ghostly procession 'viniendo de las calles que confluyen, casi tantas como los rumbos de la Rosa'. (Pérez 1989: 83)²

Pérez sees the symbol of the compass rose in terms of history:

History is 'la rosa de los vientos', pointing first one direction and then another, depending, perhaps, which hand is on the helm. Both the 'rosa de los vientos' and history are supposed to orient or guide, yet various accidents can cause them to go awry (from a change in magnetic fields to a change of influences on the historiographer). (Pérez 1989: 95)

But geographical data, too, can go awry even as it is supposed to orientate us. As we shall see, Torrente leads us to doubt geography and maps, until ultimately the novel hints at an absence at the heart of the geographical enterprise: nothingness. The compass points north or south but navigational data dissolve until eventually the compass is pointing at nothing. Furthermore, however, the

compass rose becomes a symbol of resistance to dominant ideologies: a notion that is at first blush anachronistic as regards a formerly Falangist writer. In that space of nothingness new countries and spaces might be created that do not appear on any map, but where there is room for 'us' as in *No yo soy yo*, as opposed to a 'real' Spain where there might be no room for a former Falangist.

The compass and the map are vital tools in navigation: if the compass indicates direction, the map gives us fixed points towards which we move. But cartography is not necessarily an objective science: as James Corner has commented:

The experiences of space cannot be separated from the events that happen in it; space is situated, contingent and differentiated. It is remade continuously every time it is encountered by different people, every time it is represented through another medium, every time its surroundings change, every time new affiliations are forged. (Corner 1999, 227)

That is to say, the meaning of a place changes according to who lives there or uses that place, how the place is used, and how it is represented. Geography is not simply a question of scientific data but also a question of political and social concepts and situations that require human, sociopolitical negotiation (the subject, once more). In this sense geography is a mental as much as a physical entity, and as such it is something we can actively create ourselves according to our needs and desires – and create it anew should those needs and desires change. There are alternative geographies and alternative cartographies: a geographical mutability. As Frieda Hilda Blackwell has observed, a total divorce from external reality is not possible, but the writer has the right or even the responsibility to create new, maybe obscure, realities that have not yet come into being (Blackwell 1985: 13). Loureiro, too, writes of Torrente's sufficient reality or '*realidad suficiente*', which corresponds to the minimum of necessary facts that allow the imagination to operate. In consequence: '[e] fetichismo de la realidad *referencial* queda así eliminado en beneficio del autor y del lector' (the fetishisation of the *referential* real is thus eliminated for the benefit of writer and reader; Loureiro 1990: 27, italics mine).

The link between geography and the imagination is also to be found in the links posited by Edward Said between imperialism and geography:

If there is anything that radically distinguishes the imagination of anti-imperialism, it is the primacy of the geographical element. Imperialism after all is an act of geographical violence through which virtually every space in the world is explored, charted, and finally brought under control. For the native, the history of colonial servitude is inaugurated by loss of the locality to the outsider; its geographical identity must thereafter be searched for and somehow restored. Because of the presence of the colonizing outsider, the land is recoverable at first only through the imagination. (Said 1993: 271)

Conquest changes the meaning of the land: as Ferdinando says, 'mi país ya no es siquiera un país, sino una parte olvidada del de mi primo' (My country is not even a country any more, but a forgotten part of my cousin's; Torrente Ballester 1993: 28). In Said's terms, Ferdinando can only recover his country through his imagination, and the readers of *La rosa* are witnesses to the (re-)creation of his land in his imagination. His country – never named – has disappeared as a distinct geographical entity, which means that fixed points, whether towns, cities or countries, are still susceptible to change depending on who perceives them and also who names them. The invasion by Ferdinando's cousin el Águila del Este is a form of colonialism; and Ferdinando must attempt to recuperate his geographical identity in order to recuperate his history. Given his condition of exile, the imagination is the only way in which he can do this: Said says,

To the anti-imperialist imagination, our space at home in the peripheries has been usurped and put to use by outsiders for their purpose. It is therefore necessary to seek out, to map, to invent, or to discover a *third* nature, not pristine and pre-historical ... but deriving from the deprivations of the present. The impulse is cartographic. (Said 1993: 272)

Said is here contrasting 'third nature' to 'second nature' or what is instinctive. Invention in this case is therefore not a natural impulse but a deliberate and necessary act demanded by a lack of power. What we have in *La rosa de los vientos* is Ferdinando's mental creation of an alternative geography and cartography opposed to the imperialism of el Águila del Este, an opposition that derives, as Said says, from the deprivations of the present, of exile. It entails the recuperation and restoration of a geographical identity that, given the historical moment of exile, can only exist in the imagination.

If, as in the first citation from Said, the imperial impulse is to explore and register every corner of the world, then a primary act of rebellion is the fact that no information in *La rosa* is given that allows us to identify and locate Ferdinando's country. The first reference to this geographical uncertainty can be found in the novel's prologue, in which the 'author' (is this Torrente or not?) refers to the death of an anonymous old woman:

Se pusieron telegramas a Lisboa, de allí se ordenó su embalsamamiento, alguien vino un día con poder, metieron el féretro en el tren, y se dijo que la habían trasladado a su tierra, en un país septentrional, donde la habían enterrado en un rincón de una catedral luterana. (Torrente Ballester 1993: 11)

They sent telegrams to Lisbon, from there they ordered her embalming, one day someone arrived with authorisation, they put the coffin on the train, and it was said she was transferred to her own country, a northern country, where she was buried in a corner of the Lutheran cathedral.

We may suspect that the woman in question is Ferdinando's daughter Myriam (even though he denies he is her real father); but her country has no name.

Torrente tells us only that it is in the north, and Lutheran (while the northern reference might put us in mind of Galicia, Lutheran does not). But there are still real reference points with the mention of Lisbon; and later Portugal is mentioned as well, a country we can locate on a map. However, the manuscript's donor asks that Ferdinando's country not be named: 'si alguna vez lo publica, cambie los nombres de las personas y trastrueque los de los lugares hasta llegar a situarlo en un país indefinido' (if one day you publish it, change people's names and change round the place names so as to site them in an undefined country; Torrente Ballester 1993: 12). The prologue's author immediately warns us that the author of the manuscript might have changed the place names, and refuses to tell us in the prologue if he himself has also changed the names or not. All this suggests from the outset that geographical data are not to be trusted.

Ferdinando gives us some facts about his country but not enough to identify it: it is surrounded by sea on almost all sides (*ibid.*: 26), and Portugal is closer than the French Riviera (*ibid.*: 29–30). This space sounds very much like Spain itself, but then Spain has an imperial past far removed from the status of imperial victim suffered by this country. Pérez (1989: 80–1) believes the country to be a blending of Galicia, Norway, Denmark and possibly Luxemburg, but does not observe the crucial point that the country cannot be identified with any single one of these. Ferdinando's capital likewise has no name, despite its supposed renown: 'famosa por sus canales, por sus galerías orientadas al oeste, por sus escasas, aunque incomparables, puestas de sol' (famous for its canals, its galleries facing west, its rare but incomparable sunsets; Torrente Ballester 1993: 90–1). Its fame rests on a geographical basis through ideas to do with navigation: the canals, the west and the sunsets – but it lacks a name that enables us to locate it. The lack of fixed points in Ferdinando's memory is a form of disremembering or even forgetting, a form of ludic resistance against the imperialist impulse of el Águila. The territory that the latter thinks to control and dominate, evaporates and evolves into nothingness: it is not named and is thus forgotten. What does seem clear, however, is that this is territory that Ferdinando evokes through memory and shapes to his own needs or desires: 'No deja de ser curioso que yo sea el señor del espacio y del tiempo infinitos, aunque mi señorío no vaya más allá de un salón calentito' (It is still odd that I am the lord of infinite space and time, even if my rule goes no further than a nice warm living room; *ibid.*: 74–5). This demonstrates the ironic invocation of memory even through forgetting: Ferdinando regains power once more precisely through space and time, while nonetheless the actual limit of his space is the room of his exile. Through his control of space he 'forgets' his historical situation even as it continues to pertain. The control of territory, even through the mind alone, allows one to forget.

The map

But if Ferdinando's country lacks fixed points, it nonetheless has its maps. If Wittgenstein talks of a country for which we have no maps (quoted in Casey 2002: 129), *La rosa de los vientos* deals with maps for which we have no country. When Ferdinando and his friend Fritz, Baron Cronstadt, recreate battles with their tin soldiers, a map features as a tool in their war games (Torrente Ballester 1993: 53), and the idea of the map reappears in a note to Ferdinando from his agent Paulus:

Pues, ayer, cuatro gatos salieron gritando que viva el Emperador, y que esto y que lo otro: traían un cartel muy grande en el que podíamos ver el Águila Imperial comiéndose un pajarillo en cuyo cuerpo habían escrito el nombre de nuestra Patria, y otro, mayor aún, en el que habían pintado el mapa del Imperio, con las provincias que tiene y con las que no tiene todavía: entre éstas, nosotros. Nos habían puesto como si navegásemos perdidos en la mar y el Imperio saliese a rescatarnos. (Torrente Ballester 1993: 160)

So, yesterday, four cats appeared crying long live the Emperor, and this and that: they carried a large placard on which we could see the Imperial Eagle eating up a small bird on the body of which was written the name of our country; and an even bigger one on which was painted the map of the Empire, with the provinces it governs and the ones it does not as yet, ourselves among the latter. They positioned us as if we were sailing lost at sea, and the Empire were coming to rescue us.

In both cases the salient point for my argument here is the relation between the map, war and imperialism. As Said suggests, imperialism just as much as resistance to it can be understood as a cartographic impulse; and in these two examples we can see the map as both the symbol of imperial conquest and also the (imaginary) resistance to it in the war games of Ferdinando and Fritz. We should also notice that Ferdinando's undefined country figures on both maps. Thus Torrente gives us a map, which is arguably a definition, of an undefined country.

The last sentence of the citation above links the imperial impulse to cartography and navigation. An empire can, apparently, ensure safe navigation: it reorientates those who are lost. Navigation is, however, something else that Ferdinando causes us to doubt. While there may be maps, without fixed points of location neither the navigator nor the reader can find out where they are. Ferdinando's cartographic resistance is one of absences: his country's maps are maps of nothing. Ferdinando's erasure of location and points of orientation on his maps is a gesture of forgetting similar to the dissolving landscape of Villasanta and the disappearing town of Castroforte.

The compass rose

We noted previously that it was not only the map but also the compass that aided in navigation. The compass rose allows us to orientate ourselves in relation to the cardinal points. We find many references to north, south, east and west in the novel, the last two with a particular reference to sunrise and sunset. But within Ferdinando's country we never see the sun: the constant rain blocks it out. Given this situation, the compass is the only aid to navigation, given that the sun cannot be relied on to provide the cardinal points. But the compass rose also comes to mean an absence, because, if fixed points cannot be identified the cardinal points become mere abstractions, objects of veneration, cult, ritual and obsession through their very absence, as we see above all in the beautiful closing image of the novel: the city's entire population, including the Grand Duke, looking with veneration at the rare sight of a sunset by the sea. The moment is a ceremonial one of unity (everyone must pass through a door called *la Puerta de los Dioses*, or the Gate of the Gods, a gate which has lost the building to which it was formerly attached):

El sol ya iba cayendo, y el cielo rosa se encendía: también la mar, allá, en la lejanía en que se le juntaba el cielo. Poco a poco dejó de hablar la gente en alto, y todo el mundo miraba hacia el Oeste, hacia aquel medallón dorado, pero un poco rojizo, que se movía hacia la curva del horizonte de su muerte. A nosotros se nos respetaba el privilegio de poderlo mirar como enmarcado por la gran Puerta, pero no estoy seguro de que fuese de verdad un privilegio. El horizonte sin límites, el sol señero, los colores que se van espesando como una niebla que el sol empieza a atravesar, y el movimiento lejano de las olas, nada de eso cabe dentro de un marco. (Torrente Ballester 1993: 292–3).

The sun was already setting, and the sky was lighting up pink: the sea, too, in the distance where it met the sky. Gradually people stopped talking aloud, and everyone looked westward, to that golden medallion, but slightly reddened, which moved towards the horizon of its setting. We [the Ducal Family] were allowed the privilege of being able to look at it through the frame of the great gate, but I am not sure it was really a privilege. The limitless horizon, the solitary sun, the colours thickening like a fog that the sun started to pierce, and the far-off movement of the waves, none of this fits within a frame.

This veneration of the west, and of the points of the compass more generally, can be seen elsewhere in the novel: in the joy of crew members on Guntel's ship on knowing that they are facing west, a joy Guntel likens to arrival in Paradise (Torrente Ballester 1993: 82); Guntel's own poem that begins '¿Por qué seguís al sol cuando se muere?' (Why do you follow the sun when it sets?), and which likens navigation of a form of transcendence – 'ir más allá' (ibid.: 192); and Ferdinando's commentary on the poem that refers to an anxious desire to see the sun set, and the embrace of the setting sun's rays on those who were born

in his land (*ibid.*: 191). The link of reverential ecstasy and Paradise with the west offers an implicit opposition to the imperial power of the east, a resistance situated outside the mapped imperial territory. Thus the impulse to resistance leads to an aspiration for transcendence, a desire that expresses itself in geographical terms and above all in a desire for navigation. It is a search for another land beyond this one, a land that has room for 'us'. The blurring of compass points, and the veneration for the west, is set against the imperial power of the east and thus suggests a refusal to accept the history that is now being written, echoing the forgetting of a history that is now being rewritten of Spain, in which the old order is dismissed. If, as Wylie posited, landscape, space and place are those with which we see, what space and place offer to us here is a lack of fixity and the disappearance of recognisable landmarks and coordinates. But in Rose's formulation we see a call to care (as suggested by the veneration) for a lost country, a country remembered in preference to a prevailing order which is ignored.

Navigation

We therefore have a lack of fixed geographical points and in consequence a compass rose that points to nothing (and simultaneously to transcendence, the desire to go beyond). These, taken together, suggest an incapacity to navigate. But throughout the novel we find constant references to the importance of navigation and the sea in the daily life of Ferdinando's country. Torrente's description of the city evokes an idea of the sea as essential and inevitable in the citizens' lives:

La ciudad la cruzan canales y brazos de mar, la mar penetra, las casas asoman a las ondas sus ventanas y balcones, y por todo lugar navegable se nos meten los barcos de todos los calados y de todas las banderas, de modo que al abrir las vidrieras por la mañana, siempre hay una fragata o un bergantín cuyos penoles se acercan familiarmente o pasan de largo como gente de trato. (Torrente Ballester 1993: 37).

The city is criss-crossed by channels and arms of the sea, the sea penetrates it, the windows and balconies of the houses look out on to the waves, and boats of all depths and under all flags enter in by any navigable way, so that when you open your shutters in the morning there is always a frigate or a brig whose yardarms come familiarly close or pass by like old acquaintances.

But with the advent of the new Empire the sea plays a more and more remote role in the daily life of the country. In his first letter Guntel describes what to him is the mystery of a ship and of a maritime voyage, ending his description with the phrase: 'el mundo está lleno de cosas que nosotros ignoramos' (the world is full of things we don't know; Torrente Ballester 1993: 79). Ultimately Ferdinando's country is beginning to forget its identity and its traditional

customs, as the anonymous writer observes in giving us a final image of the ship of the phantasmal gods as a final memory or trace of a maritime past which is becoming more alien (*ibid.*: 284). But the loss of the sea renders it more desirable. Navigation is the encounter with the map, its concretisation realised through the compass rose. Thus navigation is also an attempt to recuperate geography and make it concrete. As Said says, geographical identity has to be looked for if it is to be recuperated, and so once again navigation is a desire to go beyond, an attempt to realise a desire for transcendence. But there is, moreover, a tension at the heart of the map and the compass rose. Both indicate the fixed nature of places, but at the same time the possibility for navigation and thus fluid movement and instability. As Denis Cosgrove says, 'The map's pretence to stable, uniform and smoothly mobile knowledge depends upon inherently unstable, uneven, fragmentary, specifically positioned and haphazardly transferred information' (Cosgrove 1999: 11–12). The compass rose becomes a symbol of constant oscillation between the imperialist tendency to stasis and the impulse to resist it, and likewise a symbol of the desire for transcendence and ultimately for nothingness. The compass rose suggests an ever frustrated desire to make concrete an absence. Geography, symbolised by the compass rose, becomes an impossible object of desire, represented by the sunset ceremony at the end of the novel. Geography, like history, is mutable: stasis and movement, empire and resistance. In the end, as Pérez says, it depends whose hand is on the wheel.

There is thus a desire for association, a desire to belong, but to a place that becomes out of reach. Maps of the impossible place suggest resistance to the prevailing order at the same time that it assumes the impossibility of resisting: the remaking and unmaking of maps, just like the refashioning and ultimately unmaking of *Castroforte* and *Villasanta*, imply the resistance to prevailing history and the call to care for another way of being and thus the creation of an imaginary space in which this subjectivity can be fully realised, thus acting as a place of forgetting of and retreat from the real geography and real history of Spain. The spaces and places of *Torrente's* work are the ways in which we see *Torrente's* attitudes to history made manifest, his alignment with myth rather than history because, as Labanyi observes, myth-makers 'revel in the potentially infinite proliferation of variant versions offered by myth, as opposed to central authority's "scientific" insistence on imposing a "single" truth' (Labanyi 1989: 216). *Torrente's* imaginary geographies evade the strictures of 'real' history: they are calls to care for a country where he can belong, and he can forget the current rewriting of history.

But that country is not totally divorced from recognisably Spanish territory. Spanish geographical referents become the spectral presence that mean that forgetting, too, is ultimately impossible in *Torrente's* work. If the spaces and

places show us the possibility of escape, they also show the starting point from where Torrente begins: the rainy landscapes of Galicia that haunt his work. It is clear from the opening passages of *La rosa* quoted above that Ferdinando's country is not simply to be equated with Galicia, but the rain and the fog, the difficulties of seeing the sun, the link to navigation, all invoke a potential link with Galicia similar to the towns of Castroforte and Villasanta. These landscapes all share with Galicia the slippery and ludic tendencies identified by Torrente in his own description of his homeland quoted above. We have a compass and maps, and we can navigate around this land, but it is an ambiguous land where maps and compasses may ultimately point to nothingness, to the uncertainties of geography as well as history – and yet where we still may find an impulse to attempt to map the imaginary lands on to a real Galicia and a real Spain. We cannot in the end say whether or not we are talking about Galicia – but then in that sense we must be talking about Galicia, since that uncertainty is in the end the essence of the place. And Galicia in its semi-detachedness thus invokes Spain; it both is and is not of Spain, but in its indeterminacy it inevitably calls to mind the impossible 'certainty' of Spain. To conclude, I would refer back to my introductory chapter and the reference there to Antoine de Saint-Exupéry's fairytale map of Spain. He exclaims at the magically transformed space, rethought and reimagined through the encouragement of his teacher. But in the final instance it is still a map of Spain and it still evokes the notion of 'Spain', however like a fairyland it looks: its rivers are still clearly marked. At the end of *La rosa* Ferdinando comments that one should not forget that his is a country of navigators (Torrente Ballester 1993: 293) and concludes, 'olvidarlo aquí, me dejaría en los labios ese sabor amargo del que se calla la verdad porque no la juzgan decente' (forgetting it here would leave in my mouth that bitter taste of one who suppresses the truth because they don't find it decent; *ibid.*: 294). Forgetting, in the final analysis, is impossible.

Note

- 1 This author is, incidentally, also the author of the series of Petra Delicado novels (under the name of Alicia Giménez Bartlett) that I will discuss in Chapter 6.
- 2 I am using the second edition of *La rosa* published by Destino in 1993, and Pérez's citation from the novel appears on p. 171 of this edition. Translated, the citation means: 'coming from the converging streets, almost as many as the points of the compass'.

CHAPTER FOUR

Landscape and identities in the Basque Country

If landscape, space and place can be used as a way of seeing past traumas and the way in which they haunt the present, they can also be used to see present traumas, too. One of the most enduring legacies of Franco's dictatorship is the sometimes violent struggle over the political position of the Basque Country, in the north of the Iberian peninsula: although the roots of the Basque nationalist movement promoting greater autonomy or outright independence from Spain go further back in time than the Franco period, the dictatorship added a new edge to calls for a recognition of the Basque Country as a nation, since Francoist ideology opposed any expression of regional identity that might presuppose a national identity separate from that of Spain. Franco believed that Spain should be kept whole, united and indivisible. The Basque Country was not alone in suffering political and cultural repression as a result – Catalonia and Galicia, the other familiar 'historical nationalities' of Spain, also saw their cultural and political freedoms severely curtailed – but only in the Basque Country did local reaction amount to a sustained campaign of violent rebellion, now commonly recognised in the democratic era as terrorist.

My purpose in this chapter is to consider Rose's call to care in the light not only of the ongoing political conflict but also of a well established landscape tradition in the Basque Country that itself is closely bound up with Basque nationalist ideas and ideologies, although not necessarily synonymous with them. Landscape, space and place can be redolent of nationalism as well as nation, as is exemplified by the link commonly made between rural and mountainous landscape and Basque nationalism. This chapter first explores how this link plays out in films that deal with the Basque nationalist struggle and the ways in which landscape, space and place are used. It begins by considering the relation of landscape to debate about the Basque situation in Julio Medem's *La pelota vasca: la piel contra la piedra* (Basque Ball: Skin Against Stone, 2003). It then moves on to consider how terrorists fighting for Basque independence move across the Basque landscape by means of the rural road in *Días contados* (Running Out of Time; Imanol Uribe, 1994) and *El viaje de Arián* (Arian's Journey; Eduard Bosch,

2000), tracing out an oscillation between the rural, iconic of Basque nationalism, and the city and its problematisation of Basque national identity. It concludes by remaining in the city to discuss industrial landscape, a landscape also typical of the Basque Country and yet denied as indicative of it, seen by some film critics as mythical rather than real – and this despite recent efforts at co-optation of the industrial landscape, notably by film director Daniel Calparsoro, and by Frank Gehry through his Guggenheim museum in Bilbao. The Bilbao Guggenheim is our finishing point for the chapter, moving away from film to contemplate the ambiguities of this recent addition to the Basque landscape.

How does one express a desire for association with or to belong to Spain in a situation and in a landscape where ‘belonging to Spain’ is what is in question, and where a desire *not* to associate with Spain is one of the traces which haunts the landscape? As we shall see in the case of the Guggenheim museum, the apparently polarised desire for either the Basque nation or the Spanish nation can produce strikingly similar reactions: a reversion to preconceived ideas of the link between landscape and territory, so that the view of the Basque Country looks remarkably similar regardless of the point of view. Although landscape, space and place in the Basque Country are used as means through which to see a desire to belong, the same perceptions turn up regardless of the label (nation or region) applied to the place where belonging is desired. Clearly, some of those who move about Basque spaces and places actively desire to avoid invoking Spain, and yet Spain is invoked regardless of the form of desire to belong. Paul Julian Smith, in summarising the work of renowned Basque commentator Fernando Savater, observes, ‘The grand narrative of nationality is ... founded on the little narratives of locality and subjectivity: we must consider the meaning of proximity with others; and understand the confrontation between inside and outside (self and other) on which political solidarity and exclusions are based’ (Smith 2000: 82–3). Not only is Spain made up of different areas that go to make up grand narratives of ‘Spain’, but these narratives also include and perhaps even embrace counter narratives that appear to undermine the invocation of Spain. But in fact Spain is inevitably invoked when the Basque Country is mentioned, uncannily, as Joseba Gabilondo would put it (Gabilondo 2002); it is itself a ghostly trace that inevitably haunts similar invocations of the Basque Country as precisely a thing opposed to the invocation of Spain. Spain and the Basque Country haunt each other whether or not they are separate territories. Gabilondo argues that Basque identity is often one of denial that renders them uncanny to themselves, an argument that I have found not without its problems (see Davies 2009: 27) but which resonates in the use of Basque landscape, space and place. Indeed, Spain and the Basque Country come to haunt each other. The spaces and places depicted in Basque cinema and beyond come to be spaces of distance, displacement and denial appropriate for uncanny identities.



Figure 4 Rural landscape in *Ama lur*

There has been a tendency in films about the Basque Country to figure debate about Basque national identity through its landscape, particularly when it comes to the militant Basque nationalism of ETA (Euskadi ta Askatasuna, Basque Land and Liberty). Barry Jordan and Rikki Morgan-Tamosunas have commented on the tendency of some film-makers

to emphasize the folkloric, traditional, idyllically rural version of Basque life, disconnected from the outside world, a view which was largely out of step with political and social change in the region. Also, more widely, a politically radical Basque nationalism appeared to be somewhat in thrall to an essentialist vision of Basque culture and identity, predicated on just such a version of the Basque Country as an unchanging rural arcadia. (Jordan and Morgan-Tamosunas 1998: 184)

Although the history of Basque cinema goes back as far as the beginnings of the silent era, its seminal film – the first real landmark of Basque film-making – did not come until just before the 1970s and the resurgence of Basque film-making once the Franco regime had gone. *Ama lur* (Mother Earth; Néstor Basterretxea and Fernando Larruquert, 1968) (Fig. 4) was a celebratory documentary montage of life in the Basque Country that emphasised the Basque rural heritage largely at the expense of its industrial history (although the latter is not totally ignored). This is not to say that film-makers could not use the landscape itself as part of a critique of Basque nationalism in particular and Basque society more generally: an example is Julio Medem's debut film *Vacas* (Cows, 1992), where we are offered landscape shots of a romantically wild beauty that perpetuate a sense of the Basque Country as an integral part of a timeless Basque national identity (and this despite Medem's effort to site this landscape within the passage of Basque/Spanish history). But Medem simultaneously offers the claustrophobia of the landscape as the cause of the violence – at the level of the family and the nation – that occurs within it. Medem also,

however, demonstrates the constant recourse to rural images in his controversial *La pelota vasca*. In this documentary people from various walks of public life offer their often contrasting views on the ‘Basque problem’, shot against a variety of landscapes, interspersed with sweeping aerial shots of craggy Basque coastlines while Basque music is played. Rob Stone is not unique in criticising the film for overdetermined reflections of the nationalist celebration of rural Basqueness that are contrasted with montages of urban spaces as violent – a use of landscape that matches the ‘stale rhetoric’ of many of the interviewees (Stone 2007: 202). The effect of Medem’s aerial shots can be compared to Tom Gunning’s concept of phantom rides derived from early cinema’s depictions of train travel, which appear to allow an immediate experience of landscape but which in fact serves to distance us: ‘As film viewers, we seem to be there, to actually fulfil the desire for entrance into an illusionary landscape. Space streams right at us – yet it only invites our eyes to enter, our bodies remain seated, on the other side of the screen’ (Gunning 2010: 59). The notion of distance is borne out by Medem’s own comments on his film, when he talks of

esas localizaciones (de los alrededores), parajes naturales en los que parece que toda tensión entre humanos está fuera de lugar. La suma aleatoria de fondos (en bosques, campas, montes, acantilados) que ayudan a retratar la geografía vasca más primigenia, calada de sentimientos tan antiguos como inamovibles, me vino bien para mantener el ojo de pájaro y así persuadirme de que puedo ver el odio sin odiarlo. (Medem 2005: 22)

the surrounding locales, natural places in which it seems any tension between people is out of place. The random collection of backdrops (woods, open spaces, mountains, cliffs) which go together to offer a picture of Basque geography at its most primordial, saturated with feelings as ancient as they are immovable, served me well in maintaining the bird’s eye view and so convince me that I could see the hate without hating it.

The point of view of a bird flying through the landscape is crucial to Medem’s conception of the Basque conflict. However, while it gives the illusion of entry into the Basque landscape for which Medem expresses such a passion both in the above quotation and in the loving care with which he ensures it is filmed, it is a view at a distance, and the distance is important for expressing Medem’s own call to care for the Basque Country (the distance reminding us of Wylie’s geography of love) and for being able to draw back and, as Medem hoped from his film, open up the Basque question to dialogue without hate. The concept of distance is implied further when Medem talks of ‘displacing’ his interviewees into these environments (Medem 2005: 22), suggesting in consequence that these spaces are not where they normally belong, that these are alien environments. Stone’s comments on Medem’s earlier film *Los amantes del círculo polar* (Lovers of the Arctic Circle, 1998) apply equally here:

The isolation of characters in natural landscapes suggests both internal and external exile and relates to conflicting ideas of the Basque Country as being both within Spain and beyond it, as well as to the condition of a variety of Basques themselves, who may find themselves exiled physically from Spain or the Basque Country because of contrary political beliefs or fear (such as those fleeing extortion, harassment and violence in both directions) and at the same time exiled internally by their exclusion from the hegemony in the Basque Country or elsewhere. (Stone 2007: 128)

The isolation of interviewees in natural landscapes is what transpires in *La pelota vasca*, and Medem's concept of displacement underscores the awkward relationship to Basque spaces of those who are in some way qualified to talk about the Basque conflict. As Stone observes, 'Basque cinema is concerned with physical space as the absence of something that is yearned for, which is often interpreted as independence or a separate identity' (Stone 2007: 127). Such a statement coincides neatly if ironically with Wylie's geographies of love discussed in the opening chapter, in which distance, separation and loss are component parts of a possible desire for association through landscape. But the Basque landscape – the landscape with which we see the distance between a national ideal and the people commenting on it – does not necessarily have to be seen as part of a Basque nationalist project: not all of the interviewees in the film agree with such a project, but all are isolated in and distanced from the space in which Medem situates them.

This distancing effect chimes with Joseba Gabilondo's theory of uncanny identities in Basque cinema, which questions not only whether there can be such a thing as Basque cinema (Gabilondo 2002: 264) but to some extent whether there can be such a thing as a Basque identity, since the Spanish state and Spanish nationalism desire the repression of regional identities (ibid.: 267). Much of Basque cinema is produced elsewhere in Spain for Spanish audiences (ibid.: 268), while some prominent Basque film-makers have moved to Madrid: Medem himself has shown an intriguing oscillation between Madrid and the Basque Country, in the later stages of his career basing himself in the former while making a controversial film about the latter. And the controversy over *La pelota vasca* stemmed in part from where the money came from to make the film: there was a good deal of anger that Spanish public funds were used for a film in which supporters of ETA were interviewed and where the testimonies of a policeman's widow and the wife of a jailed ETA member were juxtaposed as if to give them equivalence. The justification or otherwise of these accusations have been addressed elsewhere (see, for instance, Barrenetxea Marañón 2006; Gómez López-Quñones 2009): what concerns me here is the tense relationship between the Basque Country and the Spanish state as represented by its capital Madrid that implies the uncanny identity that Gabilondo is positing, and which

brings us closer to the matter of a desire for association visualised through the landscape, in the light of the distancing effect I have posited for *La pelota vasca*. Gabilondo observes that

In Spain, most new subject positions and identities, as soon as they are othered, become national noises and fractures that, nevertheless, are constitutive of the state order and its desire. This is the contradiction at the core of Basque cinema, but also of other subjects: queers, immigrants, and women, for example. (Gabilondo 2002: 276)

The concerns of some of these othered groups will arise in later chapters, but their position, along with the historical nationalities such as the Basque Country, as intricately imbricated with the Spanish state while nonetheless being denied recognition, is akin to Wylie's idea of the geography of love although here again love is not really the word for it. But the uncanny identities that we perceive through the Basque landscape of *La pelota vasca* suggests both the gulf that separates the Basque project from the Spanish one but also how closely the two are tied together, locked in an unwanted embrace. In one sense it is like two sides of the same coin: so much are the Basque and Spanish projects fused together – and yet those two sides can never perceive each other.

At the end of *La pelota vasca* the final testimony comes from the writer Bernardo Atxaga (Fig. 5) who points to the city as the hope for the Basque Country, playing on the assonance between *Euskal Herria* (the Basque Country) and *euskal hiria* (the Basque city). For Atxaga, the multiple identities of the communities who make up the city provide a model for the Basque Country to follow. But it then becomes all the more striking that Medem rarely offers us such city images as his backdrops: the city as a site of coexistence is absent from the film.



Figure 5 Displaced interviewees: Bernardo Atxaga in *La pelota vasca*

We can see how the use of space and place figures the attempt of one group involved in the Basque struggle to come to terms with this distancing and displacement between land or nation and subject in those films which feature the road as a place of transition, self-discovery and movement away.

ETA and the rural road

The figuring of the rural landscape as symbol of an eternal Basque nation has obvious implications in relation to the figuring of a group of people fighting for that national identity as fully independent of another, colonising nation that is Spain. In this case the landscape comes to signify the interrelation between nationalist myth and contemporary history. Rosalind Galt has commented (in a discussion of the relation of landscape to Italian film),

The landscape image must not be seen as some kind of immanence, but rather is only able to signify as an abstraction when it is, already, part of a concrete history. Thus, the landscape images of the films could not produce such an effect of auratic loss if this structure of temporality did not also, and at the same time, involve a projected experience of an actual historical loss. (Galt 2002: 167–8)

In her use of the word ‘auratic’, Galt is referring to Walter Benjamin and his concept of the aura ‘as a projection of a social experience of people onto nature’ (Galt 2002: 168). In a similar manner the Basque landscape acts as a projection of Basque nationalist identity but one that is, despite its apparently physical presence, marked with loss. If the Basque landscape offers a timeless rural arcadia, as Jordan and Morgan-Tamosunas suggest, then the Basque separatist struggle to regain the Basque Country as an independent nation state implies that this arcadia has been previously lost. However, it is politically inadmissible to perceive the countryside as symbolic of a nation already lost in collective terms, if that collective is ETA: in this section, we shall see that the re-enactment of loss must be displaced from the collective to the individual, and the illustration of this argument is the section’s focal point.

It is perhaps rather obvious to say that the landscape acts as a constant reminder of the mythical Basque Country which ETA is fighting to regain, but it is also crucial to notice that in many (though not all) cases of films featuring ETA violence, that violence is displaced away from the countryside as the repository of nationalist identity to a more anonymous urban environment – where identities may be more fluid – that forms the site of terrorist operations. André Gardies argues that, unlike the narrative novel, in narrative film and theatre there is no spectacle without space (Gardies 1993: 10). For the terrorist spectacle this is particularly true: while the relationship of terrorism to the media continues to be debated, terrorists require events – spectacles – to get the message across, and thus they need a space or place in which to carry these

out. This for the terrorist is the function of the city; while the rural landscape becomes a symbol of their cause and thus untouchable. All this presumes that the city cannot act as a locus of Basque national identity, a proposition that is debatable but which nonetheless recurs in many films about ETA, and which reinforces an urban/rural divide. In the films that provide the focus for my discussion below, this dichotomy is emphasised further by the location of the city as ultimately outside the Basque Country: the urban Madrid and Barcelona are placed in opposition to a rural Basque motherland. The contemporary city implies ambiguity through the different classes and groups who live there, with their own distinct and sometimes conflicting cultures, which may in turn give rise to a sense of moral ambiguity, too. But the value of the city for ETA terrorists gives rise to a further level of ambiguity. Through its actions in the city ETA seeks to gain power over this urban space as a step towards power over the rural space to which they lay a national claim, but, as we shall see, the city also becomes the place where individual ETA members seek to evade the organisation's control.

It is also notable that we do not see ETA terrorists immersed in this rural landscape as such: rather, they move through it. There is a preponderance of roads in films dealing with Basque terrorism. If many of the films concerned posit a contrast between the (often unnamed and thus anonymous) city as the actual site of ETA's terrorist operations, and the rural landscape that offers a lost arcadia which the terrorists wish to recuperate, then the two spaces, despite their distinctiveness, are not totally divorced from each other. Such films frequently also show the terrorist crossing between the two terrains on rural highways; and it this common motif of the road as a sign of transition and traversal that will be considered here. To do this I will make use of ideas to do with the road movie: although not all the films I mention here qualify as road movies, comments made by critics of the road movie nonetheless offer some illumination of the issues concerned with terrorist road travel in cinema, particularly given the common trajectory of the road movie road through a deserted and/or rural landscape, a road often used as a route out of the constraints of urban life. A particularly pertinent comment on this point is that of Bennet Schaber, who remarks: 'With the return to the desert the road film returns to the scene of the origins of the people ... the desert is the place of a people always already in exile' (Schaber 1997: 40). In a similar way ETA terrorists continue to return to their own roots in a sort of Freudian *fort-da* movement, revisiting the land over which they are struggling to regain control, only to leave it for the exile of the urban, 'foreign' land of the city, wherein they actually carry out that struggle for the land to which they intend to return, and so on, in a circle. In the two films which form the focus of this discussion, it is noticeable that the landscape includes desert-like elements. In one case, at the beginning of *Días*

contados, the *mise-en-scène* offers cold and bleak mountains devoid of vegetation. In the other case, at the pivotal point of *El viaje de Arián*, which I will discuss in more detail below, we find craggy rock faces reminiscent of hideouts in some Western films. Also useful is the observation of Steve Cohan and Ina Rae Hark (1997: 3), that the road movie encompasses the interrelation of modernity and tradition, a concept also reflected in films dealing with ETA and roads, in which the road is the place of modern transportation employing that quintessential modern artefact, the car – but against the Basque landscape that has come to stand all too readily for a timeless (and thus not contemporary) Basqueness that is intricately bound up to questions of nationalism. This provides a link to the interrelation of myth and history in the landscape posited by Galt.

But the suggestion of exile points to another implication of the rural road. The city streets (particularly in the two films to be discussed here) seem remarkably self-contained: there is no sense that they lead anywhere. In *Arián*, an early scene shows a street protest in favour of ETA, in which activists block a police vehicle in an alley: the scene at first glance suggests the city as the place for effective action in support of ETA, but it also presents to us the city street as a place of potential entrapment and an inability to move away or escape. And this entrapment can overtake not only members of the police but of ETA as well, as the final scene of *Días contados* demonstrates: the violent and tragic denouement takes place in the confines of a side street in Madrid from which no character – including ETA members – can escape the consequences of the terrorist violence that occurs there. The rural road, however, like the road of the road movie, always contains the inherent possibility of elsewhere, of movement away, of escape and desertion; the desertion deriving from the sense of the desert, of exile. In that sense, the rural road, implying both exile and escape, is an affront to the Basque landscape through which it runs. It implies that there is always an alternative to the mother country.

Terrorists are not, of course, the only ones to use these roads, but Spanish cinema nonetheless offers a variety of examples of the road as the space and place in which different people come to terms with the implications of radical Basque nationalism. In the documentary *Asesinato en febrero* (Assassination in February; Eterio Ortega Santillana, 2001) we see those who have lost friends, relations or spouses drive through the solitary Basque landscape while we listen to their voice-overs detailing their feelings and their reactions to the effects of terrorism on their lives. Moving closer towards ETA, *La muerte de Mikel* (The Death of Mikel; Imanol Uribe, 1983) explores the inability of a Basque activist and ETA sympathiser, Mikel (Imanol Arias), to reconcile his political commitment to Basque nationalism with his increasingly overt homosexuality. The use Uribe makes here of the image of the road is compelling in this respect. After spending the night in Bilbao with a transvestite singer, Mikel begins to

drive back to his village along a road with the usual rural (and desert-like) backdrop. Suddenly he swerves and begins to drive on the wrong side of the road, running the risk of crashing into drivers coming in the opposite direction – until he pulls over on to the verge and collapses at the wheel. This sequence clearly implies not only the stress at trying to reconcile his two identities, political and sexual, but also the fact that his sexual orientation places him at odds with his community (suggested by the rural scenery, again desert-like and thus implying exile). Mikel is moving literally in a different direction from everyone else, and in so doing endangers the community cohesiveness that entails doing as everyone else does. His nationalist colleagues will subsequently withdraw the offer they previously made to him to be their candidate in forthcoming elections, underscoring Mikel's alienation from the Basque national community they claim to represent. In these cases, as well as with films focusing on actual ETA terrorists, the road features as a site of transition upon which characters negotiate the interrelation of personal desire (and suffering) with national identity and specifically ETA violence, and in driving across these roads through the Basque landscape they play out the tensions that arise from these conflicting pressures. Terrorists are not therefore unique in this particular relation of the road to national struggle, but the irony of the road as a potential force for exile has particular resonance in their case, given their insistence on reclaiming the Basque Country as a nation state. Bringing the Basque nation into full, independent realisation implies, as we shall see in more detail below, the possibility of exile and thus exclusion from it.

I would now like to explore in more detail the implication of the rural road for the terrorist in *Días contados* and *El viaje de Arián*. *El viaje de Arián* functions to a great extent as a road movie, as its title implies. *Días contados* does not function in this way, being a more general thriller, but its use of the road at key junctures of the film will also have significance for the current discussion. In these films rural roads act as the way of connection between two opposed sites – the rural countryside that seems iconic of Basque identity and thus Basque nationalism, and the city, the place and space of terrorist operations and also, ultimately, the place of exile. In both films the city street functions primarily as the site for shootings, car bombs and, in the case of *Arián*, abduction, as well as an attack on a police vehicle. These street scenes contrast to shots of the rural roads, the place where nothing is supposed to happen, the site of not-spectacle. These are for the terrorist places of transition rather than of action – although in both films they carry reminders of the terrorist's transgression of the law through checkpoints, an aspect I will discuss below. If the rural landscape is symbolic of the Basque nation, it is striking that this is for the most part an unpeopled landscape in both films, while most of the population are to be found in more ambiguous urban surroundings. In perhaps rather a crude manner, the

positioning of the terrorists in this landscape suggests that they are cut off from the rest of the population, a notion reinforced as they drive in the sealed-off isolation of the car.

As with the films previously mentioned, both of these films use the road as the place in which the central character's identification with the Basque Country, and the separatist struggle for that country, is called into question. The use of travel along a road as a metaphor for the exploration of some critical juncture in a character's life is hardly a new one – it forms the basis of the road movie genre. The road provides an opportunity to explore identities away from the demands and constraints of urban society: these identities are usually ones of marginalization or rebellion, as Cohan and Hark comment, and 'the increasing hospitality of the road to the marginalized and alienated' (Cohan and Hark 1997: 12) coincides to some degree with the use of the Basque rural road by terrorists attempting to evade the law. It might thus at first be thought that these roads would form the site of negotiation of a collective ETA identity. Katie Mills argues that 'the road story offers marginalized communities a ready narratological structure to represent rebellion and collective transformation' (Mills 1997: 307), and this hypothesis would in theory fit the Basque terrorist case quite well. This notion would reflect Cohan and Hark's positing (Cohan and Hark 1997: 2) of the road movie (and thus the road itself) as an embodiment of the tensions and crises of the historical moment – coinciding with Galt's comments on landscape as part of a concrete history, and reflecting an increasing questioning of ETA's role in an era where the repression of Basqueness that occurred in Spain's Francoist era is long gone (although abuse by Spanish forces may continue) and where the Basque Country has acquired greater autonomy than before. But what we in fact find in *Arián* and *Días contados* is not a collective transformation of the Basque community, which is arguably what ETA are working towards, but a rebellion and exile carried out at an individual level, through the protagonists Arián and Antonio. Both films emphasise the individual terrorist as distinct from the general ETA group, and the roads parallel their individual journey that ultimately leads to their deaths. If, generally, roads and road journeys signify a transgression against and an escape from an established social order, then here the road becomes the place where these individual terrorists carry out their own transgression against ETA itself, who thus ironically come to figure an established social order (see Davies 2003). If, as Cohan and Hark comment, the road is the place for the alienated, then here the terrorist individual is alienated twice over – alienated from ETA itself as well as Basque society in general, implying a (debatable) equation between the two. Cohan and Hark quote Michael Atkinson, who comments that 'once you enter the open hinterlands between cities, you're on your own' (quoted in Cohan and Hark 1997: 1). While this remark does not specifically

pinpoint the isolated individual, it nonetheless draws attention to the land outside the city as an isolated place that requires individual self-determination. Thus the terrorist use of the road suggests an individual rather than a collective transformation: the collective – ETA itself – remains unchanged.

In both films the protagonist turns away from ETA and from the Basque Country as a whole, undertaking both literal and spiritual journeys that take them on trajectories away from the rurality associated with Basque identity and towards the anonymity of a Spanish city. Arián (Ingrid Rubio) refuses to carry out the order to kill a hostage when a mission goes wrong: instead she kills the surviving members of her team and flees to Barcelona. Antonio (Carmelo Gómez) continues to participate in terrorist missions until the very end of the film, but his increasing disillusionment with ETA is paralleled by his growing involvement with a group of young junkie dropouts in Madrid and his subsequent love affair with Charo (Ruth Gabriel), one of their number. Both protagonists thus transgress against ETA and its dedication to radical Basque nationalism, and this transgression can be perceived in spatial terms as not only a shift from the Basque Country to the Spanish city but a move from the rural/mythical national to the urban/hybrid. At least part if not all of this trajectory from rural to urban involves the crossing of rural roads. As Tim Cresswell puts it, 'Transgression ... depends on the pre-existence of some form of spatial ordering. Forms of transgression owe their efficacy to types of space, place, and territory' (Cresswell 1996: 166). But transgression implies not only the notion of spatial ordering but also of movement, divergence; and the road functions here as the space in which transgressive movement can occur. In these films, transgression becomes movement away from the fixed space of the Basque Country as an expression of disillusionment with the form of commitment to the Basque Country that is ETA. The rural landscape through which the road passes suggests the pre-existing spatial order that points to Basque national identity, but the road, while itself being a part of this rural space, transgresses it by facilitating an escape from this pre-existing spatial ordering.

The rural road is further marked as transgressive through the people we encounter on it. In contrast to the streets, the rural roads are mostly devoid of people other than the terrorists: only occasionally do we see other people moving across the landscape. These non-terrorists fall for the most part into two categories. The first and most obvious group are the police posted at checkpoints. The checkpoint demonstrates one way in which the Basque road differs from the road of the road movie, for while the latter suggests the potential for freedom and an escape from social constraint, in the two films discussed here such constraints are reintroduced through the checkpoints as a reminder of the law. This suggests a competition for control of this boundary space, but also posits this space as one to which the terrorist cannot lay an overt claim,

suggesting the road's distinction from the Basque landscape that surrounds it to which the terrorist does lay claim. For a terrorist to traverse these roads is in itself an act of transgression, as the checkpoint demonstrates. Both Arián and Antonio must pass through a checkpoint and submit themselves to the gaze of the law (and in both cases this occurs after their initial moment of transgression). The checkpoint thus serves to point up the fact that the two protagonists are doubly transgressive – not only against ETA (since both checkpoint scenes arise from a defiance of ETA orders) but against a law which they might not recognise as legitimate but which they nonetheless have to take into account and under whose scrutiny they have to pass.

The other group of people to be found on the roads are in fact those who unwittingly provide cover for the terrorist to get through these checkpoints, and they moreover imply a further, sexual level of transgression. Mario (Santi Ibáñez), who picks up Arián as she walks along the road, and takes her to Barcelona (and through the checkpoint), may indulge in a one-night stand with her. The matter is unclear, but the two share a room overnight, and when Mario and Arián part company in Barcelona he tries unsuccessfully to obtain a phone number from her. But the hint of this further indicates Arián's move away from terrorist involvement. Her original participation in ETA was intricately linked to her relationship with her boyfriend Vivaldi (Abel Folk: the character is nicknamed after the composer of the music he likes), a more seasoned ETA campaigner: it is his death that in part precipitates her rebellion against orders and the subsequent murder of the rest of her team that forms her primary and principal act of transgression. The possibility that she has moved on to a new sexual partner, fleeting though the relationship might be, parallels her move away from ETA, and her sexual transgression lies not so much in the fling itself – a sign of Arián's despair and in any case hardly a matter for great censure – but in the divergence (indeed, the deviation) of sexual expression from its parallel with political commitment that the relationship with Vivaldi formerly provided. The opening credit sequence of *Días contados* reveals Antonio apparently going to or from some ETA mission, since in his car he passes, turns and follows his colleagues Lourdes and Carlos who are in another car – suggesting coordination. But then Antonio picks up a hitchhiker, Clara (Marga Sánchez), who offers him a blow job. This crucial sequence in the film indicates transgression at different levels. Clara's presence in the car in one sense covers Antonio when he is stopped at the checkpoint; but the furious reaction of Antonio's colleague and former lover Lourdes (Elvira Mínguez), who has watched the checkpoint incident from afar, suggests that Antonio's use of Clara indicates his willingness to put the mission at risk. This fact becomes more obvious with his increasing involvement with Charo, whose discovery of his identity as a terrorist will lead to his betrayal to the police by Charo's friend Lisardo (Javier

Bardem). The incident also implies that Antonio's move away from ETA is paralleled from the very beginning by his sexual transgression. Antonio refuses to continue his sexual relationship with Lourdes, preferring to 'slum it' outside the confines of a bourgeois heterosexual monogamous relationship, which, as I have argued elsewhere (see Davies 2003), is in this film strongly equated to Basque separatism. Thus this incident with Clara suggests from the outset Antonio's willingness to betray Lourdes, and thus to transgress against both sexual monogamy and ETA itself, which sanctions the monogamous relationship between ETA members but which views as dangerous any sexual interest outside its own Basque circle. The incident will point to his subsequent relationship with Charo, from the ambiguous and non-Basque city, as a further form of transgression. It is worth noting that Antonio's transgression here takes place under the censorious gaze of Lourdes; but her gaze from afar as she looks down on the road and the checkpoint is set firmly against the backdrop of the rural Basque landscape that implies a normative Basque identity (equating the gaze of the terrorist with the landscape and thus the nation), so that Antonio transgresses against this as well. Thus Antonio's act of picking up the hitchhiker reveals the rural road as the place of transgression against the rural landscape as representative of the norm breached by the transgression.

This juxtaposition of the road as transgressive against a normative landscape recurs in *El viaje de Arián*. The title of the film overtly signals a form of road movie in which the protagonist Arián will undertake some sort of journey; and she moves from her Basque town through the Basque landscape until she leaves the Basque Country altogether, seeking refuge with a friend (not a member of ETA) in Barcelona. From there her terrorist colleague Maite (Silvia Munt) drives her to an unspecified location by the sea and there executes her for her primary transgression. This pivotal moment of transgression occurs halfway through the film. Arián forms part of an ETA operations team that also includes Vivaldi: this team kidnap a young girl and hold her hostage in the Basque countryside. Their hideout is discovered and Vivaldi dies in the resulting police shoot-out, while Arián and the rest of the team escape with the hostage. The leader José (Carlos Manuel Díaz) has previously decided that Arián is the team member who should kill the hostage if necessary, since he doubts her commitment to ETA and wants her to prove herself by carrying out the execution. He now insists that she carry this out, despite sympathising with her loss of Vivaldi. Their conversation takes place in a breathtakingly beautiful setting: they are perched high up on a cliff face (with the road nearby), with a picture-box blue sky – a landscape that underscores the idea of the Basque Country as a traditionally mountainous land (Fig. 6). The Basque mountain possesses a special symbolic resonance as a site of resistance: during the Second World War and the Franco regime Basque mountaineering groups provided a cover for resistance activity. The landscape

serves not only as a poignant contrast to Arián's sorrow and distress but also as a reminder of why conversations like this are going on at all, of the mythical Basque nation for which ETA is fighting. Arián subsequently fails in her attempt to kill the hostage, too distressed at the thought: José angrily steps in and carries out the shooting, and they and a third colleague get in their car to make their escape. Arián insists on driving. As they arrive at the spot where she and José held their earlier conversation, she wrenches the steering wheel and sends the car and its occupants over the cliff, while she jumps to safety.

This scene at the heart of the film explicitly associates the transgression of the individual terrorist both with the road and the Basque countryside, the road becoming a tool for Arián's transgression against ETA and against the Basque Country itself. It is notable that the place where the terrorists take cover in their flight from the police, and where the hostage victim is eventually shot, looks remarkably like a womb-shaped space that has been hollowed out in the heart of the rock that symbolises the mother country. This space is connected to the road by a tunnel that resembles a vaginal passage. (Does this consequently imply that the police, when they later enter the tunnel to retrieve the body of the hostage, are violating the mother (country)?) Arián's transgressive exit from the tunnel and on to the road, killing her colleagues in the process, might perhaps be read as a sort of birth to a new life, but it more particularly implies an expulsion not only from the car containing the rest of her team but also from the mother country itself – and it is at this point that Arián, stumbling away from the scene, starts to head for Barcelona, walking along the rural road in a dazed way until Mario picks her up. As the terrorists' car sails over the cliff, we see Arián transfixed for a moment against this rocky backdrop, as she stares into the sun – a



Figure 6 Arián is ordered to execute the hostage in *El viaje de Arián*

cut to her pov offers us a shot devoid of any landscape, suggesting not only her exile from the Basque nation but also prefiguring her death at the end as she stares at the sea and sky, in a shot again ultimately devoid of landscape.

Both Arián and Antonio follow their paths/roads to exile and also escape. Their roads lead them away from the Basque Country to an elsewhere always implied by the rural road. For Antonio this elsewhere is Madrid, while for Arián it is Barcelona. The potential equation of the city at the end of the road with escape is underscored in *Días contados*. In a scene which harks back to the opening credit sequence of the Basque roads, we see Antonio driving along arterial roads once more – but this time the camera pulls away to offer a shot of the skyline of Madrid, towards which Antonio is driving. Madrid is the end of the road for Antonio: but, far from signifying the escape he hopes to find away from the claustrophobia of Lourdes and of ETA commitment, Madrid will come to signify his death. For the landscape is different: we are now in the urban streets that provide the locus for the terrorist acts performed in the film and which, we may remember, are places of no escape. Antonio in fact dies in just such a street. In an attempt to blow up a police station he sets in motion a booby-trapped car that enters the police station just as his lover Charo and friends arrive there for questioning. In a forlorn effort to save Charo – and thus his own hope of a new life – he then sprints after the car into the police station, just as the car bomb explodes. Antonio dies dislocated from the Basque Country that provided the original *raison d'être* for his actions, the conclusion of a trajectory that saw his increasing distance from his operations team (and particularly his former lover Lourdes) and immersion in the alternative dropout lifestyle of Madrid. This road has led away from the Basque Country to a death far from home. (It is significant that Lourdes and Carlos are present in the street and watch him die, just as they watched his double transgression at the beginning.)

Arián's journey does not even hold out the hope of Antonio's: there are no shots of the Barcelona skyline but simply a repetition of the void of the sky that she gazes into after the dispatch of her operations team. The road has taken her to Barcelona, but the city turns out to offer her no place of refuge. Barcelona, in the guise of her old college friend, rejects her so that she must turn to her colleague Maite for assistance. Maite's response, on learning of Arián's betrayal, is to take her back on the road and drive her to the ultimate place of exile, a deserted spot that we can only identify as coastal: this is where Maite carries out Arián's execution. It is not clear where we are at this point: the landscape is not necessarily that of the Basque Country, and the sense of disorientation that this induces serves to underscore further the sense of exile (Fig. 7). At this point the road has literally come to an end, and thus aptly – and perhaps rather obviously – signals the end of her journey. Arián's final sight as she waits to die is of the sea and the sky, a shot in which no landscape appears, as noted earlier.



Figure 7 Arián awaits death in *El viaje de Arián*

This shot of the horizon is the final shot of the film, so that with Arián's death we are left with an erasure of the landscape that implies the ultimate loss of the mother country.

Both films thus have horizons – the Madrid skyline and an anonymous seascape – which at first glance signify both beauty and escape, but in both cases the promise of these open vistas is curtailed by Basque violence. If in *Días contados* the rural road merely leads to the city street, the site of entrapment and the theatre of violence – the place of displacement for ETA – then in *El viaje de Arián* the road simply leads to the sea and must perforce come to an end. These, then, are roads that, despite their promise of escape, ultimately lead to nowhere but death. They are literally dead ends. This final failure is reminiscent of many postwar road movies such as *Bonnie and Clyde* and *Thelma and Louise*, which, as Schaber argues, end in the deaths of the travellers, the exodus implied by the journey giving way to the apocalypse (Schaber 1997: 39). The Basque rural road thus comes to signify the transgression of the individual terrorist both against the Spanish law and against ETA itself, but in a way that leaves the question of terrorism, like the rural landscape, untouched. Just as the spectacle of violence is displaced from the rural space of national identity to the more ambiguous city, so the problematics of transgression are displaced from the ETA collective to the individual – thus leaving unexamined and uncritiqued the relation of ETA as a whole to the land for which they fight. Contrary to Mills' dictum quoted above, the collective is not transformed by the journey, but appears to remain a solid, impenetrable mass that belies ETA's actual history of fissures and splits within the organisation. Only the individual is transformed, but ultimately such transformation counts for nothing as the journey ends in death.

Such a displacement of critique on to the individual may, of course, simply be a wise move given the very real dangers of overt critique of groups such as ETA. Such displacement has become frequent in films that deal with ETA (such as Daniel Calparsoro's *A ciegas* (Blindly, 1997), Helena Taberna's *Yoyes* (2000), Martínez-Lázaro's *La voz de su amo* (His Master's Voice, 2001), or Bernardo Atxaga's novels *El hombre solo* (The Lone Man, 1995) and *Esos cielos* (The Lone Woman, 1997)). Even Uribe himself, noted originally for his positive treatment of ETA members as a sympathetic and heterogeneous group in *La fuga de Segovia* (The Flight from Segovia, 1981), had turned to this move of displacement by 1983 with *La muerte de Mikel*. Nonetheless, with the constant displacement on to the individual and, as here, on to the road, on to the city, this sort of critique can, quite simply, never hit home. Indeed, it perpetuates the equation between Basque separatism and the Basque landscape as symbolic of an independent nation. If the landscape symbolises a sense of auratic loss, as Galt has indicated, then this loss can only be perceived by positing an elsewhere in opposition towards which the individual must perforce travel in a move of exile. But the place of exile is also the place of apocalypse, or at any rate the place in which bombs explode, shootings and kidnappings take place, and in the end people die indiscriminately, as in the police station of *Días contados*, where Antonio dies alongside the police and the dropouts. The collective refusal to recognise the Basque landscape as an always already lost arcadia ensures the continuing equation of opposition with elsewhere, and of exodus with apocalypse. The rural road thus facilitates displacement, but not communication; while Basque national identity continues to be figured, as Jordan and Morgan-Tamosunas suggested (1998: 184), as cut off from the outside world.

The industrial Basque Country and the Bilbao Guggenheim

If landscape is that with which we see, then the landscapes that are neglected or ignored also tell us something about the desire for association with a particular place. I mentioned briefly at the beginning of this chapter that the industrial landscapes of the Basque Country are much more rarely glimpsed in cultural production, despite the centrality of industry to the development of the Basque Country that made a strong nationalist movement possible, albeit one that was also ironically founded on the opposition to migrant workers from elsewhere in Spain that made such industrial development possible. In this section I will address more squarely both examples of industrial spaces and places but also how these places are not 'seen' as such: there is a wilful blindness that traces itself through both Spanish and Basque culture, an effort not to use the landscape to see. This does not simply occur within the Basque Country itself but in other cultural centres of Spain, particularly Madrid and the critical corpus

around Spanish cinema. I discovered one example of this when writing about the Basque director Daniel Calparsoro (see Davies 2009), and here I intend to gather together and recapitulate some examples of the ways in which Spanish film critics refuse to see the industrial landscape. Calparsoro's first three films form a trilogy about the Basque Country, and the first two, *Salto al vacío* (Jump into the Void, 1995) and *Pasajes* (Passages, 1996), are set prominently in urban landscapes, showing poor and desperate people in marginal situations, as a result of the decline in heavy industry and fishing that has meant that crucial jobs and opportunities have simply disappeared. Such films form part of a strong tradition of social realist cinema in Spain, but when it comes to social realism in the Basque Country critics seem to hit a blind spot, and it is this critical blind spot that I want to consider. As regards *Salto al vacío*, the response of the film critic Jesús Palacios is intriguing: throughout Calparsoro's career Palacios has been quite a fan and champion of the director. Calparsoro filmed *Salto* on location, and in particular he included a famous landmark of the area at that time, the factory of Los Altos Hornos (the factory has since been demolished). Despite this, Palacios states reductively that the rundown industrial Bilbao of the film, with its marginalised and criminal characters, does not exist. He goes on to compare the film's settings to Dante's Inferno:

Parece más bien algún círculo del Infierno que Dante se hubiera olvidado de enumerar, poblado por demonios y condenados que no pueden escapar a su destino. Que cuanto más intentan librarse de él más se ven arrastrados al centro mismo de la miseria y la muerte. (Palacios 2006: 379)

It seems more like a circle of hell that Dante forgot to describe, populated by demons and the damned who could not escape their fate. The more they try to escape, the more they are sucked into the centre of misery and death.

Palacios sees the landscape in timeless, mythical terms rather than redolent of a contemporary reality, and such mythification entails distance and denial. A similar process occurs as regards *Pasajes*, set in the Basque port of Pasajes/Paiaasa, filled with rusting boats, the mark of industrial decay. Ryan Prout has considered critic E. Rodríguez Marchante's perception of the landscape as manifesting a 'desire to dress up the film in some kind of make-believe underworld', with no clear location except in Calparsoro's imagination, a notion that Prout himself finds surprising (Prout 2000: 285). Prout also observes that *Pasajes* bears the imprint of a history of industrial decline, but a history often neglected through a preference for rural landscapes that represent a mythical Basque country (ibid.: 286–7). These denials of the reality of Calparsoro's landscapes by Palacios and Rodríguez Marchante arise from an unease at the destabilisation of cinematic depictions of the Basque Country, and this unease in turn is rooted in a denial of industrial landscape. As Kepa Sojo Gil observes, Calparsoro's sort of realism was not that originally envisaged by those who

earlier pursued a vision of Basque cinema more in tune with Basque nationalism (Sojo Gil 1997: 136).

Such a denial also comes into play when we consider the Guggenheim phenomenon. Built as a crucial part of Bilbao's regeneration from industrial wasteland to postmodern city, Frank Gehry's Guggenheim museum nonetheless overtly celebrated its industrial past, not only through its titanium walls but through the building's shape, that of a large ship. The Guggenheim phenomenon has already created plenty of academic critique in terms both of architecture and of the socio-political background to the museum's arrival in Bilbao, including the machinations of the regional Basque government (see Zulaika 1997). Joseba Zulaika has observed the integral role of the industrial aesthetic in Gehry's building: he talks of an 'aesthetics of toughness' (Zulaika 2001: 3) as discovered by sculptor Richard Serra and quotes the 'aesthetics of reality' (ibid.: 8) that Gehry himself saw in Bilbao. Zulaika's comments imply an emphasis on the industrial in the Guggenheim that is clear for all to see, suggested through the ship shape and the use of metal, themselves hints back to the Basque Country's past involvement in fishing and the steel industry. Anny Brooksbank Jones observes that the museum has blended into its surroundings to the extent that it has assumed 'the colours of its surroundings under a new form: not the green hills and lowering skies envisaged by its makers, but the corrosive residue on its titanium plates of a polluting past that is not so easily displaced' (Brooksbank Jones 2007: 108). However, the industrial may perhaps be made apparent only to become invisible again, 'unseen' because the surface of industrial aesthetic appears to be simply a screen for something else.

Zulaika draws on Benjamin's concept of beauty being veiled to see Bilbao as beautiful precisely because of her veil of industry (Zulaika 2001: 10). In a related move, Brooksbank Jones talks of the Guggenheim in terms of seduction: 'The museum was designed to distract the attention of visitors and investors from "nuestra realidad – crisis económica, desempleo, violencia" [our reality – economic crisis, unemployment, violence], from eruptions of regional–national energy and other tensions within the local and regional body politic' (Brooksbank Jones 2003: 160). I find this combined metaphor of the veil and seduction intriguing. Veils point to and emphasise a hidden reality simultaneous to their act of covering: they hint that the veil and the reality are not the same thing and, furthermore, that what is hidden is tantalising. It seduces us and draws us. We do not thus see a veil as a thing in its own right but simply as an indicator of something else that interests us more. If, as Zulaika posits, the industrial aesthetic merely acts as a veil, then we cannot see it for itself – indeed, we do not see it as such as at all. Jonathan Smith argues that an aestheticised landscape is ahistorical, a landscape from which both fear of the future and awareness of the past are absent: 'it is precisely the ability of landscape to

outlive the past, its tenacious durability, which causes its objects to pile up in front of history, shielding it from our view and substituting a seemingly greater reality of spotless innocence for its guilty and gritty processes' (Smith 1993: 80). Gehry's Guggenheim flaunts the link to an industrial past in such a manner that it detaches it from the more sordid industrial landscapes of Calparsoro, rendering it not only ahistorical but unreal.

Of course, this may have been precisely what the Bilbao authorities and the Basque politicians wanted. If we remember that the Basque conflict, still ongoing, arose in part from the insurgence of industry and thus immigrant workers, prompting the first stirrings of modern Basque nationalism, then the lack of history allows conflict to be glossed over, not insignificant when reinventing Bilbao as a possible tourist attraction. If the beauty of Bilbao for Gehry lay in its landscape of industrial ruins (Zulaika 2001: 4), then Gehry was not made happy by plans to surround the Guggenheim with parkland and shopping and conference complexes that cover over the landscape of industrial decay (ibid.: 10). Zulaika describes this possibility as 'the harmonious pretensions of beauty orchestrated for the tourist voyeurism of visitors and locals alike' (ibid.: 14). Part of the question that was debated was whether the new urbanisation project in the area would obstruct the view of the Guggenheim, so that for Zulaika decisions about buildings and landscape 'hinge essentially on the politics of sight and spectacle' (ibid.: 9). But they can also hinge on the question of veiling – the Guggenheim veiled once more by surrounding greenery and other buildings.

Justin Crumbaugh has proposed that the Guggenheim is a 'useful metaphor' for thinking about Calparsoro's *Salto al vacío* (Crumbaugh 2001: 41). He sees in both films the opportunity to make art out of an industrial landscape, and notes of the film: 'Through a poetic stirring in the waste ... the cinematic focus aims to weld new continuities by reappropriating discarded materials. The astonishing result is a tragic sensibility in the treatment of urban landscape' (ibid.: 3). More controversially, Crumbaugh compares *Salto*'s central character Alex to Gehry himself: they both create art out of chaos (ibid.: 46), a move which, as I have said elsewhere, seems to give Alex rather more power than she actually has (Davies 2009: 70, 71). But Crumbaugh also notes that

through a synthesis of historical elements, the museum rather represents Bilbao's present as a chic repackaging or wrapping of its past. And packaging, as a mode of historical representation, functions, not as a way to record history, but as a way to eliminate its real complexities and irreconcilable differences. (Crumbaugh 2001: 49)

In a similar way, Eusebi Casanelles, director of Barcelona's Museum of Technology, insists on the industrial landscape as integral to the Basque region, but as Nerea Arruti suggests, from Casanelles' perspective, 'the museum represents

a kitsch replica of an authentic historical heritage that should be preserved in its own right' (Arruti 2003: 169). Similarly, by failing to perceive Calparsoro's aesthetic as in any way real, the Madrid critics perform the same 'repackaging' of Bilbao's past. What is intriguing is that the same process goes on both amongst the Madrid-based critics (who were to laud Calparsoro when he switched from a grey Basque country to a warm and colourful Madrid in his subsequent *Asfalto* (Asphalt) of 2000) and from attempts in Bilbao to revamp the city. I do not want to suggest that it is simply a case of drawing back an aesthetic veil in order to see 'what is really there', nor do I want to deny an impulse to find beauty in what can for the locals be an unpromising environment (though as in many regeneration projects, it is not always clear that such projects coincide neatly with the needs and desires of the local population). And yet the industrial traces are clear for all to see in both films and building – it is just that there is also a clear desire *not* to see, regardless of the position from which one views the Basque Country.

In all the examples discussed above we can see a use of landscape, space and place to offer distance, displacement and denial. Joseba Gabilondo comments of Basque cinema: 'there is an element of enjoyment in negating one's own identity in order to break the state's monopoly on negation' (Gabilondo 2002: 277). The landscapes and spaces we have considered here do not prove one way or the other that the Basque Country is or is not a part of Spain. They do, however, suggest how Spain can be evoked as a call to care even through distance and negation. Spain this time is evoked as an uncanny trace, as is the Basque Country itself. The positioning of this uncanny trace will depend on the personal desires and affiliations of the subject imbricated with their own specific standpoint towards the status of the Basque Country: and so the subject must perforce be brought back into the equation. These subjects use the spaces and places of the Basque Country in different ways that interact with their own subjectivity: but always there is a 'geography of love' that ensures that Spain and the Basque Country trace themselves uncannily across each other's landscape – love, not in the sense of affection or positive regard, but in the sense that each must implicitly take account of other while nonetheless keeping their distance.

CHAPTER FIVE

Crime scene: landscape and the law of the land

This chapter and the next consider the links between the law and national identity, as further examples of the ways in which a notion of nation can trace itself through space and place. Space is one of the ideas listed by Tim Edensor in his discussion of the imbrications of legal frameworks, national identities and everyday life. 'In a very practical sense, national identity is facilitated by the state's legislative framework, which delimits and regulates the practices in which people can partake, the spaces in which they are permitted to move, and in many other ways provides a framework for quotidian experience' (Edensor 2002: 20). But more particularly space and place can become sites wherein the law is actively carried out (or, also, actively broken): the law is not simply an implicit shaper of daily experiences but something overtly manifested and displayed through policing and through criminal activity. And, as we shall see, the law is one manifestation of national identity, although not an unproblematic one precisely because the law and its policing by definition imply the possibility that the law can be broken and thus the link between law and nation fractured. But if the law is to this extent always provisional, it nonetheless offers the opportunity for the national to trace itself through textual space and place. The idea of the law, either broken or reinstated as part of the Spanish thriller, calls up once more Rose's desire for association and space and place as the means whereby we see that desire. The law's constant re-making and re-breaking, and its link to national identity, suggest once more a Spain always in the process of becoming.

The texts I will be considering in this chapter are Spanish thriller films, a genre which at first glance does not fit neatly into definitions of Spanish national cinema; and it is worth pausing to dwell a little on why this should be so before evoking the use of space and place in these films more directly. The difficulties can be illustrated by the example of the very successful debut film by Alejandro Amenábar, *Tesis* (Thesis, 1995). The plot of *Tesis* follows the protagonist Ángela (Ana Torrent) as she investigates a series of murders of young women that in turn provides the basis of a snuff movie enterprise. But Ángela is also

a student in a mass communications faculty of a Spanish university, working towards a thesis on violence in the media; and during the course of the film she and other characters make passing references not only to violence on film but also to the state of Spanish film-making and its need to compete with the more attractive Hollywood product. The issue is raised early on in the film when it is reported that Ángela's previous supervisor died while watching a film, and one of the characters comments: 'Española, seguro' (Must have been Spanish), suggesting that those who watch Spanish films would simply die of boredom. But a more significant comment is the following made by Professor Castro (Xabier Elorriaga), Ángela's supervisor, while giving a lecture to his students (to rapturous applause):

¿Qué es el cine? No os engaños. El cine es una industria. Es dinero. Son cientos miles de millones invertidos en películas y recaudados en taquilla. Por eso no hay cine en nuestro país. Porque no hay concepto de industria. Porque no hay comunicación entre creador y público. Hemos llegado a un momento crítico en el que nuestro cine sólo se salvará si es entendido como un fenómeno industrial. Vosotros sois alumnos de imagen. Sois el futuro del cine español. Salvadlo. Allí fuera está la industria norteamericana dispuesta a pisotearos, y sólo hay un modo de competir con ellos. Darle al público lo que quiere ver. No lo olvidéis.

What is cinema? Don't be deceived. Cinema is an industry. It's money. It's hundreds of thousands of millions invested in films and recouped at the box office. That's why there's no cinema in our country. Because there's no concept of industry, because there's no communication between the filmmaker and the audience. We've reached a pivotal moment when our cinema can only be saved by perceiving it as an industrial phenomenon. You are film students. You are the future of Spanish cinema. Rescue it. The American industry is out there poised to trample you underfoot, and there's only one way to compete with it. Give the public what it wants. Don't forget.

Castro concludes that cinema must be, above all, a commercial enterprise, and the only way in which the students can save Spanish cinema for the future is to give the public what the public wants, implying by this that Spanish cinema must eschew the obscure, the elitist and the arthouse in film. Castro thus simultaneously implies that Spanish national cinema and commercial cinema are mutually exclusive; and his own preference for Hollywood cinema becomes subsequently clear when we see him in his office – he has fake Oscar statuettes on his shelves and a photo in which he poses as James Bond. Castro's preference is soon discredited as Ángela discovers that he is one of those involved in the snuff movie ring and the murders. Yet *Tesis* itself is arguably a thriller in the American mode (see Allinson 1997).

The slippery nature of *Tesis* and Amenábar's deliberate questioning of the border between Spanish and American cinema also highlight the problem of where to place the thriller within the national remit; for *Tesis* poses the question

of whether the thriller can be done in an authentic Spanish mode rather than as an echo of the commercially successful American mode. Francisco María Benavent, for instance, in his overview of 90s cinema, dismisses the Spanish thriller as a cheap imitation of American cinema, or an attempt to achieve an 'internationalised' product (Benavent 2000: 25). The internationalised product that Benavent has in mind is in fact a Hollywood product, the American specificities of which seem to vanish in its globalisation. But the comments also suggest the exact opposite of the opinion of Professor Castro in *Tesis*, implying as it does that the desire of audiences for American-style cinema should not be pandered to within Spanish cinema, and that Spanish cinema cannot by definition include Hollywood-style elements. Benavent's comments might even suggest that the Spanish thriller is a contradiction in terms, and that there can in fact be no such thing. These very brief considerations of the thriller suggest a hollow at the core of an assumed Spanish national cinema. At one level it indicates that an 'authentic' Spanish cinema must assume some form of masquerade in which the film has to dress up in specifically Spanish garb – i.e., with reference to specifically Spanish motifs – in order to fit under the rubric of national cinema; except that masquerade in itself suggests an inauthenticity, a deliberate performance (see Hayward 2000: 91, 99). At another level, it implies sealing Spanish national cinema in a vacuum within which no outside influence can intrude – which, taken to extremes, would exclude the thriller from this remit, since thrillers and noirs, whether they explicitly reference Spanish realities or not, often contain an explicit or implicit nod to American traditions. Andrew Higson highlights the difficulties entailed in such an approach:

The problem is that, when describing a national cinema, there is a tendency to focus only on those films that narrate the nation as just this finite, limited space, inhabited by a tightly coherent and unified community, closed off to other identities besides national identity. Or rather, the focus is on films that seem amenable to such an interpretation. (Higson 2000: 66)

It might therefore be more profitable to think of the thriller as an interface of the negotiation between different cinemas. Philip Schlesinger comments, 'it is precisely the extra-territorial cultural pressure of Hollywood's production, imported into the national space, that sets up the contemporary issue of national cinema' (Schlesinger 2000: 24). Genres such as the thriller – usually highly derivative of American thriller fare but nonetheless made within Spain – provide opportunities to consider how such importation of Hollywood interacts with, or is refracted by, national cultural tensions. The ability of the Hollywood thriller to enter Spanish national space, in the way Schlesinger suggests here, raises the possibility that the thriller could nonetheless be co-opted into Spanish cinema, 'naturalised' in some way. Thus, to go back to *Tesis*, the film provides a critique of commercial thriller formats, and does so within that

format, but also acknowledges the possibility of simultaneously carrying out this critique within Spanish culture, with its nod to issues of Spanish cinema. The very possibility of Spanish cinema's demise raised by Castro allows us to ask if it can be recuperated. We could therefore consider the thriller as a form of cinematic border territory, perhaps disputed territory, which allows us to avoid the danger of seeing Spanish national cinema and Hollywood cinema in terms simply of a binary, against which Hayward warns us (2000: 91), or attempting to create Spanish national cinema as a hermetically sealed entity. The thriller acts as an ambiguous site of any national identity where not only do cultural fault lines cross but where they also become points of tension and potential conflict.

I have dwelt for a while on the dubious national status of the Spanish thriller in order to underscore the fact that when we come to consider the thriller in terms of actual spaces and places its figuring of the nation is hardly straightforward. The thriller implies the endangering of a national social order that is underpinned by law – one of the markers of national identity acknowledged by theorists of nationalism and the nation state. Anthony Smith, for instance, comments that the Western concept of the nation

implies a minimum of reciprocal rights and obligations among members and the correlative exclusion of outsiders from these rights and duties. It also implies a common code of laws over and above local laws, together with agencies for their enforcement, courts of final appeal and the like. As important is the acceptance that, in principle, all members of the nation are legally equal and that the rich and powerful are bound by the laws of the *patria*.

... the legal equality of members of a political community in its demarcated homeland was felt to presuppose a measure of common values and traditions among the population, or at any rate its 'core' community. (Smith 1991: 10–11)

And Smith subsequently lists legal rights as one of the core elements of national identity (ibid.: 14). The law has, in fact, formed part of a challenge to the Spanish nation state by the historical regional nationalities of the Basque Country and Catalonia. The importance of the Basque laws or *fueros* – revoked by the Spanish government in 1876 – would be reflected in the subsequent development of Basque nationalism, while the Catalan nationalist Enric Prat de la Riba would point to the law as an essential part of recognising Catalonia as a nation (Prat de la Riba 1998: 92–3). The link between the law and the nation could be considered as one example of what Michael Billig (1995) has termed 'banal nationalism', a link or allegiance to the nation so embedded in our daily lives that we do not explicitly acknowledge it is there, but it implicitly invokes the nation nonetheless. If we talk about the law – and the breaking of it – we mean the national law, unless some other entity such as international law is explicitly named. Billig mentions in passing the American flag sewn on to the sleeves of American police, or the labelling of marshals as 'US Marshal' (Billig 1995: 150).

Although Billig does not pursue the link between the law and the nation further than this, I believe his concept of banal nationalism undergirds the unstated but ever-present link between law and nation; so that when a film addresses matters of law and order, it is in fact invoking the nation. Joan Ramón Resina also invokes the link between law and nation when he disputes the idea that a 'construct' of a nation must inevitably be a fiction:

A 'construct' is the state to which we dutifully pay taxes. Its status is hardly imaginary. Although it has no essence, it does have a face, or many faces, for it is actualised, among other ways, by the police force and judiciary who bring us to our senses in case we forget the positive nature of this construct. (Resina 2002: 378)

The thriller is one site where Spanish law – and thus, by implication, the Spanish nation state – is challenged. This does not automatically indicate the thriller as a genre that presses for change: Phil Powrie comments, 'Given that the police thriller's function is to maintain order by defining who should be included in the dominant social formation, and who should be excluded, it is by nature a conservative genre' (Powrie 2007: 55). The restoration of order at the end of the thriller tends towards the maintenance of the status quo, which is, after all, one of the witting or unwitting functions of the law. However, the thriller simultaneously questions this law even as some of the characters within it may strive to re-establish it: other characters, after all, seem determined to break or ignore the law for various reasons and desires of their own. This clash, that in consequence questions the laws and mores of the land, is not unique to any single nation but may nonetheless carry traces of specific local critiques. Barry Jordan and Rikki Morgan-Tamosunas suggest that Spanish thrillers 'bring [to] centre-stage marginal behaviours, practices and social issues (drugs, terrorism, homophobia, etc.) and refigure them as both local/national as well as international/global problems' (Jordan and Morgan-Tamosunas 1998: 105). It thus becomes a question of Spanish cinema thinking globally and acting locally, producing responses to a cinema format honed above all by Hollywood but which speaks to other cinemas and other cultures – and other laws – as well. If the thriller questions the law and order that form part of any putative national identity in terms of the nation state, it also holds out an opportunity potentially to recuperate the nation by the very questioning.

If we talk about the law of the land, what I want to do now is recuperate the land dimension as well as the law, meaning here the visible and perhaps tangible manifestation of the territory concerned – thus, its landscape, space and place. Kenneth Olwig has discussed the link between landscape and the body politic, so that representations of landscape are bound up with notions of how the land should be governed. Of landscape painting, for instance, he comments that it was 'a way of representing, and making concrete, the more abstract, social idea of landscape expressed by representative legal bodies

and the law they generated' (Olwig 2002: 24); and 'the landscape/country as a physical place was ... the manifestation of the polity's local custom and common law' (ibid.: 214). Wylie, in glossing Olwig's work, notes that, according to the latter, 'landscape was understood above all as referring to a political community of people – a polity – and the set of customary, local laws through which they administered themselves' (Wylie 2007: 196). Landscape, space and place once again make visible a desire of association – a call to care – expressed by interaction with the landscape. Crime also underscores the possibility that the desire of association with Spain is not necessarily a benign one: as we shall see in one of the films I will discuss here, Spain becomes a target of criminal profit for foreign crime forces as well as for some Spaniards themselves, who wish to exploit other Spaniards. The word 'care' carries with it a nurturing overtone but Rose's theory does not preclude more malign manifestations of care. Nonetheless, in crime thrillers we are also very likely to find other citizens who show a more obvious 'care' in their desire for justice, resolution, safety – a restoration of the law of the land. Some of these citizens are paid to do this – police and private detectives – and we shall consider them in the next chapter. In this chapter, the people concerned to restore the law and thus the land of which the law is an expression are ordinary members of the public who find themselves by chance compelled to express a desire for justice and thus by implication a care for Spain. The thriller thus offers us an instance of how the call to care can be expressed differently and indeed in ways that are diametrically opposed: different desires and ideologies compete for control over Spain as territory or terrain, and that competition itself takes place through space as well as for it.

Consider, for instance, a little known thriller *La cuestión de suerte* (A Matter of Chance; Rafael Monleón, 1996), in which the coastal landscape around San Sebastián plays a pivotal role. The coast proves essential to the plan of attempted murder as the victim is lured away by boat to underwater caves, but it also serves to uncover the crimes of attempted murder and robbery. The trace of the nation asserts itself in contrast to the French nationality of the *femme fatale* who lures a young man into criminality: the coastal terrain of the setting is where she lives but it also serves to unmask her as untrustworthy, confirming the suspicions of the local community who are alert to the dangers of the woman out of place. The coastline becomes precisely the border which facilitates both the commission of crime and its policing, susceptible to infiltration from outside (France) but for that same reason zealously guarded and watched over. Or consider the film *Sé quien eres* (I Know Who You Are; Patricia Ferreira, 2000), in which Mario (Miguel Ángel Solá) and Paloma (Ana Fernández) travel from the coast of Galicia to the city of Madrid and then to the country near Segovia in the quest to solve an old crime involving corruption in the armed forces and the police. National identity appears blurred through Mario, who was born in Spain, lived as a child

in Latin America and more recently in North Africa (and has a North African ex-wife): the fact that the actor who plays him is Argentinian complicates the situation still further. This cosmopolitan character uncovers an old conspiracy, organised by members of the Spanish army against other members, in which he participated. Mario helped to blow up an army officer and by chance the officer's wife and daughter as well: this causes him to lose his memory, which he regains with the help of his doctor Paloma – a symbol of healing in the nation. *Sé quien eres* suggests that different parts of Spanish territory must be crossed in order that the crime be solved, and the camera takes time in tracing these journeys and lingers on and in the landscape as it does so. The corruption in the army and police reveal the threat to the law and to the land it protects at its very core, but the land and thus the nation is drawn together again, repaired through the camera's detailed attention to it, foregrounding it as the site of spectacle. And in the process the rot within the army is healed, the corrupt elements are cast out.

The desire of association can also be re-invoked and refreshed through the use of landscape as that with which we see even when the landscape has become familiar to the point of cliché, saturated with cynicism from the point of view of the protagonist. Such is the case of Simón (Eduardo Noriega) in *Nadie conoce a nadie* (Nobody Knows Anybody; Mateo Gil 1999). *Nadie* seems overly insistent on the Spanishness of the setting – Seville during Holy Week – while Simón and his flatmate Sapó (Jordi Mollà) disparage the religious festivities that are a high point of the cultural life of the city in which they live. The early scene in which together they create a crossword puzzle that mocks the stereotypical images of Seville sets an initial tone of weariness and disaffection with the place they inhabit. But both in fact will demonstrate a greater commitment to Seville. Sapó will turn out to be the master criminal who threatens Seville's religious ethos by disrupting religious processions and events, murdering religious personnel and threatening to blow up one of the Virgins around which the processions coalesce, thereby threatening carnage among the crowds gathered to witness her procession. His hatred of Seville and its religious culture is pronounced, but his fascination with the religious spaces and places of Seville and their iconography suggests also a distorted desire for the place – a call to some sort of care – even as he tries to destroy it. He creates a scale model of the entire city, and surveys the city from the rotating tower Torre Banesto and in particular the now deserted space used to house the 1992 Seville exhibition, even as he blows up one of the buildings. Simón, the unwilling hero who is not originally from Seville, has developed ties that link him to the heart of the community and that will lead him to defend it. Again, the city space is the means by which we see this. If Sapó delights in the view of Seville from on high, Simón uses it as the key with which to decipher Sapó's plans: he literally joins the dots of the city (via a map displayed in the tower) to uncover the threat that lies at its very centre. He backs

up his deductions with memories of specific landmarks seen on television. The Seville of the film acts as host for both the spectacle of Holy Week processions and the struggle over such processions as a site of crime and its detection. If the city space is the way in which we see order restored and a care demonstrated for what those spaces represent, there is also a reinvigoration of place away from its overcoded and recycled meanings. Simón learns to see the city anew.

These are brief examples: I would now like to consider in more detail two films that suggest the trace of both the law and its breaking across space and place.

La caja 507: two sides of one coin

Tim Cresswell, as we saw in the previous chapter, discusses the spatial aspects of ideology and how one becomes aware of ideological norms only when they are transgressed, hence the sense of ‘out of place’ (Cresswell 1996: 166). These areas of transgression in crime films, the sites of criminal spectacle, can tell us something of the law that is being transgressed and, in turn, can reinscribe the nation as a fleeting trace that nonetheless registers itself in the use of space and place. Film is one of the few places where the whole story of crime can manifest itself in both spatial and spectacular ways (Gardies 1993: 10), because, although the results of crime may be readily visible, responsibility for it is on the whole kept hidden – criminals do not want to be identifiably seen to be acting. The constant breaking and restoration of the law needs space to make it a spectacle, make it visible; and the visibility of the spectacle thus extends to the visibility of a desire to associate with Spain. A very explicit example of this is *La caja 507* (Box 507; Enrique Urbizu, 2002) in which the nation, while not insisted upon, can nonetheless reappear as a flickering presence in the corner of the eye of the spectator. In this film Modesto Pardo (Antonio Resines), a respectable manager of a small local bank (his name – literally, ‘Modest Brown’ – suggests the ordinary man), uncovers corruption and Mafia involvement in property deals on the Spanish coast as a result of an inadvertent discovery of incriminating documents during a raid on his bank. The setting of the film is an Andalusian coast that nonetheless begins to resemble a displaced Los Angeles with a mixture of palm trees and urban decay. The Andalusian space is at the heart of the plot since it motivates the crimes that take place: the trigger for both the breaking of the law and its restoration (to a degree) revolves around a corrupt desire to exploit the space for profit. In order to make protected land available for development, criminals associated with a property company set fire to its trees, and in the process accidentally burn alive Pardo’s daughter María. Seven years later, after Pardo discovers the cover-up over his daughter’s death, and the people profiting from the cover-up, he goes back to the spot where his daughter

died: the space has been transformed into a luxury development, contrasting both with the opening scenes of the film that show the land aflame and María trapped within it, and the subsequent flashback scene as Pardo and his wife move through the scorched landscape to be confronted with a glimpse of their daughter's burnt body. The criminal desire to exploit space, profiting from its warmth, sunshine and coasts, gives rise to the transformation of the space and the way in which people occupy it, but the scorching of the space will eventually impel a desire to uncover this malign call to care and, in a different form of caring, will restore the law integral to an idea of Spain.

In this thriller borders are both figuratively and literally crossed – figuratively in that the dividing line between legality and illegality is broken, literally in that Spain is infiltrated by outsiders and that Spanish nationals themselves cross national boundaries. From time to time we glimpse the Rock of Gibraltar in the background, which acts as a marker of where the action takes place. Gibraltar, in addition, acts not only as a reminder of the nation that is questioned but also the questioning of the nation (by means of its territorial extent), since Spain claims Gibraltar for its own, but so does Great Britain. The Rock both is and is not Spanish. The Mafia plot line reminds us of Italy, and we hear French, German and English spoken in passing; there is a sense of crime as an international phenomenon, a thread that Hollywood has also picked up on – in such classics as *The French Connection* (William Friedkin, 1971), for instance – suggesting that the Hollywood thriller is itself not beyond infiltration. But Pardo nonetheless never strays beyond the bounds of his own backyard, becoming the little local man who sets to rights the corruption that may be international but which has also come to infect local government and the local press, who also connive in the corrupt Mafia property deals until Pardo turns up the heat on them with the knowledge of their illegal activities which he has inadvertently uncovered. While others have thought globally, he has acted locally. He has also enforced the dictum posited by Smith, cited above, that even the rich and powerful must be bound by the law of the nation. The film ends with both the international Mafia boss and the local mayor brought down, and Pardo returns to his wife (ailing, in a coma, and near death throughout the film as a result of the criminal plots that tragically affected both her and her husband; but now convalescing, thus implying in perhaps an overcoded way the precarious restoration to health of the nation). The film ends as the couple remain on a jetty, suspended over the sea, and observe the blank horizon, facing away from the local community cleansed of crime – suggesting the liminal position of the Spaniard who has moved through this boundary area in order to restore law and order and exact retribution. He has blurred the boundaries in order to reinstate them. The law of the land and the social order are always in question, since the mere existence of the law implies that it can be broken (a problem that the thriller format



Figure 8 Pardo and his wife on the jetty in *La caja 507*

underscores), so that any restoration or maintenance of order is always precarious and ambiguous, like Pardo's position on the jetty. The Spanish sociolegal system is not that different from that of the US, but it is nonetheless a Spanish and not an American socio-legal order that is in question in Spanish thrillers. And the constant probing of the legal and social boundaries undertaken by thrillers reminds us of the border's presence and existence. The Spanish nation reinserts itself as a flickering presence in the corner of our eyes – or, as in the last scene, out of sight but acknowledged (when Pardo's wife asks him 'What's going on out there?'; to which he replies 'the same as usual') and implied by the existence of the jetty – a limbo hovering over the sea but implying the terra firma of the nation to which it is attached (Fig. 8).

If, as Schlesinger says, it is the infiltration of Hollywood into the national space that gives rise to the question of the possibility of a national cinema, then the infiltration of international crime in the same way sets up the question of the nation state and the national law that is an essential component of it. There are two international crime rings operating in Pardo's local patch, and they come to act as a source of alien infection that drags in the locals. Everywhere that Pardo goes, he discovers that the locals at all levels have been tainted. This does not only apply to the mayor and the dignitaries present at the opening of the new property development that has motivated Mafia involvement in the region (the women in androgynous Andalusian costumes who decorate the event merely underscoring how boundaries have become blurred). It also applies to the fireman who investigated the death of Pardo's daughter and subsequently produced a falsified report. And, more particularly, it applies to

the other central character of the film, Rafael (José Coronado), an ex-cop now working for the Mafia and seeking to get back his property documents, which Pardo inadvertently found in Rafael's deposit box 507 and which gave him the clue to Rafael's criminal dealings.

Despite lining up on opposite sides of the legal divide, Pardo and Rafael are like two sides of the same coin (a motif that Urbizu himself refers to on the film's DVD commentary). Rafael is not an inverse reflection of Pardo, although it is notable that both men have female partners who are damaged or sick in some way. Nonetheless, their fates are bound together as they unwittingly pursue each other and any further criminals involved, and as the camera follows first one character and then the other. The sense of the two characters as a coin in which the two sides are both mutually exclusive and yet fused together encapsulates the relationship of the law to its breaking. And the obverse of the coin may so easily become the reverse, for just as Rafael crossed the boundary from the law to illegality, so Pardo may not perhaps remain above the criminality he has exposed. As he himself says, he has changed: he has not only set things to rights but has profited from events, dressing more flashily and thinking of buying a car, while his wife recuperates in a luxury nursing home. This image of the two sides of the coin that suggests the relationship between Pardo and Rafael also illustrates the notion not only of the intricate relationship between the law and crime that is simultaneously mutually exclusive and inextricably fused but also of the Spanish thriller, which simultaneously encompasses the infiltration of American genres while reasserting (precariously) a Spanish nation state.

The notion of the two characters as two sides of one coin has particular relevance when it comes to a comparison of how they both use space. The two never appear together in shot – never occupy the same space together – until the climactic scene when Pardo reveals Rafael's unreliability to the Mafia and in doing so passes sentence of death. While Pardo looks locally for answers to his questions, Rafael ranges more widely in his hunt for the lost documents. Jesús Ángulo, Carlos F. Heredero and Antonio Santamarina identify the form of crime in which Rafael participates as globalisation at any price (Ángulo, Heredero and Santamarina 2003: 33), so initially it would seem that Rafael is demonstrating anything but a desire for association with his homeland as a specifically national space. He works for Italians and moves with ease, competence and success across north Africa as much as he does at home. Home, indeed, is his weak spot, where his alcoholic partner leaves him vulnerable. Rafael's travels across various national spaces while never being at home in any of them suggests Cresswell's notion of transgression being visible through the use of space cited above. Rafael is out of place; but also he has to leave his homeland, Spain, and go elsewhere to seek his answers (as to where his documents are), while Pardo finds them all close to home. Spain, on this reading, is simply a

place where criminality is allowed to function and the Spanish participate equally alongside other nationalities:

Británicos, gibraltareños, italianos, marroquíes, españoles ... *La caja 507* habla menos, en realidad, de la corrupción económica y social de un determinado espacio geográfico, situado a caballo entre dos continentes (Europa y África), entre dos formas de vida antitéticas (La Línea de la Concepción y Marbella) y entre tres fronteras (España, Marruecos y Gibraltar), que de la lógica implacable de un sistema que, para seguir funcionando a pleno rendimiento, necesita contar con esos sumideros o cloacas. (Ángulo, Heredero and Santamarina 2003: 37)

British, Gibraltarians, Italians, Moroccans, Spanish ... *La caja 507* tells us less, in fact, about social and economic corruption in a specific geographical space, situated halfway between two continents (Europe and Africa), between two antithetical ways of life (La Línea de la Concepción and Marbella) and between three frontiers (Spain, Morocco and Gibraltar), than the inevitable logic of a system that, in order to carry on working to capacity, has to rely on those drains and sewers.

This citation returns us to the idea of the two sides of the coin: opposites joined together. These cloacal spaces posited by Ángulo, Heredero and Santamarina are essential spaces in a Spain open to exploitation, and linked to the spaces of luxury that symbolise such exploitation. As Urbizu himself remarks, the spaces of poverty and luxury are separated by a fairly short car journey (Ángulo, Heredero and Santamarina 2003: 266) – they are intimately connected. The luxury development that Pardo returns to visit, having previously gone there to learn of the death of his daughter in the fire that Rafael set (Fig. 9), arises from the back streets of La Línea where Rafael learned to take drugs and fell



Figure 9 The luxury development that motivates the action of *La caja 507*

from grace, losing his job in the police force and becoming corrupt: his corruption in the cloacal places, and his return to them, are intimately linked to the desires of himself and others for unlawful gain expressed in terms of property and land. The spaces and places figure a different form of a call to care, spaces wherein transgression points to desire to make Spain a luxury playground. We could also invoke again Wylie's notion of distance that is imbricated with his 'geography of love', though love here is malign desire for gain and exploitation: Rafael's distance from his goal of profit matches his desire for it, and he will commit himself to any cloacal place if it entails the recovery of the documents which will put him in the way to becoming rich. The link of nation, law and land ensures that Spain traces itself across space and place through both transgression and restoration; but the landscapes are that with which we see the precarious balance between an ordered and disordered Spain, like Pardo balanced on the jetty over the water.

La voz de su amo: male noir angst in a rural landscape

If malign as well as benign desires for association can be traced on to the spaces and places of the Andalusian coast, similar things also occur in settings right at the other end of Spain, in the Basque Country. *La voz de su amo* centres on Charli (Eduard Fernández), a former footballer turned bodyguard to a businessman, Oliveira (Joaquim de Almeida), who has been threatened by ETA terrorists. Charli takes Oliveira's daughter Marta (Silvia Abascal) into his flat for protection, and he and Marta duly begin an affair. When Oliveira is subsequently kidnapped after a rendezvous with ETA terrorists, Charli seeks desperately to recover his boss, only to discover that the kidnapping was a fake, engineered by Oliveira himself and in collaboration with not only ETA but the corrupt police inspector Sacristán (Imanol Arias). Charli discovers that everybody but himself was in on the set-up, including Marta and some of his friends. He thus finds himself betrayed on all sides – by his boss, his friends, his lover, the police and the trickery of ETA. What I want to do here is discuss Charli's status as noir protagonist in terms of the landscape with which he is confronted, and the situation that pertains in the Basque Country that surrounds him. Although the main action of the film takes place in 1980, which, as we are told at the beginning, was a particularly bloody period in ETA's history, we discover that ETA is no more than part of a political and social context which betrays Charli on all sides. They are no better and no worse than the corrupt police and corrupt private sector.

Charli's situation throughout the film is very much in the mould of many noir and neo noir male protagonists, victims of circumstances beyond their control. Frank Krutnik, in his seminal work on noir and masculinity, refers to noir's emphasis on passive and emasculated men, the male as victim (Krutnik

1991: 127). Most obviously, the noir hero is in danger from any *femme fatale* that crosses his path, but he is equally vulnerable when it comes to men in whom he believes he can put his trust. Noir questions not only traditional gender roles but also male homosocial bonds; and perhaps the duplicity of the male friend or colleague is that much more cutting than that of the *femme fatale*, already notorious for her untrustworthiness. Charli also fits into the group of male noir protagonists that Andrew Spicer has identified as the damaged male (Spicer 2002: 86–7). He took up his work as a bodyguard and gopher after an injury put paid to his footballing career. There is a sense of the male body wearing out, of not being up to the job of being male, decisive, active. This may perhaps explain his reluctant capitulation to the sexual advances of the young Marta: she is clearly the dominant party in their affair, but the relationship carries the hint of an attempt to recapture lost youth. Charli's attempt to rehabilitate himself after the end of his career in football is reminiscent of the American noirs of the late 1940s that featured former war heroes trying to fit back into a civilian life they now find alien. He is more overtly marked out as solitary, and this becomes of greater significance given his status as a *maketo*, an outsider in the Basque Country. Because of his function as outsider in a country or region that is very polarised and in some sectors very nationalistic, the sense of the male protagonist as a foreigner in what may or may not be his own land is particularly pronounced. Director Martínez-Lázaro entwines the dilemma of the male protagonist around the dilemmas of life in the Basque Country so that the two become intricately related. As Ramón Freixas puts it in his review of the film, Charli lacks the 'compromiso social en un Euskadi donde hay que tomar partido' (the social commitment in a Basque Country where you have to take a side; Freixas 2001). Charli ultimately finds himself alone against everyone else, and although he initially commits himself to Oliveira before everyone, he withdraws from this commitment too, so that ultimately he is without allegiance.

This noir theme of individual male crisis is underscored further given Charli's relation to the landscape that surrounds him. The noir genre is very much linked to the city: in American noir the underside of New York and Los Angeles have become the quintessential backdrops. In Spanish noir Bilbao is coming to rival Madrid as Spain's noir city, in Enrique Urbizu's *Todo por la pasta* (All for the Dough, 1991) or Imanol Uribe's *Adiós, pequeña* (Bilbao Blues, 1986). *El invierno en Lisboa* (Winter in Lisbon; José A. Zorrilla, 1991), a noir in virtually a retro style, moves between the docksides of Lisbon and San Sebastián. Nonetheless, noir of any sort is not always confined to the city, and there are examples of classic noirs where characters begin, traverse or end up in rural or provincial settings (such as Jacques Tourneur's *Out of the Past* of 1947 and Tay Garnett's *The Postman Always Rings Twice* of 1946). There are possible examples in

Spanish noir, too: for instance, the thriller *Un cos al bosc/Cuerpo en el bosque* (Body in the Woods; Joaquim Jordà, 1996), set in rural Catalonia. *La voz de su amo*, too, deals primarily with settings outside the city. Synopses and press releases for *La voz de su amo* proclaim Bilbao as its setting, but in fact we spend little time in Bilbao. Instead, settings are primarily rural or coastal. Crime, in particular, is rural: two of the major set pieces – the fake kidnapping and the murder of one of Oliveira’s business associates – take place on rural roads in the midst of Basque fields, forests and mountains. There are bars in provincial towns, where Charli and Marta attempt to deal with ETA for the release of Oliveira: these are, it should be noted, hostile places where the clientele treat Charli with some antagonism. Charli is even led out of Spanish territory altogether as the hunt for his employer takes him across the border to France. Or the action takes place by the sea, sometimes using docksides that are themselves typically noir, but also places such as the seaside hotel where Charli spies on Oliveira’s mistress Katy and her clandestine lover, or the coastal backdrop where Charli discusses the possibility of negotiating with ETA for Oliveira’s release. Only at the end do we move back to the more urban surroundings of the train station, where Charli is injured during the final, climactic shoot-out, and the bar in which Charli and Marta appear to go their separate ways with wistful regret. Thus we experience a move through the film from city to country and back again, so that the city’s problems are displaced on to, and negotiated in, the countryside.

Of all the principal characters, only Charli lives in an urban setting. Oliveira and Marta live in a comfortable country house, while other characters seem devoid of a ‘home’ setting apart from Katy, whose flat is the site of her death early on in the film. The shift from city to country thus parallels Charli’s own crisis of masculine identity. He has to move outside to the countryside to discover that he does not belong anywhere. An additional clue to his lack of belonging occurs in the provincial bar where he and Marta first arrive in search



Figure 10 Charli’s discomfort in the country in *La voz de su amo*

of an ETA contact. In the bar he encounters a man who had heckled Oliveira at a meeting, and whom Charli had forcibly ejected from the meeting room. Now the heckler aggressively confronts Charli, secure in the knowledge that this time he (the heckler) is on his own turf and backed up by his own friends: Charli is protected only with the intervention of a man who turns out to belong to ETA. The pivotal moment of betrayal also occurs in the Basque countryside, as Charli waits for Oliveira to return from a clandestine meeting in an unspecified place. This landscape may be picturesque but it also underscores Charli's isolation, as Oliveira abandons him in all the greenery (Fig. 10). Charli distrusts the solitary figure in the landscape that he can see, the worker in the field – he fears he is an ETA collaborator (and indeed the worker refuses to back up Charli's story of the subsequent kidnapping). This sequence ends as Oliveira appears to be driven away by force: Charli leaps into his car to give chase, crashes and has to be rescued, a clear reinforcement of his loss of control in this scene: the hay bales scattered in the road suggesting an appropriately rural obstacle to a successful pursuit of his boss.

As Nathan Richardson points out: 'Like every other Spanish nationalism except the Catalan, Basque nationalism has historically employed the tension of country versus city to represent its struggle against Castilian imperialism' (Richardson 2002: 181) The city is where Charli belongs, where he is at his most comfortable and productive, a part of his community as demonstrated by the football coaching for local children. The work for Oliveira, however – which sets him on a trajectory towards his betrayal on all sides – immediately takes him out of the city to liminal and marginal places. Charli also travels a good deal, using rural roads: if in the previous chapter I suggested that the use of the road implies a movement away from commitment to the cause, simultaneously with a move away from the Basque motherland represented by the landscape, now the road, used by Charli in a different way, suggests movement away from belonging. Everyone insists that Charli must choose a side, but ultimately he opts to choose no side, merely to survive in a moral landscape where everyone appears equally corrupt. Charli's desire for association, then, shrinks to include only his local community in Bilbao, the only place that he can make his own: it is the place of healing, as he recuperates from his bullet wound, and where he finds a role as a father figure by acting as a football coach. The community also cares for him in the form of the local priest (in contrast to the rural monastery which shelters Oliveira). All the other major characters abandon Bilbao through death or exile. In the final meeting between Charli and Marta, it is clear that she still loves him, as she initiates the encounter on hearing his voice in the bar where she sits with friends. But she too is about to leave Bilbao to go to a rock concert in San Sebastián with friends. The film's final shot has Charli watching her leave with her friends: as she looks back at him, we see, from her point of

view, Charli framed centrally against the backdrop of Bilbao as if fixed there. It is the urban rather than the rural where Charli belongs and which nurtures him. His final position, framed in a low-angle shot as he stands on a bridge, gives him a moral authority linked to the fact that he survived the corruption unscathed if more cynical: his high position suggests a capacity for judgement over the other characters he has encountered (Fig. 11). The background of Bilbao also connects him more firmly to city space. But his position on the bridge over water is rather like that of Pardo on his jetty at the end of *La caja 507*: a certain ambiguity is implied.

Again, Charli's efforts to ensure the right thing is done leads to the restoration of order and the purging of unlawful elements from the land. The corrupt team of businessmen, once again exploiting the land to the detriment of the local people as in *La caja 507*, and supported by a corrupt police officer (Sacristán), has been broken up and all are now either dead or in exile. Unlike Pardo, Charli has had to go outside his home area of Bilbao in the search for answers, and he finds them deep within the ambiguity of the countryside, the locus of betrayal (the deceptions practised on him by Oliveira and later by Marta herself as she mis-identifies her father's body, the corruption revealed by Oliveira as he shoots Sacristán dead, the betrayal of his business partners) and confusion (the winding route ETA compels him to take as he seeks a final rendezvous to talk with them). However, resolution occurs at home in Bilbao, as all the threads of the plot come together in the station shoot out. Charli is now secure in his rightful place in his Bilbao community. It is possible to interpret this call to care in terms of Castilian imperialism as posited by Richardson: Charli's alignment with the city traces Spain across the landscape in terms of an equation of the law with a Spanish state often hostile to aspirations to Basque nationalism. This, however, neglects some of the ambiguities of Charli's position. Unlike Pardo there is no sense that Charli has changed after his immersion into the dubious spaces of the countryside, and there is no sense of an imbrication of luxury space with cloacal space as in *La caja 507*. But Charli's refusal to align himself with any side negates the binary of Basque nationalism/Spanish imperialism and instead suggests a call to care exercised locally. This concept, however, coincides with the comment of Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari that 'The State is sovereignty. But sovereignty only reigns over what it is capable of internalizing, of appropriating locally' (Deleuze and Guattari 1998: 360). Like Pardo, he acts locally: and these local actions come to constitute the restoration of the sovereign law even as such law remains disputed ground. Yet the very contestation of the law – by ETA, by corrupt business practices, by the very policemen supposed to uphold it – renders this local restoration precarious.

In all these examples, the tension between criminality and the defence against it does not map itself out in uniform ways, any more than national identities



Figure 11 Charli on a Bilbao bridge at the end of *La voz de su amo*

express themselves in a monolithic manner. But, taken together, these examples suggest that the ambiguity of the relationship between the law and crime, as played through the crime drama, is literally mapped on to the landscape within which this ambiguity plays itself out. But I feel it suggests more than that. It indicates that the need for space in the spectacle of crime implicitly calls for the national to reintroduce itself as an always already problematised trace. If the law that is implied by these films is inevitably Spanish, then so is the territory in which the spectacle is played out. The tension in the landscape between the imaginary and the real in this Spanish landscape runs parallel to the illusion of the law in such films: posited only to be broken – but then recreated and reaffirmed. Spain as landscape – like Spain as embodied by the law – becomes a flickering trace in the corner of our eye, always problematised but always there. When Modesto Pardo in *La caja 507* pauses to survey the landscape that is at the heart of the plot and the crime, he appears much like one of the observers gazing at the scenery to be found in Caspar David Friedrich's landscape paintings: an observer separate from what he sees. But even at this point in the film we know this is not true: his tragic past is inherently bound up with this landscape and his observation is not neutral. The call to care for the landscape and what it means results in a blurring of the meanings of landscape, space and place which is crucial in the desire of association: these meanings cannot be neatly separated. In crime films, the landscape becomes once again the way by which we see this call to care for local spaces and places.

Barry Jordan remarks:

the dominant cinema that was and still is seen and patronized by mass Spanish audiences ... is American, or more exactly Hollywood ... In other words, the ways in which Spanish audiences imagined their nation from the films they saw drew not only on the myths and stereotypes of Spanish films but on those of the Hollywood 'dream factory' and a 'whole way of life' too. (Jordan 2004: 670)

As Jordan and Morgan-Tamosunas' earlier comment cited above suggests, Spanish audiences may also use Hollywood as a resource with which to visualise their own marginal behaviours, and thus the Hollywood thriller style may be used to figure and negotiate tensions over what is central to the Spanish nation and what is marginal, what comes within the law and what does not. In doing so, audiences may co-opt the thriller for Spain, but not in the sense of the national masquerade commented on before. For they also co-opt the sheer precariousness of national identity as figured through cinema and imply the national borders as always in danger of being breached and thus always policed. In the thriller, Spain may be not be sharply defined but remains always already as a flickering presence, which, like the law of the land, is always in question but always there to be questioned.

CHAPTER SIX

Crime, scene, investigation: women, detection and the city

Following on from the arguments of the previous chapter, this chapter continues the consideration of the link between landscape, space and place and the law, but now focuses more squarely on the city and the presence of the female detective within texts on the city and crime. One of the key theories concerning moving through city space is that of the *flâneur*, a theory derived specifically from nineteenth-century Paris, theorised first by Charles Baudelaire and later by Walter Benjamin: the *flâneur* moves without specific purpose through the public and through public spaces but is not himself (and the gender here is specifically masculine as we shall see) of the public. Rather, he observes it. As Keith Tester says of Baudelaire's original theory, 'The *flâneur* is the secret spectator of the spectacle of the spaces and places of the city' (Tester 1994: 7). He is a man 'driven out of the private and into the public by his own search for meaning' (ibid.: 1) and 'is the individual sovereign of the order of things who, as the poet or as the artist, is able to transform faces and things so that for him they have only that meaning which he attributes to them' (ibid.: 6).

Therefore the *flâneur* is someone who seeks meaning from city spaces but also bestows on them individual meaning. This implies that the spaces can be read in more than one way, but what is important is this particular meaning that the *flâneur* produces. The ability to spectate and derive meaning from the act is, however, intrinsically masculine: in this original theorisation there can be no *flâneuse*. As Priscilla Parkhurst Ferguson argues, in the original theorisation of *flânerie* a woman cannot adopt the role of *flâneur* because she can never achieve the necessary detachment to observe, intricately connected as she is to consumerism (the nineteenth century seeing the rise of the department store), and subject as she is to her desires (Ferguson 1994: 27–8). A woman is in any case an object and not a subject of observation (ibid.: 28): there is a link here to prostitution, the notion that women did not belong in public spaces and therefore those who were to be found in public spaces were likely to be prostitutes. And prostitutes are objects of observation and pursuit on the street (ibid.).

If a woman, according to the original theory, cannot be a *flâneur*, nonetheless there is a role very akin that has become open to her, that of the detective. Ferguson observes that ‘the *flâneur*, like the narrator and like the detective, is associated with knowledge’ (ibid.: 31), while Rob Shields posits that ‘The *flâneur* is like a detective seeking clues who reads people’s characters not only from the physiognomy of their faces but via a social physiognomy of the streets’ (Shields 1994, 63). Walter Benjamin himself, in his interpretation of Baudelaire’s idea, argued that

behind this indolence there is the watchfulness of an observer who does not take his eyes off the miscreant. Thus the detective sees rather wide areas opening up to his self-esteem. He develops forms of reaction that are in keeping with the pace of a big city. He catches things in flight; this enables him to dream that he is an artist. (Benjamin, quoted in Frisby 1994: 92)

It is not simply in observation of people but in deciphering and extracting specific meaning that the detective resembles the *flâneur*. David Frisby talks of the detective as ‘the decipherer of urban and visual texts’ (Frisby 1994: 82) and observes further that

The *flâneur* as marginal figure, collecting clues to the metropolis, like the ragpicker assembling the refuse, like the detective seeking to bring insignificant details and seemingly fortuitous events into a meaningful constellation – they are all seeking to read the traces from the details. (Frisby 1994: 99)

Detection is a role that women have increasingly adopted in real life but also in textual form: female detectives even pre-date the ‘classic’ examples such as Agatha Christie’s Miss Marple (see Knight 2010: 77–9), but there is also an increase in women detecting professionally. Today’s detecting *flâneuse* is likely to be part of institutionalised detection (public – the police – or private). Lorraine Gamman suggests that

The attraction of law enforcement as a site for positive representations of women derives, not from any great love of the police force or a consensus that women are more ethical or less aggressive and destructive than men, but from the fact that such scenarios permit focus on female *activity* rather than on female *sexuality*. (Gamman 1988: 19)

While the emphasis here on activity seems to oppose the indolence originally attributed to the *flâneur*, the opposition between activity and sexuality allows women to become the subject rather than the object of the city gaze.

Various scholars have drawn attention to the ways in which interpretation of space and place can be gendered – both positively and negatively. Rosalind Galt argues that ‘Landscape, like woman, is imagined to be immediate, to communicate directly to those who above all want to see’, the latter, of course, being male (Galt 2006: 58). Gillian Rose in particular has seminally identified

the gaze on the landscape as male and straight, drawing on the theories of the inevitably straight male audience gaze of Laura Mulvey, including the latter's 'Afterthoughts' in which she tries to account for female spectatorship. When Mulvey talks of the female spectator as 'restless in its transvestite clothes' (quoted in Rose 1993: 110), she opens the way to some possibilities for resistance (ibid.: 101–12). Rather irritatingly, Rose herself draws on a near equation between woman and her maternal role in her effort to posit feminine gazes on the landscape (ibid.: 111), which seems to me not only dangerously close to reducing women to biology (and not all women are mothers or have a maternal role) but also rather reductive of women's relationship to the city. The examples I will draw on below in considering women's relation to space and place and the way they look at them suggest there is more than one way of acquiring female agency. Rose's link between landscape and house and garden (ibid.: 112) seems too tame and domestic, precluding the potential excitement of women looking at cityscapes to make meaning and restore order in their role as detectives. Detection does not in itself preclude a concern with house and garden, for, as we shall see, some of the detectives discussed here show an interest in these spaces on some level; but women's experience of space and place is various (and the motif of gender will return on our consideration of the landscapes of tourism in the next chapter). The confinement of women to house and garden (so that any woman on the street must be a prostitute) gives an edge to the notion of place as home. As Doreen Massey has commented,

It is interesting to note how frequently the characterization of place as home comes from those who have left, and it would be fascinating to explore how often this characterization is framed around those who – perforce – stayed behind; and how often the former was male, setting out to discover and change the world, and the latter female, most particularly a mother, assigned the role of personifying a place which did not change. (Massey 1994: 166–7)

The city space of *flânerie* is, according to Elizabeth Wilson, not easily gendered, however: 'The city is "masculine" in its triumphal scale, its towers and vistas and arid industrial regions; it is "feminine" in its enclosing embrace, in its indeterminacy and labyrinthine uncentredness' (Wilson 1991: 7). Indeed, Wilson argues that women may be better able than men to negotiate the city: 'Perhaps the "disorder" of urban life does not so much disturb women. If this is so, it may be because they have not internalised as rigidly as men a need for over-rationalistic control and authoritarian order' (ibid.: 8).

As theorists express concern about the disorientation caused by time-space compression, women seem better able to cope with this than men. This links to the condemnation by urban commentators of women as uncontrollable consumers when they move through city spaces, the indiscriminate consumption implying they do not have the rationality to make sense of city

space (Swanson 1995: 81). The condemnation may well arise from the fear that masculine rationality – imposing order – is not what is needed to make sense of the city: discrimination is not the best tool when urban reality can be experienced on levels that are not only different from each other but may conflict. Consumption can be a liberating approach from rationality. Nonetheless the continual preclusion of women from rational thought becomes tedious: the female detective raises the possibility of rationality combined with the ability to negotiate city spaces on a variety of levels. What I wish to consider here is the ways in which city spaces and landscapes allow us to perceive women acting as subjects and agents in ways that include the rational (strongly implied in the act of detecting) but also other approaches to negotiating the city that gives value to experience commonly coded as feminine. To do this I will first take the series of detective novels by Alicia Giménez Bartlett featuring police detective Petra Delicado, and then move to a discussion of the film *Mataharis* (Iciar Bollain, 2007), about three women who work as private detectives. Their activities in Barcelona and Madrid, respectively, demonstrate the commitment to restoring law that is always potentially being broken, and thus their call to care for Spain is manifested, and Spain itself is shown to be in a process of always already becoming but never completed. This chapter, however, gives greater emphasis to the question of the call to care for Spain as inherently bound up with more personal desire: in other words, it gives greater emphasis to the importance of the subject.

Petra Delicado

Petra Delicado is a police inspector working in Barcelona, the site of all but one of her investigations to date. Jimena Ugaz presents Petra as a noir hero, verging on the masculine: hard-drinking, violent and handy with a gun (Ugaz 2005: 41), but Petra is not self-consciously feminist in her role as a female detective, and indeed her career has taken a different and more family-orientated turn since Ugaz was writing, as in the recent *El silencio de los claustros* (The Silence of the Cloisters, 2010). The admittedly copious *copas* that Petra appears to consume in the series of novels form part of a process of case discussion, bonding and sociability, above all with her *subinspector* Garzón, rather than a gesture towards masculinist values. Petra is, nonetheless, clearly a *flâneuse*. The first novel in the series, *Ritos de muerte* (1996) (Death Rites), sees Petra's move away from Documentación (an administrative space and thus traditionally marked as feminine) to the street spaces of real policing (Giménez Bartlett 2007: 10). The latter spaces clearly suit her. After the case has been solved Petra goes back to the documentation section and finds work piled up. 'Me di cuenta de que había perdido la costumbre de aplicar un método por culpa de haber pasado tanto

tiempo siguiendo el zigzag de los hechos' (I realised that I had lost the habit of working methodically as a result of having spent so much time following the zigzag of the facts; *ibid.*: 260). In order to function well as a detective Petra has adopted the guise of a *flâneuse*, moving about the city not by means of a logically plotted path but randomly as the facts and events of detection take her. Petra's future fortunately lies with detection rather than documentation – fortunately because it is clear detection both suits and stimulates her. And the suitability and stimulation comes from her adoption of the role of observer and spectator linked with the *flâneuse*: she muses,

Había un componente enormemente excitante en el trabajo de investigar, hubiera sido tonto haberlo negado. Era como viajar sentado en un tren, aunque tu cuerpo permaneciera tranquilo, las cosas avanzaban a tu alrededor, todos los implicados seguían actuando. Tú te quedabas allí, pensando, ordenando los hechos, con los ojos bien abiertos para no pasarte de estación. También era emocionante aquel contacto a tumba abierta con la realidad, ser testigo de la miseria moral, la podredumbre, el horror. En ningún momento anterior de mi vida me hubiera creído capaz de soportarlo, pero era condenadamente fácil, no juzgabas, no te mezclabas, embotabas tu sensibilidad y acababas por creer que te había puesto allí la Providencia para deshacer entuertos y luchar por la justicia. (Bartlett 2007: 101)

There was something enormously exciting about the work of detection, it would have been silly to deny it. It was like travelling by train: although your body stayed still, things moved around you, everyone implicated carried on doing things. You stayed there thinking, putting facts in order, with your eyes fully open so as not to miss your station. It was also exciting to be openly in contact with reality, to witness moral misery, poverty, horror. In no previous moment of my life would I have thought myself capable of bearing it, but it was damn easy, you didn't judge, you didn't get involved, you dulled your senses and ended up believing that providence had sent you there to right wrongs and fight for justice.

While there is a discernible note of cynicism in her thoughts, she relishes the chance to observe without judgement – the gaze of the detective or *flâneur*. A similar principle underlies the admiration she expresses to Garzón in *Un barco cargado de arroz* (2004) (*A Boat Full of Rice*), arguing that someone who lives on the streets has a certain nobility: such a person has achieved wisdom and lives freely (Giménez Bartlett 2005b: 8). *Día de perros* (1997) (*Dog Day*; Giménez Bartlett 2006a) offers the potential *flânerie* of the dog walker: the first time Petra takes her new dog Espanto (meaning horror or fright) for a walk, we have an equation of *flânerie* and detection as she uses the dog in the first steps to track down the murderer of its former master. It is not incidental that this first walk actually serves as a link to one of the perpetrators of the crime (the murder of a dog thief), although Petra does not know it at the time:

Espanto no sintió nada especial en el sitio donde su amo fue hallado. Se movió en redondo, levantó la nariz y olió el aire. Entonces, sin excesivo ímpetu, escogió un

camino y se puso en marcha. Yo lo llevaba cogido por la correa, sin estirar de ella ni corregir su rumbo. (Giménez Bartlett 2006a: 52)

Espanto did not sense anything special at the site where his master was found. He circled round, lifted his nose and sniffed the air. Then, without too much haste, he selected a path and set off. I held him on the lead, without tightening it or correcting his path.

This walk does indeed have a purpose but it is neither immediately clear nor accessible to human reason (and is interrupted by vignettes such as the dog lifting his leg to a tree). But both Petra and Espanto are observing city space and drawing conclusions from their observations: they are in fact detecting. A further observation made by Petra in *Mensajeros en la oscuridad* (1999) (Messengers in the Dark; Giménez Bartlett 2006b) reinforces the link between the *flâneuse* and the detective once more as she and Garzón walk through the streets: ‘Aquel estado peripatético y sin rumbo traslucía muy bien nuestra auténtica situación policial: vagábamos de un dato a otro sin encontrar un punto en el que valiera la pena recalar’ (This peripatetic, purposeless state clearly revealed the reality of our situation as police: we drifted from one fact to another without discovering any fixed point worth aiming for; Giménez Bartlett 2006b: 110–11). And the distinction she makes between herself and the purposeful people around her as they occupy the street together underscores still further her status as *flâneuse*:

Fui cruzándome con gente que se movía impetuosamente, como si todos supieran adónde se dirigían. Gente de diverso aspecto y pelaje que sin duda tendría un cometido profesional concreto en la vida, una ocupación que conllevaría una ecuación lógica entre esfuerzo y resultados. (Giménez Bartlett 2006b: 266)

As I went I passed people moving impetuously, as if everyone knew where they were going. People with different appearances who doubtless had a specific professional mission in life, a job that included a logical equation between effort and results.

If Petra functions as a *flâneuse* in the streets of Barcelona, it is clear that the more traditional space for a woman – at home – does not suit her so well. Her attempts to manage her home spaces are not always successful, from her failure to settle in her supposedly safe haven, her new home in Poble Nou, to her efforts to grow healthy geraniums in *Ritos de muerte* (until Garzón comes to her aid). In *Muertos de papel* (2000) (Prime Time Suspect) she observes the use of suburban space in Barcelona’s San Cugat by women as one of a purposeless, routine domestic boredom totally alien to her, filled by nothing but coffee, television and children (Giménez Bartlett 2005a: 26). Later in the same novel, flicking through a copy of the women’s magazine *Mujer moderna* (Modern Woman) and the tips for self-improvement in all areas of a woman’s life (the body, the home, cooking etc.), Petra tries to get Garzón to question whether women really are able to think about all these things and whether it can leave

them time for personal pleasure (ibid.: 66), suggesting that she finds these ideas alien and unpleasurable. In *Serpientes en el paraíso* (2002) (Serpents in Paradise; Giménez Bartlett 2006c) it becomes clear that *flânerie* can even be a retreat from specifically female desires such as the child and nice house that is an integral part of the residential area where the crime takes place. When she realises that the killer is Malena, the friend she envied with the perfect child, Petra cannot face going home where her thoughts will close in on her: ‘La solución era andar, una larga caminata a la luz de una luna que no se ve en la ciudad. Y así lo hice, caminé y caminé hasta que las piernas me dolieron y la espalda me crujió’ (The solution was to walk, a long walk by the light of a moon that you don’t see in the city. And that’s what I did: I walked and walked until my legs hurt and my back creaked; ibid.: 321).

Petra’s role ensures that she moves through a variety of city spaces. Nancy Vosberg has written of Petra’s circulation through different areas of social class, notably in *Día de perros*, moving from dog kennels to dog fights to spaces for down and outs to chic animal salons. In *Mensajeros en la oscuridad*, on the other hand, her detection ‘will lead her into a space, far removed from the sun-drenched Mediterranean light of tourist brochures, where these two shadowy worlds [Mafia and real estate] converge’ (Vosberg 2005: 25). In *Serpientes en el paraíso* Petra encounters immigrant women who have been displaced and marginalised from their support systems that operate in the centre of Barcelona. The novel highlights the diversity of the inner city in contrast to the suburbs (ibid.: 26). Shelley Godsland describes *Muertos de papel*, where the action oscillates between Barcelona and Madrid, as ‘a frenetic race through all strata of the capital’s multi-faceted society’ (Godsland 2007: 36). She further observes that many different classes and social groups are implicated in the course of Petra’s narratives but the guilty person is always an individual motivated by money, power or revenge (ibid.: 50). But within the criss-crossing of social strata there is nonetheless a distinct sense of Petra (who aims to uphold the law) observing a murky world of people unlike her: she is distinct from the people who occupy these spaces. In talking of *Día de perros* Godsland points out that Petra explores areas of crime and poverty hitherto unknown to her – ‘trawls’ is the word Godsland uses (ibid.: 36). Thus the world Petra observes is for the most part alien to her: she is not of it. Petra’s own comments, as well as those of commentators, suggest a descent to an underworld. Godsland observes that ‘vast swathes of Barcelona society – and specifically its less than salubrious underbelly – are uncovered as Petra peels back the veneer of gentility that covers the unpleasant side of the Catalan capital’ (ibid.: 50). These spaces are not perceived as suitable for a woman, as Petra’s first ex-husband reproaches her in *Ritos de muerte* “‘Andar todo el día junto a un policía gordo, entrando y saliendo de bares de mala muerte y puticlubs. Te estás jugando tu dignidad’” (Going around all day with

a fat policeman, in and out of low-rent bars and strip clubs. You're playing with your dignity; Giménez Bartlett 2007: 79). He urges her to 'enderezar de nuevo tu vida' (straighten your life out) by going back to the law, her earlier profession, asking if she has not yet had enough of change and adventure (ibid.: 79). This is advice that Petra ignores.

But if the underworld and the Barcelona of the marginalised seems alien to her, so do the suburbs and middle-class residences. *Serpientes en el paraíso* explicitly focuses on middle-class residential estates as suffocating, conformist and detached from reality. Petra observes the sameness in the El Paradís residential area where she investigates a murder, where everyone has the same attitudes and ideas. 'Sería como permanecer en un gueto concebido para obtener un determinado tipo de felicidad basada en la negación de otros mundos' (It would be like living in a ghetto designed to achieve a certain type of happiness based on the denial of other worlds'; Giménez Bartlett 2006c: 19). Petra could never fit in, even though she toys with the idea, because she knows of other and less pleasant worlds. When meeting a friend in an elegant café she observes the difference from the bars that she and Garzón frequent, full of people, noise and the smell of cooking oil (ibid.: 167). The suburb is just as alien to Petra as the marginalised areas of Barcelona (indeed, El Paradís is marginalised too, in its own way), and in the end she begins to detest returning to the suburb: it is too claustrophobic and not the ideal she originally thought (ibid.: 286). And yet alienation is not the crucial factor in her rejection of certain lifestyles, since she takes pleasure in the very strangeness (to her) of Madrid in *Muertos de papel*, where she enjoys the feel of the capital as only someone from Barcelona can (Giménez Bartlett 2005a: 106).

In these differing city spaces she acts and deduces as a detective would, but also derives her own social meaning from the places she sees, offering her own social commentary. (For this reason, the fact that these novels are in the first person reinforces the notion that hers is an individual, *flâneur*-like interpretation.) Her role as detective enables her commentary: 'because the police officer has perforce to move among all sectors of society, the lives and penuries of those living on the socio-economic margins of Barcelona are also uncovered and commented on' (Godsland 2007: 75). Her career is thus what bestows the role of observer and thus of *flâneuse* on her. The interpretation she draws from the streets is not, according to her, a feminist one. In *Muertos de papel* she informs Garzón, 'no soy feminista. Si lo fuera no trabajaría como policía, ni viviría aún en este país, ni me hubiera casado dos veces, ni siquiera saldría a la calle' (I'm not a feminist. If I were I wouldn't be working for the police, nor would I be living in this country, nor would I have married twice, nor would I even go out into the street; Giménez Bartlett 2005a: 138). In terms of space and place, two elements of this statement are immediately intriguing: first, that

Spain is no place for a feminist, but also that the street is not such a place either. By adopting her position as *flâneuse* Petra is not explicitly seeking to assert a form of gender equality, but, given her position as *flâneuse* it does not mean an acceptance of traditional patriarchy either, since that entails a subordination or exclusion of women from public spaces.

As *flâneuse* she also separates herself from another function of women in city streets, that of the consumer. I noted above Priscilla Parkhurst Ferguson's comment that a woman could not adopt the role of *flâneur* because her role as consumer did not allow her the necessary detachment. But precisely because of her role as detective Petra can and must detach herself from the world of shopping, as she observes while walking around the centre of Barcelona in *Mensajeros*,

Visitamos el barrio peatonal emplazado en el centro antiguo de la ciudad. Eran apenas las once de la mañana, pero las calles bullían de vida. Se veían muchas mujeres que iban de compras, miraban escaparates y se detenían para tomar café en algún bar. Lucía un solcillo espléndido que se colaba por entre los viejos edificios muy juntos unos de otros. Un músico ambulante soltaba al aire una hermosa tonada de flauta. Todo me pareció armónico y tranquilo. En efecto, mientras nosotros estábamos cada mañana hundidos en nuestros lúgubres despachos, había gente libre que podía verle a la vida el lado luminoso. (Giménez Bartlett 2006b: 94)

We went to the pedestrian zone in the old quarter of the city. It was only eleven in the morning, but the streets were brimming with life. There were many women out shopping, looking at shop windows and stopping for a coffee in some bar. The sun shone magnificently, slipping between the old buildings tightly packed together. A wandering musician released a beautiful flute melody on to the air. To me everything seemed harmonious and calm. Indeed, while every morning we were buried in our dismal offices there were people who could freely look on the bright side of life.

The distinction made here between carefree shopping and Petra's own *flânerie* not only suggests the mutual exclusion of the two activities but Petra's own constant habitation of a semi-permanent underworld. But Petra's later experience of a shopping mall in *Nido vacío* (Empty Nest, 2007) suggests the alien nature of the environment that implies her *flânerie* is the better position: for instance, she notes with cynicism the fake paradise suggested by a café appearing to be laid out in the open air instead of where it actually is, an enclosed shopping mall (Giménez Bartlett 2009: 7). Her ability to analyse a consumer environment underscores her detachment from it; the fact that her purse is stolen before she has even embarked on any shopping short-circuits any chance of participating in consumption.

When Gillian Rose concludes that 'Pleasure in landscape, it appears, is for straight men's eyes' only' (Rose 1993: 99), Petra's example both does and does

not confirm Rose's idea. To begin with, Petra does not always find pleasure in the cityscape she observes. Her job of necessity takes her to some of the bleaker city spaces, and yet the more well-to-do places do not always bring her pleasure either: the middle-class suburb and shopping mall are (sooner or later) seen as alien to her. And yet at other times she does enjoy not only the place she is looking at and experiencing (as with Madrid, for example) but, more particularly, the actual act of looking, as her observations on detection, quoted earlier, go to suggest. Her pleasure in this act could arguably come from her adoption of a 'straight male gaze' that goes with the act of *flânerie* and thus would conform to Rose's concept. Nonetheless, Petra's role as both detective and *flâneur* does not automatically preclude knowledge and experience potentially tagged as feminine. For example, it is her awareness of home furnishings in *Muertos de papel* that helps her make a connection of complicity between the murder victim and his apparently ex-wife. In *Nido vacío* it is another oasis of calm, a garden outside the children's home (where Petra has a soothing conversation with an old lady), that eventually leads her to solve the crime – the same tulips are to be found in this garden that are also found in the window box of an associate of one of the victims, who was both a gardener and involved in a child porn ring. (Petra's awareness of plants has clearly improved since her attempt to grow geraniums in *Ritos de muerte*). Petra demonstrates an awareness of a space that Rose herself has described as specific to women (as mentioned above). It is, however, noticeable that the more she encounters the different spaces of Barcelona the more she tries to create a home space separate from it: her home becomes a necessary retreat from her world of crime, so that by the time of *Nido vacío* her marriage to Marcos at the end of the novel suggests the need for this virtually compartmentalised normality, an oasis to go back to at the end of the working day. She makes a sharp divide between the sordid world of crime (and, in this case, child pornography and the possibility that children can kill) and the lives of 'respectable' people in Barcelona who remain unaware of such a world. Petra's fear in this novel is of being submerged in the underworld of crime, a fear where she cannot escape and, significantly, will get marked, dirtied, by it, intimated when she comments of her concern to avoid falling in the 'lodazal' or mire (Giménez Bartlett 2009: 62). Inevitably, however, she takes her work home with her: not only does she continue to socialise with her *subinspector* outside the office, she cannot free herself from the curiosity of her new stepchildren about her work, as evidenced in *El silencio de los claustros* where they quiz her on the progress of the case.

When Wilson argues (1995: 75) that 'The heroism – for both sexes – is in surviving the disorientating space, both labyrinthine and agoraphobic, of the metropolis. It lies in the ability to discern among the massed ranks of anonymity the outline of forms of beauty and individuality appropriate to urban life. The

act of creating meaning, seemingly so arbitrary, becomes heroic in itself', she is describing a position that prefigures Petra's own, and suggests Petra's own call to care for the people of Barcelona that she observes. If, as in the previous chapter, the desire to restore the law allows the nation to trace itself across space and place, then Petra's concern for the victims of crime, for the inhabitants of Barcelona under her care, links, law, nation and city space. As with *La voz de su amo* in the previous chapter the identity of the nation is itself precarious: are we talking of Spain or of Catalonia, of which Barcelona is the capital? We can of course be talking of both: Petra does not specify any allegiance. Yet as *flâneuse* Petra observes the city, enters all quarters of it and knows it and its people thoroughly, although her status as observer is mitigated by the sympathy she feels for the people she encounters in her wanderings. Godsland notes that in *Un barco cargado de arroz*, for example, Petra visits a series of places – 'psychiatric hospitals, homeless encampments, derelict buildings, and social welfare centres' – where she shows 'an intimate and sympathetic understanding of the Barcelona of the marginalized, the delinquent, and the dispossessed – among whom Petra Delicado has, inevitably, to carry out her investigations' (Godsland 2007: 37). Petra does not separate herself from the city and the people she observes, as the essential masculine *flâneur* would. Petra creates meaning out of the confusion, and in doing so she also bestows a certain amount of order even as the chaos continues. City spaces are manageable even as they seep into each other. And the home space is a vital part of city space rather than separate from it as the traditional *flâneur* would have it: Petra may try to keep the two separate but it is her experiences and observations that in fact join them together to form a city of layers of which such as Petra can interpret and thus 'care' for.

Mataharis

We now turn to a different manifestation of *flânerie* in the film *Mataharis* (Iciar Bollaín, 2007), with a plot based around the lives of three women who work as private detectives: Carmen (Nuria González), a middle-aged married woman with a grown-up daughter in London, Eva (Najwa Nimri), a young mother and Inés (María Vázquez), a single woman. The fact that we are now considering a film rather than a series of novels has its own impact on our understanding of the *flâneuse*. According to Giuliana Bruno, film offers a reinforcement of the notion of *flânerie*, including the possibility that the latter can be carried out by women. Bruno observes that 'What turned into cinema was an imaginative trajectory that required physical habitation and liminal traversal of the sites of display. As wandering was incorporated into the cinema, film viewing became an imaginary form of *flânerie*. By way of the cinema, new horizons of urban "street-walking" opened to women' (Bruno 2007: 16). This form of *flânerie* is,

however, confined to the female spectator. By the time of *Mataharis*, film is not simply an opportunity for women to carry out a form of virtual *flânerie*, but also an opportunity to see other women practise it. *Mataharis* is saturated with passing shots of the women as they occupy city space, with the opening credit sequence consisting entirely of their movements around Madrid (with a shot of the Puerta de Alcalá to demonstrate where we actually are). At this point there are no storylines: the opening credits underscore quite simply the movement of women through city space, observing the spaces they move through. Carmen takes photos, Eva takes notes, while Inés follows someone in her car. They are clearly detectives, and they are also clearly *flâneuses* from the very beginning of the film.

Wilson's argument mentioned above, that women are better able to cope with the disorder of the city, has manifested itself already in Petra's ability to move through different, neighbouring but conflicting, spaces; but its relevance to the women of *Mataharis* who use city space for multi-tasking is also clear, and one of those tasks is precisely the role of detection. If detection is in once sense restoring order through the closing of a case, then the profession of detective implies the ever-present disorder that needs sorting out, the fact that detection is a constant observation and not a one-off act. In this respect the character of Eva is crucial. The emphasis in both the opening and closing sequences of the film is the women occupying city space, but Eva is the one who is actively detecting in the closing as well as the opening sequences. On both occasions she is simultaneously looking after her son in his pushchair, who accompanies his mother while she works (an accompaniment not always to the liking of her boss Valverde). Although Carmen is on surveillance in the opening sequence she is back in the office as the film closes, while Inés is roaming around the streets of Madrid but apparently as an act of questioning her allegiance to her profession rather than actively carrying it out. Eva – ironically the character who would appear to be the most tied to one place given the young age of her children – is the character who travels most widely in the film, to Zaragoza and Guadalajara as well as a remote graveyard outside Segovia.

If the detective's role is attempting to bring some order out of the chaos of the city, this applies at home as well; and *Mataharis*, like the Petra Delicado novels, shows the detectives at home as well as at work. But, for Eva – and for Carmen too, as we shall see – the home space needs as much order and control as the city space. Both city space and home space become places for detection and observation, as Eva begins to detect the suspected infidelity of her partner Iñaki (Tristán Ulloa). Just as she can change a nappy while keeping someone under observation, so she can talk to her daughter, discussing the nature of waves and the sea, while noting clues down as to Iñaki's behaviour. Although her home and work life appear chaotic as she juggles roles, nonetheless she



Figure 12 Eva as detective in *Mataharis*

is the one trying to maintain order. Eventually she discovers the mystery behind his actions: he has a son by a previous relationship living in Zaragoza. This discovery unsurprisingly gives rise to some tension between the couple, tension that Eva takes back into her job, venting to Carmen about the situation as the two women carry out surveillance: thus women detect while nonetheless carrying out their more traditional roles of maintaining and watching over family relationships. This crossover suggests that the home space is a city space for Eva like any other. For Carmen, however, outside spaces are a retreat from the emptiness of her marriage that fills her home space, until in the end she tells her husband that she is leaving that space permanently. The promise – though no more than that – of romantic fulfilment comes through her work, as she and her client Sergio (Antonio de la Torre) dance together and comfort each other after Carmen reveals to him the infidelity of his wife with his business partner. But again this piece of detection blurs home and work space: as Carmen uncovers problems in another's marriage, so she uncovers problems in her own (and it would appear to be the promise of intimacy with Sergio that leads her to abandon the lack of intimacy at home).

If Petra avowedly professes herself not to be a feminist, nor do the women of *Mataharis* profess any commitment one way or the other. The *raison d'être* for both novels and film is precisely the fact that these are women who are fulfilling a role previously tagged as masculine (explicitly that of detective and implicitly that of *flâneur*). However, in the Petra Delicado novels the emphasis and the storyline revolve around Petra's professional life as a police detective, and the chief relationship explored in the process – at least until the recent *El silencio de*

los claustros – has been with her subordinate Garzón. Romantic relationships are for the most part incidental vignettes that allow for an exploration of Petra's situation as a woman doing the job she does. In *Mataharis*, however, much more emphasis is given to personal relationships, which potentially threaten the ability to act as *flâneuse*, since the capacity for objective observation is much diminished. This is particularly the case for Inés, who becomes emotionally involved with Manuel (Diego Martín), the person she is investigating. Her involvement interferes with the detachment she needs to detect, and ultimately brings into question her whole professional commitment. The matter is not definitively resolved. While Inés reveals to Manuel that she has been investigating him (and in doing so acknowledges with a farewell kiss the end of their involvement), her subsequent course of action remains unclear as the film abandons her to a walk of indecisiveness. While Eva is still detecting (with baby) in the closing sequence of the film (Fig. 12), our final glimpse of Inés is as she walks in an aimless fashion around the streets of Madrid. This contrasts to earlier shots of Inés as she moved through Madrid, where she can clearly be seen not simply detecting but also observing the city, from the bus or from her flat (Fig. 13). But in the closing sequence she does not observe the city in the same way: her crisis of conscience has impeded her desire to see and observe the city. Whereas both Carmen and Eva resolve their domestic crises – the disorder they find at home as well as in the street (and it is worth noting that they have to go outside the home in order to resolve the crisis within), Inés is unable to achieve such a resolution and thus her role as detective/*flâneuse* is in doubt.

Such an ending raises doubt more generally about women's fitness for detection/*flânerie* given the film's strong emphasis on emotional relations.



Figure 13 Inés observes the city in *Mataharis*

These women, as in Petra's case, have shown a clear distance from the association of women as consumers that debarred them from *flânerie* (the only act of shopping is by Eva as she purchases a football shirt for Iñaki's son Javi to show her reconciliation to the fact of Javi's existence: thus shopping is here primarily to show emotional solidarity). But, unlike Petra, they are not always able to subordinate their emotional and personal commitments to the job/observation at hand. We are more bound up in the women's emotional lives than in the detection they carry out, which is almost incidental (and this fits to a great extent with Bollain's trajectory as a film-maker focused on the particularity of women's personal lives, as suggested in *Te doy mis ojos* (Take My Eyes, 2003), *Flores del otro mundo* (Flowers From Another World, 1999) and *Hola, ¿estás sola?* (Hello, Are You Alone?, 1995) – the last to be discussed in the next chapter). Their cases highlight issues in their personal lives, rather than the other way around, as with Petra Delicado. This is a more conservative reading of women moving about the city. It is highlighted in the fact that the women not only cover for and protect one another (for instance, when Carmen looks after Eva's children while Eva tracks down what Iñaki is doing) but also police each other (as when Carmen asks Inés leading questions about Manuel and observes the fact that he has Inés' phone number).

In calling the film *Mataharis* Bollain implicitly alludes not only to the women as detectives and in particular their ability to spy – it is noticeable that much of their work as detectives involves looking and surveillance – but also to the women as seductresses. At first blush this might seem like an unlikely connection: none of the women explicitly seduces anyone, and Inés' initial contact with Manuel is prompted by the needs of detection and not desire. Nonetheless, the suggestion of seduction hints back to the initial role of the woman on the street in *flânerie* – as prostitute. This suggests that while women can appropriate the gaze to act as *flâneuse*, their gender is still a complicating factor that renders their observation and movement through space as tenuous, a factor also to be seen in the Petra Delicado novels in which Petra's musing on her position as woman and as detective is constant, a questioning of self to which her male colleagues are not prone. On the other hand, we can also deduce from the example of Petra and the *Mataharis* that the *flâneuse* allows the notion of what is city space to be expanded beyond the original conception of the streets. While the home space and the street space do not necessarily join seamlessly – it is clear that Petra, at least, attempts to ensure a distinction between them even if her attempt regularly fails (many case conferences are conducted with Garzón in her living room) – they expand the women's powers of observation, so that, like Eva, the woman can detect in the personal or professional spheres, or, like Carmen, she can make deductions from her professional life which she can apply to her personal life. So that when Jonathan Raban comments, 'For each citizen, the city

is a unique and private reality; and the novelist, planner or sociologist (whose aims have more in common than each is often willing to admit) finds himself dealing with an impossibly intricate tessellation of personal routes, spoors and histories within the labyrinth of the city' (Raban 1988: 238), he implicitly points to the possibility of home becoming a part of that patchwork of city spaces, and becoming likewise part of the spaces of observation and detection. This in turn points to the dissolution of the separation of home as idealised by (male) travellers and wanderers (including *flâneurs*) elsewhere, and the spaces those travellers and wanderers moved through. Raban's own assumption that novelists, planners and sociologists are male by default does not detract from the fact that his notion of the soft city – the city that forms around one's own personal trajectory – allows for the inclusion of women. Unlike Petra, the Mataharis do not explicitly reflect on the city spaces through which they move (although we are encouraged to reflect on them as observers, since Bollaín so frequently captures them in the act of observation), nor do they reflect on their own status as observers of what is going on in those spaces. They are, in their function as detectives, nonetheless *flâneuses* in their observation of and movement through the spaces of Madrid, which allow them to make rational deductions that solve problems. But also, unlike Petra, they push the notion of city space into the home, refusing to make a neat distinction or separation between public and private spaces; and they apply the deductions they make in the public spaces of Madrid to the private ones as well. If Petra finds it difficult to keep work and home separate, the Mataharis do not even try. For them, the home space is a city space like any other; and the emotions and personal concerns interweave with professional ones to form a seamless trajectory around the city.

The call to care for these city spaces is not an overtly nationalistic or patriotic one: if anything, we could consider it as an extension of what is perceived as a woman's duty to clean house. If home and outside spaces are blurred in the city, then detection becomes another domestic duty to ensure order is kept and nurture is given. However, the extension of the duty of care nonetheless takes women into city spaces to ensure order and care there: it is notable that many of the cases they take on involve the resolution of personal relationships. Thus a traditional female responsibility – for personal relationships – becomes, when combined with the profession of detective, another form of Billig's banal nationalism, in that they care for and resolve personal difficulties for people in Madrid and thus restore order – an order that, as always when it comes to law and wrongdoing, can always be broken.

Women, the city and national identity

If the discussion so far suggests that women are able to move about city spaces as subjects that gaze, observe and draw conclusions, then how Spanish are these spaces? Does it make a difference that these cities are not simply generic city space (if, indeed, there is anything than can ever be called generic, rather than a space belonging to a specific city) but are clearly identifiable as Madrid and Barcelona? To answer this we can summon once again the notion of banal nationalism conceived by Billig (1995) in which the nation is implicitly invoked, as we saw in the previous chapter where the trace of the nation appears as the law is repeatedly broken and restored: the nation is always questioned but is nonetheless there to be questioned. This trace is further inflected, however, by the notion of city space. The cities in question, Madrid and more problematically Barcelona (since Barcelona also invokes Catalanism), are to a large extent iconic of Spain. Their iconic features are, however, rarely if ever invoked. While Petra names specific places and locations of Barcelona, only the actual label suggests Barcelona (the Diagonal, for instance): the detail oddly enough serves to render these spaces initially rather generic, areas of marginality in which live the poor and down-and-outs, sophisticated shopping streets, malls with an artificial atmosphere, suburban developments. The convents and churches of *El silencio de los claustros* might suggest a Catholic city but it does not suggest which particular one. *Mataharis* demonstrates that women can occupy and move through different spaces in different ways that speak to their multi-tasking ability (including the stress that it causes); but the specificity of the places seems not to matter beyond the quick location shot of the Puerta de Alcalá. Colin McArthur's overly simple comment that 'there must hardly be a major city in the world which ... is not known primarily by way of Hollywood' (McArthur 1997: 34) is readily disproved in the case of Madrid (like many other major cities, not the subject of a great deal of attention by Hollywood film-makers): the Gaudí architecture of Barcelona has recently gained worldwide visibility in *Vicky Cristina Barcelona* (Woody Allen, 2008), but it is hardly Hollywood that has created the prior association between the city and the architect. Spanish film and television may have made the two cities more familiar to Spanish audiences, but neither Giménez Bartlett's novels nor Bollain's film set out explicitly to invoke iconic landmarks in any profound way. So how is Spain invoked as a trace across these spaces?

We could argue that the female characters in these texts speak to the position of women in Spain, as Godsland posits for Giménez Bartlett's novels, claiming that they articulate an ambiguity at the heart of contemporary women's status in Spain, and express a post-feminist position (Godsland 2007: 8). She suggests that the use of a series of novels featuring the same detective allows

for the elaboration of a particular approach towards gender, and also notes that Giménez Bartlett deliberately uses a woman detective to illustrate her ideas on the position of women in Spain (ibid.: 13). The appearance of women as detectives coincided with better opportunities for more sympathetic police once democracy was consolidated (ibid.: 35): thus women have become an integral part of the democratisation of detection and the police procedural. We could contrast this position with David R. George Jr.'s consideration of women 'seeing' in Benito Pérez Galdós' *Episodios nacionales* of the nineteenth century, an explicit invocation of Spanish national history. George sums up his observations: 'The conclusion, if seen strictly through the optic of nineteenth-century liberalism, is disheartening: if the men in the series need to start seeing like men, then for the women to be considered as citizens they too must see like men' (George 2005: 62). Things seem to have changed from that era on two counts. First, seeing like men – adopting the identity of the *flâneuse* – is not necessarily disheartening. Secondly, it does not preclude women seeing like women. Petra Delicado may be increasingly in love with her gun (Godsland 2007: 55) but her observations (occasionally even drawing on 'feminine' knowledge and expertise) prove positive, allowing her to get the job done. Keith Tester (1994: 16) argues that although the *flâneur* was originally specific to a time and place, the figure can be used as a prism through which to look at other cities in other times; so the *flâneuses* we encounter in these texts can reflect social tensions specific to Spain. However, such tensions are not specific to Spain: in other countries women still do not have as ready an acceptance as men as detectives despite their increasing presence in film, literature and real life. Precisely because of their gender, female control over city space is always provisional and open to constant renegotiation. Furthermore, because of the precarious nature of the link between the law and the land, the interaction between women and specifically Spanish space is always already tenuous – but nonetheless it allows for a more positive understanding of women vis-à-vis the city and the nation than is sometimes posited.

There is no essential Spain lurking underneath the surface of these texts and these issues, and the female detectives do not serve to essentialise it, even though we can clearly be nowhere else. Petra explicitly invokes the spaces she moves through as specific to Barcelona, and the Mataharis clearly work in Madrid, but the texts concerned do not work towards a reiteration of iconic ideas that identify these cities as distinct. But, in acting to restore order in both public and private spaces, these women contribute to the dream of presence of these cities, always in the act of becoming. They extend the definition of what these cities are by breaking down the divide between public and private and acting to restore order in both, although this order is precarious, always likely to be broken, and thus these cities can never fully be present but must always be in the act of becoming. But, furthermore, by acting in this way, the women themselves

become an essential part of these cities through their agency: women become citizens. In the process, they act as the good citizens of the previous chapter, restoring the order of the Spanish law and in so doing perpetuating across these city spaces a trace of Spanishness through the law (that can even take into account the nuances of Catalan versus Spanish law, since both can coexist across the same space, as suggested by Catalan and Spanish police bodies operating in Petra's Barcelona). But they also extend Spanish space into the home, which is no longer a private space separate from the public sphere. The home is now an integral part of these city spaces across which the desire to maintain the law and thus implicitly the nation traces itself. If *flânerie* allows for the observation of a city, detection facilitates the assignment of personal meaning to city spaces as spaces of citizenship; and the movement of female detectives through different city spaces allows for the creation of a multi-layered sense of the city unified by the detective's gaze. Women as detectives make city spaces home spaces: the city becomes home, 'our' city, the site of care and of restoration of domestic order, in public space as well as private. Personal commitment – female desires and female subjectivities – become intricately bound up with public commitment – a *flânerie* of citizenship: this intricacy offers multiple meanings of both 'home' and 'city'. Within this, Spain traces itself once again in the corner of the eye through the invocation of active citizenship, a specific allegiance to city space precisely as home space.

CHAPTER SEVEN

Coasting: tourism and landscape

Spain has functioned as a tourist location for outsiders for at least the past two centuries. In the nineteenth century Frenchmen found Spain convivial as the primitive other next door, conveniently just the other side of the Pyrenees but allowing an escape, for a time, from the constraints of polite French society. This included a form of sex tourism, or at the very least an appreciation of maidens duskier than those to be found in France. Joseba Gabilondo observes that in the nineteenth century ‘Southern Europe, in continuation with the lower classes of most Northern European countries and cities, becomes the field in which heterosexuality is “tried out” and learned by young bourgeois men, so as to implement it later back home with women of their same class’ (Gabilondo 2008: 21). Spanish women thus come to represent a sexualised exotic other that nonetheless includes a show of freedom or agency, as Gabilondo goes on to note, ‘The orientalised “independence” of the Spanish woman becomes the sign of her “other sexuality” that is “before” and “outside” French bourgeois heterosexuality’ (ibid.: 27).

One of the most famous outputs of this vein is of course Prosper Mérimée’s novella ‘Carmen’ of 1845, which in turn formed the basis of Bizet’s opera of 1875: from there the portrait of a free-spirited, fickle and sexually desirable young Gypsy woman became known worldwide (spawning in her turn myriad interpretations of her story: see Powrie et al. 2007). Mérimée’s original story included a framing device of the French narrator travelling and researching in Spain, who meets Carmen’s lover and nemesis don José. The latter relates Carmen’s story which then forms part of the narrator’s musings on Gypsy society. Don José is himself a Northerner, from Navarre or the Basque Country, experiencing southern Spain for the first time when he is posted there as a soldier. Thus Carmen is seen as the object of a tourist’s gaze on more than one level; or, indeed, we replace the tourist with our own gaze, adopting that of Mérimée’s original traveller. What is perhaps less well known is that Spain has taken some pains to resist this figuration. Spanish cinema has contested the easy stereotype of Carmen, by emphasising the framing devices, as in Vicente

Aranda's film *Carmen* (2003), where Mérimée himself appears as a character, or earlier in *Carmen, la de Ronda* (Carmen, the Girl from Ronda; Luis César Amadori, 1959), where don José is clearly marked out as part of an invading French force, or with Carlos Saura's *Carmen* (1983), where the apparently inauthentic music of Bizet is pitted uneasily against the authenticity of flamenco (yet even here Mérimée's text is read out, drawing attention to it but also underscoring it as the ultimate arbiter). And yet there is often an ambivalence about this opposition. To take another film text, Florian Rey's *Carmen, la de Triana* (Carmen, the Girl from Triana, 1938), the plot was twisted to ensure that don José died with his military honour intact rather than shredded by a woman – he sacrifices himself to warn his colleagues of an attack by Carmen's bandits – and reviews gratefully hailed the film as ridding Spain of the story's French influence (Powrie et al. 2007: 167–8). Nonetheless, a German version of the film was made, *Andalusische Nächte* (Andalusian Nights; Herbert Maisch, 1938), with the same plot and leading actress but now spoken and sung in German, thus allowing Spain to dabble in, and profit from, being the object of dubious foreign desires (see Davies forthcoming).

The case of *Carmen* demonstrates the ambiguity of Spain's position as the purveyor of tourism. Although Michael Barke points to a high level of acceptance in Spain of tourism (as it has done much to improve the lot of people in southern Spain), he also acknowledges that 'the apparent lack of conflict does not necessarily signify a total and uncritical acceptance by Spanish hosts of the tourism phenomenon' (Barke 2002: 260). This unease can be found in other films, particularly during the Franco era, which coincided with the boom in package tourism to Spain's coastal resorts. Many of these films were comedies, such as *40 grados a la sombra* (40 Degrees in the Shade; Mariano Ozores, 1967) and *El turismo es un gran invento* (Tourism is a Great Invention; Pedro Lazaga, 1968): the unease of the position of the Spanish in the face of tourism dissipated through humour. A notable example is Luis García Berlanga's *El verdugo* (The Executioner, 1963), where the main character is forced to become an executioner in order to gain access to an apartment (which goes with the job) for his wife and family. He travels to Palma de Mallorca to carry out his first execution: while they wait for the sentence to be confirmed he and his family enjoy the tourist sites surrounded primarily by foreigners: tourists cannot be Spanish. Most of these comedies handled sexuality with a light touch, if at all:¹ the only notable sexual references would come with films of the 1960s and 70s where the male Spanish characters ogled fair foreign women in bikinis. These women, usually from Sweden but also from France and Great Britain, neatly reversed the dark Spanish woman as sexual other, so that the Spanish could find their own exotic other on Spanish beaches. Spanish women, on the other hand, were usually portrayed in such films as possibly desirable but always more conventional,

respectable and moral – or more uptight, depending on your point of view. This reversal, however, did not necessarily dislodge the original idea of Spain as exotic sexual other. As Eugenia Afinoguénova and Jaume Martí-Olivella observe, ‘there are still many ways in which Spain is still different from those ... European neighbours, and one of them is the persistence of its (self)-positioning as an (orientalized) sexual paradise’ (Afinoguénova and Martí-Olivella 2008: xxvi). Tourists do not necessarily look for the same sort of nineteenth-century induction into heterosexuality that Gabilondo sketched, as referred to above, but sex and sexuality are still integral parts of the mixture brewed to attract present-day tourists. Nonetheless, what is intriguing for me about the Franco-era comedies that drew on tourism as a subject is their viewing of tourism from the inside. Tourism in these texts invites the Spanish to negotiate their own status as both subjects and as perceived exotic others.

The focus of my attention in this chapter is precisely the idea of looking at tourism from the inside, but through films that for once allow the Spanish woman in particular some greater measure of subjectivity, given that she has been the primary embodiment of touristic otherness. If nineteenth-century French texts insisted on the Spanish woman as whore, the Spanish films of the Franco era presented her as the long-suffering wife or girlfriend to whom the straying Spanish man would return after indulging in sexually exotic scopophilia. More recently, however, some films have offered women new subject positions that complicate their status as sexual objects, further nuanced by a facet that does not appear in the Francoist tourist films so much – the fact that tourism positions women as workers, and tourists as potential sources of jobs and money. This chapter, therefore, places women in a complex relation with tourism in terms of sex and work (and the overlap between the two). If Carmen and her ilk possessed a certain measure of independence, as Gabilondo suggested, then this independence reappears to some degree in contemporary films about tourism. The female characters of this chapter are not tourists but – in the three films I am going to look at – nonetheless dependent on tourism, or the relationship between Spaniard and foreigner, in order to make a living. In a link back to the question of Carmen as object of the tourist gaze, the central characters of these films are women, who are now subject rather than object of the gaze – thus, in a sense, women reflecting back the foreigners’ gaze. The three films in question are: *Costa Brava* (Marta Balletbò-Coll, 1995), *Hola, ¿estás sola?* (Hello, Are You Alone?; Iciar Bollaín, 1995) and *Torremolinos 73* (Pablo Berger, 2003). And there is a spatial dimension to this – the beach and its hinterland – as we shall see in due course.

In his proposition 168 of *The Society of the Spectacle*, Guy Debord argues that

[h]uman circulation considered as something to be consumed – tourism – is a by-product of the circulation of commodities; basically, tourism is the chance

to go and see what has been made trite. The economic management of travel to different places suffices in itself to ensure those places' interchangeability. (Debord 1994: 120)

But is this the same from the locals' point of view, particularly those who service this industry? Can the local identity – that is, a reassertion of place as a space of belonging – re-envision the tourist image? Or, again, are these images always already compromised, because it is precisely those spaces that attract foreigners to Spain? Debord's comment about tourist locales – that they become sites of spectacle that are ultimately indistinguishable – is akin to Marc Augé's idea of a non-place. Augé says that 'soils and territory still exist, not just in the reality of facts on the ground but even more in that of individual and collective awareness and imagination', but this contrasts with the increases of non-places, which are opposed implicitly to 'a culture localized in time and space' (Augé 1995: 34). Yet John Urry remarks on the 'crucial "spatial fixity" about tourist services' in that such services cannot take place just anywhere, and their cultural meanings have to be appropriate (Urry 2002: 38). We may recall the now notorious tourist slogan used in Franco's time: 'Spain is different'. This slogan encapsulates the dilemma between place and non-place that tourist sites in fact offer. The slogan proclaims Spain as a specific territory unlike others and thus localised in time and space: but the slogan itself implies a desire to distinguish precisely because Spain was and is competing with other tourist sites that have similar charms and delights to sell. Thus Spain is hard to distinguish in precisely the terms Debord suggested. Nonetheless, these spaces are home to the Spanish who work in them: from this we can see how the definitions of place and non-place can coexist and blur within the same space.

Films such as the ones discussed below remind us that tourism has a local dimension that renders Spain's tourist sites as localised in time and space, yet the blurring of the distinction between place and non-place is readily evident in these particular films. In *Costa Brava* the apparently neat division between Anna's (Marta Balletbò-Coll) life as a tourist guide, conducting people around the very distinctive sites of Barcelona, and her home life – the non-place of tourism and the territory that is home to a lesbian awareness and imagination through the Costa Brava itself and Anna's flat – in fact becomes indistinct through the rehearsals of Anna's monologue, with the quintessential tourist site of the cathedral of the Sagrada Familia in the background. Yet, while cathedrals are very much part of a blurred site of spectacle that renders specific place unidentifiable in Debord's terms, arguably the very distinctive modernist architecture of the Sagrada Familia – to say nothing of the fact that the cathedral is still under construction, as is clear from the film – goes against the notion of non-place both for tourists and Spaniards. In *Hola, ¿estás sola?* the confusion between place and non-place comes through the indeterminate status of

Niña (Silke) and Trini (Candela Peña) as sometimes workers serving tourists but at other times acting as tourists themselves, wandering over the surface of Spain, starting out from Valladolid to Málaga, and then wandering to and from Madrid. (It is notable that one of the tourists they serve at Mariló's seaside bar is the director herself, Iciar Bollain, playing the part of a tourist singing karaoke, a further lack of distinction between tourist leisure and local work.) The tourist beaches are not, in the eyes of Niña and Trini, and later of Niña's mother Mariló (Elena Irureta) and their associate Pepe (Alex Ángulo), indeterminate tourist sites but opportunities to make money and get rich, one of the avowed aims of the girls from the beginning. Place and non-place are blurred through their fluctuating status as workers serving foreign tourists and as indiscriminate wanderers across a terrain than nonetheless remains their own native country. In *Torremolinos* 73 the site of Torremolinos is – ironically, given Debord's ideas – the one identifiable place in the film: and yet it is strangely unrecognisable because its beaches are empty, Alfredo's (Javier Cámara) film being made out of season. It remains, as before, a workplace for Spaniards: it also remains a tourist beach like any other but rendered strange through the absence of tourists (see Vidal 2010: 214). Torremolinos is thus both identifiable and non-recognisable, place and non-place. In these films, then, Spain becomes once more a trace that is invoked, and yet precisely because of this oscillation between place and non-place it can only be a dream of presence, never fully brought into complete existence. Spain is invoked both as 'home', the specific space for Spaniards, but also as tourist locale designed for non-Spaniards, aiming to serve the needs and desires of foreigners.

While some parts at least of the Spanish culture offered up to tourists are a masquerade of Spanishness behind which a real Spain may be hard or impossible to identify, that does not mean such a masquerade is devoid of any link to a 'real' Spain whatsoever. Eugenia Afinoguénova and Jaume Martí-Olivella argue that 'rather than reflect on or transmit Spanish identity, tourism has helped to construct and circulate as economically viable certain "visions of Spain"' (Afinoguénova and Martí-Olivella 2008: xvi). The Spanish themselves are actively involved in this construction of tourist identities, and to some extent connive in and create a 'true' identity. They become that identity, even if reluctantly, in order to survive economically, thus blurring the line between authenticity and performance. Patricia Hart suggests there may even be pleasure to be got from the masquerade: she observes that the Spanish may enjoy dressing up, or watching performances of kitsch flamenco (as in, for example, *¡Bienvenido Mr Marshall!* (Welcome Mr Marshall; Luis García Berlanga, 1952)): it is not simply about attracting the foreign dollar (Hart 2008: 193). But there may also be alienation. Robert Shepherd (2002: 187) observes of tourist labour, 'Producers (workers) are alienated from their produced objects and thus own labor, a

direct result of commodity exchange. In other words, after their own labor is objectified through the rhetoric of the market, workers are estranged from the objects produced with this labor'. In consequence,

the most authentic cultural practices and objects appear to be those that not only faithfully imitate an inherited set of practices and objects, but also are reproduced in a specific locale, by a specific type of people, and for a specific purpose, one unconnected to the market process. This last point is crucial: in order to be genuinely authentic, this reproduction must take place outside of the exchange process – that is, outside the supposed calculative rationality of the market and safely within the realm of Marx's natural use-value. (Shepherd 2002: 192)

Shepherd's comments suggest a divide between a real and a fake: touristic 'Spanishness' and the tourist worker can take pleasure only in the former rather than the latter. But the divide is not always so neat. Much of what goes on in these films suggests both sexual pleasure or fulfilment and alienation through labour, and it can be hard to distinguish between the two. Anna in *Costa Brava* dislikes her job as a tour guide, but it is this role, and not her desired work as a performance artist, that ensures she encounters her future partner Montserrat (Desi del Valle). Carmen (Candela Peña) in *Torremolinos 73* performs sex as an act of labour, an imitation of the exotic Spanish other in porn films, for the pleasure of Scandinavian audiences: her face as she comes to climax in the culminating moment of the sex film she makes in Torremolinos is a mixture of ecstasy and despair. The result is nonetheless the much desired child that her own husband cannot give her, the fulfilment of all her hopes. The young women of *Hola, ¿estás sola?* do not enjoy their work serving tourists, but it gives them the wherewithal to go on their own wanderings and enjoy the fleeting friendships and sexual encounters they experience along the way.

Spaces and places of work and home

Tourism as work can also be linked to landscape. Don Mitchell has suggested that landscape

is much like a commodity: it actively hides (or fetishises) the labour that goes into its making ... those who study landscape representations are repeatedly struck by how effectively they erase or neutralise images of work. More particularly, landscape representations are exceptionally effective in erasing the social struggle that defines relations of work ... the things that landscape tries to hide, in its insistent fetishisation, are the relationships that go into its making. (Mitchell, quoted in Wylie 2007: 107)

These films, however, use spaces to make plainer the efforts, the alienation and also the rewards that such work brings specifically for the Spanish. Hart (2008: 189), in discussing the rise of tourism in Spain, contrasts moving about the land

for pleasure and leisure with how most Spaniards travelled about the terrain in terms of work. 'Ordinary Spaniards a hundred years ago may have moved the flock from summer to winter pasture as part of the *trashumancia*, passed a sunny Sunday afternoon near the Jarama, or been obliged to see the world while on military service, but they did not usually have the luxury of traveling just to relax and look'. In the contemporary era little has changed on one level, as in *Hola, ¿estás sola?* Niña and Trini travel around Spain in search of work, much of this work involving the tourist industry. While tourists go to the beach to relax and enjoy themselves, the two girls labour to ensure that these tourists make the most of their leisure (by organising holiday activities or serving drinks in a bar). Anna in *Costa Brava* also labours in order to ensure the leisure and pleasure of the tourists on her tour bus (to the extent of timetabling their activities): her own trajectory around Barcelona, however, involves a frenetic scuttling to and from the tour bus as she attempts to combine paid work with her ambition to secure funding to perform the monologue she has written. Alfredo and Carmen travel to leisure spots in *Torremolinos* 73, including the eponymous seaside resort, but they go to these places in order to work, to learn and later to carry out the making of sex films for Scandinavians. Yet, as we shall see, travel, movement and occupation of space can in fact blur work and pleasure.

Tourist landscapes – and in particular the beach – are offered to the tourist as landscapes of leisure, so that the image of work is indeed neutralised: any work that goes on in these spaces is virtually invisible, serving only to facilitate the notion of leisure for the tourist.

Rob Shields talks of the beach as one of the 'places on the margins' that is the focus of his study, and argues,

Mention 'beach' and people immediately tend to think not just of an empirical datum – a sandy area between water and land caused by deposition, longshore drift, and so on – but also of a particular *kind* of place, peopled by individuals acting in a specific manner and engaging in predictable routines. (Shields: 1991: 60)

The meaning of the beach is not of course confined to this idea (as we shall see in the following chapter dedicated to the matter of immigration), but Shields reminds us that one of the primary cultural means of the beach is leisure and entertainment. The individuals Shields discusses and the activities and routines they engage in (Shields is writing about Brighton beach) are tourists and day-trippers in search of relaxation and recreation. The Spanish beach as sunny playground for foreigners neglects the earlier tradition for seaside holidays for Spanish nationals that started in the northern coastlines in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries (Walton and Smith: 1994), and which to some extent still persists today (some of the tourists at Mariló's bar are clearly Spanish). Whoever the clientele, however, these actions and routines

include a layer of people often in the background but essential for the whole enterprise: the people who work to ensure that leisure can take place (waiters, cleaners, lifeguards, deckchair attendants, ice cream sellers and so on). These are in the main local people, or at the very least they usually have to live locally in order to have access to their jobs. Very often these people are invisible: the point about the films I discuss here is that they draw attention to the fact that the local meaning of the beach is not only leisure but labour.

Fiona Handyside, in her article about the beach in the films of Eric Rohmer, has usefully distinguished between the beach as a leisure site and as the object of and creation of labour (Handyside 2009: 155), although the work she specifies in Rohmer's films – ethnography – is hardly the labour I have in mind here. I am particularly intrigued by her description of Rohmer's ethnographers as 'the *metteurs-en-scène* of desire rather than those who live it' (ibid.: 157). While the labour of tourism does not fit with the designation of ethnography, nonetheless we readily perceive the Spanish characters as performing precisely this function: of creating and maintaining tourist sites precisely as places of leisure and of interest, of being in fact *metteurs-en-scène*. This differentiation between work and leisure applies well beyond the beach, but we can see the tension operating in the films' beach scenes as well: Niña and Trini co-ordinating activities such as exercise and bingo for tourists, the actors and film crew of *Torremolinos 73* working hard to reproduce the notion of Spain as a site for recreational sex.

Handyside notes that for Rohmer's holidaymakers 'the beach is marked as a site of leisure and relaxation where one "should" be happy' (Handyside 2009: 154); thus any unhappiness experienced is more extreme. This anachronism for those who work there is readily apparent, since the labour on offer provides



Figure 14 Niña comforts Trini in *Hola, ¿estás sola?*

no satisfaction. In the three films discussed here, tourist labour is carried out in order to satisfy other people but not oneself, and it can prove an ironic backdrop for personal misery (Trini weeping on an empty beach, for instance) and dissatisfaction (Fig. 14). Yet the beach can also be the route to fulfilment of personal desire (the baby conceived, the lesbian relationship consummated, the money to wander around Spain free of ties and find fulfilment in fleeting relationships). And this personal desire can include sex, thus bringing us back to the notion of the Spanish woman as sexualised and independent. Handy-side notes the beach's 'modern reality as a place of provisional and contingent relations' (ibid.: 155), and the possibilities for sex have long formed part of the attraction of Spanish beaches. Tourist spaces for the Spanish female subject are primarily places of work but they also offer routes to personal and often sexual fulfilment, even though this path to subjectivity includes the possibility of positioning themselves as exotic objects. In this complex imbrication of subjectivity and objectivity, Spain traces itself once more in this ambivalence, which, on the one hand, attempts to overturn the stereotype of the Spanish beach as the place of sun, sand and sex, and yet, on the other hand, sees the Spanish consenting to participate in their own othering, and at times finding sexual and other satisfaction in so doing. It is this play on the stereotype that sees Spain in the process of always becoming but never being fully formed.

The beach is not, however, the only space utilised in these films: for the Spaniards the beach is one specific locale among others that also impinge on their life. The beach is not separate from a hinterland through which the Spanish characters also move: its attachment to real territories and its function as one space imbricated with other spaces, across which locals live their lives, becomes pronounced in these films. In *Costa Brava* the eponymous beach extends to the port of Barcelona itself (and at times the film refers to Barcelona's own status as a place of two different cultures and languages, Spanish and Catalan), but also Anna's flat and the back streets of Barcelona through which she moves in search of funding. In *Hola, ¿estás sola?* the beach is a way station and also the end point of the girls' journey, but they also spend time in the city: there is a fort-da sense of flitting between city and beach. In *Torremolinos 73* the trajectory to Torremolinos savagely parodies that of the tourist as the couple travel there to enact the fantasy of exotic sex with foreigners in their badly made porn films: the misery suffered by Carmen in Torremolinos will nonetheless give way to the joy she will experience back at home in Madrid with her child. The beach's hinterland may be restricted in scope, as in the Barcelona of *Costa Brava*, or it may encompass much of Spain, as in the shuttling back and forth between the beach and the capital Madrid in *Hola, ¿estás sola?* (including some panoramic landscapes of Spain as the girls travel around it in trains). Nonetheless, the beach is noticeably attached to somewhere else. The movement of the

women back and forth between the spaces of home and tourism complicates the division between the binary of an alienated tourist culture and an authentic local culture. While the places of tourism may be places of unpleasant labour for all the women involved, the desires of the women also get caught up in these spaces, and their personal lives become bound up with their experience of tourist spaces. The beach may be the space of tourist labour for Spaniards, but in each case the women use it for their own ends. Shields argues that ‘Beaches had always been a “free zone” of sorts by virtue of their status as uncertain land, the surface contours of which might change with every tide’ (Shields 1991: 89). This uncertainty and malleability also applies to the uses the women make of the beach, and the desires they trail across it. The rest of this chapter will be dedicated to looking at the way the beach is connected to its hinterland through the manner in which these spaces are used in the films for the negotiation of different forms of both labour and sexual desire.

Costa Brava

If the beach can serve quite crudely as metaphor for sex, in *Costa Brava* it also serves as an expression of true (lesbian) identity and the nurturing of a relationship that is both international and Catalan in scope. Anna as the central character is a tour guide around Barcelona, who does the job only in order to survive while nurturing her dream of getting funding to perform her monologue about a lesbian neighbour. Her relationship to Barcelona itself – the hinterland to the Costa Brava beach and the place where her labour is located – is complex: as a harassed guide, she drags her charges at high speed in English and French around the city, which in fact we do not see. Nor does Anna dwell in any detail on the sites the tourists have come to see: her work consists more of parcelling out time so that they have so many minutes to take pictures, so many minutes to take lunch, and so on (suggesting tourism as labour simply to be got through, as quickly as possible). The towers of the Sagrada Familia – the iconic image of Barcelona – are only viewed through a screen of washing as Anna rehearses her monologue, still in her tour guide uniform. This is Barcelona from the point of view of a local rather than a tourist. Tourist sites are intertwined with the marks of everyday living. Catalan modernist architecture such as the Sagrada Familia is, however, of paramount importance to Barcelona as a tourist site, and is the very thing that both keeps Anna going and interferes with her desire for expression through her drama. During one conversation Anna tells Montserrat, after the latter has mused about her relationships with men and women, that if she does not get involved with either she will be doing a lot of museums: contrary to the familiar stereotypes, tourism is a barrier to any form of sexuality. Yet beyond the Sagrada Familia, refigured through the lines



Figure 15 Anna and Montserrat at the beach in *Costa Brava*

of washing in the foreground that detract from its status as iconic of Barcelona, the spaces of the heritage industry have been eradicated from the screen.

The beach, like the Sagrada Familia, is refigured not as a touristic space, but one in which the tourist becomes intimately involved with the local and thus the space in which local as well as tourist desires are acted upon. Anna meets Montserrat, the woman who will soon become her lover, as part of her work as a tour guide. Montserrat soon separates herself out from the group and retires to the beach to read (as it happens) Anna's monologue which is inside the bag Anna lends her. The reading of the monologue and the references to lesbianism that it contains will mark out the beach as a place of lesbian desire (Fig. 15). For when Anna and Montserrat return to the beach – the Costa Brava itself of the title, suspiciously empty of tourists – their budding relationship is consummated, although only by implication. After a conversation on the beach, Anna and Montserrat disappear from the scene. Balletbò-Coll then offers the audience tranquil shots of the empty beach in which Anna's car occasionally appears to one side, the implication being that sex takes place inside the car.

Yeon Soo Kim remarks on the link between the Costa Brava and lesbian and gay identity (through the town of Sitges, a known gay resort) (Kim 2005: 139–40), and comments:

The family that Anna and Montserrat form together is located in the interstices – a borderless space with no beginning and no end. They do not confine themselves to one national territory or any single identity. The lesbian couple are migrant subjects who feel at home anywhere on earth and, at the same time, who belong to nowhere in particular. (Kim 2005: 140–1)

Her comment that the beach is devoid of the Barcelona landmarks which offer Anna employment as a guide (ibid.: 138) reinforces this notion of a lack of unidentifiable territory. The sense of the beach as borderless spaces links to the idea of interstices as observed by Susan Martin-Márquez, particularly in terms of Montserrat, whose sexual orientation is in flux and whose engineering speciality of bridges is significant. Martin-Márquez notes the initial importance of the beach in introducing the idea of interstitiality: ‘This “in-betweenness” initially surfaces in a scene set on a Costa Brava beach’ (Martin-Márquez 1999: 289). Nonetheless Martin-Márquez does ascribe a measure of Catalan identity to lesbianism through the association with the Sagrada Familia, while when Montserrat spends time with a male colleague (hinting at the possibility of heterosexual relationships), the architecture they wander around is international (ibid.: 290). Montserrat’s flirtation (literally) with heterosexuality in fact serves to problematise her specific link to the Catalanness of lesbian identity; and her iconic Catalan name suggests that Catalan identity is itself ‘in-between’ in a sexual sense. While *Costa Brava* hints strongly at Barcelona as a specifically Catalan city – and Anna includes in her tourist itinerary a discussion of the Catalan character – it simultaneously suggests that the place of lesbianism in Catalan identity is problematic: although Anna’s former lover might perform in Catalan, Anna herself gives her monologue in English, and Montserrat, for all the Catalanness of her name, cannot understand the Catalan language. Neither woman finds permanent roots in Barcelona because Montserrat loses her job while Anna can only break out of the monotony of tourism by performing her monologue in the USA.

The film’s title refers to the division and to the blurring between labour and love – labour, because Anna works for a company called Costa Brava tours, suggesting the Costa Brava as a place for tourists. Yet, for selected tourists, specifically Montserrat (and we are reminded of her status as a tourist or passer-through at various intervals throughout the film – on the tour bus and while looking around the Jewish quarter in Girona), Anna also acts as guide to another, lesbian, environment that is also the Costa Brava, the coast and beach of that name. This Costa Brava, then, is not a tourist space but reserved for a desire for which eventually Barcelona itself will not have a space, a place of private desire denuded of tourists but which is not necessarily reclaimed for the homeland, remaining an interstice, the free zone, which Rob Shields referred to above. There is, however, a disjuncture between desire and belonging which is also conveyed through mismatch between voice and image. The first real discussion between the couple-to-be takes place on the beach, with a great deal of emphasis on static shots of landscape shots of cliffs, a dead tree, the sand, while for the most part this key conversation goes on only in voice-over, with very few shots of the speakers themselves. At times when they do come into shot they are clearly not

speaking, and are some distance apart. This conversation is reflected elsewhere when we see the couple have conversations we cannot hear against neutral park landscapes (as opposed to the iconic Parc Güell as part of Anna's tour bus itinerary, which is glimpsed in grainy tourism sequences reminiscent of a video camera). The distance between the visual image of the women speaking and the aural reception of their dialogue reinforces the point to the audience that their desires are not in synch with the landscape. The disjuncture of the landscape and the couple on it, reinforced by the shots of coastline while the women make love, an activity that can only be viewed obliquely, suggest the difficulties as well as the possibilities in blurring landscape, labour and desire, contradicting Kim's comment cited above that the women feel at home anywhere. Dialogue is always synched, however, in Anna's flat that forms part of the hinterland but which is a confined space: when Anna and Montserrat occupy it together there is no sense of an exterior context. While the characters occasionally look out of the flat window wistfully, we do not ourselves see outside, or what they are looking at. This space appears cut off from Barcelona more generally, and when we do see a link between interior and exterior, as Anna performs her monologues in front of a view of the Sagrada Familia, the only route out seems to lead back to the overly familiar tourist spaces once more.

The final shot of the film includes a broad city space, as the women run gleefully towards the horizon, happy in their anticipation of a future together in the USA, a space outside the Barcelona into which they do not fit. This shot encapsulates the ambiguity of space, dwelling on the Barcelona cityscape as the space which has no room for lesbians and yet also the space through which they run, happy in the knowledge that their life together can continue. Barcelona is abandoned to tourists, while the beach has been refigured as the interstitial space, prefiguring the USA beyond the film as the ultimate interstitial space where the women can find satisfaction in both love and work. The nation thus traces itself on to the text precisely through its absence: what the landscapes help us to see is the antithetical nature of desire and belonging. Barcelona is the space from which lesbianism is excluded even as it allows the opportunity for the coming together of Anna and Montserrat. The absence of these spaces suggests furthermore the alienation of Anna's work in the tourist industry: she does not dwell in these spaces and they become not localised place but merely time passing before Anna can escape to her 'real' labour. The Costa Brava, alternatively, must be emptied of tourists in order to become a site of leisure and pleasure for local desire: its hinterland is not the city of Barcelona so much as Anna's flat, a space in which Anna and Montserrat's relationship can develop, and the streets that form the backdrop of their conversations. In this most negative call to care, the landscape expresses a need for space in which to find satisfaction in both love and work, but the nature of the work and the nature of

desire mean it can find no space within the nation. And yet the nation invites the desire by allowing the relationship between Anna and Montserrat to happen. This is expressed in spatial terms by the disjuncture between the different spaces as well as the actions and voices of the characters who move within them.

Of all the texts mentioned in this book, *Costa Brava* seems to be the one with the greatest disjuncture between the term ‘Spain’ and other labels for the nation that traces itself across the spaces. The film emphasises Catalonia as opposed to Spain, specifically in Anna’s musings to her tourists as to what it means to be Catalan: in addition, there is a certain irony in that the majority of funders she approaches for money to put on her monologue are Catalan rather than Spanish (before, finally, she turns to the USA and gets the funding she is looking for). How, then, can Spain be evoked? We can again turn to the notion of Spain as an uncanny identity suggested by Gabilondo that I discussed in Chapter 4, even though Catalan resistance to Spanishness has not been quite as violent as the antagonistic relationship which nonetheless seems to hold Spain and the Basque Country locked together. The insistence within *Costa Brava* of national identity being, if anything, Catalan, nonetheless conjures up at one remove the spectre of Spain against which Catalanness must be asserted. In a film where lesbian identity can only find clear, synched expression within the interior confines of Anna’s flat, the wider spaces of the nation, Spain as well as Catalonia, are found unaccommodating. Such a link may seem tenuous, but it is worth considering Gabilondo’s comments again when he argues that ‘In Spain, most new subject positions and identities, as soon as they are othered, become national noises and fractures that, nevertheless, are constitutive of the state order and its desire’ (Gabilondo 2002: 276), and he immediately goes on to mention ‘queers, immigrants and women’ as examples of the contradictory position to which this gives rise, categories to which one or both of the women can be considered to belong. The desire to associate offered by a dream of presence means that Anna and Montserrat contribute to this national noise in which different identities seek to find room: they do this within Catalonia, but as such contribute to Catalonia’s own ‘noise’ as it seeks to find accommodation with(in) Spain. It also, however, reveals that the desire to belong suggested by the dream of presence does not of itself guarantee the fullness of belonging. The wider spaces of Barcelona and the Costa Brava, in which labour and desire come together, ultimately do not offer such labour and desire a home.

Hola, ¿estás sola?

The ambivalence of *Hola, ¿estás sola?* in terms of the Spanish use of tourist space is apparent even before watching the film, from its DVD cover, wherein the central characters Niña and Trini are captured in what seems a relaxed tourist

pose beneath palm trees, a blue sky in the background, Niña with casual yellow knapsack and unbuttoned jeans, Trini carrying a boombox. While it suggests girls having fun – part of the ambience of the film – it also suggests them as tourists. They are indeed tourists in one sense, as they travel around Spain, moving from their home town of Valladolid to the coast to Madrid, then back to the coast and finally back to Madrid again. In some sequences the camera dwells on the Spanish landscape that provides a backdrop to the conversations of the girls as they discuss their lives and their futures. But they are also at times servants of the tourist industry. Money, or the lack of it, is one of the overriding difficulties the girls face; and the occasions when they make money are those when they are by the beach, working in the tourist industry. Thus the DVD cover belies the nature of their beach existence: they are there as workers. Their first stopping-off point is Málaga: on the Málaga beach with sunbathers in the background, they are perusing the local paper in search of a job. The job they find, as coordinators of activities for the middle-aged visitors, is on one level humorous as Trini mutters bingo numbers monotonously in Spanish: she does not have the requisite English skills to allow the tourists to participate. The humour cannot, however, disguise the fact that this is a dead-end job for them both, and soon they move on to Madrid in search of Niña's mother Mariló. But Mariló herself becomes inspired by the chance to improve her finances, and takes the girls plus new friend Pepe to the beach in order to set up a bar.

The beach sequences, intercut with those that are set in Madrid or depict travel to and from the capital, suggest a division between tourism and travel in which the latter appears to be for Spaniards alone. As Patricia Hart commented above, this is travel not for leisure purposes but travel for work purposes, or – given the girls' hopes for a brighter future through their travel – a chance to seek their fortune. This film emphasises the hinterland just as much if not more than the beach; and the hinterland raises questions about belonging and home. Martin-Márquez (2002: 259) notes the details of *mise-en-scène* in *Hola, ¿estás sola?* that suggest travel around Spain: the bag with a map of Spain on it, the painting of a winding road over the sofa, the images of Andalusia that inspire them to go south. She argues that what Trini and Niña are looking for is 'a secure and comfortable place for themselves in the world' (ibid.), but in that case they do not find it, as the film ends with them back on the train to Madrid. Martin-Márquez concludes that 'Travel, then, has moved beyond a confirmation of sameness through opposition to an-other; now, it works to reproduce that sameness. One travels to find oneself at home' (ibid.: 258); however, money and work are most likely to be found at the beach, hence the need to oscillate there and back. The hinterland, however, is no longer a space tucked away from the foreign gaze, as the girls' acquaintance with Olaf (Arcadi Levin) in Madrid suggests. As Martin-Márquez remark, 'Olaf both literally and metaphorically

builds and maintains homes in the film, and indeed, in *Hola, ¿estás sola?* it would seem that, ironically, immigrants are more successful at creating and sustaining a Spanish household than are Spaniards' (ibid.: 262). If, as she suggests, Olaf is a conscientious construction worker off whom Niña lives, then we have a neat parallel in that, at the beach, the Spanish labour to serve the foreigners while in Madrid the reverse is the case. However, whether we consider Olaf, or the girls, the division between tourism and travel remains clear: travel around Spain involves work. This involves travel to and from the beach as well: the beach remains a place of leisure for tourists only. The Spanish hinterland is, however, also the place where desire can be fulfilled: Madrid is the place where the girls have fun (in direct contrast to the image of the DVD cover), where they eat for pleasure, make friends and indulge in sexual relations with an exotic other (Olaf). Bollaín emphasises Madrid as the place of leisure and pleasure rather than work for the girls, even if work was what they were travelling in search of, while as they travel the girls recount to each other their own dreams and desires, suggesting that the relationship between work and leisure is experienced in diametrically opposed ways for Spaniards and for tourists.

The beach may be a site of demeaning drudgery for the girls, but it does nevertheless offer a chance to fulfil desires of a better and freer life, thus it still ironically implies the idea of escape. Annabel Martín comments of tourism under Franco:

Si los veraneantes extranjeros disfrutaban del subdesarrollo, de sus carencias sociales y de sus soles naturales, como mercancía explotable, los excursionistas españoles, conscientes de su papel subalterno en este juego, transforman la industria turística en su propia escapatoria a las restricciones imperantes en el franquismo. (Martín 2005: 149)

If foreign holidaymakers exploited the underdevelopment, the social deprivation and the natural sunlight as a commercial good, Spanish tourists, aware of their subaltern role in this affair, turned the tourist industry into their own escape route from the prevailing restrictions of Francoism.

This is also true, I think, many years later of the girls' beach experiences: the drudgery of the labour they have to carry out is clear, but they undertake it precisely in order to live a life free from restrictions (in Niña's case, the conservative morality of her father who catches her in bed with her boyfriend in Valladolid). The invocation of Spain through landscape and *mise-en-scène* is clear from this film: Niña and Trini through their travels draw their own personal map of Spain. The emphasis on their subjectivity as they pursue their own personal question for success, happiness and enjoyment is, however, the very thing that prevents Spain from being fully present: rather, it expresses the always already becoming of Rose's theorisation as a permanent process. Their travels also underscore the link between Spain's position as tourist other that

attracts tourists to use the labour of Spaniards, but they also demonstrate the possibility for the Spanish woman to connive in such objectification in order to assert her own subjectivity. The oscillation across different Spanish terrains allows us to see this parallel oscillation between object and subject.

Torremolinos 73

As in *Costa Brava*, so in *Torremolinos 73*: the beach is the site of sexual expression, but, as in *Hola, ¿estás sola?*, it is also the site of labour; for the making of soft porn films on the beach of Torremolinos is a form of work and, for Carmen, hardly a source of pleasure. Here again, we have the woman as apparently independent sexual other – and by a strange irony she is called Carmen, once again a siren for otherness for Northern men (in this case, Scandinavians). Carmen becomes involved in soft porn films after her husband Alfredo's employers, disappointed at the lack of profits from selling encyclopedias door to door, decide to sell erotic films instead, and insist on their employees' involvement. In changing the nature of their business, Alfredo's employers are being less radical than they might think: Spanish women have appeared to be sexually accessible to foreigners much earlier than the 1970s. There is a reversal here, however, of the previous holiday comedies of the Franco era: instead of Scandinavian women being seen as the object of rather puerile sexual pursuit by Spanish men, now Carmen is the one forced to run around a department store in the attempt to escape a Danish admirer. But the film also reminds us of one of the purposes of this labour: the acquisition of the wherewithal to participate in a consumer economy. As a result of making and acting in their films, Alfredo and Carmen have access to consumer goods that were previously beyond their reach when the former worked as an encyclopedia salesman. Alfredo and Carmen are able to buy into a life of consumer affluence: a car, a washing machine, furniture, a fur coat. The beach at Torremolinos is the setting for Carmen's acquisition of the ultimate (consumer?) good, the baby that she, though not her husband, has deeply longed for and which together they acquire directly through their work in porn films.

The eponymous beach appears late on in the film, first in the form of a poster specifically labelled Torremolinos 73, with a bathing beauty in front of a beach and hotel block, the quintessential image of Spain as a package tourist destination. But this poster is one of a display of semi-naked women designed to inspire men about to give sperm samples. This poster alone does the trick for Alfredo, about to provide a sample in his turn to test his fertility, and even then only when he, in a rather endearing gesture, tapes a picture of Carmen's face over that of the model on the poster. The exoticism to some extent turns the Spaniard on, too, but there needs to be a 'home grown' element. But we should

notice the fact that sexual desire is artificially induced: it is in itself a labour designed to acquire a good (the baby – though, as it turns out, Alfredo is sterile) and it is devoid of pleasure. This sets out the meaning of the beach in the film even before Alfredo and his crew arrive at Torremolinos to shoot his film. The beach symbolises sex, but sex as labour rather than pleasure. Pleasure in this film is seen in terms of consumerism and middle-class aspirations, and it is associated with the hinterland where Carmen and Alfredo live.

When the couple arrive at the beach, they are greeted with a surprisingly empty Torremolinos, owing to the fact that it is out of season. The beach we are offered initially appears ideal in that it is empty: we can actually see the beach because there is no clutter of tourists to get in the way, unlike the beach in *Costa Brava*. But this time the ideal beach is undercut several times over. The black-and-white footage of Alfredo's film reveals Carmen and her leading man Magnus walking romantically across the empty beach: but a cut to a colour sequence also reveals the film crew walking before them and recording their actions (Fig. 16). The idyll is no more than an act, a labour that causes distress and alienation. Alfredo himself only really comes to occupy the beach as he absorbs the fact that Carmen will perform her sex scene for real in the film, in the hope of becoming pregnant by Magnus: he sits gloomily on the beach at night alone, pensive, only his megaphone (formerly belonging to Ingmar Bergman, no less) for company. As the Danish crew attempt to persuade him to join in some nude bathing, he tries to attack Magnus, but only gets dunked in the cold sea for his pains. In the end he joins in the general laughter, since he has no other outlet for his pain and anger. This scene is surprisingly painful to watch, and of course undercuts once again the pleasurable meanings of the beach. By removing the



Figure 16 The beach as pleasure and labour in *Torremolinos 73*

tourists from the beach the film underscores the alienation of the usually invisible labour that the Spanish must perform for the pleasure of foreigners.

This beach has a hinterland: the bleak landscape of the block of flats where the couple live, and the Spanish countryside where Alfredo learns to behave like the middle classes he aspires to by going on a rabbit shoot with his employer don Carlos. He is not a natural hunter, and pauses in dismay at the prospect of shooting a rabbit, but the whispered suggestion by don Carlos of a film premiere in the Gran Vía gives him the power to shoot (with obvious phallic overtones). His shooting of the rabbit prefigures his shooting with the camera of the long-suffering Carmen. This scene thus ties in the beach with the hinterland, as Carmen's victimisation is prefigured. As Alfredo films his wife having sex with Magnus at Torremolinos, her face looks alternately possessed of sexual ecstasy and infinite sadness, while Alfredo weeps – this servicing of exotic desire is infinitely painful for those at home. But the shots of the housing estate (Fig. 17) remind us of why Spaniards might undertake labour such as this: a chance for betterment and to get out of the trap of a genteel poverty, the fulfilment or expression of desires (including, ultimately, the baby, as well as Alfredo's own ambitions to be a director like Bergman). This implies a clear-cut division between beach as place of labour and hinterland as place of self-fulfilment. But this is modified by the fact that the couple's bedroom becomes studio and rehearsal space for the porn films, both a degradation of the desire and love Alfredo clearly feels for Carmen, and also an opportunity for self-expression and self-betterment. The bedroom becomes a border space that signifies both work and sexual pleasure.

The position of the Spanish woman as exotic other for Scandinavia also proves an ambivalent matter. Carmen is certainly very uncomfortable in her



Figure 17 The hinterland that inspires aspiration in *Torremolinos* 73

role as sex star, and it is significant that in order to attempt to elude her pursuer in the department store she buys an expensive pram, thus both contradicting the sexual star persona she has acquired but also indicating the reason why she has become such a star in the first place. While Alfredo and Carmen are in the first instance virtually forced to make the films in order for the former to keep his job, the new line of work awakens Alfredo's interest in film. This turns into an obsession with Ingmar Bergman, who receives many ironic references in Alfredo's attempts at pitching his *Torremolinos* film beyond mere sexploitation, including *Death with his scythe* at the funfair and a chess-playing sequence. Spanish stereotypes are represented at the funfair by dwarves dressed as Carmen and bullfighters. These references – along with the moody sex scenes themselves – may explain why Alfredo's film succeeds in Scandinavia, as we are told at the end, while it was a flop in Spain. It suggests a lack of authenticity of a culture made with an eye to the foreigner. The ultimate irony, though, is the child that results from the onscreen union of Carmen and Magnus, the very blond Marisol, a name that resonates above all with Spanish audiences as that of the earlier blond child star of 1960s Spanish cinema. The blondness reminds us of the idealisation of the blond child, the foreign-looking child, for Spanish audiences who idolised the original Marisol. But it also harks back to the earlier notion of the Spanish woman as other reproducing a notion of Spanishness for foreign audiences. Belén Vidal, drawing on Thomas Elsaesser, notes that *Torremolinos* 73 'tacitly accepts that ideas of nation can only exist in a transnational space ... the presentation of Self (one's own national culture) through the look of the Other' (Vidal 2010: 222).

Vidal also notes that as a result of the failed attempt to give a Bergmanesque feel to the film 'the tacky holiday landscapes of the popular comedies of *desarrollismo* are defamiliarized, disclosing a different, downbeat side to the discourses of economic prosperity. The views of *Torremolinos* in the cold winter light bring to the fore the melancholic undertones of the comedy' (ibid.: 224). But when she goes on to add that the use and misuse of cinema tropes allow for an alternative imaged Spanish identity in dialogue with Europe (ibid.), this neglects the gendered aspects of the framework of Spain in the tourist gaze. Carmen is performing the same function for the foreigner as her earlier namesake: a duality of labour and pleasure that repeats old patterns but which we now see from the point of view of the Spaniard. The defamiliarisation of the cold landscape stresses the alienation of the labour that Carmen must undergo, and the trace of this alienation remains with her very blond child. But the hinterland spaces are the spaces in which Carmen continues her upward mobility, and if the child was conceived by the seaside of *Torremolinos* it is back home where she can enjoy the fulfilment of her desire, as the film closes on her delight at the child's birthday celebrations.

The uses of space and place in these three films demonstrate how Spain traces itself across the landscape, as they invoke explicitly the notion of being at home while yet existing in a position as exotic other. Their call to belong comes precisely through their status as Spaniards who are needed to participate in an industry so profitable to the country. Yet the films also evoke the ways in which such a desire for association – even if undertaken reluctantly as a means to an end – allows for the fulfilment of personal desire or at least raises the possibility. The Spanish beach and hinterland in tandem reveal the possibilities of pleasure for those to whom Spain is home rather than abroad. The characters make different uses of the spaces, including the relationship between beach and hinterland, in each film, but they also demonstrate the fluidity of movement between the two which not only suggests the blurring of boundaries but also the imbrications of each space with the other for locals. The blurring occurs on another level as well as the Spanish come to resemble tourists themselves at times: romance with a foreigner (*Costa Brava*), travelling around Spain (*Hola, ¿estás sola?*) and travel to the seaside (*Torremolinos 73*). All these activities are bound up with their roles as workers servicing the desire of incoming tourists for the exotic other in their roles as bar staff, tourist guide or even sex worker. Again, this suggests that the two roles are closely imbricated with each other.

In the process, the status of the women as independent desiring subjects rather than exotic objects is also stressed. For both Anna and Carmen the beach is an induction into fulfilment of their desires in which sex is clearly a key component part if not necessarily the ultimate goal: a stable lesbian relationship for Anna and a baby for Carmen. Their sexuality in tandem with their own positions at home allow them to see to their own desires rather than service the desires of foreigners (although the foreigners' desires are also in fact satisfied, but the emphasis in both films does not lie here). For Niña and Trini, it is their turn to use the foreigner (Olaf) as an opportunity for casual sexual pleasure: sex thus becomes simply one element among others that confirm the girls' freedom as they wander around Spain, exploiting their position as tourist workers to fund their own freedom even if they are exploited in their turn. This movement from object to subject is seen through the 'desire to belong' of the Spanish woman in her inversion of the tourist gaze – to see herself 'at home' and Spain as the site where personal desire might be fulfilled. The differences between the films lie with how far space and place allow us to see the fulfilment of Spanish female desire in spatial terms: satisfaction for the woman if not the man (*Torremolinos 73*), a constant search for a fulfilment that never arrives but which may always be sought (*Hola, ¿estás sola?*), or an awareness that personal desire and national space are ultimately incompatible (*Costa Brava*). The nation is traced across all these desires, but the satisfaction of desire is by no means guaranteed.

Note

- 1 *El verdugo* is perhaps more blatant than most in its allusion to sexual desire, as the central character becomes an executioner only in order to have sexual access through marriage to the previous executioner's daughter (as well as a home of his own). But the issue does not impinge on the protagonist and his family's interaction with tourism.

CHAPTER EIGHT

Immigration: north (of) Africa

Spanish cinema has for many decades maintained a vein of film-making known as *cine social*, films that attempt to deal with social problems in a realist style; and this vein persists today even in an era when scholars and critics of Spanish film acknowledge a move towards more commercially orientated film-making that emphasises narrative and spectacle. Indeed, some film-makers have combined the two, with Benito Zambrano's *Solas* (Alone, 2000), for instance, blending a sentimental tale of family and quasi-family relationships with a study of alcoholism and domestic abuse; or Alejandro Amenábar's *Mar adentro* (The Sea Inside, 2004), a biopic cashing in on the director's previous commercial successes that nonetheless raises the question of assisted euthanasia and a person's right to die. Similar phenomena occur when it comes to depicting the question of immigration. As Isabel Santaolalla has observed in her book *Los 'otros'* (Santaolalla 2005: chap. 1), race and ethnicity have been underlying preoccupations of some areas of Spanish film-making for many decades: nonetheless, depictions of immigration in particular have become prominent in the last two decades. This responds to wider concerns in contemporary Spanish society about immigration, particularly from the African coast, a concern exacerbated recently by the increasing influx of people trying to get to Spain from Africa and media coverage of both the human cost of this influx and the political conflicts engendered by the phenomenon within the Spanish communities most affected. Most commentators on these films foreground race and immigration as their primary point of interest. My approach here is slightly different, since, in keeping with the overall tenor of this book, I am incorporating questions of landscape, space and place into the equation: I am looking at the ways in which questions of national and ethnic identity come to interact with notions of Spanishness related to space. What I will argue is that the spatial interaction of Spaniards with North African immigrants not only problematises the claim of Spaniards to the territory but also the very filmic representation of the landscape and more particularly of the immigrant. Yet the very contestation over territory invokes a call to care on the part both of the

Spaniard and of the immigrant: both desire to associate with an idea of 'Spain'. In the case of the films I wish to discuss here, the relationship of Spaniards to their national territory only becomes overt once other people appear on it who appear to transgress. Yet the outcome in each of the films I will look at is the disappearance from the screen of the immigrant. Thus the spectacle that occurs within these films is precisely the rendering invisible of the immigrant in films that purport to be about immigration. This call to care involves eradicating others from space and place.

One way in which films such as these serve to problematise the binary between Spanish self and immigrant other is by raising the possibility of the Spanish themselves as other, regardless of immigrant influx. Isolina Ballesteros remarks, 'One common pattern found in immigration films is the parallel filmmakers establish between the different marginal (or undesirable) positions that constitute otherness in their given society: foreignness, race and ethnicity go along with (working) class, age, gender and sexuality' (Ballesteros 2006: 170). But more particularly the proximity of North Africa suggests the potential for blurring of different identities that becomes a matter for fear, as María Rosa de Madariaga suggests:

The Spaniard recognises himself too much in the other – the Moor – and this irritates him, makes him uncomfortable, leads him, in order to differentiate himself, to affirm himself, to react violently against him. He needs to demonstrate to other Europeans that the Spaniard is superior, that Africa does not start at the Pyrenees. He must insist on the distinction between the Spanish/European and the Moorish/African/Asian. (de Madariaga, quoted in Santaolalla 2007: 74)

Talal Asad reminds us of the historical background to this fear, in that 'although Spain is now defined geographically as part of Europe, Arab Spain from the seventh to the fourteenth century is seen as being outside "Europe"' (Asad 2000: 16). He goes on to note that this notion is in spite of the fact that there were strong connections between Muslims, Christians and Jews in this period (*ibid.*: 16). But, indeed, it may be this very historical intermingling, the traces of which can still be seen on the Spanish landscape and heard in the Spanish language, which gives rise to a need to mark a distinction between Spanish/European and North African. Asad then observes, 'But while one aspect of the identity of Islamic civilisation is that it represents an early attempt to destroy Europe's civilisation from outside, another is that it signifies the corrupting moral environment which Europe must continuously struggle to overcome from within' (*ibid.*: 17).

Spain, of course, knew this tendency to 'destruction' better than most, given that it was actually invaded and occupied by Arab forces. Nonetheless, the traces of Arab culture in Andalusia have been co-opted as typically Spanish tourist sites that draw thousands of visitors, hinting at both a celebration and a denial of Spain's connections to North Africa. José Colmeiro notes

the particular double bind of Spanish culture due to its experience of orientalism from both sides: as a European Christian culture that has repressed a constitutive element of its historical identity and sees the oriental as its cultural and political other, and as a mirror of oriental culture constructed by other Europeans. (Colmeiro 2002: 129)

He goes on to note that contact with Arabic and Jewish cultures have left their trace (ibid.). This is underscored by Théophile Gautier's seminal *Voyage en Espagne*:

L'Espagne, qui touche à l'Afrique comme la Grèce à l'Asie, n'est pas faite pour les mœurs européennes. Le génie de l'Orient y perce sous toutes les formes, et il est fâcheux peut-être qu'elle ne soit pas restée moresque ou mahométane. ... La Sierra-Morena franchie, l'aspect du pays change totalement; c'est comme si l'on passait tout à coup de l'Europe à l'Afrique. (Gautier 1981: 236-7)

Spain, which borders Africa as Greece borders Asia, is not designed for European ways. The spirit of the Orient penetrates it in all its forms, and it is perhaps annoying that Spain has not remained Moorish or Mohammedan. ... once past the Sierra Morena, the nature of the country changes completely: it is as if one were passing suddenly from Europe to Africa.

This suggests that much of the concern for Spanish culture to mark distinctions between itself and the other derives from this awareness of how other Europeans might see Spain, an issue particularly acute at a time when concern over immigration from Africa is Europe-wide and Spain is sometimes seen as a first, porous frontier which fails to hold back the immigrant other. This somewhat schizophrenic stance plays itself out to some degree in the films I will discuss below.

Spanish cinema has not confined itself to representing immigration purely in terms of North Africa – there is in particular a strong corpus of films that look at immigration in terms of Latin Americans returning to the former colonial power. Nonetheless, there is a special interest in North African cinematic immigration in spatial terms because of North Africa's comparative proximity in geographical terms, and also because the sense of near/like us and yet far/unlike us is paramount. Moroccan immigrants are, as Daniela Flesler observes, those most directly implicated in Spain's self-definition vis-à-vis Africa: they are a reminder of the Arabs who came from North Africa in 711 to conquer the Spanish peninsula, and still carry this trace of invasion. They function in this sense like historical ghosts (Flesler 2004: 104). Moroccan immigration predominates in the films we consider here, but the immigrants act like ghosts in another sense as well: in their virtual invisibility. They haunt the space in which they are seen as fleeting traces. They will be erased from that space, leaving the Spaniards to occupy the space and the film; and yet the plots of the films come about precisely because of their trace across the landscape. In many ways most

if not all films about immigration are not actually about immigrants. Very rarely do we see an African immigrant as subject of the film (*Las cartas de Alou* (Letters from Alou; Montxo Armendáriz, 1990) is a notable exception). Most of these films are in fact about Spaniards, so that the Africans only occupy a marginal amount of screen time: and they only appear in relation to Spaniards. And yet the ghost of the other appearing to occupy the same space as the Spaniard is enough to prompt an almost uncanny anxiety in which territory – and thus psyche – is reclaimed for Spain.

Within this phenomenon, the coastline plays a crucial role, being the point of entry for many of these immigrants and thus both a frontier and, for those who fear the influx, a frontline of conflict. It takes little stretching of the imagination to perceive the coastline as a demarcation of national territory but one that is porous, easily breached and thus vulnerable. I will argue that the coastline in these films functions not only as a border territory in which Spanish nationals must confront the subjectivity of the other, but also as a contradictory mechanism in which both national identity and the transnational are simultaneously confirmed and denied. Border crossings have been suggested in various ways throughout this book: the Spanish Civil War as viewed from both inside and outside in del Toro's Spanish films; exile and invasion in *La rosa de los vientos*; the intrusion of international crime on to Spanish territory in *La caja 507* (to say nothing of the apparent invasion of Spanish cinema by its Hollywood counterpart); the tourist industry and the entertainment of foreigners that is both welcomed and resented by the locals. In the case of immigration, however, borders are more acutely contested. Borders – real and imagined – suggest the desire to associate, to be on one side of the border rather than the other, at its height, and yet at the same time at its most problematised since the other side of the border is also a real and very close possibility. Joan Ramón Resina comments:

if 'seeing' the nation presupposes a political horizon of interpretation, it is equally true that this ideal 'boundary' attains concrete existence in the nation's borders, from where we can both catch and lose sight of the nation. Borders may be the expression of political arbitration of conflict, but they are also scenarios of personal and collective dramas, which can be contained within political exegesis only at the cost of severe reduction ... Borders are the temporary crystallization of innumerable dramas, the thickening of a formerly fluid relation to the territory. (Resina 2005: 331)

If borders are a quintessential space in which the nation is both explicitly affirmed and implicitly questioned, they are also spaces where the political 'fact' of the nation can become imbricated with the ways in which individuals move through the border space: here André Gardies' notion that there can be no spectacle (or, in Resina's terms, drama) without space becomes more apparent,

as mentioned earlier in Chapter 4 (Gardies 1993: 10). Borders readily demonstrate the individual's desire for association, and the resulting text that we look at arises from that individual desire to belong and how it interacts with other desires. The border becomes John Wylie's landscape with which we see these desires in process. Resina further argues:

The state exists in space and time by virtue of the border, with the political subject in the role of transcendent subject. The border, then, is the nation's horizon of possibility, the perspective from which that political reality can be observed. A virtual line created and sustained through the most strenuous and costly efforts, the border is constitutive of the perspective from which any object of experience is promoted to the status of a metonymic representation of the national. Yet ... the political subject can overstep her ideal bubble and expose herself to a different regime of visibility. She can discover the gap between the state's ideal border and the nation she actually spies from her dramatic standpoint. (Resina 2005: 331)

The border is thus a very real national space in that the nation presupposes borders; but it is a space that must constantly be maintained, protected (as we saw in the case of international crime in Chapter 5). But it still leaves open the question as to what form Spain, constantly remade at the border, will take in the perception of the person interacting with border space to express a desire for association. The gaps between what the state is supposed to be and what it actually is – and, a possibility not mentioned by Resina here, what it could be – become the points at which the desire of association can manifest itself through the landscape.

I will therefore first look at the ways in which the coastline is figured in two key recent films on immigration: Chus Gutiérrez's *Poniente* (West) of 2002 and Imanol Uribe's *Bwana* of 1996. The Mediterranean beach, the principal setting for both films, becomes the landscape in which these Spaniards of Spanish film cross the divide between self and other and move into otherness, thus raising the possibility of the other moving towards the self and in this way gaining subjectivity. The beach becomes the embodiment of the coexistence of binary opposites – here, beauty and squalor or death, as we shall see – and the ability to move between them, suggestive of the ability to move between self and other. But other spaces and places can produce similar effects: cities, too, function as a locus of both encounter and exclusion between immigrant and Spaniard. Although much immigration from North Africa has clearly had to do with the need for cheap agricultural labour in the south of Spain, cities are attractive partly because of a perception of them as a site of greater economic opportunity but also because diaspora communities already exist there, allowing a foothold and an induction into Spanish city life. Nonetheless, these city spaces do not act as melting pots: rather, we find demarcated communities that do not seamlessly mix with one another, in which city space serves to divide rather

than bring together. I will consider the significance of city space through a discussion of Antonio Chavarrías' *Susanna* (1996). Finally, I will examine coast and city space in tandem in Ignacio Vilar's *Ilegal* (Illegal, 2003). In all four cases I will demonstrate how, although space acts to foreground spectacle and bring the story of the immigrant to the fore, it simultaneously and contradictorily serves to render invisible the immigrant in favour of immigration as a story in fact about Spaniards and their relation to the land. Desires for association and belonging, in Mitch Rose's terms, are at their most critical here, since territory/place and personal identity are acutely bound together, yet simultaneously the call to care must incorporate the awareness, conscious or not, that the position as Spanish itself carries the potential towards otherness and thus proximity to and affiliation with the other as African. In geographical terms, Spain is north of Africa, but it has been perceived as North Africa itself. In this formulation, the tension and conflict lie precisely in that small word, 'of'.

Coast

Chus Gutiérrez's *Poniente* deals with the coexistence of Spanish bosses and migrant agricultural workers on the Mediterranean coast. The coexistence is not a happy one: the workers suffer appalling living and working conditions while the bosses resent the presence of the migrants even as they exploit them. The tension between the two groups eventually results in violence, tragedy, and the departure of the migrants. *Poniente* culminates in a confrontation between the two groups: the victims of this violence include Curro (José Coronado), the male lead character, a Spanish go-between for the two communities, who is beaten unconscious. Santaolalla observes that *Poniente*

makes the Spanish spectator experience cross-cultural dialogues and/or conflicts in three time frames simultaneously: the so-called cohabitation of Moors and Christians following the invasion of the Peninsula in the 8th century, the hardships endured by Spanish migrants to Europe in the 1960s and conflicts between Spaniards and economic migrants in 21st century Spain. (Santaolalla 2007: 74)

Implied in this is the danger of an equation between the two groups: the Spanish were once subservient to the Moors, and they themselves have also carried out the same role – immigrant worker – as the Moroccans do now. The film raises the possibility of the Spanish themselves as immigrant other through Curro, son of an emigrant who went to Switzerland; and through the footage he discovers of Spaniards leaving their homeland to find work. Much of the tension and violence thus arise from the need of the Spaniards to elude this African equation. This is essentially a tale about the Spanish; of Curro, trying to keep both sides of the community happy and establish his own roots, and his

romance with Lucía (Cuca Escribano), who has also returned to her homeland from Madrid. The film nonetheless offers a variety of people from ‘outside’ – Spaniards as well as immigrants – attempting to put down roots in the local community, and the difficulties they have in doing so, which runs the risk of the dangerous equivalence of Spaniard and immigrant. This resulting tension is often represented in spatial terms, so that, in particular, the immigrants cannot get housing, or share the same bar as the Spanish bosses: the violence simmering among the immigrants derives in the first instance from a failed attempt by some young Moroccan workers to acquire better accommodation.

Both lead characters demonstrate an attraction to African otherness not shared by most of the Spanish community. Curro develops the closest links with the immigrants working the fields of peppers and tomatoes, and particularly with Adbembi (Farid Fatmi). Lucía returns from self-imposed exile in Madrid (thus offering an urban divide as well) to carry on her father’s work in agriculture despite opposition from her family, and works alongside her African employees. This duality is reflected in the use of landscape, as Verena Berger notes. She observes that the director often uses images of the horizon ‘para retratar filmicamente el límite hacia la otredad’ (to illustrate cinematically the border with otherness; Berger 2007: 194), but also as a possibility of opening up to the other. Gutiérrez often intercuts action scenes with long shots of landscape that act as a frontier: the beach, the mountains, the roads, the sheeting of the greenhouses. As Berger comments, ‘Siempre resaltan las líneas demarcadoras del paisaje, como si cualquier horizonte se convirtiera en símbolo de la frontera que existe como obstáculo, pero también para ser superada’ (The demarcating lines of the landscape always stand out, as if any horizon were to become a symbol of the border that exists as a barrier but also as something to be overcome; *ibid.*: 195). The horizon, the frontier, both divides and unites. Parvati Nair observes, ‘The borderline in lived practice asserts itself in the daily encounter with alterity: it demarcates the safe from the unsafe, the legal from the illegal, the rich from the poor’ (Nair 2004: 110).¹ But the borderline also tells us that the other is there, within reach, and thus there is a pull towards it.

Poniente’s opening credits run against the background of what appears to be a slightly out of focus beach, but something about it looks fake: at the end of the credits the camera pulls away to show the scene as a mock-up. This opening posits the varied meanings of the Mediterranean beach – as pleasure playground above all – as simply false. This is not quite exact. The beach in both this film and, as we shall see, *Bwana* proves to have multiple meanings that suggest the Mediterranean as a locus of conflict and death and, of course, of racial hatred, but it is also a site of encounter between self and other to the extent that the binary may dissolve – and it is furthermore the site of the very pleasure the fake beach is supposed to induce in us. In blurring these meanings,

the Mediterranean functions not only as a border territory in which Spanish nationals must confront the subjectivity of the other, but also as a contradictory mechanism in which both national identity and the transnational are simultaneously confirmed and denied. The coastline does not act simply as a backdrop for these issues, but actively embodies them. The coastline itself acts both as a territorial boundary and also as a point of entry. Given the indeterminacy of meaning, it is perhaps unsurprising that the film ends with physical violence that in part results from an attempt to determine the meaning of the land and also to determine who has power over it (whoever has the power determines the meaning). Rob Shields, as we saw in the previous chapter, is one commentator who has noted the liminal status of the beach. The seashore possesses a 'shifting nature between high and low tide, and as a consequence the absence of private property', and this in turn suggests 'the unterritorialised status of the beach, unincorporated into the system of controlled, civilised spaces. As a physical threshold, a *limen*, the beach has been difficult to dominate' (Shields 1991: 84). He further comments, 'Beaches had always been a "free zone" of sorts by virtue of their status as uncertain land, the surface contours of which might change with every tide' (*ibid.*: 89). Shields' remarks imply the problematic nature of the beach in terms of territory in that its national status is always open to question and always in need of active control, vulnerable to attack from outside, as Spain had in the past good reason to know. Yet Shields' comment about the shifting nature of the beach and its status as a free zone also posit the beach as a locus wherein the self is contested in conjunction with the potential proximity of the other. In *Poniente*, the beach is a site of hybrid encounter between Moroccan and Spaniard, those Spaniards who already recognise themselves as potentially other. It is notable that those who do *not* explicitly recognise themselves to be on the margins of Spanish society are never to be found on the beach: only the Moroccans, Lucía, Curro and the stripper Perla (Mariola Fuentes) spend time there. Those who meet on the beach are all nomads of a sort, including Curro, with his Swiss roots, and Lucía, who left her home to live in the city and now cannot understand the ways of her home on her return. When she gets lost in the maze of plastic tunnels that cover the ground, she must be set on the correct way by the immigrants who live there: it is familiar territory to them – ironically, their home – but not to her, who perceives it as 'the end of the world'. But if we can identify the beach with the expression of hybrid and fluid identities, this is nonetheless also the place where Adbembi assures Curro that they share the same roots as they stare at what Santaollala calls the 'emblematic Mediterranean' (Santaollala 2005: 144). Their desire to go into business together by taking over the beach café suggests this unity too. Thus, as symbol both of fluidity and hybridity, and of shared roots, the beach implies once again the equivalence of Spaniard and African (Fig. 18).



Figure 18 Shared roots: Curro and Adbembi on the beach in *Poniente*

The dual meaning of the beach functions as both pleasure and death: a place of enjoyment and community celebration, but also of bereavement (the drowning of Lucía's daughter years earlier), the fear of death (Curro's near fatal beating) and of displacement. It suggests the belief in roots of Adbembi and Curro is not so secure; and the rubbish that floats about it implies the collapsing into each other of the natural and the manufactured and thus the literal dissolution of boundaries. The plastic sheeting pervasive in the landscape is not simply a sign of squalor but actively contributes to its picturesqueness, as a close-up focuses on the graceful curlicues of the plastic floating in the sky – apparently devoid of context. The camera dwells lovingly on the signs of rubbish and detritus that become a sight of beauty. Ballesteros is right to point out the emphasis the film gives on the contrast between the beauty and the squalor, so that

Sophisticated cinematography and camerawork forcefully highlight the beautiful coastal landscape of Almería and contrast it throughout the film with the miserable and subhuman environments where immigrants are forced to live. A poetic leitmotif is used to reinforce that disparity: the plastic bags immigrants use to cover both the greenhouses and the shacks they live in fly in the sky indiscriminately paired with clouds and fog; they are metaphors of misery, warning signs of their presence, reminders of their invisibility. (Ballesteros 2005: 11)

The beach later provides a backdrop for another imaginative use of the plastic, as Curro makes an elaborate kite from it and races across the beach with the kite, accompanied by some of the Moroccan children. It is notable that the rubbish in this film is always associated with the immigrant, but so are the beauty and the pleasure of it, suggesting that the other is not simply abject. The landscape

in which the immigrants are immersed thus embodies the ever-present danger that the alien other, the abject object, might become a thing of beauty, pleasure and desire. Curro at the very least has perceived the attraction.

Other Spaniards must perforce maintain their boundaries, so *their* interaction with the landscape is precisely about doing this. As Adbembi observes, the two groups have common cultural roots, but there is a contradictory impulse to both embrace and deny on the part of the Spaniards, as well as a desire to forget their own history as immigrants: hence only if they feel a pull towards the other – if they have been marginalised themselves in some way – are they found in the area the immigrants occupy. Lucía, for example, the outsider, is one of the few owners who work alongside their pickers. Spaniards reinforce their territory in concrete ways, such as denying young migrants the right to rent rooms. In a situation where both Spaniard and Moroccan are viewed from elsewhere in the world as simply the agricultural workers conveying our peppers and tomatoes to the local supermarket – so that both appear to us like the primitive, because agricultural, other – the need to demarcate space becomes more acute, so that only the Moroccans inhabit an agricultural space, while the Spaniards are more likely to be found in the local bar.

The film's last scene reveals the immigrants with all their belongings walking across the beach, on the way to somewhere else – displaced, not rooted. At the end of this sorry line of people is Adbembi himself, forced to recognise that a supposition of sharing roots is not enough. This reflects a comment of Parvati Nair concerning the representation of Moroccans on films, 'In the context of contemporary globalization ... the geographical proximity of Spain and



Figure 19 The disappearing immigrant: Adbembi in *Poniente*

Morocco ... underlines their close physical relation as well as the fact that in this blurred line of contact lies also the boundary that separates Europe from its economically disadvantaged “other” (Nair 2004: 110). The beach in *Poniente* illustrates this point neatly: as a boundary it brings together both the sense of proximity and the ever-present possibility of alienation and separation which becomes a reality by the end of the film. The Moroccans literally exit stage left, and no longer are visible in the Spanish landscape. However, their story is in any case submerged under the drama of Spaniards coming to terms with their own roots. The drama of what happens to the Moroccans is displaced in favour of the melodrama of what happens to the Spaniards. The fine line between tragedy and melodrama is trodden by the Spaniards, as agricultural boss Miguel (Antonio Dechent), partly responsible for the final conflict, sets a fire to destroy Lucía’s business that accidentally kills his son, while Lucía’s lament over Curro’s unconscious body resembles the pose of the *mater dolorosa*.² Romance and melodrama more widely – indeed, any form of emotion – are reserved for the Spanish. When the camera pauses on Adbembi as he looks back at the deserted beach he is leaving behind, we might guess his thoughts but we are not privy to them; and the fact that the camera captures him in medium long shot rather than close-up, the preferred camera shot for revealing emotion, underscores the sense that what matters in this sequence is the shot of Adbembi disappearing from the screen (Fig. 19). As they did some 500 years before, the Spanish have managed once again to eject the North African from their soil. The film contains a crucial line of dialogue that underscores the question of visibility, when Adbembi says to his boss Miguel that what the latter would really like is for his immigrant workers to be invisible; and in the end the Spanish get their way, though at terrible cost to themselves as the son’s death and the destruction of Lucía’s business makes clear. This ending reminds us of Spain’s double bind towards Africa: it is impossible to harm the other without hurting oneself. Yet as the end credits roll over the now empty windswept beach (with a hard, cold sky that points up the contrast between the real beach and the fake one with which we started), we cannot but be aware that part of the spatial spectacle of which Gardies speaks, as mentioned above, is precisely that of the erasure of the immigrant.

If *Poniente* erases the immigrant through displacement, *Bwana* suggests other, more vicious methods of erasure. *Bwana* suggests the doubleness of the foreign, as a Spanish family, stranded by the coast after their car breaks down, encounter an African on the beach and spend the night in his company, only to abandon him to attack and death by passing German neo-Nazis the next morning. In *Bwana* the fragmentation of the Spanish self is easy enough to detect: Uribe positions a working-class Spanish family opposite a newly arrived immigrant called Ombasi (Emilio Buale), whom they encounter as they

go to a deserted beach to pick cockles. But from the very beginning this family is fractious: the husband and wife squabble, the son is scared of his father, the daughter is violently car sick (spoiling her mother's dress in the process), and the family car breaks down. The family begins to fragment further when the wife, Dori (María Barranco), becomes attracted to Ombasi, and it is only brought together again through fear, the family fleeing as Ombasi is attacked by neo-Nazi thugs. Otherness thus develops along gendered as well as ethnic lines given Dori's attraction to the African other. The Spanish are shown as rather reductively inadequate and ignoble, in comparison to Ombasi, who acquires a moral stature that positions him as superior to the Spanish family. Such a positioning is dangerous as it means that Ombasi must be brought low in order to restore a status quo in which the Spanish are superior; and yet the Spanish are unable even to achieve this much, leaving Ombasi's destruction to foreign others. Uribe himself observes in retrospect of his own film: 'No pasa de ser un cuento moral, con un mensaje social determinado. Con personajes miserables. Todos miserables, excepto el negro, que es al que se considera peligroso ... Que es realmente el más digno de todos' (It continues to be a moral story, with a fixed social message. With despicable characters. All despicable, except for the African, the one who is actually considered dangerous ... Who is really the most noble of them all; Aguirresarobe 2004: 170: ellipsis in original). Not even the children escape Uribe's condemnation (ibid.: 171).

The beach that forms the central space of *Bwana* is explicitly and sometimes problematically marked as a place of pleasure. It is on one level an extension of the spaces the family have used for leisure purposes and is more specifically a chance to indulge in cockle-picking. The beach also offers the opportunity to swim, although while both Ombasi and Dori enjoy their naked bathe together the latter's family look on in horror. But it can also be a potentially hostile space in which basic functions such as urination prove uncomfortable and embarrassing. And from an early stage the beach is marked with death, long before the climactic scenes of violence. When the Spanish arrive Ombasi is on the beach watching over his dead friend, buried in the sand, who apparently drowned in the voyage to Spain that Ombasi himself has survived. This coincides with the link of the beach of *Poniente* with death: it was the place where Lucía's daughter Angela drowned, an event that seemed to have compelled her flight from home to Madrid. In the latter film, a fiesta on the beach where Lucía and Curro eat and dance together with the Moroccans induces a mood of happiness. But at the end of this sequence we cut briefly to Said (Marouane Mribti), prevented from renting a home of his own because of his ethnic origin, and who is thought to be a troublemaker, and then immediately after this we cut to the beach bathed in a blood-red sunset, a clear clue to the violence and death to come. In *Bwana*, however, death is literally made a part of the beach as Ombasi buries his dead

friend in the sand, and later imagines the wind blowing the sand off to allow the friend to rise again and warn him in his dreams of the dangers of the white man.

The duality of the beach is thus clearly marked out in both positive and negative terms: it proves to be fluid in meaning. These signs of the ability to shift in meaning as well as physically relate to Parvati Nair's comments concerning Moroccans in Spanish film: she argues that 'while the immigrant engages in the hybrid act of reinventing the displaced self, he also simultaneously experiences the multiplicities of time and place that accompany the migratory experience, whereby the memory of a former located, gendered and defined self interferes with the fluid, mobile and unreliable present' (Nair 2004: 108). Such a process is not immediately apparent in *Bwana*, where Ombasi is for the most part the object of the gaze and subjectivity is denied him; but the scene in which he imagines the sands of the beach shifting in order to uncover his dead friend, who then speaks to him, is suggestive of Nair's point. The dead friend reminds him not to trust white people, going counter to his current attempts to make friendly contact in his new world. The beach plays a central role in this process, literally shifting to remind Ombasi of his former located self in a world where white people were not to be trusted, and suggesting the hybridity of a new territory in which he must set aside old suspicions – and yet, as events prove, the dead friend has a point. The beach is also fluid in gendered terms: Isabel Santaolalla describes the beach as 'un entorno mítico', or mythic surroundings full of female symbolism (the sea, the shells, the moon and the uterine hollows of the dunes) and male symbolism (the sun and the fire) – the latter associated exclusively with Ombasi (Santaolalla 2005: 161). It also suggests the immigrant as taking advantage of the Mediterranean as a scene of play and of enjoyment, reminding us of the common association of the beach with leisure and pleasure, and thus ironically of a place where foreigners are likely to come, one of the attractions of the Spanish terrain in the sight of others. But these are pleasures available to Spaniards too. The family arrive at the beach in the first place with a view to enjoying the pleasures of the seaside (cockle-picking); and it is Dori who makes the most of the opportunity in the end. Her pleasure is linked to sexual desire, rooted in her earlier dream that Ombasi approached her for sex, and now suggested in the two of them bathing naked together: the covert expression of sexual possibilities also forms part of the notion of the escape to the beach for pleasure.³ But this equation is, of course, unstable, since the neo-Nazis come to disturb this idyll for their own violent pleasure: the beach then converts itself to a setting reminiscent of the jungle – dry dunes with bushes to provide undergrowth (not, alas, enough for Ombasi to hide). The instability of the landscape's meaning reflects its ambiguity as a border territory that defines national identity and hints at other possibilities, including both the pleasure and danger of identification with the other. There is a particular irony

in that, as Flesler notes, the skinheads of *Bwana* police the Spanish racial and sexual frontier, that is to say, the beach (Flesler 2004: 107): what Flesner does not observe is that the skinheads are themselves foreign, from Germany. The ambivalence of the Spanish towards the African other is such that they cannot adequately police their own border.

Again, this border landscape provides the space for the spectacle of the erasure of the immigrant; though in a further twist we do not see this elimination. The film ends as the family drive away into the distance, refusing to help: the camera focuses on them in close-up while in the distance the neo-Nazis surround Ombasi. Thus it erases not only the immigrant but the process whereby he is eliminated, as this is left to our imagination. The territory is only tentatively recovered for the Spanish since they themselves hurriedly vacate it to be policed by foreigners against foreigners. But this is still a story about Spaniards, their inadequacy, their incomprehension, their dual fear and desire, while Ombasi remains an object of otherness, desired and feared but never comprehended, his life ending on the landscape where his friend is buried. Rose's desire for association, then, is also ambiguously suggested through the presentation of the landscape, as the beach comes to indicate the desire and fear bound up in the association with Africa.

City

If the beach offers us a border landscape that both divides and unites, attracts and repels, a similar process can happen in a city such as Barcelona, the setting for *Susanna*, a film about an adulterous affair between Alex (Alex Casanova), a married man, and a young woman called Susanna (Eva Santolaria). Out of sight of Alex, but not of us, Susanna is romantically involved with Said (Said Amel), a Moroccan butcher, becoming engaged to him during the course of the film. The film rapidly takes on noirish overtones as Alex is overtaken by an *amour fou*, so *fou* in fact that he is reduced to murdering Susanna. Said takes the rap for the crime, being found with the woman's blood on his hands, even though he is innocent and distraught at her death. Alex, however, is free to return to his so-called normal life with his wife and newborn child.

Susanna acts as a bridge between the Spanish community and the Moroccan community through her involvement with one man from each. The two communities, however, reveal more similarities than a shared desire of a woman's body. In particular, we see two celebratory parties held in the same bar, one Spanish, one Moroccan, yet the similarity of the music that is sung suggests a common link. This is an example where the two communities appear to occupy the same space, but not at the same time. The way in which Barcelona is shot, and the fact that the Spanish and Moroccan communities never appear together on screen

(until the very end), suggest a warren of city streets in which people are able to maintain separate identities, a warren that becomes almost a clichéd symbolisation of the protagonist's confused mind and desires. The two communities never impinge on each other – until Alex murders Susanna. This reminds us of Michel Foucault's concept of the heterotopia. As Nathan Richardson has said, 'heterotopias are not merely where other spaces and their meanings simply are remembered, or cohabit, or even fuse. Heterotopias are locations where multiple spaces actually coexist and, without fusing, interact with, contradict, and invert one another' (Richardson 2002: 129). Linked to Colmeiro's remarks I quoted earlier, this suggests that the heterotopia of these films is precisely those spaces – concrete spaces – in which the Spanish work out their own double bind towards immigration. The notion of heterotopic space as one of interaction combined with contradiction and inversion suggests Susanna's movement through a Barcelona in which two different communities coexist within the streets, bars and houses of the city but who do not actually share this space. Only Susanna herself is able to cross from one heterotopic space to another.

This working out of the double-bind that the Spanish feel towards North Africans occurs in the film through the use of melodrama. The mixture of noir and *cine social* does not disguise the melodramatic thread that traces itself through the film. In *Poniente* and *Ilegal* (which I discuss below) the reality of immigration is intertwined with a love story of some sort, usually between Spaniards, but nonetheless Spaniards who have associations with the immigrants; but the melodramatic spectacle serves to keep hidden the possibility of miscegenation.



Figure 20 Susanna and Said on the outskirts of Barcelona in *Susanna*

Nonetheless, the possibility is broached in *Bwana* while *Susanna* takes things to a more explicit level through the engagement of Susanna and Said; and Alex participates in this miscegenation at one remove, given his sexual relationship with Susanna. The concerns over miscegenation are expressed in the use of space and place. There are graphic sexual scenes between Alex and Susanna that contrast with the chastity which is insisted on by Said (as he talks to Susanna on the outskirts of Barcelona) (Fig. 20) and policed by his female relatives (who grill Susanna about her past affairs). It is notable that Said's one gesture towards sex, when he begins to make more intimate sexual moves towards Susanna but then draws back – hinting at the possibility of the ultimate blurring of bodily boundaries – can only occur on the outskirts of Barcelona, while the affair with Alex takes place within the city. In addition, the separate space which Said's female relatives occupy suggests a rigid demarcation of Moroccan space (from which the men are banished) that contrasts with the interstitial spaces in which Alex and Susanna conduct their affair. Flesler suggests that the scene where the women interrogate Susanna is set up to suggest the oriental backdrop and sexist ideas of the women, so that the audience judges these women and not Susanna (Flesler 2004: 111), and this is true to some extent, although we must know from Susanna's behaviour that they are right to be suspicious. It is also clear, however, that Susanna is intruding into this space, a space demarcated as not Spanish. Flesler further observes that *Susanna* offers a contrast between the progressiveness and sexual freedom of contemporary Spanish women and the conservative ideas of Muslim men: while Susanna is attracted to a Moroccan man the film makes it clear that this is not a natural relationship, since it would involve a rejection of the woman's 'true' identity. But it is also clear that Susanna's relationship with a Spanish man makes her unhappy, suggesting perhaps that she would prefer a return to traditional gender roles and the benign patriarchal care of a man with traditional values (ibid.: 112). And perhaps there is a desire, too, for demarcated space rather than the border spaces of her relationships: not only the outskirts of Barcelona with Said but the back alleys, among the dustbins, with Alex.

This desire for the reinstatement of conservative values brings us back to the question of melodrama, and its use as a technique whereby Spaniards negotiate the repulsion and desire towards the immigrant. Colmeiro quotes Simonde de Sismondi's notes of 1813 on Spanish literature:

Tandis que son essence est tirée de la chevalerie, ses ornements et son langage son empruntés des Asiatiques. Dans la contrée la plus orientale de notre Europe, elle nous fait entendre le langage fleurie et l'imagination fantastique de l'Orient ... alors nous nous trouverons heureux de pouvoir respirer, dans une langage apparenté à la nôtre, les parfums de l'Orient et l'encens de l'Arabie. (quoted in Colmeiro 2002: 131)

While its essential nature is drawn from chivalry, its embellishment and language are taken from Asia. In our Europe's most oriental land, it [Spanish literature] conveys to us the Oriental flowery language and imagination full of fantasy ... so we are happy to be able to breathe in the perfumes of the Orient and the incense of Arabia in a language similar to our own.

This feminised literature (Colmeiro's term) might seem somewhat removed from contemporary Spanish films about immigration, with the emphasis on *cine social*, but the impulse towards melodrama and the *crime passionnel* brings this dangerously back to the feminine again, the position occupied by both the woman and the immigrant. Thus the woman must die and the immigrant must pay, and the film ends with both erased from the picture and Alex reunited with his wife and newborn child, the quintessential Spanish family. Barcelona – itself an icon of coexistence between Catalan native and Spanish immigrant – here becomes a heterotopia in which communities can coexist but which is literally policed to ensure the erasure of the immigrant once again, whose own blurring of boundaries between subject and object, symbolised by sex, can only occur outside the city. At the end of the film Said finally strays into Spanish space, running into the street in his distress at Susanna's murder, and as soon as he does so he is attacked by the Spanish/Catalan community: his arrest and incarceration will ensure his disappearance from the streets of Barcelona. Although much of the film was shot in Catalan, there is no distinct emphasis on Catalan as opposed to Spanish identity, as both identities are opposed to that of North Africa. While Susanna desires the other in Said, and Alex desires Susanna as an alluring border crosser, able to occupy the spaces of the other and thus be figured as other herself, nonetheless they both also feel a pull towards ordered and demarcated spaces wherein they can be acceptable socially; but this fixity in a fluid city space like Barcelona can only be achieved through the death of the woman who leans so perilously towards the other.

Coast and city

My final example is *Ilegal*, which once more presents the Spanish as subjects and the African immigrants as object, even though the revelation of illegal trafficking in immigrants into Galicia in Northern Spain is ostensibly the point of the story. Luis (Chisco Amado) is a reporter pursuing a story concerning the drowning of illegal immigrants, but in turn he is pursued by the criminal gang in charge of the trafficking of immigrants, who wish to obtain the photos of the immigrants in his possession, kill him and thus put an end to the story: thus Spaniard confronts Spaniard over the body of the immigrant – to be precise, that of the one immigrant who has survived, but who for much of the film remains hidden and thus invisible. Luis himself only survives by having recourse to the

immigrant community in Vigo, who retain the clue to the mystery but also offer shelter. And in that shelter Luis and Sofía (Lucía Jiménez) – a private detective who is tracking Luis but who comes to collaborate with him in solving the crime – encounter Moroccan culture in the form of a religious ceremony and later a Moroccan communal meal which the Moroccans invite the Spaniards to share. Sofía even perforce dresses in a Moroccan shirt when her own gets splattered by the blood of the lamb that was killed to make the meal, a form of ritual baptism into another culture for her.

Ilegal offers a variety of landscapes, including the beach once more; but the first beach we see is a Moroccan beach that is policed by potential immigrants and where Luis is clearly trespassing and unwanted. The first shots of the film emphasise a beach where we see traces of immigrants but strangely enough a lack of their presence – the empty boat, the washed up clothes, but no people, no bodies (Fig. 21). Later, Luis visits the Moroccan beach to try to find out about the traffic in immigrants, and he finds a beach littered with both rubbish (rather like the beach of *Poniente*) and humans, so that once again we find that beaches are for Africans marginal spaces of detritus. The film ends by the sea as well, but now we are firmly on Galician soil, and gradually the Moroccans are edged out of the picture both literally and figuratively, as the surviving immigrant dies and the film in its climactic moments focuses on Spaniard against Spaniard once again. The two beaches of the film illustrate how melodrama displaces the immigrant: in the opening shots of the Moroccan beach we find Luis with his guide María (Vicenta N’Dongo), a Moroccan singer who nonetheless shows no signs of fixity (she sings in English and Portuguese, and in the car of the opening sequences she switches the radio channel from Arabic music, selected



Figure 21 The deserted Moroccan beach in *Ilegal*

by her lover Durán (Chete Lera), to Western pop). The scene initially suggests a romantic day by the sea for Luis and María, but no: this is strictly business, and the couple are colleagues and friends but no more. The melodrama is reserved for Galicia, as Luis and Sofía fight for the film of the immigrants on the beach, for it is this film that Sofía has been hired to recover. They tussle on the beach only to dissolve into kissing in the style of *From Here to Eternity* (Fred Zinneman, 1953) (Fig. 22). The romance, and not the fought-over film, is the focal point, the image of Spaniards and not Moroccans. The two beaches in tandem nonetheless make visible the ambivalent relationship of Spain to north Africa in that Luis is impelled to visit the Moroccan beach in the first place because the root of the story lies with the Africans and that is what attracts him. María's presence as a potential sexual interest, even if this possibility is never taken up, traces the notion of sexual desire for the other across the beach as well. But if the Moroccan beach lays bare the attraction of the Spanish towards North Africa, the Galician beach – as far away from Africa as one could possibly get within Spain – covers over this attraction, re-figuring the beach as a site of sexual encounter only for Spaniards.

The film also offers us cityscapes, shots of Santiago and Vigo and, like Barcelona, these are city spaces in which Africans are hardly visible: Luis and Sofía must go to hidden places within Vigo to locate the immigrant community. In the case of both cities the director includes a long shot of the city at night: Shields (1991: 220) quotes Andrew Higson's argument that the long shot of the city suggests distance and thus authorship (in all senses), but the long shot disavows the distance by making the city a spectacle to be gazed at. What is useful for us to consider here is that these two spectacular shots (again, in all



Figure 22 The romantic Spanish beach in *Ilegal*

senses) contain hidden within them the mystery that links Spaniard to African. The shot of Santiago's cathedral introduces us to the sequence in which Luis takes refuge, with his film of the immigrants, from his pursuers: a quintessential emblem of Spanish Catholicism becomes a site of shelter for the image of the African but also a way in which to conceal it. In the chase sequence around the cathedral between Luis and his pursuers for that image, the actual image is rendered invisible in favour of the sight/site of the cathedral. The night-time long shot of Vigo, too, suggests distance in contrast to the passage of Luis and Sofía to the heart of Vigo and to its Moroccan community hidden on the margins of Vigo street life. The Vigo long shot comes immediately after the scenes in which Luis and Sofía kiss on the beach, which, as we have seen, show a landscape denuded of Africans: this double distancing allows a parallel distance from Africans even as the Spanish couple successfully conclude their search to find them. The distancing effect of the long shot is contrasted by the labyrinthine paths that Luis must take through both cities to discover what he needs to know: in Vigo, indeed, he and Sofía must go through its sewers in their quest to find the missing African. The combination of long shot and labyrinth offers the possibility of attraction towards – hunting for – the African and yet a move to distancing even as the couple home in on their goal.

Illegal revolves around a quest for images, the images of the immigrants aboard the boat that, if released, will expose the illegal traffic in immigrants. In the end, however, the closing credits roll as the tapes with their valuable footage, revealing the violence and exploitation of Spaniard against immigrant, sink to the bottom of the sea to embed themselves in the very depths of Spanish territory: once again the immigrant becomes invisible while touching Spanish soil. In contrast to Jaume Balagueró's and Paco Plaza's film *[REC]* (2007), in which the camera's act of looking is all that survives at the end of the film, beyond the human, this film ironically asks us in the end to dispense with the need of looking. The recorded image of the Africans is not, ultimately, used to highlight the deaths of immigrants but ironically to preserve the life of a Spaniard: the film casing (and not the image) blocks the bullet intended for Sofía. And, not surprisingly, the image is in the hands of the Spanish, Luis and Sofía. However we may wish to perceive the Africans, they are always mediated by the Spanish – framed, in the dual meaning of the word.

The subtitle to this chapter, 'north (of) Africa', with its brackets, suggests, I like to think, the double bind of Spaniards highlighted by Colmeiro: a fear that it might itself be thought of as a continuation of Africa (rather than Africa being a continuation of Spain, as suggested in Spain's retention of the Moroccan towns of Ceuta and Melilla). The word 'of' in brackets suggests the tension of trying to maintain a separate identity, controlling the land and the image, while

nonetheless drawing on North Africa in terms both of cultural roots and of an agricultural labour force. These films are in the end films about Spaniards, and the immigrant is a fleeting trace on screen – a tension which the Spanish landscape embodies. But if these films are about Spaniards, they are about Spaniards trying to work out the problematic between self and other through space. Victor Burgin quotes Julia Kristeva, who says that ‘To live with the other, with the foreigner, confronts us with the possibility ... of *being an other*’ (Burgin 1996: 119). Burgin himself notes, following her comment, ‘to encounter the other in one’s own space is to confront one’s own alterity to that other’s space’ (ibid.). But if the beach acts as a form of Homi Bhabha’s ‘third space’, where people are neither outside nor inside but connected to both (see Crang 1998: 171), the city acts differently, wherein there are defined and demarcated spaces where immigrants can go – if only then to make themselves visible – but where the Spanish may roam freely. Or, as in *Ilegal*, it becomes an oscillation between entry into the labyrinthine heart and long shot distance which prefigures the oscillating attraction and denial of Spaniard towards African.

As Shields says,

Margins, then, while a position of exclusion, can also be a position of power and critique. They expose the relativity of the entrenched, universalising values of the centre, and expose the relativism of cultural identities which imply their shadow figures of every characteristic they have denied, rendered ‘anomalous’ or excluded. (Shields 1991: 277)

While these landscapes may serve to erase the immigrant from the screen, nonetheless they also suggest the ever present possibility of the immigrant’s return, the return of the Spanish other; and thus, like the shifting sands of the beach, expose the frailties of identities thought of as specifically Spanish. Such identities are always drawn back to the margin and risk shifting and collapsing, like the beach itself. Spain as a dream of presence always in the process of becoming is made manifest as the characters move through the different spaces and places in a reflection of the fluctuation between fear and desire of the other. The African other is constantly erased from the landscape, so only Spaniards can be seen, yet the Spanish remain haunted by the dangers and the possibilities of a close historical and geographical connection that opens them out to the erasure of their own Spanishness. This call to care is often expressed in very malign ways, yet its constant repetition suggests the ever present undoing of a secure Spanish identity on Spanish soil: thus the call to care is never ending. Its perpetual desire to ensure that Spain remains Spain in turn acknowledges the underlying reality that Spain is never fully and completely Spain.

Notes

- 1 Nair is talking about cities, but her point applies to the coast, particularly since the city she is primarily discussing, Barcelona, is itself coastal.
- 2 I am grateful to the audience of an earlier seminar paper I gave at University College London (which contributed to this chapter) for pointing this out to me.
- 3 Uribe notes that this scene was added simply to pad a film that was otherwise rather short (Aguirresarobe 2004: 173).

CHAPTER NINE

Conclusion

One of the purposes of this book has been to reinvigorate the meaning of the word Spain as a term of more than simple convenience for academics. What that term means, of course, is another matter altogether. Given the case studies outlined here, the term resonates in different and often opposing ways. While both the films of del Toro and the novels of Torrente Ballester look to recover a Spain apparently lost, the Spains they imagine to be lost are very different, as are the reasons why recuperation is desirable. As regards the Basque Country, considered in Chapter 4, there are landscape traditions used to figure a different space wherein Spain may be resisted but must nonetheless be taken into account. The Spain stitched together through a restoration of the law of the land appears different depending on whether you are a local man taking on international crime lords and a corrupt local government or a woman juggling the spaces of work and home in a city. The porousness of borders can affect home life very differently if you are earning money through catering to foreign tastes for Spain as exotic and pleasurable, or if you feel threatened – or attracted – by the thought of foreigners coming to share your space on a more permanent basis. The explicitness of these characters' commitment to Spain varies, too. While in the earlier chapters an avowed struggle for a certain sort of Spain – or, indeed, against a certain sort of Spain – takes place, in later chapters characters are more likely to prioritise personal over patriotic concerns.

What all these chapters have in common, however, is their invocation, either explicitly or implicitly, of Spain through their interaction with landscape, space and place: it is the last that assists us in the perception of Spain as being evoked. This use of landscape, space and place is another crucial element of what I have wished to explore here. As I noted in the Introduction, the examination of these in Hispanic studies is beginning to develop; but the purpose of this particular analysis has been more precisely to attempt to tease out how Spain as a concept is seen explicitly or implicitly by subjects by means of landscape, space and place. This to me is important not because of a desire to essentialise these things – I do not feel that the spaces and places discussed here point to

an ideal Spain – but because of a desire to attempt to perceive the workings of cultural geography beyond the Anglo-American remit to which hitherto it has mostly been confined, but also quite simply to address the question of how such theories work here and not there, here being Spain, of course. I do not want the meaning of ‘Spain’ to be perceived solely as a relative concept which could mean virtually anything; it is worth remembering the tie of this term to a particular geographical shape we can point to on a map. Neither, however, do I want Spain to be thought of as some ideal Platonic form towards which these case studies and any others we care to consider might gesture but which they can never realise. There is a real Spain, but there is no perfect form of Spain, although it may be that some subjects wish there were, as the discussion of Torrente Ballester’s novels raises as a possibility. It is not a question of how far individuals’ understandings of and uses of the term ‘Spain’ coincide with an ideal reality, although a notion of such an ideal might well be a factor in these understandings and uses. As Mitch Rose has it, there is a dream of presence of Spain, but it is an entity always in the process of becoming, through the interactions of people with the landscape.

For, in contrast to the notion of the Platonic form, the subject is vital in this process of tracing Spain across landscape, space and place. When John Wylie insists on landscape as that with which we see, he places the subject in an intricate and necessary relationship with landscape, space and place that allows for Spain as a dream of presence to be constantly coming into being. We have moved away from the early position in landscape studies of the subject as master of all he surveys, through the intervention, among others, of Henri Lefebvre and de Certeau, who stressed space and place as items of use and interaction rather than simply observation, feminist theories that challenged the notion of masculine mastery, and all these theories and others that explicitly acknowledge the role of power and thus expose its workings (and these are simply edited highlights of all those theories that take issue with the notion of mastery). Wylie’s theoretical position, however, allows the subject to come back in, in the process acknowledging the social, cultural and ideological position in which the subject is situated but explicitly recognising the importance of the subject in the process of the dream of presence. But the subject is hardly monolithic; thus we have a plethora of associations with landscape, space and place that means that Spain itself is not monolithic either. ‘Spain’, then, is the sum of all these subjective viewpoints – and not only those I have considered here – but, because the process of forming subjectivity and subjective perspectives of Spain is never ending, Spain is always in the process of becoming.

Doreen Massey comments, ‘The question is how to hold on to that notion of geographical difference, of uniqueness, even of rootedness if people want it, without it being reactionary’ (Massey 1994: 152). I would argue that the way

to 'hold on' to Spain is to consider the ways in which subjects express their personal desires – explicitly connected to the national or not – and how their interactions with the landscape call forth not only expressions of desire and of fears but how those desires and fears relate to where they are. These interactions, desires and fears do not preclude the reactionary by any means, but they are not confined to it. Spain as a term certainly possesses reactionary meanings, as with the use made of the idea of Spain by Franco and his followers; but it is also the enchanted land of Saint-Exupéry's map. Subjectivity allows meanings to coalesce around the term 'Spain', and the Spanish landscapes, spaces and places that go to make up the territory are the means by which we see this subjectivity expressed. When Mitch Rose talks of 'the "again and again" desire for full presence that never arrives' (Rose 2006: 545), we can readily see this is the constant expression of desire through place which can ultimately never be satisfied; and Spain is evoked as a trace in that these desires and longings manifest themselves in these places and spaces and not others, in a manner akin to Michael Billig's banal nationalism. Spain is at its most reductive a specific geographical area bounded by France, Portugal, the Atlantic and the Mediterranean but it is also an entity constantly in the process of becoming through the subjects that express their desires through the landscapes and thus associations with Spain through those very landscapes: Spain traces itself across these subjectivities. And these expressions of subjectivity and commitment include this book.

Filmography

Principal films discussed in this book

***Ama Lur* (Mother Earth, 1968)**

Directors: Néstor Basterretxea and Fernando Larruquert

Writers: Néstor Basterretxea and Fernando Larruquert

Producer: Frontera Films

Music: Javier Bello and Juan Urteaga

Cinematography: Julio Amóstegui and Luis Cuadrado

Editing: Pedro del Rey

Running time: 103 minutes

***Bwana* (1996)**

Director: Imanol Uribe

Writers: Ignacio del Moral (play), Francisco Pino, Joan Potau and Imanol Uribe

Executive Producer: Antonio Cardenal

Music: José Nieto

Cinematography: Javier Aguirresarobe

Editing: Teresa Font

Cast:

Antonio – Andrés Pájares

Dori – María Barranco

Ombasi – Emilio Buale

Running time: 90 minutes

***La caja 507* (Box 507, 2002)**

Director: Enrique Urbizu

Writers: Enrique Urbizu and Michel Gaztambide

Executive Producer: Fernando Victoria de Lecea

Producers: Fernando Bovaira and Gustavo Ferrada

Music: Mario de Benito

Cinematography: Carles Gusi

Editing: Ángel Hernández Zoido

Cast:

Ángela – Miriam Montilla
 Modesto Pardo – Antonio Resines
 Mónica – Goya Toledo
 Rafael – José Coronado
 Running time: 104 minutes

Costa Brava (1995)

Director: Marta Balletbò-Coll
 Writers: Marta Balletbò-Coll and Ana Simón Cerezo
 Producer: Marta Balletbò-Coll
 Music: Miquel Amor, Emil Remolins Casas, Xavier Martorell and Ikal Sena
 Cinematography: Teo López García
 Editing: Olaguer Córdoba
 Cast:
 Anna – Marta Balletbò-Coll
 Jordi – Joseph Maria Bruges
 Marta – Montserrat Gausachs
 Montserrat – Desi del Valle
 Running time: 90 minutes

La cuestión de suerte (A Matter of Chance, 1996)

Director: Rafael Monleón
 Music: Bernardo Bonezzi
 Cast:
 Alfonso – Ion Gabella
 Concha – Leire Berrocal
 Julio – Eduardo Noriega
 Marie – Anna Galiena
 Pili – Marta Belaustegui
 Ricardo – Simón Andreu
 Running time: 92 minutes

Días contados (Running Out of Time, 1994)

Director: Imanol Uribe
 Writers: Juan Madrid (novel) and Imanol Uribe
 Producers: Andrés Santana and Imanol Uribe
 Music: José Nieto
 Cinematography: Javier Aguirresarobe
 Editing: Teresa Font
 Cast:
 Antonio – Carmelo Gómez
 Charo – Ruth Gabriel

Lisardo – Javier Bardem
Lourdes – Elvira Mínguez
Rafa – Karra Elejalde
Vanessa – Candela Peña
Running time: 93 minutes

***El espinazo del diablo* (The Devil's Backbone, 2001)**

Director: Guillermo del Toro
Writers: Guillermo del Toro, Antonio Trashorras and David Muñoz
Executive Producers: Pedro Almodóvar and Guillermo del Toro
Producers: Agustín Almodóvar, Rosa Bosch, Bertha Navarro and Michel Ruben
Music: Javier Narrete
Cinematography: Guillermo Navarro
Editing: Luis de la Madrid
Cast:
Carlos – Fernando Tielve
Carmen – Marisa Paredes
Dr Casares – Federico Luppi
Conchita – Irene Visedo
Jacinto – Eduardo Noriega
Jaime – Íñigo Garcés
Santi – Junio Valverde
Running time: 106 minutes

***Hola, ¿estás sola?* (Hello, Are You Alone?, 1995)**

Director: Icíar Bollaín
Writers: Icíar Bollaín and Julio Medem
Producers: Fernando Colomo, Beatriz de la Gándara and Santiago García de Leániz
Music: Bernardo Bonezzi
Cinematography: Teo Delgado
Editing: Ángel Hernández Zoido
Cast:
Mariló – Elena Irureta
Niña – Silke
Olaf – Arcadi Levin
Pepe – Alex Ángulo
Trini – Candela Peña
Running time: 92 minutes

***Illegal* (Illegal, 2003)**

Director: Ignacio Vilar
Writers: Xavier Manteiga, Ignacio Vilar, Valentin Fernández-Tubau and Alicia Freire
Executive Producers: Jorge Maroto and Mario Pedraza

Producer: Fernando Martin Sanz
 Music: Manuel Balboa
 Cinematography: Federico Ribes
 Editing: Guillermo Represa
 Cast:
 Durán – Chete Lera
 Luis – Chisco Amado
 María – Vicenta N'Dongo
 Sofía – Lucía Jiménez
 Running time: 107 minutes

***El laberinto del fauno* (Pan's Labyrinth, 2006)**

Director: Guillermo del Toro
 Writer: Guillermo del Toro
 Executive Producers: Belén Atienza, Elena Manrique and Edmundo Gil
 Producers: Álvaro Agustín, Alfonso Cuarón, David Ebner, Bertha Navarro, Guillermo del Toro and Frida Torresblanco
 Music: Javier Narrete
 Cinematography: Guillermo Navarro
 Editing: Bernat Vilaplana
 Cast:
 Carmen – Ariadna Gil
 Doctor – Alex Ángulo
 Faun/Pale Man – Doug Jones
 Mercedes – Maribel Verdú
 Ofelia – Ivana Baquero
 Vidal – Sergi López
 Running time: 119 minutes

***Mataharis* (2007)**

Director: Icíar Bollaín
 Writers: Icíar Bollaín and Tatiana Rodríguez
 Executive Producer: Santiago García de Leániz
 Producers: Simón de Santiago and Santiago García de Leániz
 Music: Lucio Godoy
 Cinematography: Kiko de la Rica
 Editing: Ángel Hernández Zoido
 Cast:
 Carmen – Nuria González
 Eva – Najwa Nimri
 Iñaki – Tristán Ulloa
 Inés – María Vázquez
 Manuel – Diego Martín

Sergio – Antonio de la Torre
Valbuena – Fernando Cayo
Running time: 100 minutes

***Nadie conoce a nadie* (Nobody Knows Anybody, 1999)**

Director: Mateo Gil
Writers: Mateo Gil and Juan Bonilla (novel)
Executive Producers: Gustavo Ferrada and Antonio P. Pérez
Music: Alejandro Amenábar
Cinematography: Javier Salmones
Editing: Nacho Ruiz Capillas
Cast:
Ariadna – Paz Vega
María – Natalia Verbeke
Sapo – Jordi Mollà
Simón – Eduardo Noriega
Running time: 105 minutes

***La pelota vasca: la piel contra la piedra* (Basque Ball: Skin Against Stone, 2003)**

Director: Julio Medem
Writer: Julio Medem
Executive Producers: Julio Medem and Koldo Zuazua
Cinematography: Javier Aguirre, Ricardo de Gracia and Daniel Sosa Segura
Editing: Julio Medem
Running time: 110 minutes

***Poniente* (West, 2002)**

Director: Chus Gutiérrez
Writers: Icíar Bollaín and Chus Gutiérrez
Executive Producer: Ana Huete
Producers: Ana Huete and Iñaki Núñez
Music: Tao Gutiérrez and Ángel Luis Samos
Cinematography: Carles Gusi
Editing: Fernando Pardo
Cast:
Adbembi – Farid Fatmi
Curro – José Coronado
Lucía – Cuca Escribano
Miguel – Antonio Dechent
Paquito – Antonio de la Torre
Perla – Mariola Fuentes
Saïd – Marouane Mribti
Running time: 96 minutes

***Salto al vacío* (Jump into the Void, 1995)**

Director: Daniel Calparsoro

Writer: Daniel Calparsoro

Producers: Andrés Santana and Imanol Uribe

Music: José Nieto

Cinematography: Kiko de la Rica

Editing: Teresa Font

Cast:

Alex – Najwa Nimri

Esteban – Alfredo Villa

Javi – Roberto Chalu

Juancar – Karra Elejalde

Tono – Ion Gabella

Running time: 85 minutes

***Sé quien eres* (I Know Who You Are, 2000)**

Director: Patricia Ferreira

Writers: Patricia Ferreira, Daniela Féjerman, Manuel Gutiérrez Aragón, Enrique Jiménez
and Inés París

Executive Producers: Carmen de Miguel and Claudio Pustelnik

Producers: Pancho Casal, Gerardo Herrero and Claudio Pustelnik

Music: José Nieto

Cinematography: José Luis Alcaine

Editing: Marcela Sáenz

Cast:

Álvaro – Roberto Enríquez

Coro – Ingrid Rubio

Ginés – Manuel Manquiña

Mario – Miguel Ángel Solá

Marisa – Mercedes Sampietro

Paloma – Ana Fernández

Salgado – Héctor Alterio

Sánchez – Jordi Dauder

Sara – Vicky Peña

Running time: 100 minutes

***Susanna* (1996)**

Director: Antonio Chavarrías

Writer: Antonio Chavarrías

Producer: Antonio Chavarrías

Music: Javier Navarrete

Cinematography: Andreu Rebés

Editing: Ernest Blasi

Cast:

Alex – Alex Casanovas

Fouces – Joan Dalmau

Muntsa – Rosa Gàmiz

Said – Said Amel

Susanna – Eva Santolaria

Running time: 93 minutes

Tesis (Thesis, 1995)

Director: Alejandro Amenábar

Writers: Alejandro Amenábar and Mateo Gil

Executive Producers: José Luis Cuerda and Emiliano Otegui

Producer: José Luis Cuerda and Ricardo Steinberg

Music: Alejandro Amenábar and Mariano Marín

Cinematography: Hans Burman

Editing: Mari Elena Sáinz de Rozas

Cast:

Ángela – Ana Torrent

Bosco – Eduardo Noriega

Castro – Xabier Elorriaga

Chema – Fele Martínez

Figueroa – Miguel Picazo

Sena – Nieves Herranz

Yolanda – Rosa Campillo

Running time: 125 minutes

Torremolinos 73 (2003)

Director: Pablo Berger

Writer: Pablo Berger

Producers: Tomás Cimadevilla, Bo Ehrhardt, José Herrero de Egaña, Mohamed Kashoggi
and Lars Bredo Rahbek

Music: Mastretta

Cinematography: Kiko de la Rica

Editing: Rosario Sáinz de Rozas

Cast:

Alfredo – Javier Cámara

Carmen – Candela Peña

Don Carlos – Juan Diego

Juan Luis – Fernando Tejero

Magnus – Mads Mikkelsen

Running time: 91 minutes

***El viaje de Arián* (Arián's Journey, 2000)**

Director: Eduard Bosch

Writers: Patxi Amezcua and Jordi Gasull

Producer: Ángel Blasco

Music: Joan Valent

Cinematography: Xavier Gil

Editing: Eduard Bosch and Javier Naya

Cast:

Arián – Ingrid Rubio

Arián's Father – Txema Blasco

Isabel Ulloa – Laia Marull

José – Carlos Manuel Díaz

Maite – Silvia Munt

Patxo – Paul Berrondo

Vivaldi – Abel Folk

Running time: 104 minutes

***La voz de su amo* (His Master's Voice, 2001)**

Director: Emilio Martínez-Lázaro

Writers: José Ángel Esteban, Carlos López, Emilio Martínez-Lázaro and Alfredo Montoya

Producer: Andrés Vicente Gómez

Music: Roque Baños

Cinematography: Javier Salmones

Editing: Iván Aledo

Cast:

Charli – Eduard Fernández

Katy – Ana Otero

Marta – Silvia Abascal

Oliveira – Joaquim de Almeida

Sacristán – Imanol Arias

Running time: 105 minutes

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