

**Contemporary Spanish Women Cineastes:
Constructing a feminine memory of the
Spanish Civil War, Francoism and the
Transition period through twenty-first
century fiction films and documentaries**

By

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Abstract

While much has been written about Spanish cinema in academic circles over the last twenty years, comparatively little attention has been directed at films by and about women. There has been even less research on women's cinematic representation of history and socio-political issues in Spain. Although individual films dealing with this issue have been analysed, mainly in journal articles or as part of a collection of essays, as far as I am aware, there have been no substantial studies providing an in-depth analysis of films on this subject by exclusively Spanish female directors in the first decade of the twenty-first century.

Due to the fact that only a small percentage of all Spanish feature films directors are female, this study claims that women's experiences of the Spanish Civil War, Franco's dictatorship and the Transition period have been under-represented in front of and, especially, behind the camera. However, a cohort of women directing in the 2000s explore these episodes of Spanish history in their films. Intersecting with three different fields –history, cinema and gender studies– this thesis examines the diverse representations of these women filmmakers in order to gauge the contributions of their films in recovering Spain's historical memory and shaping a collective national identity.

Chapter One provides a historical overview of women directors' role and evolution in the Spanish film industry, concluding with an assessment of their challenges and achievements in the twenty-first century. Chapter Two constitutes the historical and theoretical framework that contextualises the films' subject of study through a revision of Spain's politics of memory and its influence on the construction of a national identity.

Over four more chapters, the textual analysis of eight films, including fiction films and documentaries, places a special emphasis on the role that memory, identity

and female subjectivity play in the selected films by contrasting an eclectic array of female fictional characters as well as eye-witnesses. Chapter Three analyses the only two women-authored films set in the Spanish Civil War: *La buena nueva* (Taberna, 2008) and *Iris* (Vergés, 2004). The different generational approaches to remembrance of the Civil War and the intergenerational transmission of such memory are addressed in the melodrama *Para que no me olvides* (Ferreira, 2005) and the documentary *Nadar* (Subirana, 2008). Chapter Five examines the personal style in Koska's documentaries *Mujeres en pie de guerra* (2004) and *Vindicación* (2009), which portray women's overlooked involvement in war conflicts and politics. Chapter Six analyses the use of documentary interviews within the films *Señora de* (Ferreira, 2009) and *El tren de la memoria* (Arribas and Pérez, 2004) to empower and pay homage to silenced generations of women whose female identities were shaped by Francoist society.

The completed thesis provides the reader with a deep insight into the feminine perception and portrayal on screen of women's participation in twentieth century Spain's major historical events through fictional characters, female eyewitness testimonies and the directors' own enquiries about their past. By documenting women's artistic contribution to the recuperation of a marginalised version of Spain's collective memory, this thesis aims to assist in the consolidation of female models of reference for future generations of filmmakers as well as male and female spectators.

Declaration

I certify that this thesis does not incorporate without acknowledgement any material previously submitted for a degree or diploma in any university; and that to the best of my knowledge and belief it does not contain any material previously published or written by another person except where due reference is made in the text.

Natalia Sanjuán Bornay

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for being the most inspiring models of my life,
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Introduction

The twentieth century was an intense period of upheaval, conflicts and transformations for the Spanish population, but above all for Spanish women. The role of women throughout this century shifted drastically, sometimes due to political and social manipulation, as in Franco's dictatorship, at other times thanks to women's determination and activism, as in the Second Republic, when universal suffrage was achieved. However, since men have been traditionally in charge of writing history, women have generally been excluded from official war and resistance accounts as well as from the processes of drafting legislation or policy-making. With a few exceptions, historiography has failed to grant women historical agency for their critical engagement in the socio-political events that transformed Spain and failed, in turn, to record the impact of the new changes in ordinary women's destinies.

It is important to highlight, that Spain is definitely not an isolated paradigm of historical amnesia in this regard, as in other countries women have also been left out of war memory or historical accounts, including in the Anglophone world. It is only recently, with the emergence of third wave feminism and boom of memory studies that we see women entering the frame in worldwide scholarly research. For instance, in the last two decades there has been a huge body of scholarship making women more visible in First and Second World War narratives.¹ However, the Spanish case is peculiar due to the manipulated version of history and the extremely patriarchal values instilled during the four decades of Francoism, which encumbered women's participation in the public sphere. In her groundbreaking work *Defying Male Civilization*, a text that I will draw upon in several chapters, Mary Nash remarks

¹ See Miriam Cooke, *Women and the War Story* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1996); Lucy Noakes, *War and the British: Gender, Memory and National Identity* (London; New York: I.B. Tauris, 1998); Joy Damousi and Marilyn Lake (eds.), *Gender and War: Australians at War in the Twentieth Century* (Melbourne: Cambridge University Press, 1995).

that 'Spanish historiography has only recently incorporated a social approach to its studies and has practically overlooked the contribution of women's history'.² The social dimension of Spanish history, Nash goes on to argue, is hard to explain due to the challenges of obtaining documentary material, as large amounts of documentation were destroyed and disappeared during Franco's dictatorship.

Andreas Huyssen has noted that, 'remembrance shapes our links to the past, and the ways we remember define us in the present. As individuals and societies, we need the past to construct and anchor our identities and to nurture a vision of the future'.³ Consequently, the general absence of a feminine perspective in the debates about Spain's recent history results in a biased and incomplete reconstruction of the country's collective memory. It is paramount then to consider what women remember, which women are remembered and how they are remembered, in order to gauge what the impact of such representations in the overall collective memory and the formation of a national identity might be. The recovery of female testimonies is, therefore, essential to acknowledge and reconstruct the memory of Spain's troubled past and furthermore brings a perspective that for a long time has been silenced, ignored and unnoticed. Combining journalistic with historical research, Antonina Rodrigo has been a pioneer in recovering the significant contribution of many Spanish women in history, politics and culture over the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. In her introduction to *Mujer y Exilio*, Rodrigo notes that 'in the history books women are absent; their 'battles' have not been collected. When they are mentioned, they are described with their strict conventional profile of being a woman'.⁴ The research of feminist historians

² Mary Nash, *Defying Male Civilization: Women in the Spanish Civil War* (Denver: Andern Press, 1995) pp. 43-44.

³ Andreas Huyssen, *Twilight Memories: Marking Time in a Culture of Amnesia* (London: Routledge, 1996), p. 249.

⁴ Antonina Rodrigo, *Mujer y exilio, 1939* (Madrid: Compañía Literaria, 1999), p. 23. Note that quotes from authors and critics that are originally in Spanish have been translated into English by myself.

like Nash and Rodrigo since the 1970s, and later by younger scholars like Carmen Domingo, Fernanda Romeu Alfaro and Carme Molinero is vital to rescuing women's voices and presenting them as historical actors. In this thesis the crucial work of these academics in constructing a feminine memory of Spain's recent past provides an important context for the work by creative practitioners, in particular, women filmmakers.

The lack of documentation of women's active engagement can be further observed in the cultural scene, resulting in a collective memory that tends to omit women. Even now, in the early twenty-first century women are still under-represented in the world's artistic canon, as highlighted by Jacqueline Cruz.⁵ In an article denouncing the limited presence of women in several cultural areas, writer Laura Freixas stresses that not even in the more feminised areas –like literature– are women getting closer to achieving equal prominence.⁶ As Freixas deplores, 'a culture that makes women invisible, or ridicules them, or makes their preoccupations trivial is not only detrimental to female poets and composers, but to all women'.⁷ It is important to note that, of all narrative art forms, filmmaking has been the area which has been historically controlled by men for a longer period of time. This is particularly relevant in Spain, where only twelve women directors have been recognised from the beginning of sound cinema until 1989.⁸ When compared to the previous decades, the number of women directors increased considerably in the 1990s, as a direct reflection of the changing role of women in new democratic Spain.

⁵ Jacqueline Cruz, 'Las mujeres en el ojo de la cámara (de cine)', in *La historia no contada: Mujeres pioneras 2008* (Ayuntamiento de Albacete, 2008).

⁶ Laura Freixas, 'La marginación femenina en la cultura', *El país*, 3 May 2008, <http://elpais.com/diario/2008/05/03/opinion/1209765613_850215.html> [accessed 19 April 2011].

⁷ Freixas, 2008.

⁸ Carlos Heredero, *20 Nuevos directores del cine español* (Madrid: Alianza Editorial, 1999), p. 16.

I first noticed the limited presence of women directors in the Spanish film industry when I was tutoring the topic 'Spanish History through Cinema' at Flinders University, as the film sample included barely any women-authored films. In effect, the only woman director incorporated in the curriculum was Icíar Bollaín, who had her directorial debut in 1995. Such absences encouraged me to investigate whether women directors were concerned about portraying twentieth century Spain as well as to question the current status quo of female professionals in the Spanish film industry. To my surprise, recent data shows that in the new century women's prominence in leading positions within the film industry is still blatantly constricted (7% of all feature film directors are female, 15% are producers and 20% are scriptwriters).⁹ As Christian Metz and many other film theorists since Metz have claimed, cinema can function as a mirror, able to reflect reality but also having the potential to transform it by creating new and vastly complicated models of reference.¹⁰ Therefore, according to Metz' argument, the under-representation of Spanish women as filmmakers suggests that Spanish cinema's portrayal of history and society has only been partial. This fact may well lead to a biased depiction of reality and, subsequently, to an impoverishment of Spanish culture and socio-cultural values.

A preliminary literature review undertaken for this study indicated that most scholarly attention was placed on the emergence of a new cohort of women directors during the course of the 1990s rather than on their work. In Spain, the first publications exclusively dedicated to women filmmakers were the proceedings from debates originating at film festivals. The pioneering work by Carlos Heredero, *La mitad del cielo*, was based on the first Málaga Film Festival in 1998, and included a debate

⁹ Fátima Arranz, *La situación de las mujeres y los hombres en el audiovisual español: Estudio sociológico y legislativo* (Universidad Complutense de Madrid, 2008), p. 117. <<http://cimamujerescineastas.es/archivos/1255974265-ARCHIVO.pdf>> [accessed 30 March 2011].

¹⁰ Christian Metz, *Psychoanalysis and Cinema: The Imaginary Signifier*, trans. Celia Britton et al. (London: Macmillan, 1982).

explaining women directors' situation.¹¹ Four years later the association Drac Màgic published a book summarising the ten years of the International Exhibition of Films by Women in Barcelona.¹² A key work on the emerging Spanish women directors in the 1990s and their production is María Camí-Vela's comprehensive collection of interviews with the cineastes.¹³ The interviews aim to explore the directors' opinions on the current role of women in the film industry, and to determine whether there is a distinctive feminine gaze in their films. Except for two of the directors, most of them deny being feminist and reject doing women's cinema in order to avoid being categorised. Other studies have embedded information about women directors without making any distinction based on gender, in particular Heredero's publications on the generational renovation in the 1990s, which also incorporates interviews with some of the most relevant women filmmakers.¹⁴ In the twenty-first century further investigations have continued to appear. Based on an empirical study conducted in 2008, Fátima Arranz's volume presents an overview of the uneven situation of women in the film industry and strongly advocates for working towards gender equality in decision-making positions.¹⁵ Finally, the first comprehensive dictionary documenting the existence of every Spanish woman director throughout the twentieth century was published in 2012, nearly two years after this thesis was started.¹⁶

¹¹ Carlos Heredero (ed.), *La mitad del cielo: Directoras españolas de los años 90* (Málaga: Ayuntamiento de Málaga, 1998).

¹² Marta Selva and Anna Sola (eds.), *Diez años de la muestra internacional de filmes de mujeres de Barcelona* (Barcelona: Paidós, 2002).

¹³ María Camí-Vela, *Mujeres detrás de la cámara. Entrevistas con cineastas españolas de la década de los 90* (Madrid: Ocho y Medio, 2001) and *Mujeres detrás de la cámara. Entrevistas con cineastas españolas 1990-2004* (Madrid: Ocho y Medio, 2005).

¹⁴ See Carlos Heredero, *Espejo de miradas: Entrevistas con nuevos directores del cine español de los años noventa* (Alcalá de Henares: Fundación Colegio del Rey, 1997), and Heredero, 1999.

¹⁵ Fátima Arranz (ed.), *Cine y género en España: Una investigación empírica* (Madrid: Cátedra, 2010), p. 63.

¹⁶ Trinidad Núñez Domínguez, May Silva Ortega and María Teresa Vera Balanza (eds.), *Directoras de cine español: ayer, hoy y mañana, mostrando talentos* (Sevilla: Fundación Audiovisual de Andalucía; RTVA, Radio y Televisión de Andalucía: Secretariado de Publicaciones de la Universidad de Sevilla, 2012).

In contrast to the early work that catalogued women's industrial contributions, research into the representation of women in Spanish cinema was less comprehensive. Several books on Contemporary Spanish cinema have included one chapter tackling the representations of gender in films in the post-Franco era.¹⁷ A more comprehensive analysis is presented by Pilar Aguilar Carrasco who looks at fifty-five Spanish films directed by female and male directors from 1990 to 1995 in order to explore the representations of gender, in particular of women and their relationships with men.¹⁸ Although the selected films show the considerable progress that Spanish women have achieved since the beginning of democracy, they also expose how patriarchal values are still dominant in Spanish society. Aguilar Carrasco urges the necessity of analysing current representations and cultural constructs about gender. The first book in Spain analysing in an in-depth way the role and representation of women throughout the history of Spanish cinema has only been published in 2010 by Enrique Pérez.¹⁹ A latest publication dealing with representations of femininity and masculinity in immediate post-Franco popular cinema (from 1977 to 1989) is María Castejón Leorza's volume, based on her PhD research.²⁰

While many women directors did not want to be categorised as 'feminist', a number of scholars nonetheless worked to identify a feminist voice in the work by women filmmakers. Unlike in other countries, feminist film theory has rarely been used in the analysis of Spanish cinema and, when it has been utilised, it has been mainly within an Anglophone context. Rosa Bosch claimed in 1990 that 'any notion of a feminist

¹⁷ See Barry Jordan and Rikki Morgan-Tamosunas, *Contemporary Spanish Cinema* (Manchester University Press, 1998), pp. 112-154; Barry Jordan and Mark Allinson, *Spanish Cinema: A Student's Guide* (London: Hodder Arnold, 2005), pp. 152-169; Jordi Puigdomènech López, *Treinta años de cine español en democracia, 1977-2007* (Madrid: Ediciones JC, 2007), pp. 96-102.

¹⁸ Pilar Aguilar Carrasco, *Mujer, amor y sexo en el cine español de los 90* (Madrid: Fundamentos, 1998).

¹⁹ Enrique Pérez Romero (ed.), *La mujer en el cine español* (Arkadin: Madrid, 2010).

²⁰ María Castejón Leorza, *Fotogramas de género. Representación de feminidades y masculinidades en el cine español (1977-1989)* (Logroño: Siníndice, 2013).

voice within mainstream Spanish cinema has no meaning'.²¹ Ten years later two scholars addressed the issue in order to refute such a provocative statement. In 1999 Susan Martin-Márquez claimed the existence of feminist discourses in Spanish cinema by evaluating the relevant contribution of women directors throughout history and by examining key films that provide 'alternative approaches to gender difference in Spanish society'.²² A novel feminist perspective, offered by Maria Donapetry, emphasised the notion of the 'critical female spectator', who interprets films and constructs her own meanings, rather than focusing on the director's approach.²³

Barbara Zecchi's latest work, *Desenfocadas* (2014), presents by far one of the most thorough historical overviews of women directors in Spain together with an analysis of their work focusing on their gender discourses.²⁴ Zecchi challenges controversial issues from feminist film theory by proposing the neologism 'ginocine' as an alternative to 'feminist' or 'women's cinema' and reflects on the gender awareness of twenty-first century directors. With this work, Zecchi addresses part of an outstanding research gap in the film analysis of women-authored films. However, as Arranz has concluded in her latest publication, and as this literature review has also noticed, further in-depth film analyses from a variety of perspectives are needed to gain a better understanding of the work by Spanish women cineastes.

Rationale

There are several interrelated reasons for the selection of the specific films chosen for this study and why I embarked on this project. The early twenty-first century is a significant time in Spanish history because it commemorates twenty-five years of

²¹ Bosch in Annette Kuhn and Susannah Radstone (eds.), *The Women's Companion to International Film* (London: Virago, 1990), p. 380.

²² Susan Martin-Márquez, *Feminist Discourse and Spanish Cinema: Sight Unseen* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999), p. 5.

²³ María Donapetry, *La otra mirada: La mujer y el cine en la cultura española* (New Orleans: University Press of the South, 1998) and *Toda ojos* (Oviedo: KRK Ediciones, 2001).

²⁴ Barbara Zecchi, *Desenfocadas. Cineastas españolas y discursos de género* (Barcelona: Icaria, 2014).

peaceful democracy after Franco's death in 1975. The long and disastrous Civil War of 1936-39 caused enormous suffering among the population who subsequently continued to suffer under the new military and repressive dictatorship that followed. Early Francoism pursued a policy of economic autarchy that immersed the population in a state of hunger, misery and isolation for over two decades. The financial measures approved by the government in the 1959 Stabilisation Plan facilitated Spain's economic growth and opening up to the world, mainly through the welcoming of mass tourism and the arranged European migration scheme. These factors marked the beginning of a rapid economic development and a gradual shift of conservative attitudes for many Spaniards. The establishment of a democratic nation after the dictator died, demonstrated that in general the Spanish population was ready for a change. However, the political transition from dictatorship to a democratic constitutional monarchy urged a necessary conciliatory 'pacto del olvido' (pact of oblivion), which erased from Spain's memory the tragedies of the Civil War and the following repressive decades.²⁵ The pact of oblivion, as will be explained in more detail in Chapter Two, plays a big role in Spain's politics of memory during the twentieth and twenty-first centuries, since it prolonged the silence imposed on the defeated during Franco's regime.

It is to be noted that in the twenty-first century, Spain is an established democratic member of the European Union and embraces globalisation as demonstrated by the rich multicultural population visiting and residing in the country over the last ten to twenty years. During this same period, the generation of the so-called war's grandchildren, born during or after the transition years and raised with democratic values, have questioned the pact of oblivion. This new generation has assumed the responsibility of confronting the violent past experienced by their relatives and rescuing silenced family stories, essential for identity construction. The radical shift

²⁵ Tatjana Pavlovic, *100 Years of Spanish Cinema* (Malden, MA: Wiley-Blackwell, 2009), p. 127.

towards memory started in 2000, when the first common grave with remains of victims of the Civil War and the dictatorship was discovered and opened in León. Thus, in the first decade of the twenty-first century a social movement led mainly by new generations of professionals in various areas including historians, anthropologists, writers, filmmakers, and scholars emerged to re-assess Spain's past and recuperate the memory of the defeated. Further investigations, along with political debates over the following years, resulted at the end of 2007 in the enactment of a law –popularly named Law of Historical Memory– which granted recognition to the victims of the Civil War and the dictatorship.

In cultural terms, the social movements and political endeavours concerning the past in the new century influenced the making of films that in turn contribute to the reconstruction of Spain's historical memory. However, it could also be argued that the increase of cultural products since the beginning of democracy have created an awareness and preoccupation in the population with revisiting the past, in particular in younger generations. This research has identified that a cohort of women directing in the 2000s have chosen to explore the unjustified violence and crimes perpetrated during and after the Civil War. These filmmakers, who do not have direct experience of the period they are examining, have now been able to research and depict disregarded aspects of Spain's collective memory through documentaries and fiction films. Specifically, these directors have started to investigate women's experiences of the most arduous episodes of Spanish history, some of them based on their own family history. In addition, they have given voice to those forgotten or suppressed women who were never acknowledged or simply were not allowed to speak for themselves until this century. Many of these films reveal that the heavy legacy of Francoism has survived in different aspects of today's Spanish society, by showing how patriarchal views, strict morals and fear instilled during the dictatorship for nearly forty years are still ingrained in the mentality of many Spaniards. Although

women-authored films depicting the past encompass different historical periods over twentieth century Spain and an array of topics, this thesis analyses films that depict women's experiences of the Civil War, Franco's dictatorship and the Transition period directed from 2001 to 2010.

I also would like to note that the reconstruction of this contested chapter of Spanish history is of particular interest to me for personal reasons. My family could be seen as a direct metaphor of the two conflicted 'Spains'. On the one hand, my paternal grandfather fought on the Republican side during the Civil War and married my grandmother in a Francoist prison, where he was confined for seven years. During this time, their first child died of starvation, but my grandmother conceived another two children that she had to raise on her own until my grandfather was released. On the other hand, my maternal grandparents were extremely religious, conservative and supporters of Franco. Interestingly, their stories about the war and postwar period, even coming from the winning side, also stress the hunger and misery they suffered –a vivid memory from their childhood that they were unable to erase. Regardless of the side they supported, their accounts revealed how the war for many was a formative period which has shaped how subsequent periods were remembered, even if the postwar was even more traumatic. I was unable to learn much about those parts of my grandparents' lives while they were still alive, since the war has always been a taboo subject in my family, as it has been for the rest of Spain due to the pact of oblivion. Unfortunately, it is too late now for me to learn those stories through their first-hand testimonies. For this reason, I would like to emphasise the importance of the films analysed in this study, which reflect parallel stories to the ones experienced by my own family, in particular by my grandmothers, as I am sure by many other Spanish families. These are invaluable stories that if we don't rescue and recognise will get lost and will never form part of the country's collective memory.

This thesis presents significant features that distinguish it from previous research and is also timely, as gender has become a very important area of study in historiography, memory studies, and media studies. The topic of contemporary Spanish cinema by and about women is an important one given the potential marginalisation of women's voices. While much has been written about Spanish cinema in academic circles over the last twenty years, comparatively little attention has been directed at films by and about women, as indicated earlier. In general, there is even less research on women's cinematic representation of history and socio-political issues in Spain. As far as I am aware, there have been no substantial studies providing an in-depth analysis of films depicting the contribution and participation of women in Spanish history by exclusively Spanish female directors in the first decade of the twenty-first century. Although individual films have been analysed, mainly in journal articles or as part of a collection of essays, they have not yet been examined as a collective body of works framed by the theme of historical memory. As a result, intersecting three different fields –history, film and gender studies– and their corresponding theoretical underpinnings, this interdisciplinary research aims at denouncing the underrepresentation of women's version of Spain's contested past in cinema.

To this effect, the filmic analysis places a special emphasis on the role that memory, identity and female subjectivity play in the selected films. In the following chapters, this study explores both documentaries and fiction films with the aim to provide wider and more varied perspectives depicting a feminine memory and to reflect the current growth in documentary-making. It is not surprising that non-fiction production, and in particular those films that incorporate interviews with eye-witnesses, has become popular in the twenty-first century because the time to collect first-hand testimonies is limited. For this reason, women directors endeavour to give voice to many significant women and to recuperate essential individual

testimonies for history before the last war eyewitnesses disappear. Specifically, this investigation contrasts the diverse accounts of an eclectic array of female fiction characters as well as eye-witnesses, including, among others, female activists in the Civil War, silenced subjugated housewives during (but also after) the dictatorship and female migrants from Spain to Germany in the 1960s. As a result, this research aims to fill a gap in the knowledge of a significant element of contemporary Spanish culture by asking the following questions: Is there a particular feminine approach to the filmic reconstruction of Spanish historical memory by twenty-first century Spanish women directors? What main topics and issues relating to their recent historical past concern them? How are they innovating in representing the past? How are they taking a personal perspective? How do these films assist in shaping our understanding of the present? Are they contributing to the shaping of a collective national identity with these films? If so, how?

Methodology and Structure

Two types of primary sources inform this study: a selection of feature films and interviews with their female directors. The choice of films followed a series of steps. Using the data included in the website by Instituto de Cine y las Artes Audiovisuales (ICAA), I created an index with the complete filmography by women directors from 2001 to 2010.²⁶ Two outstanding facts were noticed in films directed in this decade which contrasted with the 1990s production. First, documentary production had increased considerably becoming 40% of the total female film output. Second, several women directors explored a variety of concerns relating to the country's contested past of the Civil War and the postwar era. The final sample of films was

²⁶ The official webpage of the Spanish Ministry of Culture has a section on cinema and the audio visual field which includes relevant data on the Spanish film industry. This section compiles annual publications issued by ICAA which encompass technical information on every film classified to be shown in cinemas that have been produced in Spain, <<http://www.mecd.gob.es/cultura-mecd/areas-cultura/cine/mc/ace/portada.html>> [accessed on multiple occasions from 15 March 2011].

selected from a filmography of 124 feature films according to the following criteria.²⁷ The films needed to: a) be directed by a Spanish woman over the first decade of the twenty-first century (2001-2010 inclusive); b) be feature-length films, (either documentary or fiction); c) deal with aspects of Spain's recent historical past that incorporate a feminine perspective. In total, the corpus comprises eight films by seven women directors. Although one might argue that the number of films selected for this thesis is small, their study and close analysis is extremely relevant due to their valuable contribution to Spanish history and reconstruction of its collective memory that includes women's perception and experiences of the country's troubled past.

Each of the four analysis chapters presents a detailed textual analysis of two main films and examines three main aspects: a) type of genre (subgenre)/cinematic style;²⁸ b) portrayal of female characters and female agency; c) contribution to the reconstruction of Spain's collective memory. My arguments are drawn from the films themselves, in particular from descriptions of specific sequences, with reference to the ideas of a range of historians and hispanists, who will be mostly introduced in Chapter Two and in the relevant chapter. Other films by male directors tackling the same themes are briefly discussed in lesser detail in order to provide context for the innovative aspects explored in the thesis film sample.

An important part of the thesis is the interviewing of female directors in the Spanish film industry in order to record first hand testimonies in the area of study.²⁹ This

²⁷ For the complete filmography by Spanish women directors from 2001 to 2010 refer to Appendix A. Please note that this index was created in 2011, in the absence of similar tables at the beginning of my research. Zecchi's publication from 2014 includes a complete index of all women directors' filmography from 1922 to 2010 (pp. 227-243).

²⁸ For the formal aspects of the film analysis I have consulted David Bordwell and Kristin Thompson, *Film Art: An Introduction* (Boston: McGraw-Hill, 2004).

²⁹ As part of this investigation I undertook a two-month research field trip to Spain from 9 June until 15 August 2012 funded by two scholarships from Flinders University. I performed extensive archival research in the national and Catalan film archives as well as some local and women's libraries. I also attended two international women's film festivals in Barcelona and Pamplona, where I viewed several films relevant to my study and participated in the

investigation includes interview material with seven experienced women directors: Helena Taberna, Rosa Vergés, Patricia Ferreira, Carla Subirana, Susana Koska, Marta Arribas, and Inés París.³⁰ The interviews are used as primary data in my research to complement the filmic analysis.³¹ They are semi-structured face to face interviews. The interview questions enquired about the motivation and inspiration of each director for choosing a topic that aims to reconstruct Spain's recent past, specific aspects involving the narrative or the aesthetics of their films and asked for their personal opinion about the current debates on memory. Drawing on their responses, the four analysis chapters are informed by the filmmakers' viewpoints on the contribution of cinema to the reconstruction of Spain's historical memory, and in particular, of their own films. Several questions were also raised in order to gain a better understanding of the current situation of women in the film industry through their personal experiences, which are included in Chapter One. That chapter also contains parts of my conversation with Inés París, who was interviewed for her role as the first president of CIMA (Spanish Association of Women Cineastes).

To summarise, the thesis includes an introduction, six chapters and a conclusion. The first two chapters provide a historical background to female filmmaking and the construction of memory in Spain in the relevant historical period. Drawing on Martín-Márquez's, Camí-Vela's and Zecchi's research, Chapter One provides an overview of the evolution and work by the main Spanish women cineastes in order to consolidate the existence of a feminine tradition in Spanish cinema. The directors and their cinema are framed by a socio-political summary with focus on the role of women within the development of the Spanish film industry over time. The chapter

discussions that followed each screening. This trip was crucial in assisting me with the identification of a research gap in representations of the past by women directors.

³⁰ I also had the opportunity to interview Chus Gutiérrez and Laura Mañá, but their films have not been included in this study as they did not meet the final selection criteria that define the film sample. However, Gutiérrez' views appear in Chapter One when discussing the current situation of women directors.

³¹ See appendix B to view the complete original interviews in Spanish. Note that in the body of the thesis the interviews have been translated into English by myself.

starts with the introduction of the only director in the silent era and ends with a discussion of the current situation of women cineastes in the twenty-first century, drawing mostly on my own interview material with the directors.

Chapter Two discusses the politics of memory in Spain in regards to the Civil War, Franco's regime and the democratic transition period. By looking at the current ongoing academic and public debates on memory –focusing on the social movement to exhume common graves and the 2007 'Law of Historical Memory'– the status of Spain's collective memory and national identity in the twenty-first century is examined. The chapter stresses that, in spite of the 'desmemoria' (deliberate amnesia) agreed in the transition with the symbolic 'pact of oblivion', contested and repressed memories of a traumatic past have been recovered through cultural production. For this reason, a review of essential post-Franco cultural representations of memory is presented, comprising literary, but mainly filmic works that problematise Spain's relationship with its past and contribute to a transformation of its collective memory. Such review brings to light the noticeable shortage of a feminine perspective in depictions of the past in front of and, especially, behind the camera.

Chapter Three to Six are concerned with an exploration of the thematic and stylistic concerns of twenty-first century directors with reference to a selection of films that contribute to the construction of a feminine memory of Spain's troubled past. Chapter Three examines the impact of a war in ordinary people's lives, focusing on how this traumatic event provokes an identity conflict in the protagonists of the only two female-authored films set during the Spanish Civil War. *La Buena Nueva* (Helena Taberna, 2008) is the first fiction film directed by a woman set entirely during wartime. While much has been written about this film, I analyse how the depiction of a priest's personal struggle and his solitude become the centre of an original war account which denounces the overlooked role of the church supporting

Franco's revolt and represents women's reality in the rearguard. I then examine *Iris* (Rosa Vergés, 2004), the story of a young woman photographer, whose life changes dramatically with the outbreak of a war. The deliberate withholding of specific political and temporal references, intended to generalise the depicted war as 'any war' (and not specifically the Spanish Civil War), is precisely what makes *Iris*, I argue, an unconventional portrayal of the Spanish Civil War. I continue discussing how the film addresses in metaphorical ways controversial topics of Spain's conflicted past such as the silence among generations, the loss of identity and the traumatic effects of a war, all seen from the point of view of a woman.

Through the analysis of the drama *Para que no me olvides* (Patricia Ferreira, 2005) and the documentary *Nadar* (Carla Subirana, 2008), Chapter Four explores how twenty-first century women filmmakers portray the different approaches to memory taken by three generations, focusing on the perspective of the war's grandchildren. On the one hand, *Para que no me olvides* addresses the hardship of dealing with the loss of a family member through deliberate remembering or intentional forgetting, which I deem as an analogy of Spain's politics of memory. The film also highlights the ignorance of younger generations about their recent historical past. On the other hand, *Nadar* shows the director's investigation of her mysterious grandfather who was executed in 1940 under unknown circumstances. Subirana's experimental film project, eight years in the making, reveals the complexities of undertaking direct enquiries with war survivors so many years later and, most importantly, allows viewers to reflect on their personal relation to the past.

Chapter Five analyses two documentaries by Susana Koska, which depict a historical reflection of women's socio-political history in twentieth century Spain. Her work is paramount as it presents an innovative approach that combines historical document, personal search and road trip. Her debut film, *Mujeres en pie de guerra* (2004), gives voice to female eyewitnesses who narrate their war and postwar

experiences. The chapter focuses particularly on the testimonies by the leftist women who actively fought to defend their political beliefs and overthrow Franco's dictatorship, since their perspective is rarely included in historical documentaries. In her second work, *Vindicación* (2009), Koska discusses with several female activists the significance of the feminist fight in the late 1970s to reclaim the rights that women lost during the dictatorship. My analysis explores the various filmic devices that Koska employs to give memory a more personal and humane perspective by means of appearing herself in the documentary, using poetic and aesthetic elements and incorporating music.

Two more documentaries are analysed in the final chapter in order to reflect on the representations of a victim in Franco's dictatorship that has been commonly disregarded by historiography: the ordinary woman. Ferreira's *Señora de* (2009) is a successful attempt to document what it meant to be a woman during Francoism through the stories of twelve women, mainly from Galicia, of similar age but from different social and educational backgrounds. Also making use of female testimonies, *El tren de la memoria* (Marta Arribas and Ana Pérez, 2004) uncovers the official version of the economic migration to Germany in the 1960s and reveals the sacrifice that female migrants made for their families and the country. I argue that both documentaries construct what I call 'counter-heroic' portrayals of those women –in contrast to the testimonies in Chapter Five– on grounds that their personal stories and reflective accounts on the past also show personal strength, spirit of overcoming and, in most cases, lack of resentment.

The completed thesis aims to provide the reader with a deep insight into the feminine portrayal on screen of women's participation in twentieth century Spain's major socio-political and historical events through fictional characters, female eyewitness testimonies and the directors' own enquiries about their past. By examining women's representations of a disregarded version of Spain's collective

memory, this study addresses an outstanding research gap in the analysis and contribution of women-authored films. In a similar vein to the studies conducted by Martin-Márquez, Camí-Vela and Zecchi, my thesis intends to put women front and centre of Spanish film history in order to recognise the important role of women in changing society and to consolidate female models of reference for future generations of filmmakers as well as spectators.

Chapter 1. Being a woman director in Spain: A historical overview

A filmmaker is a person who rows in the desert. Perhaps a woman filmmaker is a person who rows in the desert with only one oar.

Carla Subirana

As mentioned in the introduction, most publications on the history of Spanish cinema tend to forget the significant contribution of women in the early part of the industry. Even in the twenty-first century entire volumes solely dedicated to women and Spanish cinema omit the existence of the first women directors. For example, the recent study *La mujer en el cine español* (2010) analyses women-authored films only from 1976. However, the editor, Pérez Romero, acknowledges the need for a more thorough coverage of the filmography of pioneer directors such as Rosario Pi, Ana Mariscal, Margarita Alexandre, Pilar Miró and Josefina Molina, whom I will introduce shortly.¹ Women directors in Spain have existed since the 1920s but they have not always been acknowledged and, occasionally, their films have been attributed to male directors. It was not until the last year of the century that a comprehensive study based solely on Spanish women directors saw the light. The groundbreaking volume by Susan Martin-Márquez, *Feminist Discourse and Spanish Cinema* (1999), not only identifies most women filmmakers of the twentieth century, but also provides an extensive analysis of the work of selected directors from different generations using a feminist approach.

In a similar vein, the recent study by Barbara Zecchi, *Desenfocadas* (2014), identifies and explores the work by four generations of women directors to rescue their contribution to Spanish cinema from a patriarchal historical amnesia. The new feminist perspective added by *Desenfocadas* surveys pro-active initiatives and

¹ Pérez Romero, 2010, p. 15.

growing gender awareness of directors in the new century and reflects the constant development of women in the Spanish film industry. Since this thesis examines the work by a cohort of twenty-first century women directors, it is vital to frame them in a historical context in order to identify the context from which they emerge. Drawing largely from the work of these two authors and Camí-Vela's collection of interviews, this chapter provides an overview of the evolution and work by the major Spanish women directors with the aim to consolidate the commonly disregarded existence of a feminine tradition in Spanish cinema. To this end, the directors and their work are contextualised by a brief socio-historical background focusing on the role of women within the development of the Spanish film industry in each historical period. The chapter starts with the introduction of the only director in the silent era and concludes with the current situation of women directors in the twenty-first century.

The precursors: Cortesina and Pi

Recent archival research has revealed that the very first female director in Spain dates back to the silent era.² With a solid background as a dancer, film and theatre actress Helena Cortesina (1904-1984) was the very first woman to produce and direct a film in Spain. Her only feature film, *Flor de España, o La leyenda de un torero*, was shot in 1922 after she established her own production company in Madrid, Cortesina Films.³ The film premiered in Barcelona in 1923 and was later screened in Madrid, although it was not particularly well received by critics. For many years, scriptwriter José María Granada was officially recognised as the only author of the film, but several contemporary reviews clearly identify Cortesina as the director and Granada as the scriptwriter.⁴ Martin-Márquez highlights the difficulties of ascertaining Cortesina's exact roles in filmmaking since no copies of her films

² Martin-Márquez, 1999, p. 6.

³ Martin-Márquez, 1999, pp. 6-7.

⁴ Martin-Márquez, 1999, p. 7.

have survived, as has happened with many films of the silent era.⁵ At the beginning of the war Cortesina migrated to Buenos Aires, where she continued developing her acting career, performing in different theatre plays written by Federico García Lorca (*Bodas de Sangre*) and in some cases also directed by him (*La zapatera prodigiosa*). Cortesina also composed the music for *A sangre fría* (Daniel Tinayre, 1947). Unfortunately, only one of those films has been preserved, an adaptation of Lorca's *Bodas de sangre*.

The Second Republic initiated a liberation process for women, raising awareness and calling for female participation in the public sphere. This process was supported by the establishment of the 1931 Constitution, which meant a qualitative step forward on the role and rights for women at different levels such as universal suffrage, co-education, equal salaries, civil marriage, and divorce.⁶ In this favourable historical context emerged the first female director of sound cinema in Spain: Rosario Pi (1899-1967). Martín-Márquez, who dedicates a whole chapter to this director, highlights the lack of data about Pi's life and work, with the exceptions of reviews of her first film *El gato montés* by José María Caparrós Lera and Román Gubern.⁷ The film was directed in 1935 and three years later, at the height of the Civil War, she managed to direct *Molinos de viento*. Prior to that, Pi founded her own production company, *Star Film*, together with Emilio Gutiérrez Bringas y Pedro Ladrón de Guevara, for which she was the manager. According to Caparrós, the nearly three years of Civil War is the period when most films about the conflict were made: three hundred and sixty on the Republican side and ninety-three on the National side.⁸ Although most films were propagandistic, their extraordinary value as historical testimony of this confrontation is undeniable. The war, however, had

⁵ Martín-Márquez, 1999, p. 7.

⁶ Martín-Márquez, 1999, p. 49.

⁷ Martín-Márquez, 1999, pp. 49-84.

⁸ José María Caparrós Lera, 'La Guerra Civil española en el cine', *ABCD las Artes y las Letras*, 15 July 2006.

terrible consequences for Spanish filmmaking as many of the directors, actors and scriptwriters were forced to go into exile and only came back after the end of the dictatorship or never did. As Francoist troops were slowly taking over the country, Pi fled to Paris with her friend Maria Mercader, the protagonist of *Molinos*. Later, both moved to Cinecittá in Italy, where Pi collaborated in the studios doing translations and other production jobs while opening a *boite* in Rome. In the hard years of the postwar period they returned to Spain. The repressive context of Franco's regime compelled Pi to give up her passion for cinema, but she continued her entrepreneurial activities and also opened a restaurant in Madrid.

Women directors during Francoism: Mariscal and Alexandre

Franco's regime had a huge impact on the film industry since film production and exhibition were manipulated with the incorporation of three significant changes.⁹ Firstly, film censorship was established. Secondly, dubbing into Spanish of all foreign films was imposed. Thirdly, from 1942 compulsory official newsreels called No-Do (Noticiarios y documentales cinematográficos) were introduced. No-Dos were produced until 1977, with the policy stipulating No-Dos were to be screened in all Spanish cinemas before every movie. The aim was to celebrate the regime's achievements in public works, report on official ceremonies and showcase all manner of national trivia. Together with education, cinema was used to indoctrinate the population in Catholic values and to inculcate traditional gender-specific roles and behaviors through feature films and the newsreels.¹⁰ The dictatorship was certainly the most difficult period for women directors in Spain. This particularly patriarchal society, based on strong Catholic values as well as sexual and political repression, left no space for creative women.¹¹ Women automatically lost the freedom and rights achieved during the Republic, became legally and economically

⁹ Jordan and Allinson, 2005, p.15.

¹⁰ Martin-Márquez, 1999, p. 91.

¹¹ Camí-Vela, 2005, p. 17.

subordinated to men and were relegated to the domestic sphere. Divorce, contraception and abortion were forbidden and the family became one of the mainstays of Francoist society, in which the man was indisputably the head and the woman was assigned the traditional roles of mother, wife and daughter.¹² Because of this, the incipient incorporation of women in the Spanish film industry initiated during the Second Republic was brought to a standstill for several decades. During the dictatorship only two women were able to stand behind the camera: Ana Mariscal and Margarita Alexandre.¹³

It is rather ironic that one of the most prolific Spanish female cineastes emerged in the middle of a dictatorship which would not allow women to work without their husband's written permission. Cinema and theatre actress Ana María Rodríguez Arroyo (1923-1995), professionally known as Ana Mariscal, was involved in well over fifty films between 1940 and 1968. She became one of the favorite female stars in the 1940s and 1950s and directed eleven films between 1947 and 1968. However, in spite of her multifaceted career as an actress and a screenwriter, producer and filmmaker, there has been no major assessment of Mariscal's contributions to Spanish cinema behind the camera due to her political views and close relationship with Franco.¹⁴ For instance, the study *Spanish Film under Franco* does not acknowledge the existence of female filmmaking during the regime.¹⁵ Unfortunately, in most research, Mariscal is merely remembered as an actress who complied with the demands of the regime and who was known as Franco's star for her protagonist role in *Raza* (José Luis Sáenz de Heredia, 1941), a film scripted by

¹² Martin-Márquez, 1999, p. 91.

¹³ Barbara Zecchi, 'Mujer y cine: Estudio panorámico de éxitos y paradojas', in *La mujer en la España actual ¿Evolución o involución?*, ed. by Jacqueline Cruz and Barbara Zecchi (Barcelona: Icaria, 2005), p. 315.

¹⁴ Martin-Márquez, 1999, p. 85.

¹⁵ Virginia Higginbotham, *Spanish Film under Franco* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1988).

Franco himself.¹⁶ Like her predecessors, she founded with her husband her own production company, Bosco Films, and started her directorial career with the documentary *Misa en Compostela* (1947). In 1955 she wrote and directed *Segundo López, aventurero urbano*, a comedy influenced by Italian Neorealism about a country man who tries to start a life in Madrid. Other remarkable works are *Con la vida hicieron fuego* (1959), a drama about the war and *El camino* (1963), an adaptation of acclaimed writer Miguel Delibes' novel that would finally grant her recognition as a director.

Together with the critic and directing assistant Rafael Torrecilla, Margarita Alexandre (born 1923) was thirty when she co-directed her first film, *Cristo* (1953), an extraordinary documentary about Jesus' life through painting.¹⁷ Their passion for cinema made her create, with Torrecilla, her own production company, Nervión. Apart from producing other films, Alexandre and Torrecilla embarked on the filming of two more feature films with political implications: *La ciudad perdida* (1954), whose last dialogues were rewritten by the censors and *La gata* (1955), the first Spanish film that used the Cinemascope system.¹⁸ In order to divorce her husband, the aristocrat Juan José de Melgar y Rojas, and to marry her friend and colleague Rafael Torrecilla, she moved to Cuba. There she studied at the prestigious Instituto de Cine, where she started a friendship with some well-known local directors and became a producer. Eleven years later, after seven more films, Alexandre returned to Europe. Her last contribution to cinema took place in Rome, where she was involved in the production of *Operación Ogro* (Pontecorvo, 1979), a film that tackled

¹⁶ Núria Triana-Toribio, 'Ana Mariscal: Franco's disavowed star', in *Heroines without Heroes: Reconstructing Female and National Identities in European Cinema 1945-51*, ed. by Ulrike Sieglöhr (London: Cassell, 2000), p. 185.

¹⁷ Ricart Salvat, 'Monogràfic III: Margarita Alexandre', *Assaig de teatre: revista de l'Associació d'Investigació i Experimentació Teatral*, 60-61 (2007), p. 52.

¹⁸ Bernard Bentley, *A Companion to Spanish Cinema* (Woodbridge: Tamesis Books, 2008), p. 124, p. 127.

the murder of Franco's prospective successor, Carrero Blanco.¹⁹ She has lived in Madrid since 1982.

Feminist Pioneers in the Transition: Miró, Molina and Bartolomé

Influenced by the second wave of feminism spreading out in many parts of the Western world, a new era in Spanish cinema began in the democratic transition period of 1975-82, after nearly forty years of Francoism. The transition years provoked fundamental progressive changes in the film industry: censorship was officially abolished in 1977, the directing scene became more diverse (incorporating the presence of a few women directors), and regional cinemas started to develop.²⁰ Despite its status as a period of political disenchantment, the transition period meant a dramatic improvement in women's quality of life, which was legally supported by the new constitution (1978) and the legalisation of divorce (1981) and abortion (1985).²¹ The three pioneers of the first Spanish feminist cinema, who reflected such changes in their films, were Pilar Miró, Cecilia Bartolomé and Josefina Molina.²² These directors were the first women to graduate from the former Official School of Cinematography (EOC), where acclaimed directors such as Luis García Berlanga, José Luis Borau or Víctor Erice were trained. Miró, Bartolomé, and Molina explored taboo topics and introduced a female perspective in Spanish cinema using very different styles and narratives. These directors instigated the breaking of the patriarchal views of the previous regime by presenting powerful feminist and political discourses and by creating new filmic models of autonomous transgressive women

¹⁹ María Camí-Vela, 'Laudatio de Margarita Alexandre y Rafael Torrecillas', *Asociación Española de historiadores del cine*, <<http://www.historiadoresdelcine.es/index.php/medallas/82-medallas/152-laudatio-de-margarita-alexandre-y-rafael-torrecilla>> [accessed 15 December 2014].

²⁰ Pavlovic, 2009, pp. 129-131.

²¹ Virginia Guarinos, 'Mujer en Constitución: la mujer española en el cine de la Transición', *Quaderns de cine: Cine i Transició (1975-1982)*, 2 (2008), p. 53.

²² Pérez Romero, 2010, p. 245.

for female spectators.²³

Pilar Miró (1940-1997) is not only a crucial pioneer of women's cinema but also a key reference for male as well as female filmmakers in Spain. Despite her conventional and religious upbringing in Franco's regime, Miró was determined to pursue a directorial career. After interrupting her law studies, she enrolled in film and journalism and graduated in scriptwriting from the Official School of Cinematography in 1968, becoming the first woman to complete a degree at the distinguished institution.²⁴ Miró worked for over a decade on several television series and in the news department before directing her first feature film, *La petición* (1976), an adaptation of Émile Zola's novel, whose explicit sexual scenes and female protagonist provoked great controversy. In 1979, she became a popular film director with *El crimen de Cuenca*, a polemical film that denounces the abuse of power by the Spanish Civil Guard who tortured innocent countrymen in the 1910s and 1920s. Despite the lack of censorship, Miró's second film was prohibited for months by the military authorities, who made her face a military tribunal.²⁵ Conversely, the film was a considerable box office success when it was finally released in 1981 and has since become a 'powerful testament to the era of the transition (...) that shows that despite and because of the *pacto del olvido* there was a persistent desire for political and historical revision'.²⁶ Her extensive experience as a theatre, film and TV director (of more than three hundred programs) together with her tenacious personality, were crucial to her ability to gain significant decision-making positions like General Director of Cinematography (1982-1985).²⁷ In 1983 the so-called 'Miró's Law' was put into place in order to boost Spanish film production by offering a series of government grants and subsidies. However, this measure was highly criticised by

²³ Jordan and Morgan-Tamosunas, 1998, pp. 119-121.

²⁴ Pavlovic, 2009, p. 149.

²⁵ Núria Triana-Toribio, 'In Memoriam: Pilar Miró (1940-1977)', *Film History*, 10, (1998), p. 233.

²⁶ Pavlovic, 2009, p. 139.

²⁷ Triana-Toribio, 1998, pp. 233-234.

some film professionals.²⁸ In 1986 Miró was appointed General Director of the public Spanish Television (RTVE) but three years later she would resign, after being accused of misappropriating state funds.

Although Miró was an avowed anti-feminist who frequently uttered misogynist comments in public, her films have been included in the first cohort of feminist films in Spanish cinema.²⁹ For instance, *Gary Cooper que estás en los cielos* (1980), with a semi-autobiographical plot, depicts the tough situation faced by women who aspire to be directors in the 1970s. The protagonist, Andrea, reflects on her life before deciding whether to undergo an operation that will have serious consequences. As pointed out by Jo Evans, 'the decision Andrea is forced to take (whether to go ahead with an operation that may save her life, but will terminate the pregnancy) is a graphic biological metaphor for the catch-22 of domestic and professional demands faced by women'.³⁰ *El pájaro de la felicidad* (1992) has also been considered a mirror of the director's life that 'becomes a remarkable example of feminist autobiography'.³¹ Most of Miró's filmography comprises literary adaptations. In collaboration with acclaimed director Mario Camus, she wrote *Werther* (1986), an adaptation of Goethe's novel, and *Beltenebros* (1991), which received the Silver Bear for an outstanding artistic contribution at the 42nd Berlin International Film Festival. *El perro del hortelano* (1996), based on the homonymous play by Lope de Vega, was awarded numerous prizes, gaining her the Goya Award for best Director, a prize that had not been previously bestowed on a woman. Based on politician Joaquín Leguina's novel, her last feature, *Tu nombre envenena mis sueños* (1996), is a thriller in which detective Barciela investigates a murder committed in 1942,

²⁸ Jordan and Allinson, 2005, pp. 27-28.

²⁹ Jordan and Morgan-Tamosunas, 1998, p. 119.

³⁰ Jo Evans, 'Almodóvar's "Others": Spanish Women Film-Makers, Masquerade, and Maternity', in *A Companion to Spanish Women's Studies*, ed. by Xon de Ros and Geraldine Hasbun (Woodbridge, Suffolk; Rochester, N.Y.: Tamesis, 2011), p. 333.

³¹ Jaume Martí Olivella, '(M)Other Strategies in *El pájaro de la felicidad*', in *Burning Darkness: Half a Century of Spanish Cinema*, ed. by Joan Ramón Resina (Albany: State University of New York Press, 2008), p. 129.

while falling madly in love with Julia, the woman who might have the answer to the mysterious suicide. Miró worked for television until her very last days, covering the 11th Edition of the Goya Awards and Infanta Cristina's wedding in Barcelona in 1997, fifteen days before a heart-attack put an end to her life.

Josefina Molina (born 1936) was the first woman who graduated in film directing from the Official School of Cinematography. She worked for Spanish television for several years, mainly as Miró's assistant, until she released her first feature in 1973, *Vera, un cuento cruel*, a Gothic horror story. As an avowed feminist, Molina presented a discourse that promoted women's freedom and initiative throughout her filmography. Her most subversive film, *Función de noche* (1981), takes a feminist approach to Delibes' renowned novel, *Cinco horas con Mario*, which she had previously adapted and directed as a theatre play.³² The intense ninety-minute monologue of widow Carmen Portillo, interpreted by actress Lola Herrera, repeated twice a day, six days a week over two years, made Herrera realise that Carmen's unhappy life mirrored hers and caused her great stress.³³

As a result, Molina filmed an experimental documentary employing *cinema verité* strategies and intertwining key extracts of Carmen's monologues from the play with discussions in the dressing-room between Herrera, the actress, and her ex-husband, Daniel Dicenta, about their failed marriage. The hard work and process of shooting the film resulted in a breakdown for the actress through the verbalisation of her lifetime frustrations, escalating into a confession to her husband that he never gave her an orgasm.³⁴ Molina's double deconstruction of the Francoist model of the submissive woman (Carmen/Herrera) is a remarkable example of intertextual

³² For in-depth analyses on the film see Susan Martin-Márquez, 'La literatura proyectada por una lente feminista: Josefina Molina y la adaptación cinematográfica', *Letras Peninsulares* (Spring 1994), 351-368; Donapetry, 2001, pp. 106-125; María Suárez Lafuente, 'Women in pieces: The filmic reconstruction of Josefina Molina', *The European Journal of Women's Studies*, 10, 4 (2003), 395-407.

³³ Suárez Lafuente, 2003, p. 398.

³⁴ Jordan and Morgan-Tamosunas, 1998, p. 121.

documentary.³⁵ In turn, Herrera's breakdown was regarded as a 'metonym for the experience of a generation of Spanish women', who were liberated from their traditional roles of mother and wife in the Transition period but felt the need to search for a new identity.³⁶

Molina wrote and directed three more feature films for cinema. The historical drama *Esquilache* (1989), based on the play *Un soñador para un pueblo* by Antonio Buero Vallejo, received ten Goya Award nominations and was entered into the 39th Berlin International Film Festival. With the critical comedy *Lo más natural* (1990), Molina continued vindicating women's independence and agency by presenting the relationship between a professional divorced middle age woman and a much younger man as 'the most natural thing', as illustrated by the ironic title. Her last film for the big screen was *La Lola se va a los puertos* (1993), starring the famous singer Rocío Jurado and well-known actor Paco Rabal. The biopic *Teresa de Jesús* (1984), about the sixteenth century Spanish saint Teresa de Ávila, and *Entre naranjos* (1998) are some of the most successful series she made for television. Molina, who declares not having seen a film directed by a woman during her first twenty years, has become a reference for present and future women cineastes in the twenty-first century. Her trailblazing film career was publicly recognised when the Spanish Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences granted her the honorary Goya Award 2012.³⁷ Currently Molina is not directly involved in filmmaking but acts as an ambassador supporting the next generations of women filmmakers.

Since her youth, director, scriptwriter and producer Cecilia Bartolomé defined herself as a feminist. Bartolomé was born in 1943 in Alicante, but she grew up in Equatorial

³⁵ Suárez Lafuente, 2003, p. 398.

³⁶ Evans, 2001, p. 336.

³⁷ Gregorio Belinchón, 'La cineasta Josefina Molina, premio Goya de Honor 2012', *El País*, 27 October 2011, <http://cultura.elpais.com/cultura/2011/10/27/actualidad/1319666412_850215.html> [accessed 12 December 2012].

Guinea, where she spent eighteen years of her life. She returned to Spain to study directing at the School of Cinematography in Madrid. Her filmography, although not as extensive as that of Miró and Molina, comprises provocative films that deal with unexplored topics. However, her logical and honest manner of telling stories was not always well received by critics and she also turned to television and publicity campaigns in order to make a living. In general, her work has unfairly received little attention from scholars.³⁸ Her graduation project, the medium-length film *Margarita y el Lobo* (1969), was found to be so controversial that she was not able to direct films until a decade later. This project, a musical comedy whose female protagonist decides to leave her husband because she feels trapped in an unhappy marriage, was automatically banned by the censorship board, according to Bartolomé, 'because it made people laugh and have fun'.³⁹

After Franco's death, Bartolomé released her first feature film *¡Vámonos Bárbara!* (1978), a project inspired by Martin Scorsese's *Alice Doesn't Live Here Anymore* (1974), which had been previously rejected by Miró.⁴⁰ The plot centres around Ana's journey in search of a new identity with her twelve year-old daughter, Bárbara, after having left her husband. Set during the Transition period, Bartolomé dared to enact on screen women's power of decision during a time of radical socio-political changes. Her courage resulted in her directing the first feminist film in the history of Spanish cinema, as suggested by film historian Román Gubern.⁴¹ Unfortunately, this release has gone unnoticed for decades until it was finally rescued and shown at several women's film festivals in the twenty-first century. Her political engagement and critical approach are also present in her subsequent films.

³⁸ For further detail on her work see Josetxo Cerdán and Marina Díaz López (eds.), *Cecilia Bartolomé: El encanto de la lógica* (Barcelona: L'Alternativa, 2001).

³⁹ Radio interview with Cecilia Bartolomé, <<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=0B8yY-ida1c>> [accessed 30 November 2012].

⁴⁰ Bentley, 2008, p. 230.

⁴¹ Natalia Contreras de la Llave, 'Entrevista Cecilia Batolomé: La Linterna de la memoria'. *Quaderns de Cine: Cine i memòria històrica*, 3 (2008), p. 37.

Together with her brother José Juan Bartolomé, she made *Después de* in 1981, a two-episode documentary (*Part 1: No se os puede dejar solos* and *Part 2: Atado y bien atado*) that depicted –from several perspectives– the effect of Franco’s death on different sectors of society.⁴² At a recent interview Bartolomé stresses the relevance of constructing, at the time, a memory of that particularly delicate episode of Spanish history: ‘We wanted to leave a testimony, because both of us were very worried about the historical amnesia. People used to forget very easily what had happened before, that’s why we wanted to reflect, somehow, facts that we saw that people deleted from their memory very quickly’.⁴³ Her latest film, *Lejos de África* (1996), is an autobiographical work based on her childhood experiences in Equatorial Guinea during the last years of colonialism. Through the protagonist’s friendship with a native Guinea girl, the film shows the impact of Francoist political and Catholic ideology on the colony, which contrasts strongly with the African culture, rituals and diverse religious practices. In recognition to her exceptional career, Bartolomé received the award ‘Mujeres de cine 2012’ in the framework of the 50th edition of Gijón International Film Festival.⁴⁴

Directing in Democracy: the so-called ‘boom’ of the 1990s

The end of the dictatorship and, in particular, the establishment of democracy stimulated a series of economic, legislative and social changes that have radically changed the traditional image of Spanish society, and, above all, women’s situation and status. In the 1980s there was a massive incorporation of women into the workforce and by the end of the decade women represented nearly thirty-five per

⁴² Bentley, 2008, p. 241.

⁴³ Contreras de la Llave, 2008, p. 39.

⁴⁴ Claudia Lorenzo, ‘Y el Premio Mujer de Cine 2012 es para... Cecilia Bartolomé’, *www.gijonfilmfestival.com*, 18 November 2012, <<http://www.gijonfilmfestival.com/noticias/show/17767-y-el-premio-mujer-de-cine-2012-es-para-cecilia-bartolome>> [accessed 13 December 2012].

cent of the working population.⁴⁵ Democracy meant a significant transformation for women's lives as they gained access to all areas of the country's public and cultural life. The democratisation and opening of university to the middle class facilitated women's access to tertiary studies, which provided the same educational opportunities for men and women alike and rapidly increased the number of university female students.⁴⁶ Studying film became accessible to everyone as the novel degree of 'Comunicación audiovisual' (Media studies) was progressively included in fifteen private and public Spanish universities throughout the 1990s.⁴⁷ Furthermore, the Escuela Superior de Cine y Audiovisuales (ESCA) –previously Official School of Cinematography– reopened in 1994 after having closed in 1975. However, some professional sectors were particularly reluctant to include women, as highlighted by filmmaker Chus Gutiérrez: 'Society is not ready to truly accept the incorporation of women in all social spheres. There is still a long way to effectively achieve the integral transformation of the social work and intellectual structure that will truly allow women's professional development'.⁴⁸

The new and changing social reality for women prompted by democracy was reflected in cinema through an unprecedented number of women joining the film industry and an increased interest, by both male and female directors, in exploring female concerns, characters and perspectives.⁴⁹ It is ironic, however, that the most prominent representative of women's cinema in Spain to date is a male director. Pedro Almodóvar's films brought a revolution in Spanish filmmaking during the first years of democracy. The pioneer of the underground scene *La Movida*, which took place in Madrid in the early 1980s, has become the most acclaimed international

⁴⁵ Carolina Martín López, 'La mujer en el mercado de trabajo', *Anales de Economía Aplicada. XIV Reunión ASEPELT-España*, Oviedo, 22 and 23 June, 2000.

⁴⁶ Javier Callejo, 'La formación del estudiantado universitario en comunicación audiovisual: las expectativas profesionales', in Arranz, 2010, p. 76.

⁴⁷ Callejo, 2010, pp. 77-79.

⁴⁸ Chus Gutiérrez, 'La Mirada', *DUODA*, 24 (2003), p. 110.

⁴⁹ Jordan and Morgan-Tamosunas, 1998, p. 117, p. 121.

director in Spain.⁵⁰ His prolific filmography (nineteen feature films over three decades) attests to a career as a revolutionary director who has challenged Spanish audiences with unconventional characters, themes and aesthetics.⁵¹ In his early films Almodóvar created new referents and iconography, by showing the marginal and extreme individuals who lived in Madrid. As Marvin D'Lugo claims, 'Almodóvar's cinema represents in most ways an unequivocal stylistic rupture with nearly every Spanish filmic tradition that precedes it'.⁵²

An obvious recurring trait in Almodóvar's cinema is his predilection for female characters: 'Godard said that all you need for a film is a girl and a gun. But you'd rather have two girls? Maybe they are carrying a gun in their handbag, and you can't see it. Or maybe they use their tongues as guns'.⁵³ His films mostly feature a wide variety of women who represent a complex female universe not portrayed on screen in Spain before. Remarkably, only one of his films (*La mala educación*, 2004) lacks significant female roles.⁵⁴ His major contribution to Spanish cinema is the break with the dominant patriarchal filmic discourse and the representation of traditional womanhood by introducing strong and independent women in his narratives. As noted by María Castejón Leorza, Almodóvar 'constructs women who do not resign themselves to marriage and housework, work outside the domestic sphere, subvert maternity and embrace their sexuality in a unique way'.⁵⁵ Nevertheless, the model of

⁵⁰ 'La movida' also emerged in other capital cities such as Barcelona or Bilbao. This counter-cultural movement, which included all sorts of arts (music, film and television, literature, photography and painting, graffiti, fashion, comics, etc.), was characterised by freedom of expression, transgression of taboos, use of recreational drugs but, above all, a new spirit of freedom and fun that was absent during Franco's regime.

⁵¹ For a recent comprehensive study on his career see Brad Epps and Depina Kakoudaki (eds.), *All about Almodóvar: A Passion for Cinema* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2009).

⁵² Marvin D'Lugo, 'Almodóvar's city of desire', *Quarterly Review of Film and Literature*, 13, 4 (1991), p. 48.

⁵³ Paul Julian Smith, 'Almodóvar and the Tin Can', *Sight and Sound*, 6, 2 (February 1996), p. 25.

⁵⁴ José Luis Sánchez Noriega, 'Mujer, identidad y deseo en el cine de Pedro Almodóvar', in *La representación de las mujeres en el cine y la televisión contemporáneos*, ed. by Pedro Sangro Colón and Juan F. Plaza Sánchez (Barcelona: Laertes, 2010), p. 59.

⁵⁵ Castejón Leorza, 2013, p. 106.

women represented in his films has transformed over time: from the initial transgressive and provocative characters that break all the rules (*Pepi, Luci, Bom*, 1980, *Entre Tinieblas*, 1983) to later female characters who tragically suffer because of love (*La flor de mi secreto*, 1995). His continuous work with the same group of actresses (Carmen Maura, Rossy de Palma, María Barranco, and lately Penélope Cruz) has created the trademark 'chica Almodóvar'. Later in his career, Almodóvar has also been very supportive through the promotion of women-authored films by means of his production company, El Deseo S.A., created with his younger brother Agustín.⁵⁶ The strong women's presence and varied portrayal of female themes on screen advocated by Almodóvar have been continued by other male directors like Benito Zambrano or Miguel Albaladejo but, above all, by a new cohort of emerging female directors.

The 1980s was not a particularly prolific time for female filmmaking. Only fifteen women-authored films were released over an entire decade by a total of nine women directors. Apart from the pioneers Molina, Miró and Bartolomé, only Isabel Coixet (*Demasiado viejo para morir joven*, 1989) and Ana Díez (*Ander eta Yul*, 1989) were able to consolidate a directorial career.⁵⁷ Coixet has become one of the most internationally acclaimed Spanish cineastes and Díez is a key representative of Basque cinema. However, it was not until the last decade of the twentieth century that the prominence of women filmmakers in Spain increased considerably, as a direct reflection of the changing role of women in Spanish society. Between 1990 and 1999 a total of twenty-eight women filmmakers made their debut film, forty-

⁵⁶ Some examples are: Mónica Laguna (*Tengo una casa*, 1996), Isabel Coixet (*My Life without me*, 2003; *The Secret Life of Words*, 2005), Dunia Ayaso, who co-directs with her partner Félix Sabroso (*Descongélate*, 2003), and more recently Belén Macías with her debut film *El patio de mi cárcel* (2009).

⁵⁷ Isabel Mulá, who had extensive experience as a script supervisor and a producer, directed two films *Depravación* (1982) and *Los nuevos curanderos* (1986). Virginia Nunes also directed two films in 1983 *Gritos: A ritmo fuerte* and *En secreto, amo*. Both Mulá and Nunes work has gone unnoticed and they are rarely mentioned by scholars. Pilar Távora made her directorial debut in 1984 with *Nanas de Espina* and she released two more films, *Yerma* in 1998 and *Madre Amadísima* in 2009. Cristina Andreu directed her only film, *Brumal*, in 1988.

seven films by thirty-three women directors were released, and only three of these films were co-directed with a male counterpart.⁵⁸ Some of the most acclaimed and prolific women filmmakers of this period are Icíar Bollaín, Isabel Coixet, Chus Gutiérrez, Gracia Querejeta and Rosa Vergés, followed by Arantxa Lazkano, Azucena Rodríguez, Mónica Laguna, Marta Batllebó-Coll, Cristina Esteban, María Miró, Yolanda García Serrano, Manané Rodríguez, Dolores Payás and María Ripoll.

The last decade of the twentieth century represents a turning point for Spanish women filmmakers and has been described as the 'boom' of the 1990s by film scholars.⁵⁹ Nevertheless, a close look at statistics shows that the number of new female directors, although significant, is not as impressive as it might appear. For instance, first-time female directors in this decade represent still only 17.08% of a total of 158 filmmakers.⁶⁰ Consequently, the term 'boom' reads perhaps slightly naïve and overly optimistic. As director Dolores Payás questions in Camí-Vela's collection of interviews: 'What boom? We are just beginning to redress the balance'.⁶¹ Consequently, in spite of the increased incorporation of women directors into the film industry, numbers show that women in leading positions were still a clear minority in Spain during this decade.

The means of access for women filmmakers to directing roles has been diverse and can be divided into three main pathways: a) formal education, b) undertaking other jobs in the film industry and c) having a background in a different artistic area such as literature, theatre, music, fine arts or film criticism.⁶² It is important to note that a new cohort of women entering the directing scene does not necessarily mean that

⁵⁸ Data collected from the ICAA online film database <<http://www.mecd.gob.es/cultura-mecd/areas-cultura/cine/mc/ace/portada.html>> [accessed 15 March 2011].

⁵⁹ Pérez Romero, 2010, p. 284.

⁶⁰ Heredero, 1999, p. 16.

⁶¹ Camí Vela, 2005, p.125.

⁶² For a detailed summary on the different ways that women accessed the directing scene see José Enrique Monterde, 'El largo camino hacia la dirección', in Heredero, 1998, pp.16-20.

they were inexperienced novices. In fact, the average age for women making a debut film in this decade is thirty-six, which contrasts strongly with the average age for men. According to Monterde, twenty-three men but only four women directed their first film under age thirty, whereas 38.46% of first-time women directors were over forty in comparison with 24.29% of male directors.⁶³ These figures indicate that, by the time women directors achieved their first feature film, they had usually reached maturity in their careers and, in many cases, gained extensive professional experience, whether as scriptwriter, director's assistant, actress or in a different career such as that of a journalist or publicist.

In terms of funding, most of the emerging female directors had access to some sort of government subsidy although there were no specific grants for women. However, the Ministry of Culture laws regarding funding to promote films by new directors, (the previously mentioned Miró's Law), came into effect again in 1994, after having been suspended for five years.⁶⁴ The reestablishment of public financial aid might explain, as suggested by Camí-Vela, that in the second part of the decade (1996-2000) thirty-seven films directed by women were released in contrast to fourteen during (1988-1995).⁶⁵ In addition, several popular male producers (Elías Querejeta, Alfredo Matas, César Benítez) and established filmmakers (Fernando Colomo, Fernando Trueba, Emilio Martínez-Lázaro, Gómez-Pereira, Pedro Almodóvar) showed their support and produced several women-authored films.⁶⁶ Although on a minor scale, the number of Spanish female producers also increased and was key in funding films by women directors.⁶⁷ Some of the new producers are Esther García, Cristina Huete, Beatriz de la Gándara, Marta Figueras, Rosa Romero and Isona Passola.

Regarding themes and stylistic approaches, the films directed by these filmmakers

⁶³ Monterde, 1998, p. 17.

⁶⁴ Camí Vela, 2005, pp. 24-25.

⁶⁵ Camí Vela, 2005, p. 25.

⁶⁶ Camí Vela, 2005, pp. 25-26; Monterde, p. 21.

⁶⁷ Monterde, 1998, p. 22.

were not as transgressive and controversial as those of their predecessors in the late 1970s and early 1980s. As Martín-Márquez points out, 'a boom in women directors does not necessarily produce an explosion of feminist cinema'.⁶⁸ In fact, this new generation of female directors formed part of a broader movement of promising young directors that rejuvenated and transformed the directing scene in Spanish cinema at the time.⁶⁹ A relevant common feature shared by these emerging cineastes was the fact that they did not experience the Spanish Civil War and had not lived as adults during the repressive dictatorship. This characteristic has inevitably influenced their films, which show strong interest in the present and in their characters as individuals.⁷⁰

Camí-Vela summarises the preferred genres, highlighting a predilection for drama and comedy, and describes the main themes in films by the 'boom' generation directors.⁷¹ She also mentions the emergence of new subgenres associated with women directors such as the so-called 'cine intimista o de personajes' (intimate or character-focused cinema) or an autobiographical genre in which the female characters embark on the search of self. These films tend to deeply explore couple relationships (mainly heterosexual) and female friendship.⁷² Unlike their French contemporaneous colleagues (Catherine Breillat, *Romance X*, 1999; Virginie Despentes and Coralie Trinh Tri, *Baise Moi*, 2000; Brigitte Roüan, *Post coitum*, 1997), Spanish women directors have not explored the erotic-porn genre nor shown any interest in including explicit or controversial sexual scenes in their narratives. Some of the most recurrent themes are the current world of youth and their problems, women's emotional, sexual and social problems and, to a small extent, contemporary and past socio-political issues in Spain. Other minor themes include

⁶⁸ Martín-Márquez, 1999, p. 280.

⁶⁹ Carlos F. Heredero, 'New Creators for the New Millennium: Transforming the Directing Scene in Spain', *Cineaste* (Winter 2003), p. 32.

⁷⁰ Heredero, 1999, p. 17.

⁷¹ Camí-Vela, 2005, pp. 29-32.

⁷² Camí-Vela, 2005, pp. 29-31.

the family and the normalisation of lesbian and gay relationships.

As outlined in the introduction, most film scholars have mainly examined the emergence of female filmmakers in this decade as a single group and focused on the novelty of the directors' gender, leaving many individual women-authored films unexplored. Consequently, the arrival of women on the directing scene resulted in a confusing paradox as I will go on to demonstrate based on Camí-Vela's studies. Her interviews with many of these women directors of the 'boom' generation elucidate their viewpoints and create a debate on the matter that is still ongoing in the twenty-first century. On the one hand, some women filmmakers reject the concept of 'women's cinema' and refuse to be categorised as female directors. On the other hand, many film professionals confirm the existence of a distinctive female gaze that allows them to reflect the feminine reality.

From the interviews, it has become clear that being only associated with women's cinema has been perceived as negative for most women directors: 'I still have a lot of contradictory thoughts about the term 'women's cinema' because I think it's dangerous, that it can result in discrimination', claims Icíar Bollaín.⁷³ Azucena Rodríguez conveys a similar opinion: 'speaking about 'women's cinema' is creating a line that doesn't benefit us at all because we are becoming excluded, positioning us somewhere else'.⁷⁴ Rosa Vergés rejects the categorisation of cinema made by women as a genre of its own, because she considers it as 'a superfluous label because it is a very delicate terrain'.⁷⁵ Chus Gutiérrez, in turn, has often complained about the constant emphasis put on her gender instead of her filmography: 'Journalists keep on asking me the same question. How is it being a woman and

⁷³ Camí-Vela, 2005, p. 59.

⁷⁴ Camí-Vela, 2005, p. 165.

⁷⁵ Camí-Vela, 2005, p. 219.

directing films? I am tired of answering that question. Men are not asked how it is being a man and directing films'.⁷⁶

Other female directors, like Silvia Munt, prefer to claim the existence of a distinctive feminine gaze: 'What I think is that we do cinema with a different gaze, that we explain things differently. The feminine gaze does exist. There are very few women interested in image and action cinema. We are more interested in cinema focused on the characters, on their psychology, on explaining what is not obvious, what forms part of our universe'.⁷⁷ The feminine gaze not only exists, Helena Taberna claims, but can also be transgressive and alter the established order and conventions: 'the change of sex behind the camera causes changes', such as the incorporation of only male nudity in films.⁷⁸ Inés París also asserts that gender influences your view of the world, although not more than other factors like nationality, age or social class.⁷⁹ For París, 'women's cinema doesn't mean that there has to be just a single feminine gaze', but that the diversity of women's perspectives still needs to be portrayed. As she denounces, the male view in cinema impedes a realistic portrayal of women: 'Cinema doesn't usually reflect how women truly are. Cinema is, in general, very masculine in the sense that the images of women are enormously clichéd, far from what we women are and, above all, of what we personally wish'.⁸⁰

For the above-mentioned reasons, female directors have had to look for new forms of dramatic and ideological expression within their cinema, starting with the construction of female characters. In Spanish women filmmakers' narratives, a broader and richer variety of women protagonists can be found; this, in turn, results in more genuine and representative images of real-life women. The incorporation of

⁷⁶ Camí-Vela, 2005, p. 89.

⁷⁷ Camí Vela, 2005, p. 351.

⁷⁸ Camí Vela, 2005, p. 202.

⁷⁹ Camí Vela, 2005, p. 367.

⁸⁰ Camí Vela, 2005, pp. 366-367.

women directors in the Spanish film industry over the last twenty years has broadened the possibility of a feminine approach to cinema that offers a new perspective on previously filmed themes, but also that introduces women-related topics which have not been explored before on screen. Notably, a major contribution of women directors in Spanish cinema over the 1990s is the inclusion of daily, social issues presenting diverse feminine perspectives. To sum up, it could be concluded that female directors in this decade have developed a discourse within their own cinema that Zecchi has labelled 'gynocentric', as indicated in the introduction. 'Gynocentric' cinema, Zecchi proposes, tackles issues mainly related to women while deconstructing the stereotypical representation of women normalised by male directors.⁸¹

Challenges and achievements in the twenty-first century

Although the 1990s seemed to open doors for women to easily join the directing scene, figures indicate that the outlook for Spanish female filmmakers in the twenty-first century is far from promising. Women directors belonging to the 'boom generation' have struggled to direct more features after their debut film. Only ten of them, including Isabel Coixet and Ana Díez, have been able to release more than three films. A quantitative study by Universidad Complutense de Madrid indicates that between 2000 and 2006 the Spanish film industry produced 886 films, of which 7.3% were directed by women, 91% were directed by men and 1.7% were co-directed.⁸² If we look at the whole first decade of the twenty-first century (2001 to 2010), a total of 124 women-authored films were screened in Spanish cinema.⁸³ According to my own data collection, the most represented genres in this decade by women cineastes are documentary and drama, as 40% of output by women

⁸¹ For a summary of the specific topics and diverse female characters see Zecchi, 2014, pp. 125-132.

⁸² Arranz, 2008, p. 117.

⁸³ See Appendix A for a comprehensive list of the female production from 2001 to 2010.

directors were documentaries and 39% of output were dramas.⁸⁴ The remaining 21% comprised a variety of genres, led by comedy (14%), followed by animation and family film (4%), thriller (2%) and science fiction (1%). Including fiction films and documentaries, a total of fifty-nine Spanish women filmmakers directed their first feature film. It is important to note that this figure nearly doubles the amount of first-time women directors in the 1990s (thirty-three), which, as discussed previously, scholars have branded the 'boom decade' for female filmmaking in Spain. Remarkably, half of the twenty-first century female directors made their debut with a fiction film whereas the other half started with a documentary. The most prolific filmmakers who started their directorial debut at the turn of the century –in 2000– are Patricia Ferreira, Helena Taberna, Laura Mañá, Inés París and Daniela Féjerman, having managed to direct three or more features since then. Some of the more productive and award-winning documentary makers are Mercedes Álvarez, Carla Subirana, Susana Koska, Arantxa Aguirre and directing team Marta Arribas and Ana Pérez.

As highlighted in the introduction, the production of full-length documentary features has increased considerably in this century and has attracted commercial audiences in Spain, following the trend across Europe and USA.⁸⁵ The main factor prompting this boom in the non-fiction genre has been the development of manageable and cheap digital equipment, which, as remarked by Gubern, 'has democratised audio visual production'.⁸⁶ Together with the possibility of smaller budgets, Casimiro Torreiro names two further reasons for the popularity of documentary in Catalonia: the support provided by regional television (TVC/TV3), and the introduction of specialised Master courses at the prestigious universities Pompeu Fabra and

⁸⁴ Data collected from the ICAA online film database: <<http://www.mecd.gob.es/cultura-mecd/areas-cultura/cine/mc/ace/portada.html>> [accessed 25 November 2011].

⁸⁵ Jordan and Allinson, 2005, p. 33, p. 40.

⁸⁶ Román Gubern, 'Prólogo', in *Doc 21. Panorama del reciente cine documental en España*, ed. by Inmaculada Sánchez and Marta Díaz (Girona: Luces de Gálibo, 2009), p. 10.

Universidad Autónoma.⁸⁷ A recent study by Camí-Vela recapitulating female filmmaking in Catalonia shows that nearly half of the films directed from 2000 to 2009 are documentaries, a popular trend in this region which is only increasing in the 2010s (only four fiction films out of twenty feature films were produced from that region).⁸⁸ Torreiro's explanations can help us understand why many twenty-first century women filmmakers have chosen to start their directorial career with a documentary but also to continue in the field of documentary making. Except for Ferreira, the directors of the documentaries analysed in this study –Subirana, Koska, Arribas and Pérez– have specialised and pursued a career as exclusively documentary-makers.

Directors interviewed for this study were asked about the advantages of making documentaries.⁸⁹ Besides the low-cost factor, Koska extols that 'it's a generous genre where everything fits in. It's a very fun genre to cook with'. Subirana agrees with Koska and expands on her arguments: 'documentary is a very rich genre because all types of narrative and all types of cinema can fit in, which gives you amazing creative freedom'. Interestingly, Arribas expresses feeling discriminated against for being a documentary maker, arguing that when documentary makers started making films, they were treated as second class directors. To exemplify such discrimination she further noted that she was offered worse conditions and accommodation at films festivals. Throughout her discourse, Arribas maintains a very clear dichotomy between fiction and documentary, suggesting that the two genres are opposite worlds in rivalry and that directors should loyally belong to one or the other: you are a fiction director or a documentary maker. In a very sarcastic way, Arribas shows discontent about fiction directors infiltrating in 'her world':

⁸⁷ Casimiro Torreiro (ed.), *Realidad y creación en el cine de no-ficción* (Madrid: Cátedra, 2010), pp. 7-9.

⁸⁸ María Camí-Vela, 'Directoras de cine en Cataluña: un recorrido histórico', *Zeitschrift für Katalanistik*, 27 (2014), p. 31.

⁸⁹ Unless otherwise indicated, the quotes by filmmakers belong to the interviews conducted for this project.

And suddenly, when the world of fiction saw that they had less possibilities, the world of documentary started to be more popular and to show that it was not just boring reports, because here we are very uneducated in regards to documentary. However, we have come a long way, I mean, from nothing to something, and also now documentaries are screened at cinemas. Therefore, once it started, and it wasn't bad, and it was cheaper to make and there were more opportunities to produce, then many people from fiction changed to documentary, and documentary was considered to be wonderful. In the end, I had a feeling like, didn't you say it was second class? Now it is a great discovery, it's a wonder, but all of this is positive because it improves the viewpoint about documentary.

Arribas' argument illustrates Gubern's analogy in his prologue to *Doc 21*, when he described the evolution of documentary from being a 'poor child' to becoming a 'vain child', when it was upgraded to the category of macro-genre with numerous subgenres.⁹⁰ Other directors, in contrast, do not appear to have such rigid views about the borders between fiction and non-fiction films. For instance, Subirana argues that she likes documentaries because 'inside the same documentary you can work with a fiction structure but combine it with real characters (...), as mixing fiction with reality allows you to move in a very free terrain'. What is clear from the data is that the boom of the documentary genre has allowed a significant number of women filmmakers to start their directorial career with a feature film in the twenty-first century. However, the disproportionate percentages discussed in this chapter, when compared to production by male directors, reflect how, over thirty years after the end of Franco's dictatorship, Spanish women directors continue to encounter great difficulties in having their voices heard despite higher rates of women enrolling and completing university degrees in Media Studies.⁹¹

⁹⁰ Gubern, 2009, p. 9.

⁹¹ Callejo concludes that this degree is slightly feminised in most universities as demonstrated by the provided statistic data from 2003 to 2006 (2010, pp. 80-83).

Prejudices and invisible discrimination

What are then the main hindrances that impede women directors from breaking the still existent 'glass ceiling'? What perpetuates the ongoing gender inequality in the Spanish film industry? Drawing on Arranz's study and my own interviews with a selected cohort of Spanish female directors, the following section in this chapter discusses the main obstacles faced by women filmmakers in the twenty-first century. It could be argued that women's access to leading positions in the film industry is influenced by a combination of social, historical and financial factors. As stated earlier in this chapter, on average women directors achieve their first feature film five years later than male directors. In general, women receive lower budgets than men for their debut film, and do not usually get increasing budgets for their second or third films, as opposed to their male counterparts, even if the debut film has been successful. Taberna remarks that 'I see that when my male colleagues from my generation make a successful debut film, they automatically get producers interested in them'. Ferreira asserts how, for her, the process to become a feature film director and earn trust with large budgets was hard and prolonged, and how on many occasions she felt patronised by her male colleagues:

When I started to work on Television Española (Spanish state TV) I was like from another planet. Josefina [Molina] and Pilar Miró were already working there, but the next generations, we were, as I said from another planet. They humoured us. They said 'look at this girl who wants to be a director'. And they kind of let you do it. But later when bigger budgets for bigger projects became available, I never got them. And why? Because I was worse than my male colleagues? Well, I don't think so because many of them are still directing on TV and I have already done four features, five, if we count *Señora de*.

Another major problem faced by women directors, is the reconciliation of their professional with their domestic life. For instance, París insists on this issue a couple

of times throughout the interview I conducted with her: 'I believe that women are still carrying the load of how to juggle their personal and professional world, which is something that men don't even have to consider'. In order to exemplify her own words París shared the following anecdote: 'The other day I listened to how Vargas Llosa deeply thanked his wife for allowing him to have his career, he said, because he lives exclusively for reading and writing since she takes care of everything else'. In contrast, París explains how her job as a director interfered in her affective relationships, arguing that filmmaking is an absorbing and time-consuming profession and, as a consequence, had to raise a child on her own. Subirana, who is also a mother, names the choice of motherhood over career as one of the reasons accounting for the limited presence of women directors: 'The age when a human being reaches certain maturity to be able to shoot a film coincides with the age to become a mother'.

Acclaimed director Icíar Bollaín, who portrayed the hardship of being a mother and a professional in her film *Mataharis* (2007), admits feeling the victim of a fraud in regards to her experiences of motherhood: 'We have liberated professionally, we can choose a husband, a job and if we want to have children or not, but then you find out that we live in a country where the places in nursery school run out and your whole life collapses. (...) Now you need to be a 'superwoman' and slog away. (...) The labour market is not ready and you flounder'.⁹² As Bollaín indicates, a report presented by the Institute of Family Politics in the European Parliament, has demonstrated that Spain is one of the European countries that assigns fewer resources to family issues.⁹³ The report highlights the poor measures to support work and family conciliation including both direct assistance (baby bonus) as well as

⁹² Miguel Olid, 'Entrevista a Icíar Bollaín', in *Mujeres de cine: 360º alrededor de la cámara*, ed. by María Caballero Wangüewert (Madrid: Biblioteca Nueva, 2011), p. 371.

⁹³ M. J. Pérez-Barco, 'España entre los países europeos con menos flexibilidad laboral para conciliar', *ABC*, 14 November 2014, <<http://www.abc.es/familia-padres-hijos/20141114/abci-flexibilidad-laboral-espana-201411131544.html>> [accessed 14 February 2015].

indirect (kindergarten places, lack of flexible working times, short maternity leaves, etc.); a situation which has been aggravated since the post global financial crisis.

Since historically filmmaking has been a male dominated industry, women filmmakers claim having great difficulties when dealing with male-chauvinist producers who still have numerous prejudices against women. Taberna confirms that discrimination happens implicitly: 'A lot of this discrimination is unconscious. It's what we have been talking about. They [producers] don't think of us, women. When they have a script, a story in mind they always think of those who are closer to them because it is in the bars where they meet. It's like this, isn't it? And because we are still very few women in the industry'. Subirana, who is a younger director, concurs with Taberna that according to her experience discrimination is unspoken: 'It [discrimination] is something very intangible but exists, when you go in a producer's office and you are a woman and young, or with young aspect, a priori he is not going to trust you, you have to demonstrate very clearly that you can direct a film and that you will be able to get to the end'. Other interviewed directors are able to give very concrete examples of discrimination and patronising attitudes. París, who co-directed several films with Féjerman, mentions having to deal with paternalistic male professionals throughout the process of filming:

Of course, at the set I have also come across very male-chauvinists men. I had a production director who wouldn't leave us alone, questioning our work, and I am convinced he wouldn't have behaved in the same way with a male director. I have experienced how they were constantly checking if the ladies, the girls, were doing a good job or not. Paternalism all the time: 'how clever! You are actually very clever, and very fast, you are learning very well.

Unlike her colleagues, Gutiérrez recognises not feeling discriminated against by her male colleagues but by the media instead, experiencing a constant lack of recognition for her work and her multiple awards. Gutiérrez emphasised that 'the

press makes a kind of silencing, they always forget something, and this something is always women'. In her case, she remembered not appearing in the press after receiving the FIPRESCI award for her film *Poniente* (2002) at the Guadalajara Festival in México, while the news centred on her male colleague Álex de la Iglesia, who was just attending the event. On another occasion, she was not mentioned on the TV program *Días de cine* for her homage at the Festival Cinema Jove in Valencia, Spain. In addition, Gutiérrez found out that a less experienced male director was being paid more than she was by the same producer.

These negative attitudes, opinions and behaviours towards women in the film industry were exposed in Arranz's study through several interviews with male distributors, directors and producers. The discourse conveyed by some male film professionals in Arranz's investigation essentially insists on male superiority to justify the scarce number of women filmmakers: 'If in the forties, and fifties in Spain all production companies were directed and managed by men, it's like there is a continuation in the same and it looks like it is something that only men can do'.⁹⁴ Some of them explicitly declare sexist prejudices, as they believe that women lack talent and the required skills to make films.⁹⁵ For instance, a producer confirms women's inferiority in making films arguing that 'men move much easier in all the shortcuts to make a film, women in this respect are less capable, politically speaking, maybe I don't know'.⁹⁶ Similarly, a distributor claims that women lack many personality traits essential for being successful in this profession:

It will continue being a job for *machos*, [...], because you have to be authoritarian, you have to command. Being a film director or producer is very complex. You need to be many things at the same time; you need to be very patient... Well, very capable, intelligent, patient, bad-tempered, to have leadership skills... At the same

⁹⁴ Arranz, 2010, p. 304.

⁹⁵ Arranz, 2010, pp. 275-348.

⁹⁶ Arranz, 2010, p. 312.

time, understanding, eh... you need a lot of energy, a lot, a lot, a lot.⁹⁷

One director suggests that women simply need to study, ignoring that the number of female graduates in media studies is higher than male graduates: 'I think that there is a very important element, which is education, that is, if women are trained and have an ambition that is bigger, because society also allows it to them, then this will be translated into more women directors and producers'.⁹⁸ However, Subirana, who is currently involved in teaching at tertiary level, questions the transition from university to working life rather than women's ability to direct films: 'I am a university lecturer and have regular contact with students. Many times I have conversations with other colleagues about the fact that female students often have the better or more powerful projects, but I don't know what happens that they are not able to make them happen'. Paris strongly contends that this is due to the problem that women are not taught to be assertive or encouraged to assume managing roles, and consequently they lack the necessary self-esteem for a competitive and creative profession like filmmaking.⁹⁹

For all these reasons, many women filmmakers decide to become their own producers and start their own production companies, which are generally small businesses managing little budgets created basically to self-fund their own projects. This entrepreneurial initiative appears to have been common practice from the very beginning of cinema, as we have seen with the pioneers (Pi, Mariscal, Alexandre, etc.). However, having to play this double, and in many cases, triple role (director/producer/ writer) significantly delays the process of making a film and prevents women directors from being more prolific or supporting more women-authored films. Taberna's case constitutes a good example: 'I think that if I have filmed and

⁹⁷ Arranz, 2010, p. 321.

⁹⁸ Arranz, 2010, p. 313.

⁹⁹ Camí-Vela, 2005, p. 368.

screened four films in the 2000s, if I hadn't had to do everything myself, I mean if I had had a producer, etc. I could have done eight films, for instance'.

Certainly, the lack of female role models in directorial, managerial and technical positions complicates the visibility of women as successful specialised professionals in their respective areas, which, in turn, delays a continuous presence of established women in all sectors of the film industry. Luckily, recognised women directors such as Josefina Molina are actively working towards consolidating a female filmic tradition in Spain. In an interview after receiving the Goya award in 2012, she made a very strong point about this –now identified– absence: 'It's true that now, at my age, I do feel I have a responsibility, to serve the others [women directors], so that the future generations know that they have precedents, so that they have what men have always had: cultural tradition'.¹⁰⁰ Despite all the challenges and prejudices discussed above, women filmmakers have made enormous efforts to gain more visibility and recognition via different initiatives such as the celebration of women film festivals and, more recently, the foundation of the association of women cineastes, CIMA.

Fighting Inequality: the foundation of CIMA

After years of involvement in filmmaking, in 2006 a small group of prominent women directors (Iciar Bollaín, Chus Gutiérrez, Isabel Coixet, Patricia Ferreira, Helena Taberna, and Laura Mañá, among others) decided to found CIMA. Scriptwriter and director Inés París was chosen as the first president followed by director Isabel de Ocampo in 2012 and scriptwriter Virginia Yagüe in 2014. The head office is located in Madrid but there are three representative board members in the regions of Catalonia, Andalusia and Galicia. In six years CIMA managed to create a solid

¹⁰⁰ Josefina Molina, 'Por ser mujer, he hecho la mitad de las cosas que podría haber hecho', *CIMA noticias*, 28 November 2011, <<http://cimamujerescineastas.es/htm/comunicacion/blog/noticias.php?id=1223&titulo=Josefina%20Molina>> [accessed 2 February 2012].

network of more than three hundred female professionals involved in cinematography, TV or the audio visual media including directors, scriptwriters, producers, distributors, exhibitors, directors of photography, composers, film editors, etc. Despite being an association for women, (fee-based) membership is not only limited to female film professionals as long as men share their aims: to defend the equality of opportunities for women when accessing directing positions, to promote a more realistic image of women on screen that assists in dignifying women's public image and to create reference models for the new generations.¹⁰¹ Ferreira emphasises several times throughout my interview the great value of the association and the importance of having a common voice: 'The fact that we have come together and are associated has given us strength and self-confidence to be influential. At this moment in time, we women filmmakers count, but we count because we are united. One by one we wouldn't count'. In fact, CIMA has been able to achieve relevant changes concerning equality such as introducing measures to promote positive action in the Law of Cinema or guaranteeing parity in the members of the jury at film festivals or national prizes.¹⁰²

In order to corroborate the limited presence of leading women in the film industry over the last years, CIMA commissioned the earlier mentioned study directed by Arranz to the Universidad Complutense de Madrid in 2008. Thanks to this empirical investigation, female directors became truly aware of their uneven situation in the industry and have extensively divulged such low percentages in the media, at conferences and further publications. Thus, the study became the foundation for the later publication *Cine y género en España* (2010) –already mentioned earlier– which provides comprehensive research into women filmmakers' status in the Spanish film

¹⁰¹ For a detailed description of CIMA's foundation, goals and achievements see París' chapter in Arranz (2010), pp. 349-381.

¹⁰² In 2011 the jury's decision to grant the 'National Prize of Cinema' had to be postponed because the jury was comprised of a majority of male members, which did not fulfil the requirements for parity between men and women to comply with the Law of Equality 2007.

industry with the intention of denouncing gender inequality. The volume highlights the challenges for well-prepared women in becoming directors, discusses key factors that promote discrimination, examines the underrepresentation of female characters, introduces CIMA and analyses the inclusion of equality in the sector's public policies in Spain and Europe. Remarkably, in the interview for this project, París praises the work undertaken by scholars such as Arranz, Aguilar and Pardo in this publication and highlights the relevance of academic research on women directors to gain visibility: 'It gives us dimension, importance, even existence in some occasions, and rescues us from being ignored'.

In her latest study, Zecchi makes an observation regarding the absence of communication between the different generations of Spanish women cineastes as well as the lack of intertextual references within their work.¹⁰³ In the past, she discerns, every generation was forced to be pioneering due to the lack of female models of reference, which impeded continuity in female filmmaking. Until recently there was neither a common generational spirit nor an awareness of belonging to the same group. However, the rivalry experienced among women directors in the transition, Zecchi notes, has been replaced with dialogue over the last decade, when three different generations coexist and cooperate together, particularly since the foundation of CIMA: 'the new relationship between generations of cineastes –the recognition of the work of pioneers by the youngest, and the support and mentoring of the pioneers to their heirs, is symbolised in the appointment of Josefina Molina as honorary president of CIMA'.¹⁰⁴

Further actions undertaken by the organisation were the celebration of two international congresses in 2008 and 2010 to further discuss the current situation of the profession and to seek alternatives to improve it in the future. Former president,

¹⁰³ Zecchi, 2014, pp. 11-15.

¹⁰⁴ Zecchi, 2014, p. 15.

Inés París summarises the main achievements of CIMA in two parts: 1) raising awareness and creating a debate about the lack of women in managing positions in the Spanish film industry, and 2) the fact that women film professionals have associated with a common objective that goes beyond the sector differences. In addition, CIMA has started and currently supports other women's networks in Europe (EWA, European Women's Audiovisual Network) and South America (MICA, Red de mujeres iberoamericanas de cine y medios audiovisuales). The association has a digital platform (www.cimamujerescineastas.es) and a Facebook site with more than twenty thousand friends. CIMA also collaborates with film festivals, seminars and university courses. that study or support the work and legacy of women in the industry. One of the latest projects has been the mentoring program started in 2014: 'Cima Mentoring, project consulting laboratory'. This pro-active initiative to promote female filmmaking consists of masterclasses with international renowned professionals in the film industry, and is aimed at helping new women directors to find funding for their projects and learn how to be competitive in the job market.

The importance of Women's Film Festivals

Other factors contributing to the dissemination and promotion of female filmmaking in Spain are the numerous international women's films festivals that are held each year. The oldest festival, 'Muestra Internacional de Cine y Mujeres de Pamplona', has been running since 1987 and presents films by women from the five continents; these films are usually introduced by the directors themselves.¹⁰⁵ Each screening is followed by a discussion allowing the audience to interact with the filmmakers or experts on the film topics. Another prominent festival is 'Mostra Internacional de Films de Dones de Barcelona', which commemorated its twentieth anniversary in

¹⁰⁵ For their 25th Anniversary the E-book edited by María Castejón Leorza was published: *25 años de cine: Muestra Internacional de Mujeres y Cine de Pamplona*, Ipes Elkartea Navarra. E-book, 2011, <<http://www.muestracineymujeres.org/libro>> [accessed 5 July 2012].

2012. Since 2002 the association TRAMA (Coordinator of Film, Video and Multimedia Festivals organised by women) has coordinated eight of the main women's film festivals nationwide, including the above-mentioned and the ones held in Zaragoza, Granada, Bilbao, Huesca, Teruel and Córdoba. In addition, TRAMA has developed three yearly distinctive projects to promote women-authored cinema: 'El video del minuto' (The 1 Minute Video), 'Cortos en Femenino' (a competition of short films) and the subtitling of two foreign documentaries to be disseminated in the Spanish speaking countries.

Specialised women's film festivals have also emerged in order to promote women directors' varied interests. Due to the increase in female documentary-makers in the twenty-first century, 'MujerDoc' (International Festival of Documentary Cinema about Gender) was created in 2009. The festival aim was to be a platform for the exhibition of documentaries that contribute to the promotion of equal opportunities for men and women. In Madrid, the 'Muestra de cine político dirigido por mujeres' focusses on films dealing with women's specific socio-political concerns.

All festivals are organised depending mainly on government funding approval and external sponsorship. In the most recent years, the global financial crisis that has affected Spain's economy considerably has had a great impact on some festivals. In 2012 the Pamplona's Festival was compelled to reduce the program and show a smaller amount of films than in previous years. However, the festivals organised by TRAMA have been so far able to continue every year, but other minor films festivals have been cancelled due to the lack of financial resources. For instance, the international film festival 'Mujeres en dirección' in Cuenca was last held in 2011, after six editions, and 'MujerDoc' took place only three more times in 2011, 2012 and 2013.

The need to continue celebrating the festivals as spaces for visibility of women's creation and thinking is widely supported by films festival organisers and filmmakers alike. María Castejón, former organiser of Pamplona's festival, claims that such festivals are still necessary for two main reasons: 'firstly, because women directors continue being a minority in the industry; secondly, because the 'Muestra de Cine y Mujeres de Pamplona' not only projects films but is a space for gathering and reflection, a debating space to analyse the situation of women in the world and the representations of their identities in film'.¹⁰⁶ In a similar vein, the association TRAMA argues that these festivals are indispensable because they offer 'the possibility of presenting alternatives to the dominant model, alternative viewpoints to the hegemonic thinking, allows us to erode little by little the monolithic model of genres and open the door to thousands of subjectivities from all continents'.¹⁰⁷ París highlights another positive aspect of the festivals: 'We have corroborated that, above all, in the European context, women's film festivals also contribute to create associative movements. For instance, around the festival 'Elles tournent' in Brussels a new whole movement of study and analysis of what is happening has been generated'.

The festivals also provide a positive environment for recuperating the memory of important women directors who have been overlooked in film history and present further feminine models of reference, both national and international, for current directors. Vergés remembers an anecdote about her ignorance of Alice Guy –the first fiction director ever– when she was invited to introduce one of her films at Mostra celebrating the hundred anniversary of cinema. She was very impressed

¹⁰⁶ Natalia S. Bornay, 'María Castejón: "En cuanto los medios etiquetan un producto o manifestación artística como 'de mujeres', lo están devaluando"', *Ipes: mujeres y feminismos*, 25 June 2012, <<http://noticias.ipesmujeres.org/2012/06/maria-castejon-en-cuanto-los-medios-etiquetan-un-producto-o-manifestacion-artistica-como-de-mujeres-lo-estan-devaluando/>> [accessed 5 January 2014].

¹⁰⁷ Pilar Moreigne Ferrer and Amparo Bella Rando, 'Una mirada propia: Muestras de cine realizado por Mujeres', *TRAMA*, <http://www.feministas.org/IMG/pdf/5-_UNA_MIRADAPROPIA.pdf> [accessed 9 March 2013].

when she saw the movie theatre crowded with a receptive audience and that she herself could relate to how Guy was able to tell stories during such early stages of cinema. Taberna confesses the impact that the first films by Margaret von Trotta had on her, to which she was exposed for the first time at the Pamplona festival. Subirana also acknowledges the importance of having seen Agnès Varda's *oeuvre* in the Mostra in Barcelona.

In addition to creating a new space for discussion and inspiration, for many directors the festivals meant a starting point in their directorial career. Taberna, for instance, believes that she has become a director thanks to the Pamplona's festival. She explains that 'a space like this allowed me to learn about women's cinema and to realise that, when the video appeared, I could also become an author of small or big stories.'¹⁰⁸ Although these festivals are important for helping directors to reach audiences, there is a risk, however, that women directors will be limited by them, if they do not have access to mainstream festivals or theatrical distribution. As París emphasises, 'we have always insisted on women having access to high budgets and that their films participate in the big festivals: San Sebastián, Venice, Berlin or Cannes'.

Paradoxically, in 2015, while Isabel Coixet was opening the 65th Berlinale with her eleventh feature film *Nadie quiere la noche*, the 29th Goya Awards overlooked the work by women directors in one of the best years for Spanish cinema in terms of figures.¹⁰⁹ Apart from the awards to actresses, only three Goyas were granted to women. According to Cabré, the Goya for best short fiction awarded to Patricia Font can be seen as 'a metaphor of the small space allowed to women cineastes'. Unfortunately, 2014 has been considered as 'a year of failures for equality' since

¹⁰⁸ María Castejón Leorza, 'Helena Taberna: El compromiso hecho cine', in Castejón Leorza, 2011, p. 76.

¹⁰⁹ M^a Ángeles Cabré, 'Unos Goya muy machos', *El País*, 12 February 2015, <<http://blogs.elpais.com/mujeres/2015/02/unos-goya-muy-machos.html>> [accessed 13 February 2015].

women's participation in front of and behind the camera in this prolific year and their representation in fiction has been scarce and stereotypical.¹¹⁰ For this reason, it is paramount that associations like CIMA in Spain, EWA in Europe and MICA in Latin America are working to ensure gender parity on the juries of film festivals and award ceremonies. However, until this parity and equal representation is achieved, women's film festivals continue to be essential to promoting women-authored cinema. As Subirana claims, borrowing one of the organisers' arguments, 'the day that the Mostra has to stop being held, it will mean that there is no longer the need for making women directors visible, for employing positive discrimination, for balancing the existing imbalance'.

Conclusion

This chapter demonstrated that, despite encountering a number of socio-historical hindrances and sexist prejudices, Spanish women directors have strived to direct and produce films from the beginning of cinema. The lack of dialogue between generations of women cineastes has impeded a continuous and influential presence of women in the film industry as well as the establishment of female models of reference for both directors and spectators. This chapter also showed how this situation is slowly beginning to be rectified as in the twenty-first century three generations of women directors are now finding a collective voice through CIMA to fight discrimination and gender inequality so that they can achieve equivalent conditions and opportunities to their male counterparts. Women directors' films reflect their views of the world about numerous topics, commonly introduce unexplored subjects, use a variety of genres and provide a more realistic representation of women. As indicated in the introduction, this thesis examines the work of a cohort of women makers of both fiction films and documentaries,

¹¹⁰ Claudia Lorenzo, 'Un año de fracasos para la igualdad', *La crítica*, 7 February 2015, <<http://www.lacriticany.com/un-ano-de-fracasos-para-la-igualdad/>> [accessed 10 February 2015].

concerned with revisiting the past of the Spanish Civil War and the postwar period. The following chapter provides an overview of the controversial politics of memory in Spain and builds a theoretical framework, centred on fundamental concepts of Memory Studies and Spanish Cultural Studies, to inform and contextualise the analysis of the selected films.

Chapter 2. National identity and politics of memory in Spain

The Civil War was, without a doubt, the most important historical event in contemporary Spain and, who knows, if the most decisive in its history. Nothing else has shaped the life of Spaniards in the twentieth century in that manner and it is still far away the day that the men of this land can feel free of the weight and shadow that this ill-fated conflict still generates.

Juan Benet¹

The relationship between memory and history in contemporary Spain remains controversial. In spite of the current preoccupation with memory, materialised both in cultural production and the media debates, over whether to acknowledge or forget the past, the lack of a political consensus on the issue points towards a 'memory crisis'.² Seventy-five years after the end of the Civil War and forty years after Franco's death, Spain has not fully resolved the fratricidal conflict that started in 1936 or successfully dealt with its violent traumatic past. Throughout most of the twentieth century, the conflict has been remembered –or disremembered– in a very different manner in each historical period depending on the political interests and beliefs of the time. This illustrates Maurice Halbwachs' presentist perspective, which argues that a country's collective memory is a social construction that happens according to the needs of the present.³ Drawing on Halbwach's arguments, Paloma Aguilar also highlights the mutual influence between past and present noting that 'in the present that part of the past which is relevant to each moment is selected, and, in turn, that selected past influences the present'.⁴ In addition, Aguilar clarifies that,

¹ Juan Benet, *Qué fue la guerra civil* (Barcelona: Editorial La Gaya Ciencia, 1976), p. 9.

² José F. Colmeiro, *Memoria histórica e identidad cultural. De la postguerra a la modernidad* (Barcelona: Anthropos Editorial, 2005) p. 13.

³ Maurice Halbwachs, *La mémoire collective* (Paris: PUF, 1967).

⁴ Paloma Aguilar, *Memory and Amnesia: The role of the Spanish Civil War in the Transition to Democracy*, trans. by Mark Oakley (New York: Berghahn Books, 2002), p. 9.

since we remember in socio-cultural contexts, the nation's version of its past is connected with the version of its national identity, which in authoritarian societies are controlled and censored by official channels.⁵

In the case of Franco's dictatorship, a unilateral version of the past was created and used as an instrument of legitimation of the present endorsed by tradition and anachronistic values. As suggested by Barry Jordan and Rikki Morgan-Tamosunas, 'Francoism, if it was an ideology, was one which looked to the remote past in order to create a myth for the present, appropriating its crusading image from Spain's cultural and colonial "Golden Age"'.⁶ The Civil War, hence, was presented –and remembered over the following decades– as a new crusade that justified the war and postwar crimes as necessary to rescue Spain from the Marxist influence. At the end of the war, the official Francoist discourse distinguished between the two opposite 'Spains': the victors and the defeated; a division that has played a major role in the formation of a national identity for Spaniards and that, to a certain extent, still exists in today's Spain.⁷ The Republican soldiers and politicians who stayed in Spain became victims of massive systematic reprisals: they were killed, generally without a trial, tortured or imprisoned for years under inhumane conditions.⁸ Without further justification, thousands of civilians, including women, who had been associated with a left-wing party or association were also sent to jail or executed. The most persecuted people were those who had participated in workers', farmers' or youth social and political organisations or those who belonged to professional or intellectual sectors with a social dimension, namely teachers. Women were particularly affected by Francoist brutality, being subjected to public humiliation, rape

⁵ Aguilar, 2002, p. 266.

⁶ Jordan and Morgan-Tamosunas, 1998, p. 17.

⁷ For a study on the existence of the two ideological Spains from the beginning of the 19th century until the middle of the 20th century, see Santos Juliá, *Historias de las dos Españas* (Madrid: Taurus 2004); and Julián Casanova, *España partida en dos: Breve historia de la guerra civil española* (Barcelona: Crítica, 2013a).

⁸ José Álvarez Junco, 'La ley de víctimas de la Guerra Civil y el Franquismo', *Historia Contemporánea*, 38 (2010), p. 148.

or execution as a punishment on behalf of their 'red' husband's, father's or son's behaviour.⁹ Since the strict Francoist reprisal measures were not always put on official records –or were destroyed, as indicated in the introduction– the relatives of those who disappeared were not only left with uncertainty as to what had happened to them but also with the impossibility of finding out.

The new regime endeavoured to create a new national identity that heroically extolled the victors of the war who had liberated Spain from the chaotic communist influence. All those killed by the Republicans were treated as martyrs 'for God and Spain' and commemorated with different memorials including street-naming, an annual 'Victory Parade' and numerous monuments. The most representative memorial, where Franco is still buried, is the mausoleum in the Valle de los Caídos (Valley of the Fallen), built mostly by Republican prisoners, many of whom died in the process of constructing it.¹⁰ The surviving defeated, in contrast, were humiliated and denigrated in Francoist rhetoric. As a condition for survival, they were forced to deny their left-wing background and transform their way of living, changing professions and homes. Exiled in their own country, they experienced double physical and psychological repression as they were condemned to live in misery, hunger and social marginalisation. Discrimination was even harder for those women associated with the defeated, as they were presented as the opposite model of immaculate virgins and good mothers advocated by the Church and the Sección Femenina (Women's Section). The stigma of being 'red women' compelled them in many cases to subsist under subhuman conditions, and, due to the precarious financial situation, work as prostitutes.¹¹ Furthermore, very strict censorship together

⁹ Paul Preston, 'Prólogo', in *La memoria de los olvidados: Un debate sobre el silencio de la represión franquista*, ed. by Asunción Álvarez and Emilio Silva (Valladolid: Ámbito; León: Asociación para la Recuperación de la Memoria Histórica, 2004), p. 14.

¹⁰ Paloma Aguilar, 'Agents of memory: Spanish Civil War veterans and disabled soldiers', in *War and Remembrance in the Twentieth Century*, ed. by Jay Winter and Emmanuel Sivan (Cambridge University Press, 1999), p. 85.

¹¹ Preston, 2004, p. 15.

with the compulsory No-Do newsreels contributed to shaping a targeted Spanish identity by imposing an official history and forbidding alternative accounts of the war or Franco's regime for the following four decades.

After Franco's death, the provisional government supported the ideology of reconciliation in order to guarantee a peaceful transition to democracy. On a global scale, Spain belongs to the third historical wave of democratisation of post-authoritarian societies in the twentieth century, together with other Latin American, Asian and Southern European countries.¹² Since such transitions agreed on impunity for the perpetrators, a common dilemma faced by the new democratic regimes has been how to deal with the past in a politically pragmatic way that is also ethically fair and juridical.¹³ Particularly in Spain, the Europeanisation and modernisation of the country became a political priority to the detriment of transitional justice for the victims of the war and the dictatorship. In 14 October 1977 the Amnesty Law, approved by a democratically elected Parliament, was promulgated to grant amnesty to all political prisoners and crimes committed before 15 December 1976, including crimes from both sides in the war.¹⁴ However, although not at a symbolic level, relevant measures were taken to compensate the victims of the Civil War and dictatorship on the Republican side. For instance, small compensations or pensions were granted to former political prisoners, war amputees and the relatives of the deceased.¹⁵ The transition to democracy in Spain has been considered a model of moderation and ability by analysts and experts, as it was based on a common agreement between the political elites but also was

¹² Andreas Lagenohl, 'Memory in Post-Authoritarian societies', in *Media and Cultural Memory: An International and Interdisciplinary Handbook*, ed. by Astrid Erll and Ansgar Nünning (Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 2008), p. 163.

¹³ Mark Arenhövel, *Demokratie und Erinnerung: Der Blick zurück auf Diktatur und Menschenrechtsverbrechen* (Frankfurt am Main: Campus, 2000, pp. 96-102), as cited in Lagenohl, 2008, pp. 163-164.

¹⁴ Aguilar, 2002, p. 194.

¹⁵ Álvarez Junco, 2010, pp. 152-153.

generally supported by the population.¹⁶ Despite the different contexts, similarities have been drawn between the financial and political instability in the 1930s and the 1970s, instigating the alarm of a new war. As Aguilar has explained,

although the general climate within the country created favourable prospects for the consolidation of democracy, helping to dissipate, at least in part, the ghosts of the past, the seriousness of the economic crisis and the revival of party politics, as well as the numerous terrorists attacks and social demands of the time, recalled the failures of the past and, for some, led to the fear of a repetition of events.¹⁷

Consequently, the Amnesty Law, considered necessary and positive at the time for the successful consolidation of democracy, initiated the symbolic 'pacto del olvido' (pact of forgetting or pact of oblivion), cancelling at the time the settling of scores for war and postwar crimes. The imposed silence during Francoism was then reinforced by an agreed deliberate amnesia that prolonged the failure to acknowledge the victims of Francoist repression in the country's historical memory but, above all, the victims' inability to speak out and make closure with a traumatic repressive past. For this reason, this tacit agreement is also addressed by some scholars as 'pacto del silencio' (pact of silence).

Recovering the historical memory

Nevertheless, democracy –with its consequent freedom of speech– gave rise to a fruitful cultural production that problematised Spain's relationship with its past, initiating a remarkable transformation of its collective national memory. A great deal of novels, documentaries, feature films and historical studies explored stories of the Civil War and Francoism, showing multiple perspectives that had not been permitted before. However, according to Labanyi, due to a lack of a parallel political debate

¹⁶ Álvarez Junco, 2010, p. 150.

¹⁷ Aguilar, 2002, p. 151.

about the past, the cultural discourse did not have a great impact in society.¹⁸ The real 'memory boom', Jo Labanyi claims, started in 1998, coinciding with the arrest in London of Chilean General Pinochet, accused by Spanish judge Baltasar Garzón of the torturing and murdering of Spanish people in Chile during his regime. The case received international media attention resulting in a renewed interest in the Spanish media aiming to bring to light the truth about the Republicans who disappeared during the war and the dictatorship.

Parallel to the explosion of media debates about the past, a movement to find and exhume common graves with the remains of victims of Francoism was initiated in 2000 by journalist Emilio Silva after he managed to disinter his grandfather. Like Silva, many grandchildren of those who fought and/or endured the war are willing now to investigate the gaps in history in order to break their parents' and grandparents' imposed silence. The third generation, whose members have not experienced a repressive past, is prepared to assume responsibility and agency in the recovery of Spain's historical memory. Together with Santiago Macías, Silva founded the Association for the Recovery of Historical Memory (ARMH), an NGO now with more than five thousands volunteers, which was initially conceived to facilitate the exhumation of the graves.¹⁹ However, due to the increased number of cases, the association took further action and in 2002 asked the UN for assistance, proposed a draft for a law to all political parties and organised a conference with prominent historians, writers and several war victims.²⁰ With a preface by hispanist and historian Paul Preston, the conference proceedings were published in a multidisciplinary book, *La memoria de los olvidados*, which addresses the need to

¹⁸ Jo Labanyi, 'The languages of silence: historical memory, generational transmission and witnessing in contemporary Spain', *Journal of Romance Studies*, 9, 3 (Winter 2009), pp. 26-27.

¹⁹ For further detail on the association ARMH's goals and achievements check the website: <<http://www.memoriahistorica.org.es/joomla/index.php/quienes-somos/629>> [accessed 3 June 2013].

²⁰ Jo Labanyi, 'Entrevista con Emilio Silva', *Journal of Spanish Cultural Studies* 9, 2 (July 2008), p. 147.

rescue the memory of the defeated from assorted perspectives.²¹ The ARMH also aimed at recognition of unspoken tragedies of the war and having them incorporated into history textbooks so that future generations have a more comprehensive understanding of their past.

As the number of exhumations increased, the ARMH expanded organising regional sections in different Spanish cities while other associations emerged around the new NGO *Foro por la Memoria* (Forum for Memory).²² More than five hundred bodies had been found in over sixty exhumations by the end of 2005.²³ Silva acknowledges the influence of the media, in particular from other countries, to make the exhumations possible and put pressure on the government to deal with the matter. The exhumations have located and assigned an identity to the bodies of many disappeared, allowing their relatives to voice their long-life suppressed suffering in the process. As Estela Valverde points out, 'the ARMH had initiated a rupture in Spanish memory politics', which has assisted many families of the victims to finally make closure with their troubled past after so many years.²⁴ In order to pay tribute to hundreds of victims and their families, Silva and Macías published a compilation of stories revealed during the exhumations in the book *Las fosas de Franco*.²⁵ Since the associations also aim to analyse victims' accounts of the Civil War from different perspectives, they have been collaborating with a great number of experts including historians, forensic and social anthropologists, archaeologists and psychologists. For instance, cultural anthropologist Francisco Ferrándiz has collected a wide range

²¹ Asunción Álvarez and Emilio Silva, *La memoria de los olvidados: Un debate sobre el silencio de la represión franquista* (Valladolid: Ámbito; León: Asociación para la Recuperación de la Memoria Histórica, 2004).

²² For further information about the association Foro por la memoria, its activities and reports on their exhumations check its website <<http://www.foroporlamemoria.info>> [accessed 5 June 2013].

²³ Francisco Ferrándiz, 'The return of the Civil War ghosts: the ethnography of exhumations in contemporary Spain', *Anthropology Today*, 22, 3 (June 2006), p. 8.

²⁴ Estela Valverde, 'Constructing victimhood in post-Franco's Spain: the recovery of memory by the grandchildren of victims of the Civil War and dictatorship', *Temida*, 15, 1 (2012), p. 79.

²⁵ Emilio Silva and Santiago Macías, *Las fosas de Franco: los republicanos que el dictador dejó en las cunetas* (Madrid: Temas de Hoy, 2003).

of testimonies by witnesses and relatives with the purpose of investigating the impact of the exhumations in the politics of memory in contemporary Spain.²⁶ In his analysis, Ferrándiz indicates that the testimonies of Civil War terror have now been reinforced by the multiple marks of violence found in many of the unburied corpses as they provide physical evidence of the Francoist massacres. Despite being controversial, Ferrándiz remarks, the exhumation processes are essential for a proper re-examination of the past as they trigger emotions and narratives that challenge the established politics of victimhood and hegemonic versions of a conflictive past.²⁷ As Aleksandra Hadselek has noted, 'by exhuming unmarked graves and collecting the personal testimonies of victims and witnesses, activists and historians alike attempted to make public what had until then remained in the private sphere'.²⁸

The actions of the associations have been supported by relevant symbolic political events over the 2000s. On the twentieth of November 2002 Francoism was unanimously condemned for the first time by the Spanish Parliament, which declared Franco's rebellion against a legitimate government illegal.²⁹ As promised in the electoral campaign, the new elected socialist government, led by Jose Luis Rodríguez Zapatero, approved in 2004 the creation of a Commission for the victims of the dictatorship. Conceived to elaborate policies of reparation to the victims, the Commission has collaborated closely with the different associations for the recovery of historical memory. In order to commemorate the 75th anniversary of the proclamation of the Second Spanish Republic and 70th anniversary of the beginning of the Civil War, the law 24/2006 declared 2006 the Year of the Historical Memory.

²⁶ Francisco Ferrándiz, 'Cries and whispers: Exhuming and narrating defeat in Spain today', *Journal of Spanish Cultural Studies*, 9, 2, (July 2008), 177-192.

²⁷ Ferrándiz, 2006, p. 7.

²⁸ Aleksandra Hadselek, 'Spain's "pact of silence" and the removal of Franco's statues', in *Past Laws, Present Histories*, ed. by Diane Kirkby (Acton, A.C.T.: ANU E Press, 2012), p. 172.

²⁹ Ferrándiz, 2006, p. 10.

This law recognises the Second Republic as a precedent of the current democracy and promotes the celebration of events to pay homage to those who made an effort to achieve a democratic regime.³⁰

The controversial 'Law of Historical Memory'

One year later, after ongoing political debates, a more significant and comprehensive law was passed on 26 December of 2007: the so-called 'Law of Historical Memory'.³¹ Thirty years after the Amnesty Law, the Spanish legislation was changed to start revisiting its conflicted past and provide further support to the victims. In summary, the 2007 law recognises the injustice of the crimes perpetrated during the Civil War and the dictatorship, increases the compensations to the victims, extends them to new groups of victims and provides technical and financial assistance to the associations for the recuperation of historical memory.³² The 2007 law also includes measures to improve the archives of documentation on the period like the creation of a Centre for Documentation of the Historical Memory in Salamanca.³³ Despite constituting an important step in addressing the country's conflicted past, and providing additional financial support to the victims, the 2007 law has received four major criticisms from a variety of political parties, scholars and segments of society.

Firstly, the Left, the surviving victims and their relatives accuse the law of privatising memory as it puts the emphasis on granting assistance and recognition to the

³⁰ 'Ley 24/2006, de 7 de julio, sobre declaración del año 2006 como Año de la Memoria Histórica', *BOE*, 162 (12309), 8 July 2006, <<http://www.boe.es/boe/dias/2006/07/08/pdfs/A25573-25573.pdf>> [accessed 12 May 2012].

³¹ 'Ley 52/2007, de 26 de diciembre, por la que se reconocen y amplían derechos y se establecen medidas en favor de quienes padecieron persecución o violencia durante la guerra civil y la dictadura', *BOE*, 310, 27 December 2007, <http://www.boe.es/diario_boe/txt.php?id=BOE-A-2007-22296> [accessed 11 May 2012].

³² From 2007 until 2011, the Association ARMH received a yearly grant from the Ministry of the Presidency that oscillated between Euro 45,000 and Euro 60,000 in order to undertake activities related to the victims of the Civil War. This grant covered 20% of the expenses of an annual project involving ten exhumations around the country. The remaining 80% was achieved through the work of hundreds of volunteers.

³³ For a detailed analysis of the Law content and development see Álvarez Junco, 2010.

victims on an individual basis. Consequently, the law, whose official name is 'Law 52/2007: Recognising and Extending Rights and Establishing Measures in Favour of Those who suffered Persecution or Violence during the Civil War and Dictatorship', fails to provide an official apology to the victims of Francoist crimes. José Álvarez Junco argues about the difficulty of doing so since the law does not distinguish between crimes perpetrated during the war by both sides and the illegal mass executions during Franco's regime.³⁴ Although historians, anthropologists and sociologists establish differences between different forms of violence, Santos Juliá recalls the impossibility of legally qualifying the same crime in a different manner.³⁵ However, while it is true that both sides committed unjustifiable atrocities, Aguilar maintains that the nature of the violence as well as the amount of murders committed were different.³⁶ The collaborative work by several historians including Juliá and Julián Casanova, *Víctimas de la Guerra Civil*, emphasises the difficulties in documenting definite numbers on the victims executed after the war since most of the evidence was strategically destroyed during the dictatorship or collected by Francoist historians.³⁷ Despite such difficulties, this volume, which provides a complete chronology of the facts and an accurate estimate of victims in every Spanish province, concludes that recent estimations reveal triple the amount of victims of Nationalist repression (100,000 during the war and 50,000 after) than by Republican forces (around 50,000).

Consequently, some scholars, like Álvarez Junco, criticise the term 'Law of the Historical Memory', and rather prefer to label it 'The Law of Victims of the Civil

³⁴ Álvarez Junco, 2010, pp. 149-150.

³⁵ Santos Juliá, 'Bajo el imperio de la memoria', *Revista de Occidente*, 302-306 (2006a), p. 19.

³⁶ Aguilar in Silvia Pisani, "'La memoria tiene que ser plural", dice Paloma Aguilar Fernández', *La nación*, 29 marzo 2006, <<http://www.lanacion.com.ar/792709-la-memoria-tiene-que-ser-plural-dice-paloma-aguilar-fernandez>> [accessed 1 June 2013].

³⁷ Santos Juliá (ed.), *Víctimas de la Guerra Civil* (Madrid: Temas de Hoy, 1999), pp. 407-412.

War and Francoism'.³⁸ According to him, in the absence of an official acknowledgement of Francoist mass crimes as illegal and a public apology to the victims, the popular denomination is misleading as the law fails to transform the country's historical memory. The revision of the past appears to be a very thorny issue that every democratic government in Spain avoids putting on the agenda. As Colmeiro has noted, the generations in power in the post-Franco era are not interested in remembering a past that does not bring political benefits for anyone because 'it seems that historical memory is a bad investment of cultural capital without political profitability'.³⁹ In a similar way, Álvarez Junco claims that it is too late to 'do justice' and points out the challenge to determine now, after so many years, who should take moral responsibility for those crimes, as many of the perpetrators are not alive any more.⁴⁰

Secondly, the Right, who generally rejects the need for a debate about the past, and right-leaning historians 'dismiss the process as petty, unnecessary and vengeful' contending that it will only lead to opening up old wounds and disinter a conflict that was resolved with agreed amnesty by all political parties during the transition.⁴¹ For instance, in December 2002, the Partido Popular (PP) Prime Minister Jose María Aznar openly rejected a possible official apology to the victims of Francoism: 'I don't have to apologise for anything. The history of Spanish Transition is a history of profound reconciliation, and we should continue working on that basis'.⁴² Similarly, in 2007 Aznar's successor Mariano Rajoy, currently Spain's Prime Minister, disdained the efforts made by the Socialist government to recover the historical memory: 'Who cares about the so-called historical memory? Go and ask an 18-year-

³⁸ Álvarez Junco, 2010, p. 161.

³⁹ Colmeiro, 2005, p. 21, p. 24.

⁴⁰ Álvarez Junco, 2010, p. 160.

⁴¹ Ferrándiz, 2006, p. 11.

⁴² Silva and Macías, 2003, p. 128.

old what the Republic is or who Franco was'.⁴³ Álvarez Junco also notes the emergence of 'revisionist' publications by non-professional conservative historians –mainly Pío Moa and César Vidal– who argue that the current revision of the past might have detrimental effects for everyone, given that both sides committed atrocities.⁴⁴

Thirdly, the involvement of the judicial system in the exhumation of the mass graves appears to be another problematic area of the law. Many judges have rejected getting involved in this legal process, arguing that amnesty for those crimes was granted in 1977 and, in particular, after seeing the negative consequences for the only judge who dared to support the cause.⁴⁵ Judge Baltasar Garzón generated great controversy in relation to the subject of exhumation and seems to be alone in his fight to investigate Francoist crimes in the judicial system. He has encountered numerous hindrances in going ahead with exhumations since 2008, when he commanded nineteen exhumations, including of the grave where the Spanish poet Federico García Lorca is presumably buried.⁴⁶ In Isabel Coixet's Goya award-winning documentary, *Escuchando al juez Garzón* (2011), the judge acknowledges his surprise when discovering the lack of an official document that should include an index of the number of victims and a map of the common graves' location. In 2010 he was suspended from judicial activity in Spain pending trial on several charges, among them abusing his powers in investigating Francoist crimes.

⁴³ 'Mariano Rajoy: "A quién le importa eso de la memoria histórica"', *Diario de Córdoba*, 27 March 2007, <http://www.diariocordoba.com/noticias/cordobaandalucia/mariano-rajoy-a-quien-le-importa-eso-de-memoria-historica-_310852.html> [accessed 11 June 2013].

⁴⁴ Álvarez Junco, 2010, p. 154.

⁴⁵ Valme Cortés and Natalia Junquera, 'Ningún juez quiere abrir la fosa de García Lorca... ni ninguna otra', *El País*, 19 September 2012, <http://politica.elpais.com/politica/2012/09/19/actualidad/1348064463_366485.html> [accessed 13 June 2013].

⁴⁶ Lorca's family was never supportive and maintained a controversial attitude that became the focus of the media for a long time and did not contribute to the completion of the exhumations.

After his experience, Garzón criticised the ‘Law of Historical Memory’ on the grounds that ‘it represented an improvement although with many setbacks and, in the end, with legal vacuums which greatly complicate the search, location and exhumation of the bodies. And about the reparation of memory, not a word’.⁴⁷ The judge also denounced the lack of a Truth and Reconciliation Commission to investigate the crimes, but above all, the fact that there was no intention of creating one. As explained by Andreas Langenohl, in other post-authoritarian societies such commissions have been a model of international practice and an essential strategy for confronting a criminal past.⁴⁸ For instance, the South African Commission promoted national reconciliation aimed at public acknowledgement of the victims’ suffering and an apology by the perpetrators after listening to the victims’ stories.⁴⁹ In the prologue to journalist Natalia Junquera’s recent book *Valientes*, dealing with victims and survivors of Francoism, Garzón urges the need for further investigations so that the country can surmount its contested past:

Not only the example of other countries’ experiences but common sense indicates that the reconciliation of a country after events like the ones experienced by Spain can’t be based on oblivion. Every time it has been tried, the experience has been negative. It is necessary to deal out justice and establish the truth of what happened, not only for the obligation that we have towards the victims, but also for the country’s historical memory. It is important that future generations of Spaniards receive an education, whose absence ballasted a whole generation.⁵⁰

Finally, Nieves Montesinos also criticises the individual perspective of the Law of the Historical Memory in terms of gender, as it silences and promotes the invisibility of

⁴⁷ Anabel Díez, ‘Garzón: “Mi absolución ha sido la condena para las víctimas del franquismo”’, *El País*, 15 May 2013, <http://politica.elpais.com/politica/2013/05/14/actualidad/1368561333_541334.html> [accessed 20 May 2013].

⁴⁸ Langenohl, 2008, p. 165.

⁴⁹ Langenohl, 2008, p. 168.

⁵⁰ Natalia Junquera, *Valientes* (Madrid: Aguilar, 2011), p. 17.

women as a collective.⁵¹ The law, Montesinos remarks, does not recognise the terrible injustice that all women had to suffer from the beginning of the war and until the end of the dictatorship: the loss of full rights gained during the Second Republic and consequent subordination to men.⁵² Consequently, the law also fails to address and compensate for the negative consequences that impacted women in the Francoist patriarchal system, which strengthened and legitimised gender stereotypes as well as assigning different roles and opportunities to men and women.

Academic debate on memory and amnesia

Nations are not amnesic. Amnesty is not amnesia. Tradition is a resource of collective memory, but there are also other less offensive ones. Governments are not amnesic either although sometimes they try to be 'forgetters'. Curiously enough, their way of forgetting is usually proselytising, since their goal is that the rest forgets as well.

Mario Benedetti⁵³

The debate on memory and amnesia in twentieth century Spain has been the center of attention in academia in the last two decades, including scholars from different disciplines. After Franco's death, historians discovered new sources and added new lines of investigation that enhanced the knowledge about the past in academic circles by opening a new debate about the Civil War and the dictatorship. However, those findings did not reach the general public and were rarely disseminated by the media. In the second part of the 1990s an unprecedented interest in the study of memory and its relationship to history began. Paloma Aguilar was one of the first

⁵¹ Nieves Montesinos Sánchez, 'TIC, mujeres y Transición Española', *Cuestiones de género: de la igualdad y la diferencia*, 8 (2013), pp. 10-11.

⁵² Montesinos Sánchez, 2013, p. 11.

⁵³ Mario Benedetti, 'Variaciones sobre el olvido', *El País*, 6 September 1987, <http://elpais.com/diario/1987/09/06/opinion/557877611_850215.html> [accessed 15 May 2014].

historians to explore the influence of the historical memory of the Civil War on the transition to democracy by examining a wide range of sources such as official newsreels, school textbooks, contemporary historical research, memoirs, official documents, legislation, and monuments.⁵⁴ In her study, *Memoria y olvido de la Guerra Civil* (1996), Aguilar analyses the political discourse relating to the war, how memory was transmitted and the impact of such memory in the process of democratisation. Aguilar suggests that consensus was possible in the transition because politicians agreed to the so-called pact of oblivion: 'it was a question of forgetting the resentments of the past, of 'wiping the slate clean' for all, of retaining the lessons of history without stirring up the past, in order to be able to build a future of democratic peace and harmony together'.⁵⁵

The efforts of historians like Aguilar, however, were not always well received. For instance, Juliá rejects the existence of a pact of oblivion insisting on a saturation of memory about the war that can be found in numerous monographic studies.⁵⁶ Juliá has constantly shown his concern about the potential confusion between memory and history, which he claims to be instigated in the last decade by the social movement of recuperation of the historical memory. Thus, the historian openly disapproves of the sudden increased interest in memory to study the past drawing on personal experiences as it appears to be replacing the objective approach given by history, founded on facts and documents:

For several years we have been living, not only in Spain, under the sign of memory. Before, around thirty years ago, we were interested in what had happened during the Republic and the Civil War: to establish the facts, to interpret texts, to analyse the situations. Today, when a new generation of historians, authors, culture critics

⁵⁴ Paloma Aguilar, *Memoria y olvido de la guerra civil* (Madrid: Alianza, 1996). This thesis used the English language edition, which was published some years later, in 2002.

⁵⁵ Aguilar, 2002, p. 269.

⁵⁶ Santos Juliá, 'Saturados de memoria', *El País*, 21 July 1996, <http://elpais.com/diario/1996/07/21/espana/837900021_850215.html> [accessed 15 May 2012].

born around the transition is in the front line, what has happened is no longer as interesting as its memory; not the facts but its representations, which acquire a sort of autonomous existence, independent of the represented facts.⁵⁷

While his prolific contribution as a historian is invaluable, his negative position towards memory has been contested by other scholars. In particular, Francisco Espinosa disagrees with Juliá's argument denying a pact of oblivion in the transition. According to Espinosa, the transition period (1977-1981) continued treating the repression as a taboo topic and rather 'transmitted a clear message: reconciliation equated oblivion and memory equated resentment'.⁵⁸ Espinosa also claims that Francoist repression has only started being investigated in the 1990s by those historians, including himself, who were not scared to break the continued silence. A relevant publication from the late 1990s that tackles the violent nature of Franco's dictatorship is Nicolás Sartorius and Javier Alfaya, *La memoria insumisa*.⁵⁹ The volume, partly autobiographical, provides a broad revision of diverse aspects of such a brutal period: repression, torture, execution, censorship and alienation through National Catholicism.

Juliá's attitude towards memory in multiple publications has not only instigated reactions from other historians but also from other professionals. For instance, film director Günter Schwaiger briefly responded to his recent newspaper article 'Trampas de la memoria', in which Juliá criticises the memoirs of several authors on grounds that memory is selective, contentious and biased.⁶⁰ Schwaiger wonders in a sarcastic tone whether Spanish historians 'have developed such an academic arrogance that the victims have to ask for permission from historians in order to

⁵⁷ Juliá, 2006b, p. 7.

⁵⁸ Francisco Espinosa, 'De saturaciones y olvidos. Reflexiones en torno a un pasado que no puede pasar', *Hispania Nova. Revista de Historia Contemporánea*, 7 (2007), p. 425.

⁵⁹ Nicolás Sartorius and Javier Alfaya, *La memoria insumisa. Sobre la dictadura de Franco* (Madrid: Espasa, 1999).

⁶⁰ Santos Juliá, 'Trampas de la memoria', *El País*, 14 octubre 2006b.

know if their suffering was true or just an illusion?’⁶¹ Yet Sebastiaan Faber claims the opposite, that historians feel threatened, as ‘the recent widening and politicization of the debate –fueled by a remarkable amount of non-academic, politicized books, documentaries, debates, reportage, and events about the Republic, the Civil War and Francoism– (...) has diminished historians’ power and prestige’.⁶²

In spite of these discussions, at the beginning of the twenty-first century, the memory of Francoist repression and its victims is still being investigated and remains the centre of a diversity of monographs on Francoist concentration camps and prisons,⁶³ on the violence perpetrated by Francoist troops during the war and during the dictatorship,⁶⁴ and on the lost generations of Republicans’ children during the dictatorship.⁶⁵ In 2006 and 2007 special issues with multiple contributions appeared in the journal *Hispania Nova*, exploring the relationship between generations and the current efforts by the movements to recuperate the memory of Francoist repression.⁶⁶ An essential study on the topic is Paul Preston’s latest comprehensive volume *The Spanish Holocaust* (2012).⁶⁷ Franco’s merciless plan of extermination has been purposely assigned such a controversial title, as Preston

⁶¹ Günter Schwaiger, ‘¿Historia sin testigos?’, *El País*, 19 October 2006, <http://elpais.com/diario/2006/10/19/opinion/1161208810_850215.html> [accessed 3 March 2012].

⁶² Sebastiaan Faber, ‘The debate about Spain’s past and the crisis of academic legitimacy: The case of Santos Juliá’, *The Colorado Review of Hispanic Studies*, 5 (Fall, 2007), p. 175.

⁶³ Javier Rodrigo, *Los campos de concentración franquistas. Entre la historia y la memoria* (Madrid: Siete Mares, 2003) and Carme Molinero, Margarita Sala and Jaume Sobrequés (eds.), *Una inmensa prisión: Los campos de concentración y las prisiones durante la guerra civil y el franquismo* (Barcelona: Crítica, 2003).

⁶⁴ Francisco Espinosa, *La columna de la muerte: El avance del ejército franquista de Sevilla a Badajoz* (Barcelona: Crítica, 2003); Julián Casanova (ed.), *Morir, matar, sobrevivir. La violencia en la dictadura de Franco* (Barcelona: Crítica, 2002).

⁶⁵ Ricard Vinyes, Montse Armengou and Ricard Belis, *Los niños perdidos del franquismo* (Barcelona: Debolsillo, 2003).

⁶⁶ Julio Aróstegui and Esteban Canales (eds.), ‘Dossier: Generaciones y memoria de la represión franquista: un balance de los movimientos por la memoria’, *Hispania Nova. Revista de Historia Contemporánea*, 6 (2006), 193-847, <<http://hispanianova.rediris.es/6/dossier.htm>> [accessed 2 December 2012] and 7 (2007), 303-843, <<http://hispanianova.rediris.es/7/index.htm>> [accessed 2 December 2012].

⁶⁷ Paul Preston, *The Spanish Holocaust: Inquisition and Extermination in 20th Century Spain* (New York: W.W. Norton & Co, 2012).

explains in the prologue, 'not just because of its extent but also because its resonances with systematic murder should be invoked in the Spanish case, as they are in those of Germany or Russia'.⁶⁸

The contribution by hispanists to the debate about re-examining Spain's repressive past concentrates rather on how memory has shaped Spain's cultural identity and the different attitudes towards silence. Colmeiro, for instance, presents a very pessimistic viewpoint of Spain's memory, joining those scholars who claim that the country suffers a memory crisis.⁶⁹ According to him, there is still a clear division between those wanting to forget the past and those wanting to accept it, which should be resolved in an open debate that the country has been avoiding for decades. Colmeiro not only criticises the lack of political actions to recover the past but also blames the nation for having a passive attitude towards memory and being part of a collective amnesia that consents to oblivion. 'Spain's 'desmemoria', Colmeiro contends, 'implies a lack of voluntary historical memory'.⁷⁰

In contrast, Labanyi challenges the notion that silence indicates absence of memory and claims that the lack of discussion in the public sphere does not necessarily mean that people forget.⁷¹ Drawing on Passerini's work on memory, Labanyi analyses the different meanings of practices of silence by looking at personal stories transmitted orally. Silence can represent different things, Passerini claims, but it is hard to listen to silence as it is hard for the defeated to articulate their experience.⁷² Labanyi's interpretations of silence lead her to disregard trauma theory, since her findings reveal that the silence of the interviewees for her study is not exclusively due to having experienced a traumatic past. Instead, Labanyi points out that in some

⁶⁸ Preston, 2012, p. xii.

⁶⁹ Colmeiro, 2005, p. 13.

⁷⁰ Colmeiro, 2005, p. 35.

⁷¹ Labanyi, 2009, pp. 23-35.

⁷² Luisa Passerini, 'Memories between silence and oblivion', in *Memory, History, Nation: Contested Pasts*, ed. by Katharine Hodgkin and Susannah Radstone (New Brunswick, NJ: Transaction Publishers, 2006) pp. 238-54.

cases silence was actively chosen as a strategy for survival by the war's losers, sometimes prolonged over several generations –as the discussion of some of the analysed films will reveal– but also as an attitude of defiance.⁷³

Mediatized memory: dealing with the past through cultural products

As already mentioned, the Civil War is one of the most significant events in the history of Spain. Literature has played an essential role in enhancing our understanding of the conflict through a wide range of representations of collective memory over different historical periods as well as for new literary generations. Hispanist Maryse Bertrand, who has written one of the most comprehensive bodies of bibliographic work on the Civil War, asserts that from 1936 until 1993 around 1300 novels on the conflict were written by national and foreign authors.⁷⁴ As Bertrand indicates, most of the literary output was created by Spaniards who stayed in the country, followed by those who went into exile, whose work decreased after the 1970s, whereas foreign authors were most productive during wartime. From 1975 until 1980 there was an abundance of memoirs, many of them about important Spanish political figures in the Republic and the war.⁷⁵ In the 1990s the emergence of autobiographical and self-referential texts was resumed by some of the most representative writers in the country including Jorge Semprún, Antonio Muñoz Molina, Manuel Vázquez Montalbán, Juan Eduardo Zuñiga and Rosa Regás.⁷⁶

The first decade of the twenty-first century was also particularly productive in creating a literary narrative that depicts the Civil War and its aftermath from the point of view of the defeated. Since the beginning of the exhumations in 2000, the

⁷³ Labanyi, 2009, pp. 29-31.

⁷⁴ Maryse Bertrand, 'La guerra civil española y la creación literaria', *Anthropos*, 148 (1993), p. 6.

⁷⁵ Álvarez Junco, 2010, p. 153.

⁷⁶ The Instituto Cervantes website has a detailed list of the most relevant novels that deal with Spain's historical memory from 1989 until 2005.

<http://www.cervantes.de/es/03_bibliothek/bibliographie/memoria/memoria_narrativa.html> [accessed 15 June 2013].

postwar repression has become the subject of best-selling books. Many of these novels, set in the immediate postwar years, recreate the dark, oppressive and violent environment during wartime and Franco's dictatorship, reviving also a wide range of silenced memories of repression.⁷⁷ Another trend of contemporary novels reflects the current preoccupation of younger generations with investigating and recovering the past. The precursor of this retrospective narrative is Javier Cercas' *Soldados de Salamina* (2001), a novel which emphasises the ability of literature to preserve memory.⁷⁸ In addition to these works, in the 2000s there was furthermore a resurgence in the testimonial genre. In the same spirit of the already mentioned book by Silva and Macías (2003), several investigative journalists and writers compiled the testimonies of an array of eyewitnesses of Francoist repression. For example, such publications explored how non-famous people experienced the war and the postwar period,⁷⁹ denounced the exploitation of war prisoners during Francoism,⁸⁰ or revealed the life of *guerrilleros* against Franco, hidden in the mountains during the first decade of the postwar.⁸¹ Some survivors and witnesses decided to write their own memoirs of the repression.⁸² Testimonial literature by marginalised groups, as Ramblado points out, has a primary political function: to give voice to those who lost it and use it as a way of denouncing the past and

⁷⁷ Some of the most popular fictional works are Manuel Rivas, *El lápiz del carpintero* (Madrid: Grupo Santillana Ediciones, 1998), Jorge Semprún, *Veinte años y un día* (Barcelona: Tusquets Editores, 2003), and Isaac Rosa, *El vano ayer* (Barcelona: Seix Barral, 2004).

⁷⁸ Having sold more than a million copies and been translated into more than twenty languages, Cercas' best-seller was well received by both readers and critics, and praised by prominent writers including Mario Vargas Llosa, John Maxwell Coetzee and Susan Sontag.

⁷⁹ Carlos Elordi, *Los años difíciles. El testimonio de los protagonistas anónimos de la guerra civil y la posguerra* (Madrid: Aguilar, 2002); Jorge M Reverte & Socorro Thomas, *Hijos de la guerra: Testimonios y recuerdos* (Madrid: Temas de Hoy, 2004).

⁸⁰ Isaías Lafuente, *Esclavos por la patria: La explotación de los presos bajo el franquismo* (Madrid: Temas de Hoy, 2002).

⁸¹ Alfonso Domingo, *El canto del búho. La vida en el monte de los guerrilleros antifranquistas* (Madrid: Oberón, 2006).

⁸² Luis Elío, *Soledad de ausencia. Entre las sombras de la muerte* (Pamplona: Pamiela 2002) or Joan Sans Sicart, *Comisario de choque: La guerra que nunca imaginé* (Lleida: Editorial Milenio, 2003).

rebellious against the present.⁸³ Despite being limited, a female perspective of the time is conveyed in a few novels including *La voz dormida* (Dulce Chacón, 2002) and *Las trece rosas* (Jesús Ferrero, 2003), which denounce the torture, humiliation and tragic end experienced by female political prisoners.

Although literature has been paramount in the reconstruction of a collective memory of the war and its aftermath after Franco's dictatorship, visual media, in particular cinema and television, have also been widely used to explore new portrayals of the past. The major cases of crisis in twentieth century around the world –two world wars, Holocaust, national liberation movements– have been steadily interpreted and represented by the media. As Marcia Landy points out, such representations of the past have become 'a barometer of the social and cultural life of the last decades of the twentieth century'.⁸⁴ Since its inception, cinema has become an effective medium to reach wider audiences, which offers the possibility of recreating the same historical events from a wide range of perspectives, correlating with the multiple interpretations of history. Richard Francaviglia and Jerry Rodnitzky stress the potential of films to transmit the intensity and complexity of history but also to recreate emotions such as fear, anger or despair, which may have been experienced in critical historical periods.⁸⁵ However, as acknowledged by Robert Rosenstone, many historians distrust the historical film, arguing inaccuracy, distortion of facts or romanticism of people, events and movements.⁸⁶ Rosenstone, who has extensively written about the relationship between film and history, contests the widespread misconception that books explain contents whereas films show

⁸³ María de la Cinta Ramblado Minero, '¿Compromiso, oportunismo o manipulación? El mundo de la cultura y los movimientos por la memoria', *Hispania Nova. Revista de Historia Contemporánea*, 7 (2007), p. 660.

⁸⁴ Marcia Landy (ed.), *The Historical Film: History and Memory in Media* (New Brunswick, N.J.: Rutgers University Press, 2001), p. 1.

⁸⁵ Richard V Francaviglia and Jerry Rodnitzky (eds.), *Lights, Camera, History: Portraying the Past in Film* (Arlington: TAMU Press, 2007), p. viii.

⁸⁶ Robert Rosenstone, 'The historical film: looking at the past in a postliterate age', in Landy, 2001, p. 50.

distortions. Instead, he argues that historical films can challenge our concept of history; he does this by exploring the contributions of a variety of national cinemas around the world to overcome the limitations of written history.⁸⁷ Jordan and Morgan-Tamosunas also defend the suitability of cinema to cross-examine historical events and even question the idea of historical truth. They argue that ‘the representation of history in cinema raises even more complex questions because of the particular qualities of film as the medium most closely able to stimulate reality through its moving images and the unique relationship that exists between the spectator and the text’.⁸⁸ Casanova contributes to this argument, stating that cinema ‘transmits a clear tension between different memories, individual or collective, and projects it on the present and its political and cultural debates’.⁸⁹

As outlined in Chapter One, the Spanish Civil War has been, since its outbreak, a popular film set for both national and international productions.⁹⁰ Parallel to –and in many cases drawing on– the variety of literary genres to represent Spain’s past, a wide range of film genres and narratives have been explored in order to depict a traumatic event which divided the country into two irreconcilable sides. Several scholars have observed a clear preoccupation with revisiting the past in post-Franco cinema.⁹¹ Although a nostalgia boom was simultaneously happening in other contemporary Western societies, Jordan and Morgan-Tamosunas argue that

⁸⁷ Robert Rosenstone, *Visions of the Past: The Challenge of Film to Our Idea of History* (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 1995).

⁸⁸ Jordan and Morgan-Tamosunas, 1998, p. 16.

⁸⁹ Julián Casanova, ‘Guerra y dictadura en el cine español’, *El país*, 8 September 2008, <http://elpais.com/diario/2008/09/08/opinion/1220824812_850215.html> [accessed 10 October 2012].

⁹⁰ Currently, the Internet Movie Database (IMBD) shows a total of 191 films (including fiction films, documentaries and TV series) related with the Spanish Civil War.

<<http://www.imdb.com/search/keyword?keywords=spanish-civil-war>> [accessed 20 February 2014].

⁹¹ For a detailed overview on historical films in the post Franco era (1975-1999) please see Chapter One in Jordan and Morgan-Tamosunas, 1998, pp. 15-60; David Archibald, ‘Reframing the past: representations of the Spanish Civil War in popular Spanish cinema’, in *Spanish Popular Cinema*, ed. by Antonio Lázaro Reboll and Andrew Willis (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2004), pp. 76-91; and chapters 8 and 9 in Vicente Sánchez-Biosca, *Cine y Guerra Civil española. Del mito a la memoria* (Madrid: Alianza Editorial, 2006), pp. 275-327.

Spain's insistence on recuperating the past was mainly motivated by the need to articulate alternative perspectives to the official version imposed by Francoism for four decades.⁹² According to them, this explains the popularity of the historical film during the transition period (1976-82) as of the 'nearly three hundred historical films produced since the 1970s, more than half are set in the Second Republic, Civil War and Francoism'.⁹³ When censorship had finished, the documentary genre reappeared in films aiming to investigate historical truth. In order to provide a new analysis of the past, this emerging trend of documentaries avoided No-Do newsreels' rhetorical and didactic style, which had characterised film reports from 1943 until 1977. Instead, these new documentaries presented silenced viewpoints and a novel reflection on Spain's contested past. Jordan and Morgan-Tamosunas present a useful selection of influential documentaries made after Franco's death that pose questions about the Civil War; these include (among other) documentaries by Jaime Camino, Diego Abad de Santillán, Basilio Martín Patino, and Jaime Chavarri.⁹⁴

In an attempt to analyse the defeat of the Second Republic and the aftermath of the war, *La vieja memoria* (Jaime Camino, 1977) and *¿Por qué perdimos la guerra?* (Diego Abad de Santillán, 1978) include interviews with crucial former politicians interspersed with archival footage. Other documentaries examine the dictatorship from a darkly humorous approach like *Queridísimos verdugos* (Basilio Martín Patino, 1977) by addressing the anachronistic execution by garrotte method and *El desencanto* (Jaime Chavarri, 1976), which deals with the model of the national patriarchal Francoist family. Another relevant documentary from the period is Patino's *Canciones para después de una guerra* (made in 1971 but only released in

⁹² Jordan and Morgan-Tamosunas, 1998, p. 16.

⁹³ Jordan and Morgan-Tamosunas, 1998, p. 16.

⁹⁴ Jordan and Morgan-Tamosunas, 1998, pp. 20-21.

1976), which denounces Francoist manipulation of cinema.⁹⁵ Finally, Cecilia and José Juan's Bartolomé's *Después de* (1981), as mentioned in Chapter One, is significant as an essential testimonial document of the polarised climate during the transition, whose historical value has been widely overlooked. At a recent interview, Bartolomé highlights the crucial role of the documentary genre in the reconstruction of memory on the grounds that 'you can recuperate sound, images, photographs and give a more direct image than the simple article, the simple essay and the simple book. [It is] much more impressive for the audience, since the audiovisual image is much more approachable than an essay, regardless how well documented it is. And it reaches a broader audience'.⁹⁶

The political documentary that attempted Spain's historical memory practically disappeared during the next two decades with some exceptions, such as *Madrid* (Martín Patino, 1987). Colmeiro argues that *Madrid* is one of the most interesting explorations of historical memory in Spanish cinema, as it provides a new image of Spain from the perspective of the present in a hybrid form that combines fiction with documentary.⁹⁷ Following the trend of the testimonial genre in literature, in the 2000s a new documentary revival, strongly focused on testimonies by the defeated, took place. Rather than examining the conflict itself and its aftermath, these documentaries describe ordinary people's first-hand experiences and daily life during those difficult periods. To this effect, many films incorporate interviews or accounts with eyewitnesses –most probably the last war survivors– who can finally voice their silenced stories. Some of the protagonists of these films include the Republican children who were sent to Russia before the end of the war, (*Los niños de Rusia*, Javier Camino, 2001), members of the International Brigades who supported the Republican side (*Extranjeros de sí mismos*, Javier Rioyo y José Luis

⁹⁵ Jordan and Morgan-Tamosunas, 1998, pp. 20-21.

⁹⁶ Contreras de la Llave, 2008, p. 38.

⁹⁷ Colmeiro, 2005, p. 190.

López-Linares, 2000) or the maquis, *guerrilleros* who fought against Franco after the Civil War (*La guerrilla de la memoria*, Javier Corcuera, 2001).⁹⁸ To a lesser extent, the memories of women have also been foregrounded in a few non-fiction productions, contrasting those involved in the antifascist fight (*Mujeres en pie de guerra*, Susana Koska, 2004) with those who survived the war at the rearguard (*La guerra cotidiana*, Daniel and Jaime Serra, 2002). I will return to discuss Koska's film in detail in Chapter Five.

In terms of fiction films, the early 1980s started a trend of a more nostalgic and personalised cinema that continued in the following decades. Jordan and Morgan-Tamosunas point out that during the 1980s and 1990s there was a noticeable increase in the production of popular movies and art-house films 'which self-consciously reflect on a whole range of relationships between the past and the present, reality and representation, history and memory'.⁹⁹ A great number of fictional representations of the war and the dictatorship were literary adaptations, as they were promoted by the socialist party PSOE film policy from 1983. Two of the most influential film adaptations are *Los santos inocentes* (Mario Camus, 1984) based on Miguel Delibes homonymous novel (1982) and *La lengua de las mariposas* (José Luis Cuerda, 1999), integrating three of the short stories of Manuel Rivas' *¿Que me quieres, amor?* (1995). *Los santos inocentes* renders a grotesque image of the still existing feudal system in some rural areas of Spain in the 1960s. The film denounces the abuse of power of the masters over their servants and the extreme class differences of the time. *La lengua de las mariposas* is a remarkable film because the impact of the war in Galicia remains unexplored, and also because of the emphasis placed on a known reality that has been rarely recognised in

⁹⁸ Sánchez-Biosca, 2006, pp. 313-316.

⁹⁹ Jordan and Morgan-Tamosunas, 1998, p. 17.

Spanish cinema: 'the moral ambiguity of becoming victim and executioner at once'.¹⁰⁰

Literary adaptations about the war and dictatorship continued to be popular into the 2000s, translating the popularity of novels about the past into the screen. The huge success of the novel *Soldados de Salamina* led to the filmic adaptation with the same title only two years later by director David Trueba. Remarkably, Trueba chose to replace Javier Cercas' character in the novel with a female writer, Lola Cercas, 'adding a pseudo lesbian incentive to the storyline'.¹⁰¹ Although the film was not considered as noteworthy as the novel, it was selected to represent Spain in the competition for the Oscar for best foreign film. Other popular filmic adaptations of this decade are *Las trece rosas* (Emilio Martínez Lázaro, 2007) and *Los girasoles ciegos* (José Luis Cuerda, 2008), which will be briefly discussed later in this thesis.

In this brief overview, in spite of the volume of work on the subject of Franco and the postwar period, one can observe the small percentage of films providing a feminine perspective on these historical events both in front of and behind the camera. In what follows, I will survey: 1) women-authored films tackling Spain's past made in the decade prior to the start date for my study, and 2) non-stereotypical representations of female characters in films on the subject by male directors. Apart from the already mentioned Miró's *Tu nombre envenena mis sueños* (1996), Barbara Zecchi highlights three other films offering a feminine version of this period of the country's past directed from the 1990s.¹⁰² Despite representing the perspectives of very different women, these films, Zecchi notes, depict protagonists in a quandary where they are forced to choose between their political stance and their private life. *Entre rojas* (Azucena Rodríguez, 1994) is set in a women's prison in the middle 1970s. *Los años oscuros* (Arantxa Lazcano, 1993) tackles the postwar era through

¹⁰⁰ Colmeiro, 2005, p. 194.

¹⁰¹ Sánchez-Biosca, 2006, p. 310.

¹⁰² Zecchi, 2014, pp. 126-127.

the gaze of a girl. *Yoyes* (Helena Taberna, 2000) portrays the life of the first female ETA leader in the 1970s who, after resigning from her post, was killed by a member of her former association in 1986.

There is evidence of non-stereotypical female characters in films by male directors about the war and postwar period. One of the most acclaimed films is the musical tragicomedy *¡Ay Carmela!* (Carlos Saura, 1996), based on the play by José Sanchís Sinisterra.¹⁰³ Unlike her partner, the female protagonist Carmela 'is presented as a positive figure that cannot be bought and sold'. As David Archibald puts it, Carmela becomes an inspirational example for rebelling against oppression despite her tragic end.¹⁰⁴ Furthermore, the untraditional role of women as *milicianas* (militiawomen) or activist women has been portrayed in several war films with female protagonists. Some examples are *Libertarias*, (Vicente Aranda, 1995), *Silencio roto*, (Montxo Armendáriz, 2002) and the literary adaptation of *Las trece rosas* (Emilio Martínez Lázaro, 2008). All these films will be commented in Chapter Five before analysing *Mujeres en pie de guerra*. A recent study by Juan Carlos Ibañez has noted that fiction films dealing with the past made in the first decade of the twenty-first century frequently incorporate strong female protagonists surrounded by other significant secondary female characters; and that these characters differ from previous stereotypical representations.¹⁰⁵ According to him, these films deal with the representation of gender-specific topics and portray an unusual perspective on the war and the postwar period. Most of the characters that Ibañez describes (Lucía in *Silencio roto*, Lola in *Soldados de Salamina* and Ofelia and Mercedes in *Pan's Labyrinth*) have been created by male directors as his sample only contains two

¹⁰³ Colmeiro, 2005, p. 192.

¹⁰⁴ Archibald, 2004, p. 84.

¹⁰⁵ Juan Carlos Ibañez, 'La Guerra Civil en el cine español de la primera década del siglo XXI', in *Memoria Histórica e Identidad en Cine y Televisión*, ed. by Juan Carlos Ibañez and Francesca Anania (Zamora: Comunicación Social Ediciones y Publicaciones, 2010), pp. 98-100.

films directed by women (*La buena nueva*, Helena Taberna, 2008 and *La mujer del anarquista*, Marie Noelle and Peter Sehr, 2008).¹⁰⁶

A genre that remains under-explored is the filmic adaptations of women-authored novels and tales depicting this period of the past. Colmeiro questions the lack of adaptations of the work by remarkable female writers such as Carmen Martín Gaité, Ana María Matute or Josefina Aldecoa.¹⁰⁷ However, in the twenty-first century some women directors are showing interest for these authors. Inspired by Martín Gaité's short story *De su ventana a la mía*,¹⁰⁸ Paula Ortiz's debut film *De tu ventana a la mía* (2011) presents a powerful narration of feminine self-improvement that intertwines three stories set in different periods. In my interview with Rosa Vergés, the director expresses her wish to make a film about one of Matute's novels and, like Colmeiro, wonders why it has not been done before.¹⁰⁹ One of the most successfully adapted women-authored novels in the new century is Dulce Chacón's *La voz dormida*, which highlights the significant role of women in the fight against Fascism and denounces the terrible conditions in women's prisons during the dictatorship. The film with the same name, directed by Benito Zambrano in 2011, was granted three Goya awards and was pre-selected to compete in the Oscars.

Another film about the war?

As discussed in this chapter, since the transition period a steady number of novels and films have depicted Spain's controversial past focusing on the perspective of the defeated, a trend that has continued into the twenty-first century. Since the films during the dictatorship were strictly one-sided, I have observed that much of the

¹⁰⁶ This film has not been included in the film sample because it is a Franco-German production by a French woman director.

¹⁰⁷ Colmeiro, 2005, p. 192.

¹⁰⁸ This short story is published in Carmen Martín Gaité, *Desde la ventana (Enfoque femenino de la literatura española)* (Madrid: Espasa Calpe, 1987).

¹⁰⁹ Although it was not only focused on films portraying the past, in March 2015 CIMA organised the cycle 'Mujeres de cine' including four screenings of films by women directors based on female authors' novels. The cycle included Vergés' *Iris*, which will be analysed in the next chapter.

recent academic debate around contemporary representations of the war centres on the difficulty of making an impartial film about the fratricidal conflict. Some scholars argue that most post-Franco films tend to present a reverse dichotomy in order to compensate for the lack of representation of the defeated during Franco's regime. In such films, Nationalists are generally portrayed as the evil executioners whereas Republicans are presented as the innocent victims. José María Caparrós Lera, for instance, asserts that the films about the war have not been objective –they are as subjective as the novels, memoirs or the history books.¹¹⁰ In his view, the bias seems logical and likely to continue, until at least a time when there are no eyewitnesses who have suffered the consequences of the war. Other scholars argue that this polarisation is directly influenced by the director's or producer's political views, who might have access to more funds when a like-minded party is in power. In a more recent study, José Vidal Pelaz López and Matteo Tomasoni examine eighteen films about the war directed during the first decade of the twenty-first century.¹¹¹ According to them, the selection of films offers a biased vision of the war in accordance with the movements of the historical memory claimed by the left-wing parties. In considering the representations of the war and the dictatorship, historian Julián Casanova discusses the need for more critical and objective films: 'In order to tackle it (the recuperation of the past), we need the cinema, its narrative efficiency and the power of its images. A cinema that is not only an instrument of denunciation, but that also provides a will of knowledge, and transforms the past into a lesson of tolerance for the youth'.¹¹²

Nevertheless, despite all the arguments presenting the advantages of cinema to deal with a contested past, there seems to be a widespread rejection of Spanish audiences of this particular theme. The above mentioned study by Pelaz López and

¹¹⁰ Caparrós Lera, 2006.

¹¹¹ José-Vidal Pelaz López and Matteo Tomasoni, 'Cine y Guerra civil. El conflicto que no termina', *Diacronie. Studi di Storia Contemporanea*, 7 (2011), pp. 4-5.

¹¹² Casanova, 2008.

Tomasoni argues that Spanish spectators are not –and have never been– particularly interested in watching films about the conflict.¹¹³ Thus, the negative reaction ‘another film/novel about the war’ to both cinematic and literary representations of the event and its aftermath has become popular not only in mainstream society but also in critics’ reviews, academic studies and newspaper articles.¹¹⁴ Some authors have even taken advantage of the expression for commercial purposes. For instant, Isaac Rosa has edited and criticised his first novel *La mala memoria* (*The bad memory*, 1999), renaming it *¡Otra maldita novela sobre la guerra civil!* (*Another bloody novel about the war*, 2007). The second edition itself constitutes a criticism of the emergence of excessive volumes of books focused on the war. Javier Cercas, in contrast, reflects on the importance of novels about this critical event in Spanish history in a recent book review positively entitled, perhaps as a reaction to Rosa’s title, ‘Otra bendita novela sobre la guerra civil’ (*Another blessed novel about the war*). According to him, with time he has come to realise that ‘the past never passes, that the past is the present or the matter that the present is made with and that, whether we like it or not, what we are is not understood without the Civil War because the Civil War is our foundational myth’.¹¹⁵

Concerned about the repercussions that such statement could have had for the under-representation of women-authored films dealing with Spain’s contested past, I considered it essential to discuss it with the directors interviewed for this project. Patricia Ferreira argues that the comment ‘another film about the war’ has simply become a fixed expression. Disconcerted, the director believes that what should be examined is ‘how we have arrived at this point’. In a similar vein to Cercas’ approach, she suggests that instead the expression should be ‘oh great, another

¹¹³ Pelaz López and Tomasoni, 2011, p. 2.

¹¹⁴ See, for instance, Carlos Prieto, ‘Hartos de la guerra civil’, *Público*, 13 June 2009, <<http://www.publico.es/culturas/hartos-guerra-civil.html>> [accessed 14 November 2014].

¹¹⁵ Javier Cercas, ‘Otra bendita novela sobre la guerra civil’, *El país*, 10 January 2010, <http://elpais.com/diario/2010/01/10/eps/1263108408_850215.html> [accessed 7 May 2013].

film about our history!’ Helena Taberna also condemns this negative attitude, contending that what matters is the film’s quality: ‘How can they say ‘another film about the Civil War? Because the film is either good or bad. Films have to be classified according to those two categories. Or (because) the film presents new and original topics and provides new light about a past or a present, and the story is well developed or not. Rosa Vergés, who has been working in the Spanish film industry for longer than either Taberna or Ferreira, explains that perhaps this perception of ‘excess’ comes from outside, since for a long time Spanish cinema was exclusively associated with representations of the Civil War. However, all the interviewees agreed to the fact that this episode of Spanish history is an inexhaustible topic, capable of inspiring numerous narratives. Taberna, for instance, claims that ‘it is one of the great themes to do fiction as well as documentary’. Similarly, Susana Koska concedes that the war is an ‘endless topic, for both fiction and historical film. Through cinema you can tell the country’s history’. Inés París remarks the insufficient fictional representation of women as protagonists of our own history. To this purpose, París insists, additional financial incentives (either private or institutional) are essential to promote women’s production, especially for those films ‘establishing a different, non-stereotypical gaze which recuperates the historical memory of women’.

Conclusion

Chapter Two reviewed the divergent politics of memory about the Spanish Civil War and the effects on the construction of a national identity in the relevant historical period in the twentieth century. I discussed the political endeavours to deal with a repressive past, first, in 1977, with the Amnesty Law and the consequent pact of oblivion, and, more recently, with the 2007 Law of Historical Memory. I also outlined how cultural production and, in particular, cinema has contributed to create a collective memory that includes the defeated perspective. Although a few films have

been made, my overview of Post-Franco cinema reveals that a richer variety of women's personal experiences and points of view about the past is still to be portrayed. In particular, ordinary women's accounts of the conflict and how they were affected by its repercussions remain under-represented on the big screen.

However, this shortage of women-authored films representing the past is being slowly addressed in the new century, as this thesis will demonstrate in the following chapters. What I have concluded from the interviewees' responses is that these women directors are committed to portraying the silenced women's perspectives on the war and the dictatorship, despite all the obstacles outlined earlier that representations of this topic might entail. As Koska has noted, 'there are still many stories to be told, some of which are fascinating'. There is no doubt about this, as proven by recent productions like *La buena nueva* (Helena Taberna, 2008) and *Iris* (Rosa Vergés, 2004), which aim to transform the past into a lesson of tolerance for the youth, as Casanova suggested, by presenting a conciliatory end. Both films are discussed in the following chapter focusing on the portrayal of ordinary women's experiences of the war and their strategies for survival in the rearguard.

Chapter 3. Women-authored portrayals of love, conflict and identity in the Spanish Civil War

We are our memory. The loss of our memory is the loss of our total identity

Josefina Aldecoa¹

As mentioned in the previous chapter, in the whole Spanish filmography only two Spanish women filmmakers have directed fiction films set during the Spanish Civil War: *La buena nueva* (Helena Taberna, 2008) and *Iris* (Rosa Vergés, 2004). Both directors emphasise in the interviews their intention of targeting, above all, younger audiences so that they learn about Spain's troubled past. Taberna highlights the curiosity of younger generations about this period of Spanish history, as 'the grandchildren were mainly the ones who went to watch the film'. She also explains the engagement of her young leading actor in the topic 'I saw how Unax Ugalde was very passionate about the script and the story'. Rosa Vergés is also adamant about the relevance of transmitting war accounts to those who did not experience Spain's repressive past: 'The new generations have the right to find out what happened to their ancestors and, according to me, to find out how women experienced lives they shouldn't have had to experience. They didn't have the opportunity to have another life, both those who lived better or worse'. For this reason, both Vergés and Taberna have chosen to depict war experiences from the rearguard, foregrounding the perspective of ordinary women.

It should be noted that both are established directors and have been able to make these films at an advanced stage in their careers. Produced by her own production company, Lamia Producciones, *La buena nueva* is Taberna's third feature film. Exceptionally, the budget for this film (Euro 2,2 million) was smaller than for her

¹ Aldecoa in Christina Dupláa, *Memoria sí, venganza no en Josefina R. Aldecoa* (Barcelona: Icaria, 2000), p. 26.

debut film *Yoyes* (Euro 3 million). In the case of Rosa Vergés, *Iris* constitutes her fourth feature film. It needs to be observed that the film was released fourteen years after her debut film *Boom Boom* (1990) with a seven year gap between it and her following film, *Tic Tac* (1997).² Although box office takings for both films were not very far apart (*Iris*: Euro 355,146; *La buena nueva*: Euro 493,332), the scholarly attention they received is considerably different. Whereas *La buena nueva* has been included in the corpus of analyses of numerous studies exploring representations of the Civil War,³ very few scholars have examined *Iris*.⁴

In my filmic analysis I argue that both films tackle various issues around the theme of the overlooked feminine memory of the Spanish Civil War. In what follows, I explore common threads such as the recuperation of historical memory through the protagonists' internal conflict, a critical approach to unexplored aspects of the war, and a portrayal of ordinary women's war experiences at the home front. The chapter's examination of the films is guided by the following questions: What aspects of the Spanish Civil War are women directors interested in portraying? How are women's experiences of the war reflected? What is the directors' perspective on representing memory? Do they provide a conciliatory end?

² Since *Iris* Rosa Vergés has not directed another feature film.

³ See Asunción Bernárdez Rodal, 'De la violencia institucional a la violencia de género: últimas representaciones cinematográficas de la Guerra Civil en el cine español contemporáneo', *Revista canadiense de estudios hispánicos*, 34, 1 (2009), 61-75; Jacqueline Cruz, 'El nacional catolicismo, o la Santa Cruzada contra el Evangelio: *La buena nueva* de Helena Taberna', *Ciberletras*, 24 (Dec 2010), <<http://www.lehman.cuny.edu/ciberletras/v24/cruz.html>> [accessed on 20 February 2014]; Pelaz López & Tomasoni, 2011; Francisco Javier Moral Martín, 'Los perdedores de la guerra civil en el reciente cine biográfico español: de la historia a la memoria', *Zer*, 17, 32 (2012), 171-186; José Luis Sánchez Noriega, 'Vindicación de la historia y la cultura democráticas en las biografías del cine español (2000-2010)', *Cuadernos de Historia Contemporánea*, 34 (2012), 251-275.

⁴ See section 2.3.2 in Nekane Parejo, *El fotógrafo en el cine. Re[representaciones]* (Tenerife: Cuadernos artesanos de Latina/ 21, 2011), pp. 102-109 and Evans, 2011, pp. 327-342.

La buena nueva: a civil war or a holy crusade?

The interest by Helena Taberna in Spain's troubled past and, particularly, in her home region's political complexities is constant throughout her filmography. Her first film, *Yoyes* (2000), presents a portrayal of an important female member of the political organisation ETA in the 1970s and her assassination by members of this group upon her return to the Basque Country one decade later. In her directorial debut, Taberna already dared to tackle and shed new light on one of the most controversial political topics in recent Spanish history. Thus far, *Yoyes* has been the director's most expensive, most seen, and most lucrative film. In 2002 she created her own production company Lamia Producciones, 'named after the lamias (a creature half female/half animal) in Basque mythology and because it is 'la mía' (my own)'.⁵ Loyal to her background, her next drama tackles once more a very close topic to her for two reasons. First, it depicts the story of her uncle, priest Marino Ayerra, and is inspired by his memoirs *No me avergoncé del evangelio*.⁶ Second, Taberna returned to the political and ideological intricacies of the Basque Country and Navarre.⁷

In 1994 she directed a short film (*Alsasua, 1936*) and an interview-based documentary (*Recuerdos del 36*) about Ayerra's experience during the Civil War as a priest in her hometown, Alsasua. Fascinated by people's appreciation for a family member that she never met, Taberna's curiosity and ambition did not stop until she brought to the big screen the life of a man, according to many, 'ahead of his time'.

⁵ Guadalupe Treibel, 'Helena Taberna, eterno resplandor de una mente con recuerdos', *Página 12*, 7 May 2010, <<http://www.pagina12.com.ar/diario/suplementos/las12/13-5707-2010-05-07.html>> [accessed 18 November 2014].

⁶ Marino Ayerra Redín, *No me avergoncé del evangelio (desde mi parroquia)* (Periplo: Buenos Aires, 1958). In 2002 the book was published in Navarre with a more controversial title *¡Malditos seáis! No me avergoncé del evangelio* (Iruña: Mintzoa, 2002).

⁷ Her last documentary *Nagore* (2010) also looks at a story from Navarre: a case of gender violence –a nursing female student violently killed by a resident psychiatrist during the San Fermín festival in 2008– which set a legal precedent in Spanish law. The only work by Taberna not set in her region is the documentary *Extranjeras* (2003), which explores the diversity –and adversity– of female migrants in Madrid.

Yet Taberna would have to wait nearly fifteen years to release this feature film, she indicates in the interview, as her producer was asked at the end of the twentieth century if they had obtained the permission of the Church. The long documentation process, in consultation with hispanist Ian Gibson, resulted in a combination of a period film with extraordinary historical accuracy and breathtaking cinematography. Featuring mostly Basque actors and actresses, *La buena nueva* finally premiered in 2008 at the Valladolid Film Festival.

The great success of the film has been demonstrated by fifteen prizes at several international film festivals, a twelve week screening period at the cinemas and one of the most popular TV ratings on its first showing.⁸ In fact, the timing of the film's release could not have been better: one year after the 'Law of the Historical Memory' had been passed, when Judge Garzón had reinitiated further investigation into Francoist crimes, and at a time when Spanish audiences were more receptive to films about the Civil War. As Gibson has claimed, *La buena nueva* 'is a necessary and opportune –but not opportunistic– film in today's Spain, with an obstinate Church which does not want to admit its mistakes from the past'.⁹

The direct involvement of the Church in the Spanish Civil War is a polemical topic that, for a long time, has been disregarded –or most probably avoided– in Spanish cinema. Although the presence of priests and nuns is common in films about the war and the dictatorship, they mainly feature as secondary characters. In 2008 another film that shed new light on the Church's support for Francoism and its influential role both during the Civil War and the postwar period was released, *Los girasoles ciegos*

⁸ To check the prizes and other details about the film visit Taberna's website. <<http://www.lamiaproducciones.com/labuen/premios.php>> [accessed on 21 January 2013].

⁹ The interview with Ian Gibson used to be accessible on the film's website but the website no longer exists. I found it in Victoria Bazurto, *Dossier pédagogique* (Festival cinema espagnol Nantes, 24 ed., 2014), p. 37. <http://www.cinespagnol-nantes.com/documents-festival/enseignants/DP_la-Buena-Nueva.pdf> [accessed 1 January 2015].

(José Luis Cuerda).¹⁰ In a comparative study, Asunción Bernárdez Rodal argues that this latest film and *La buena nueva* denounce not only the physical or institutional violence but also the gender violence involved in armed conflicts and question the roles attributed to each gender.¹¹ According to her, *La buena nueva* is more explicit in showing the institutional violence reflected in the collaboration between the Church and Fascism, and Taberna's depiction of such collaboration is done in a documented and convincing manner. Other scholars also remark on the significant contribution of *La buena nueva* to the cinematic memory of a well-known but unexplored aspect of the Civil War and Franco's repression. José Luis Sánchez Noriega, for instance, asserts that the film 'tackles an important perspective: the political and ideological function undertaken by Catholicism, with the ambition of completing the truth with minor but very significant facts'.¹²

Taberna, I argue, does indeed go a step further than other directors. She not only deplores the Church's complicity with Nationalist crimes but also portrays for the first time the active participation of priests as a collective in the armed conflict. Some scenes show never before depicted images of priests holding arms in their cassocks, while being trained by soldiers to join the army at the war front. Figure 3.1 illustrates how the director has also incorporated the moment in which a group of priests had their picture taken together with two Falangist members of the army. By doing so, Taberna aims to immortalise a key moment in Spanish history which has been studied before but barely has a visual presence in our cultural memory. Such images illustrate historian Casanova's words that 'most members of the clergy not only silenced that wave of terror against the "red" but approved and even

¹⁰ The violence perpetrated against the clergy by the Republicans has also been denounced in more recent films: *Encontrarás dragones* by British director Roland Joffeé (2011) and *Un dios prohibido* (Pablo Moreno, 2013).

¹¹ Bernárdez Rodal, 2009, pp. 61-75.

¹² Sánchez Noriega, 2012, p. 258.

collaborated in "body and soul" in the repression'.¹³ The film, as pointed out by Sánchez Noriega, is also meant to pay homage to the minority of Catholics who resisted calling Franco's uprising a 'crusade' and denounced the criminal impunity of the Fascist repression.¹⁴ In addition, I have noticed that Taberna wishes to complicate the understanding of the priests' involvement, by showing uncertainty in them. For instance, when this picture is being taken, a close-up of one of the young priests shows his confused gaze, expressing wonder as to how he became involved in such a situation, while looking at his peer next to him (Figure 3.2). Since the novel representation of the Catholic Church has been examined in-depth in several studies, particularly by Cruz and Moral Martín, I focus on exploring two aspects more aligned with the aims of this thesis: the recovery of historical memory through the priest's personal conflict and women's experience of the war.



Figure 3.1 Priests and soldiers having a picture taken in *La buena nueva*



Figure 3.2 Close-up of two young priests in *La buena nueva*

A conflicted priest in a complex war

The apple of the bishop's eyes, Miguel (Unax Ugalde), is finally assigned the management of a parish after his seminarian studies in Rome. Two days before the military uprising the inexperienced priest is sent to a little town in Navarre –in the film named Alzania– which is quickly occupied by the Nationalist troops. The film depicts Miguel's challenging interaction with the inhabitants, divided among Republicans and the traditionalist Carlists. As the war progresses, he endeavours to

¹³ Julián Casanova, *La iglesia de Franco* (Madrid: Temas de hoy, 2001), p. 14.

¹⁴ Sánchez Noriega, 2012, p. 258.

assist the most disadvantaged under hostile circumstances, mainly the Republican widows and their children. His blatant opposition to this war contrasts with the stance taken by the Catholic Church hierarchy supporting the army's revolt against a legitimate elected government. Miguel's disappointment and distancing from the Catholic Church increases after witnessing the progressively active involvement of the clergy in an armed conflict which targets civilians. This situation creates a personal conflict in the young priest, whose belief in the Gospel allows him to bravely confront the military and ecclesiastic hierarchies. And amidst his faith crisis, Miguel is also faced with his incipient love for Margari (Bárbara Goenaga), the school teacher who becomes the priest's confidant after her Republican husband is killed at the outset of the Civil War in the village.

Taberna introduces the film's topic to the spectator using original cultural references: images of altar candles appear during the credits in juxtaposition to sequences of a traditional Basque pelota game played by the bishop (Joseba Apaolaza) and the young priest. During the friendly match the bishop, who initially seems to embody a paternal figure for Miguel, advises him to be wise and act in this town with his 'left hand'. This piece of advice, carrying double-meaning and political connotations, together with Miguel's slip at the end of the game, implicitly predicts what will become one of the greatest challenges in the priest's life. The candles are also a portent of the events that will develop in the culmination of Miguel's role as a parish priest in the spectacular final scene.

Ironically, Miguel arrives in Alzania full of excitement, with the aim of creating an atmosphere of peace and fraternity, two days before the outbreak of a cruel fratricidal war. From the very beginning, Miguel discloses his mission in life: to bring the good news of resurrected Christ, an allusion to the film title which will be repeated in several scenes. In his first sermon he acknowledges his inexperience, which he aims to compensate for with his enthusiasm. This has already been

proved, as within two days he has managed to clean the nearly abandoned church and to attract most inhabitants to Sunday mass. The mass will be the last time when the inhabitants of Alzania coexist peacefully in the same space, which paradoxically is a church.

Within a very short timeframe, Taberna introduces all the main characters and, through them, exposes the viewer to the ambivalences of a complex political system and diverse ideologies in Navarre at the time. Through the main male characters the film accurately depicts the various factions of the winning side, something rarely explored in fiction films about the Civil War. On the Nationalist side, these factions include Carlists, represented by Hugo (Gorka Aginagalde) and his family, Falangists, portrayed mainly by the captain (Mikel Tello) and the Catholic Church. The Church is represented by several characters with very different positions, namely Miguel, the bishop and another priest, Miguel's old seminary classmate Rodrigo (Rodrigo Sáenz de Heredia). The opposing reactions to the war from Miguel, who refuses to get involved in a fratricidal war, and Rodrigo, who is ready to fight at the battle front, find a middle point in the bishop's stance. Indicted of opportunistic activity by Cruz, the bishop's discourse is rather cautious and avoids taking sides.¹⁵

All these positions are made apparent in a key scene towards the middle of the film, which portrays a heated conversation at a dinner table, where the main male characters are present: the bishop, Miguel, the captain, Hugo and Rodrigo. Ironically, the bishop, who has come to the village on Miguel's request to guide him about the role of the Church in the war, presides at the table. The scene shows the tensions between all characters, in particular with respect to discussing the

¹⁵ Cruz, 2010.

Guernica bombing and the controversy this incident generated.¹⁶ In the previous scene, we have seen Miguel receiving conflicting information: whereas the news on the radio talks about fascist planes, a newspaper article accuses the Marxists of the catastrophe.¹⁷ When Miguel brings up the topic, the bishop's neutral position allows him to regard the episode as a tragedy that does not need further discussion. In contrast, the captain without any hesitation blames the Basque people but Margari, the only woman present, who has served the meal (as illustrated in Figure 3.3), gets involved in the discussion and contradicts the captain, adding that she is 'a widow thanks to his glorious revolt'.



Figure 3.3 Lunch during bishop's visit to Alzania in *La buena nueva*

The argument escalates until the captain, seeking the bishop's endorsement, reaffirms in an angry tone that the war is a very much needed holy crusade, as stated by Cardenal Gomá, and endorsed by all bishops. However, the bishop tries to be placating, claiming that 'the official doctrine of the Church is to obey the

¹⁶ On 26 April 1937 the small town of Guernica, a symbol of Basque liberties, was bombarded during a market day by the Condor Legion, during the Spanish Civil War, killing many innocent civilians. Thanks to Picasso, who painted his famous work 'Guernica' as a condemnation of the bombing, the painting became the symbol of the atrocities of any war (Casanova, 2001, p. 77).

¹⁷ Initially, Franco's propaganda and press releases denied that there was a bombing attack in Guernica, and then they attributed the destruction of the place to the Basque people, a false story that was perpetuated during the dictatorship (Casanova, 2001, p. 77).

established power', although he himself admits in the same conversation that there was a legitimate government in Madrid before the war.¹⁸ The scene ends abruptly with Margari leaving the room, as the Captain, in the absence of convincing arguments, rudely blurts out to her 'don't take offense, but this is a conversation amongst men'. This sexist comment foresees the domestic and denigrating role that will be bestowed upon women during Franco's regime and the silencing of oppositional discourse.

The portrayal of these conflicting political and ideological views presents a novel representation of the Civil War, demonstrating that the conflict involved much more than only two sides. As Gibson claims, '*La buena nueva* is a film with nuances, it is not a biased film of "goods" and "bads"'.¹⁹ Although early in the film Margari's husband, Antonino (Guillermo Toledo), describes to Miguel the polarisation of the place –'here you are on one side, or you are with the enemy'– the variety of complex well-depicted characters embody a rich ideological display in which politics and religion do not always belong together. For instance, the perspective of the Basque Nationalists is represented through the characters of a father and a son who are going to be executed for defending the Republic. Despite being religious, they do not support the military revolt as they aim for regional independence. When he is given the opportunity to confess before being executed, the father contends to Miguel: 'I am Basque and Catholic. If I cannot be both, I prefer to die'. On the contrary, the Falangist captain is not portrayed as a religious person. In fact, he is critical of the Carlists for being ultra-Catholic and in several confrontations with Miguel he overtly criticises the great influence of the Church in Spain: 'I personally think that you, the priests, have too much power in this country, although one thing is true, for the moment you could help us win the war'. The captain's words corroborate that the winning coalition, as Casanova has explained, 'became very

¹⁸ Cruz, 2010.

¹⁹ Bazurto, 2014, p. 37.

useful for everyone: for those thankful to a regime which had brought them back everything and for those who were busy enough trying to survive, which in a time of silence, death and hunger was not a small task'.²⁰

In spite of his constant interaction with the inhabitants of Alzania, Miguel's feelings of loneliness and his sense of isolation are highlighted throughout the narrative in several visually striking sequences. He gains confidence when he wins the children's affection, by playing soccer with them. It is then through their children that the Republican mothers feel confident to approach the priest, when they feel the pressure to baptise them by the Nationalists. Little by little Miguel takes solace in anyone who offers him some sort of affection. The widows, and especially Margari, offer him the possibility of feeling needed and of doing something for the apparently 'weaker' people in town. Miguel knows how to earn the friendship of honest people but he clashes with those who defend any sort of violence, mainly represented by Hugo and the captain. He is adamant about his impartial position in regards to the war, claiming that 'for me there are no sides; the parish will always be neutral territory', contrasting with the categorical support that the Church ends up providing to the Nationalist side. At the same time, due to the seal of confession, he sees himself compelled to keep silent in regards to crimes confessed to him by a Falangist soldier and by Hugo. All these events create in the well-intentioned priest an internal conflict which provokes extreme turmoil, unease and disappointment. The culmination of his suffering is dramatically depicted in an impressive high angle shot which highlights his desperation by placing him in foetal position in the centre of the small chapel's floor while Christ observes him from above. As shown in Figure 3.4, this dark shot transmits the priest's sense of claustrophobia in a situation that seems to have no resolution. However, within the four stone walls the high key lighting, which illuminates Christ's statue and the door, symbolise an indication of

²⁰ Casanova, 2001, p. 17.

hope: his faith in God might allow him to escape from these suffocating circumstances.



Figure 3.4 Miguel in the chapel in *La buena nueva*

Despite his internal fight, Miguel decides to take responsibility for historical memory. The film highlights, above all, the priest's determination to document Francoist crimes with the intention of preventing the possibility of historical amnesia in the future. As shown in Figure 3.5, Miguel meticulously maps in a notebook the places where the defeated were killed or secretly buried, because, as he comments to Margari, 'nobody can bring them back to life, but we can avoid them being killed again with oblivion'. The notebook, which contains invaluable information for the coming generations, needs a custodian, since Miguel has lost his position as a priest after he helped the two Basque Nationalists escape, as they were about to be executed. When Miguel returns to Alzania to pick up his belongings and make closure with the town, he gives this notebook to Remigio, his altar boy, as portrayed in Figure 3.6. Symbolically, innocent Remigio, son of a Republican killed by the Nationalists, is given the important mission to later uncover the atrocities committed in that town. Yet, given the age of the character, it would be more likely that the descendants of the character, the grandchildren of the Republican widows, would

accomplish that mission. When discussing *La buena nueva*, Moral Martín has emphasised ‘the significance of projecting the story towards a future which is our present, alluding thus to the collectives and associations dedicated to the exhumation and recuperation of the remains of the victims of Francoist reprisal’.²¹ Cruz makes an observation regarding the transmission of memory from a gendered perspective, arguing that it can be interpreted as a way of presenting an alternative masculinity from the one represented by the winners as well as an alternative church.²²



Figure 3.5 Miguel drawing the map in *La buena nueva*



Figure 3.6 Miguel giving his notebook to Remigio in *La buena nueva*

The extraordinary final scene also proves Miguel’s determination to pay homage to the executed Republicans. The ceremony, despite fulfilling all the criteria of the Catholic liturgy, as Cruz indicates,²³ is not celebrated inside a church but in a natural space, as shown in Figures 3.8 and 3.10. This scene, also described by several scholars, juxtaposes through several effective parallel crosscuts the two polarised worlds depicted in *La buena nueva* and highlights the existence of two conflicted churches.²⁴ Figures 3.7 and 3.8 illustrate the contrast between the triumphant military march of soldiers carrying rifles and the three flags (Spanish, Carlist and Falangist) and the women’s peregrination to the chasm where their husbands’ corpses have been thrown. Carrying a humble cross and the altar candles that

²¹ Moral Martín, 2012, p. 183.

²² Cruz, 2010.

²³ Cruz, 2010.

²⁴ Cruz, 2010; Moral Martín, 2012, p. 182.

Miguel bought at the beginning of the film, the widows together with the priest traverse the forest that he so many times had crossed by himself in the search of the location of the dead bodies. Despite his leadership, Miguel never walks at the front of the women but next to them, representing an alternative church to which the Republican mothers have now willingly adhered. As Cruz suggests, 'it would be like an "other" religion, closer to the primitive Christianity, based on the message of love for your neighbour and support for the oppressed, which does not demand belief in a superior being'.²⁵



Figure 3.7 Army's parade in *La buena nueva*



Figure 3.8 Miguel pilgrimage with the widows in *La buena nueva*

By contrast, the film portrays how the hierarchies in the new regime have already been established and publicly acknowledged, as shown during the winners' mass in Figure 3.9. This shot reveals the distribution of power between the (slightly elevated) Church and the military which will prevail during the dictatorship, with a population kept in the background, as an anticipation of the extremely patriotic and repressive immanent regime. The new Spain is epitomised by the multiple Spanish flags, the Fascist salute by the captains in the centre, and the triple golden letters with the dictator's name. In the interview for this project Taberna expressed her intention of denouncing Pope Pius XII's legitimisation of Nationalist crimes in order to acknowledge that 'Pius XII was not only involved in but supported in first person and pleaded for the Holy Crusade'. Although the Pope does not appear in the film, his

²⁵ Cruz, 2010.

discourse supporting the new regime can be heard through the radio in the square at the beginning of this scene before the official mass takes place.

The widows' ceremony, on the other hand, is very modest and takes place at night. All women participate in lighting candles with each other while Miguel blesses the remains of the defeated with holy water. This ceremony constitutes a beautiful homage to the executed in Alzania, and by extension, it could be argued, to all the executed in Spain. Figure 3.10 shows the beautiful shot composition and spectacular use of light; each candle symbolising a soul. Miguel is not the only witness of the Francoist crimes any more. He has shared his knowledge about the exact location of the executed Republicans with Remigio and now in the chasm with the widows. In addition, the different shots showing the widows from behind, followed by the camera panning over them, culminate in a bird's eye shot, which positions the viewers at the edge of the chasm as further witnesses of the war's terror. The analysis of this final scene illustrates the director's outspoken purpose of the film: 'My intention is not to point to the guilty, but to render a healing and poetic memory to those who lost the war'.²⁶



Figure 3.9 Winners' mass in *La buena nueva* Figure 3.10 Losers' mass in *La buena nueva*

La buena nueva also portrays the internal conflict of the priest as a male. During the three years of war that the film shows, Miguel and Margari have developed a very close relationship, both providing mutual support to each other. The viewer is shown

²⁶ Helena Taberna, 'Notas de la directora', www.lamiaproducciones.com, *La buena nueva*, <<http://www.lamiaproducciones.com/labuen/helena-taberna.php>> [accessed 11 June 2014].

how he has trusted her with very private issues about his personal life and how he becomes her main support through her pregnancy and after her baby girl is born. A number of scenes show how both their friendship and, subtly, demure sexual tension builds up gradually between them. The climax of their relationship happens when Miguel is back in Alzania before leaving for good and Margari confronts him for concealing that Hugo was her husband's informer. After Miguel asks for forgiveness hugging her, Margari proposes to him to start a new life somewhere else and raise her daughter together. Miguel is then portrayed as a very vulnerable priest faced with a double dilemma: he has to fight against the Church to follow his principles but also against his feelings for the woman who has shown him affection.

Consequently, Miguel's character, it could be argued, constitutes an innovative representation of masculinity, as it shows a priest with sexuality, yet free from machismo, who is willing to take on women's work. Several scholars have noted that Miguel is a feminised character represented with feminine attributes (he wears an apron, does house chores and appears in domestic spaces).²⁷ Miguel's regular presence in the domestic sphere, as Cruz points out, is narratively justified from his lack of familial bounds and the support his character extends towards the widows.²⁸ Throughout the film Miguel is also depicted undertaking a parental role with Margari's daughter, which is more in line with motherly responsibilities (i.e., he puts her to bed). Certainly, he is a pioneering feminist male character, which breaks with the stereotypical gender roles in 1930s Spain.

Although Margari is a fictional character, Taberna's open end points to her uncle's future in real life; he went into exile and later got married and had two daughters.²⁹ As a result, in the last scene Miguel is portrayed on a train wearing what he calls the

²⁷ Cruz, 2010; Bernárdez Rodal, 2009.

²⁸ Cruz, 2010.

²⁹ Lola Huete Machado, 'El cura de Alsasua contra la Santa Cruzada', *El país*, 2 January 2008, <http://elpais.com/diario/2008/01/02/eps/1199258809_850215.html> [accessed 15 March 2012].

'sinner suit', implying that he will not remain in the church. Despite looking sad, the timid smile on his face transmits to the spectator a feeling of confidence about his decision: he is true to his Christian faith, even if it means abandoning the institution. As illustrated in Figure 3.11, Taberna strategically uses a shallow focus shot that centres on Miguel while Margari sits behind him out of focus. Taberna's open ended future proposes the need for a conciliatory approach to the past as she herself ascertains symbolically in the interview for this project: 'my film is not resentful, nor transmits hate but instead opens the possibility of a hug. But a hug is not possible if there is no recognition of the horror'.



Figure 3.11 Miguel and Margari in the final scene of *La buena nueva*

Representing the feminine experience of the war: integrity, solidarity and survival.

Despite having a male lead protagonist and many other supporting male characters, one of the main strengths in the film, I argue, is the depiction of a broad range of complex female characters. Women's diverse attitudes towards the war and religion are widely represented in the film and go beyond the stereotypical binary opposition of the two sides. This is certainly one of the main contributions of the film, as all female characters are carefully depicted, sometimes with short but sharp brush strokes, like Benita (Iñake Irastorza), or in substantial detail like the protagonist,

Margari. Although at the start of the film both women are portrayed as religious, the negative consequences of the war on their personal lives change their beliefs and their position towards the Church. Margari's character undergoes a more radical transformation: she completely revokes her Catholic faith, alleging to Miguel that 'those who defend religion have killed my husband'. Benita, in turn, represents the ultra-conservative female Catholic. Very early in the film, however, she becomes detached from the parish and quits her role as sacristan. She disagrees with Miguel's actions to help those whom she initially considers the 'enemy', the red atheist women and their children. At the end, both women condemn the war, demonstrating that in a fratricidal conflict there can only be losers, where women especially are concerned. Benita ends up with a family of three disabled men: her younger son returns from the war front in a vegetative state, Hugo is lame, and the grandfather is in a wheelchair. Similarly, Margari sees herself in a desperate situation, forced to choose between struggling to bring up her daughter on her own or marrying her detested cousin, Hugo. She has lost everything: her husband, her job as a school teacher and, subsequently, the teacher's house.

The film depicts women's daily struggle to survive in a small town, in which most men are at the front, have been executed or forced to escape to the forest, representing a common reality during wartime. As mentioned at the outset of this chapter, the feminine experience of the war has been rarely explored in Spanish cinema but Taberna has pertinently incorporated it in her narrative to show how the war affected both men and women. However, *La buena nueva* highlights a striking difference between the values that male and female characters endorse. Whereas men seem to defend their political ideology staunchly, women prioritise their own and their children's survival. The Republican widows are portrayed as determined women, always ready to do anything that is in their hands to protect their children and to survive a war which they have been compelled to experience. Several

scenes show how these women swallow their pride and sacrifice their secular beliefs so as to avoid personal punishments by the Nationalists. For instance, a group of mothers led by Resu (Maribel Salas), Remigio's mother, asks Miguel to baptise their children as they have been threatened with having their hair shaved off. In order to attenuate these women's humiliation, Taberna adds humour in these scenes, mainly through Resu's sarcastic comments and her son Remigio's comical facial expressions. Particularly funny is the scene where Remigio is asked by Miguel if he wants to be the new altar boy to which Resu reacts 'Do you want to make a fool of yourself dressed like that in front of everyone?' Despite her convictions, Resu allows the child to do this job when she recognises the financial benefits for the family. As demonstrated by these examples, the film aims to highlight that during wartime women were able to adapt to unfavourable circumstances and develop an array of strategies for survival.

Another relevant characteristic that the film reflects about the feminine experience of the war is the strong solidarity amongst women. In a time where men fight against each other at the war front, women see themselves forced to coexist, work together and help each other at the home front, regardless of the side they belong to. This female network is orchestrated and supported by Miguel, who helps them, despite their lack of Catholic faith, and who gradually becomes their friend. The creation of a textile cooperative becomes a temporary solution for the women of Alzania to make their living during the war.³⁰ Although at first it seems to be a betrayal for the women, as they are making the uniforms for their husbands' executioners, Miguel reminds them that they are working to feed their families. The women realistically accept the situation because, as one of them says: 'it is just a piece of cloth'.

³⁰ Taberna incorporates here one more cultural element related to her region, since Navarre and the Basque Country have the longest tradition using this type of collective organisations.

Through the character of Arantxa (Susana Abaitua), the film portrays the humiliating punishments that Republican women were subjected to. When Nationalists soldiers find her in a straw loft with her Republican lover, they aggressively shave her head, give her castor oil and drag her with defecated underwear to the town's main square: 'you shit yourself, bitch'. This confronting and violent scene illustrates how women especially were exposed to public ridicule during the war. As Ángeles Egido León notes, such chastisements against women continued during the postwar period, especially in towns, putting a show on for the rest of the inhabitants when the female prisoners were taken to a court-martial.³¹ The violence executed by the soldiers is then contrasted with Miguel's protective reaction, who rescues Arantxa from the soldiers. Miguel's support for the Republican women can also be compared to that of the Catholic nuns who seem to have reported to the Nationalists the hidden place of Arantxa's lover. This is one more example of how Taberna subtly continues to condemn the role of the Catholic Church in the war. Figure 3.12 shows how Arantxa is later comforted by the other women in a calming bath. In this context of extreme violence resulting in numerous deaths, Margari, in the absence of the village doctor (her dead husband), gives birth and is helped by the other widows. Miguel joins the women to celebrate the miracle of life soon after the baby girl has been born, as shown in Figure 3.13.



Figure 3.12 Arantxa being looked after by the Republican women in *La buena nueva*



Figure 3.13 Margari after giving birth in *La buena nueva*

³¹ Ángeles Egido León, 'Mujeres y Rojas: La condición femenina como fundamento del sistema represor', *Stud. Hist., Hª cont.*, 29 (2011), p. 29.

Despite showing constant support between women, Taberna also includes minor confrontations to show the tension that this fratricidal war created among friends and neighbours. The first conflict, already mentioned, is when Benita disagrees with feeding the Republican women after their children's baptism, as she feels threatened and fears losing her privileged position in the Church. The second one is when Resu accuses Antxoni (Magdalena Aizpurua) –another worker in the cooperative who is having sex with the captain– of sleeping with her 'husband's killers' and the two women start a fight, pulling each other's hair. In both scenes Miguel acts as the peace-maker and tries to calm down both sides.

The film also illustrates the patriarchal and sexist mentality of the time, embodied in Hugo but, markedly, in the Falangist captain. Against the negative attempts of these characters, the female characters have proactive and independent roles and stand out for themselves. Margari, for example, bravely confronts the captain, as has been explained earlier on when discussing the bombing of Guernica. Antxoni, in turn, bravely stops her love affair with the captain the moment he becomes abusive and slaps her face. After this incident, she steals two things from him: some money that she will use to leave the town and a note from a box. Before leaving, Antxoni gives the note to Margari to reveal that Hugo, who she is about to marry, was her husband's informer. In a similar vein, Hugo's mother, Benita, also despises him when she finds out that he denounced Margari's husband. These are further examples of female solidarity which was crucial for women to survive and get ahead during the war.

As a result, the feminine world traditionally portrayed as 'weak' is, in Cruz's words more 'vital, resistant and morally superior'.³² In fact, at the end of the film the Republican women together with Miguel preserve their dignity, in contrast to the remaining men. It is noteworthy that the (once anti-Church) Republican women

³² Cruz, 2010.

accept Miguel's democratic leadership after he baptises their children. From the beginning Miguel brings out the best in these Republican women, who since the outbreak of the war have to learn to live without their husbands. It is not surprising then that these women follow the young priest as he offers an alternative church, which is not coercive, lucrative or judgmental nor promotes hierarchies, but favours the disadvantaged. Beyond their religious beliefs, Miguel and the women have common ethical principles, which unite them and are the foundations of a new community.

For this reason, I dispute Cruz, when she concludes that Miguel has failed in his mission of bringing 'the good news' and saving Alzania's inhabitants. Despite not having a conventional happy ending, the priest survives and the last scene on the train intimates that he might escape Francoist repression. Unlike the bishop, Miguel evolves and becomes a free priest, loyal to his principles, consistent in his ideology and true to himself. In his position as a parish priest during the three years of war he practices an exemplary Catholicism and avoids following the guidelines of a corrupt institution. His commitment to help others is present until the end, indicated as he returns to the town, risking his own life, in order to celebrate a funeral rite for the executed Republicans who were thrown in the chasm and to make sure that their death would not be forgotten. Thus, Miguel sees himself forced to disobey the bishop, who has stopped being his spiritual father. If, at the beginning of the film, he slips while playing Basque pelota with the bishop, anticipating the difficulty of his mission, at the end, Miguel proves his success in his first experience as a parish priest. His legacy will continue with Remigio and the Republican women, whom he provides strength and strategies to fight in the patriarchal and repressive future that is awaiting them. The next part of this chapter explores *Iris*, another outstanding portrayal of the aftermath of the war and the postwar in ordinary women's lives and their children.

***Iris*: Capturing the war and its aftermath through the female lens**

One of the fifteen first-time filmmakers in 1990, writer-director Rosa Vergés has proved to be a multifaceted cineaste, endorsed by a career that combines filmmaking with many other collateral activities in the fields of video and theatre.³³ After exploring the genres romantic comedy (*Boom Boom*, 1990; *Souvenir*, 1994) and fantasy (*Tic Tac*, 1997), multi-award winner Vergés embarked on a melodrama which metaphorically tackles Spain's historical memory.³⁴ Vergés' fourth feature film, *Iris*, makes a case against wars; a project that the director had pursued for a long time.³⁵ The making of the documentary *El pabellón de la República* for the 1992 Olympic Games sparked her interest in reconstructing Spain's recent troubled past.³⁶ The documentary, co-directed with Jordi Barrachina, explores the Spanish pavilion built for the Paris' Expo in 1937. As Vergés explains in the interview for this study, this building represented all the pain of Spain during the war, seen through the eyes of various artists including Picasso, Miró and Buñuel among others. The documentation process for the film exposed the director to numerous archival images of children, women and families whose bewildered gazes reflected the suffering of a population traumatised by a war. Vergés' fictional film homage to surviving war victims would not materialise until 2004 with the release of *Iris*, whose script was also developed in collaboration with Barrachina.

Iris, I argue, constitutes a complex case study for several reasons. To begin with, the film has been overlooked by scholars or, when it has been considered, it has

³³ Heredero, 1999, p. 359.

³⁴ Vergés' directorial debut (*Boom Boom*) granted her the Goya Award for best novel director as well as the prizes Sant Jordi, Fotogramas de Plata and the Prize of Cinematography of the Generalitat de Catalunya. For *Tic Tac* she received the Jury Prize in the Chicago International Children's Film Festival and the 'Águila Dorada' prize in the Giffoni's Film Festival (Italy).

³⁵ Camí-Vela, 2005, p. 225.

³⁶ Vergés has also directed two documentaries on the lives of two influential Spanish poets, *Rafael Alberti, un poeta en la calle* and *Lorca: de Granada a la Luna* as well as collaborating in the multi-authored documentary *Ferida Arrel* (2012) about Catalan poet Maria Mercè Marçal.

mostly not been regarded as a film about the Spanish Civil War. However, some film specialists, like Caparrós, highlight *Iris* as the only fiction film about the war during the first two years of socialist party PSOE term in office, which started in 2004.³⁷ Nevertheless, in more recent research looking at films about the Spanish Civil War, it has not been included, as in the previously mentioned studies by Ibañez (2010) and Pelaz López and Tomasoni (2011). In other studies, the film has been deliberately excluded, on grounds that the film does not deal with the conflict directly, as the director has (by her own admission) not contextualised the story in a concrete time and space.³⁸ In fact, Vergés herself confirms her intention to omit political references: 'Actually, what I did with *Iris* was try not to make a film about the Spanish Civil War but about the victims of any war. In the film we never see uniforms or the characters talk about politics'. For this reason, the focus of the film, according to Vergés, is put on the suffering and the consequences for the victims of a war: 'We wanted above all, I insist, to pay tribute to the living victims for the strength they have had and still have. That's why we didn't want to locate the film in a specific year, it wasn't clear when it happened because it was a way of saying that it is still happening'. To emphasise this, Vergés has added real photos from victims of other armed conflicts while the closing credits show. According to Vergés, setting the story in such an apparently neutral context can offer a more humane perspective of the impact of a civil war in ordinary people's lives and attract a wider audience.

In spite of the director's stated positioning of her movie, this study categorises and examines *Iris* as a film about the Spanish Civil War. It would be a missed opportunity to disregard this film in this thesis, for the deliberate absence of political and temporal references, I contend, is what actually makes *Iris* an unconventional portrayal of the Civil War. Furthermore, even though the director insists that *Iris* is

³⁷ Caparrós, 2006.

³⁸ Jacqueline Cruz, 'Para que no olvidemos: La propuesta de recuperación de la memoria histórica de Patricia Ferreira', *Letras Hispanas*, 3, 2 (Fall 2006), p. 39.

meant to be about *any* war, this argument is somewhat contradicted by some of her interview comments, where she acknowledges the influence of actual Spanish historical events. In fact, the film presents obvious socio-historical references that locate the film in the Spanish context, and that therefore qualify the story for discussion in a study on representations of the Civil War. Above all, this chapter examines the film's depiction of the war's specific impact on women, focusing on those changes prompted by the new legislation put in force during Franco's regime. In particular, I explore the film's positioning of the female characters as, not victims, but in valued professional roles (as female photographer and nurse). Finally, my analysis comments on how Vergés also incorporates, although to a lesser extent, the depiction of war's effects on male victims.

The film's narrative develops chronologically in three main time frames which can be easily identified with twentieth century Spain: the war, the repressive postwar period, and the democratic transition period. Escaping from an oppressive marriage, young and enthusiastic Iris (Silke) returns to her hometown and to her mother, with the intention of starting a new life working as a photographer. Without showing explicitly violent scenes, an unidentified war is depicted from the home front, showing how civilians had to hide in shelters when threatened by bombing attacks and unexpected shootings. The explosion at the beginning of the film, in which Iris's mother loses her life, could be identified as the Guernica bombing as it happens on a market day. Vergés confirms in the interview that this scene was her way of paying homage to this tragic episode and all the civilian victims who died in it.

It is noteworthy that both directors, Taberna and Vergés, include this important event in their films, although with different purposes. Whereas in *La buena nueva* the bombing is used to show the contrasting positions about the war by the main characters, in *Iris* the bombing has a more direct effect on the storyline, as it causes the death of one character. As mentioned earlier, the actual bombing attack took

place on a busy market day, where a great number of civilians were gathered.³⁹ However, the representation of the massacre in the film is brief and sudden, avoiding the appearance of blood or corpses, and highlighting instead the futility of the death of a non-combatant human being, a mother.⁴⁰ Iris is taking a picture of her mother in front of her market stand when a couple of shots are heard. The camera comes closer to Iris' shocked face, fading the image into a white screen while screams and further loud noises of an explosion can be heard. The next shot shows Iris at a hospital sadly singing goodbye to her dead mother. For Iris and the people around her, this scene marks the beginning of living with war and its aftermaths.

Paradoxically, Iris is confronted with the cruel realities of war while she experiences extreme happiness falling madly in love with Óscar (Ginés García Millán). The proximity of life and death, characteristic of any war, is depicted in a scene that takes place in the darkness of a shelter. There she reencounters the man she photographed earlier while travelling in a tram (Óscar) at the beginning of the film, who happens to be a doctor. After helping to deliver a newborn in the middle of the war, Iris and Óscar passionately give themselves to each other, reflecting desperate *carpe diem* behaviours as a consequence of extreme situations. Shortly afterwards, Iris looks for a job as a photographer for a newspaper because she wants to 'show how the war is affecting people's lives'. The newspaper editor, however, seeks for a more sensationalist perspective, expecting Iris' pictures to depict 'how people are still living despite the war'.

The viewer is then exposed to the war through the protagonist's eyes and her camera, whose photographs portray the conflict's grim reality from the rearguard. This is shown not to be an easy task for her, in particular, as when she goes to the hospital and meets a young nurse, Magdalena (Ana Torrent), who asks her to take

³⁹ The estimated number of mortal victims exceeded 1,500 and another 1,000 people were injured (Casanova, 2001, p. 77).

⁴⁰ Interestingly, in Picasso's painting we can see the figure of a mother holding her child.

photos of dead people for further identification. Iris is portrayed then as an ethical photographer who gives preference to the social and practical value of photography. It is through this experience that both women become best friends and supporters of each other. It is also here in the hospital where Iris, by chance, meets Óscar again, surrounded by his collection of cactuses, a scene that will be very relevant and will have symbolic connotations at the end of the film. Soon afterwards, in the middle of the war, Iris marries Óscar in an intimate civil ceremony with only a few attendees: her new friend Magdalena, Damián –a friend of Óscar who becomes Magdalena’s partner/lover– and José, a tram driver who was her dead father’s colleague. Acting like a paternal figure, José worries about the validity of the marriage:

José: But is this legal, Iris?

Iris: What?

José: Your wedding, because you are already married, aren’t you?

Iris: Divorced, José.

This dialogue provides a brief, but significant, insight into how the new legislative changes implemented during the Second Republic had not been entirely assimilated in society. As Nash points out, ‘despite ongoing reforms and the modernisation of the country, attitudes regarding women were slow to change’.⁴¹

As quickly as they started, Iris and Magdalena’s passionate love stories with their respective husband/partner end abruptly, due to the men’s respective political responsibilities (it is implied that both men are fighting on the Republican side). Óscar, who was asked to take charge of a group of wounded soldiers, vanishes without trace and Damián, who has been helping people to leave the area by providing them with false documentation, is imprisoned and then killed. The same day that Óscar disappears from her life, her ex-husband Julián (Josep Manell Casal)

⁴¹ Nash, 1995, p. 48.

reappears unannounced and forces her to have sex with him. Iris gets pregnant and is condemned to live with the uncertainty of whether her daughter, Ágata, is the fruit of hate or love. Here is introduced a major theme in the storyline: the uncertain paternity of her daughter as an enigma which will torment the protagonist for the rest of her life. During the ensuing years, however, Iris fights tirelessly to find Óscar, the love of her life.

The postwar period is portrayed as a highly repressive period, in which people are morally devastated, inexorably reminding the viewer of Spain in the 1940s. The appalling living conditions during this time are condensed in the only scene in which Magdalena and Iris have an argument. Unable to understand Iris' optimism about finding Óscar, who has by now been gone for a long time, desperate Magdalena tries to open her friend's eyes about the reality of their situation while shouting in tears: 'But haven't you realised that we have lost everything? The war has not finished, the war starts now. We don't have anything left. We don't have food. We don't have anyone to love, we don't have a place to live. Everything has been stolen from us. Our lives have been stolen, our dignity has been stolen!' Such powerful claims remind us of a scene in Miró's *Tu nombre envenena mis sueños* in which the main character, Julia Buendía, makes a similar accusation when remembering the war: 'Everything was stolen from us, first the youth, then the dreams, they even took the future from us'. Vergés, who is a confessed Miró's admirer, aims at transmitting, like her, the frustration and desperation experienced by the young generations, and in particular, by women. As she explains in the interview, Magdalena 'represents a woman who had already conquered a place in society and she sees how they take it away from her'.

The film reflects through several examples how the eradication following the war of the legal reforms undertaken during the Republic dramatically transformed women's role and status in society and cancelled many of their rights, as already indicated in

Chapter One. For instance, Iris' new civil marriage as well as her divorce are declared invalid, reflecting how the Republican divorce laws passed in 1932 were abolished and the previous marriages were re-established. According to the new regime, which can easily be identified with Franco's regime, Iris becomes the widow of a war hero, since Julián died in the battleground. Gibson explains how such legislative changes also affected the children's identity, arguing that 'the remarriages of those who had obtained divorces under the Republic were considered null and void, and their fruits illegitimate'.⁴² In the film the repercussion for the war's children is represented through Iris' daughter, Ágata, who experiences an unstable childhood and is separated from her mother on several occasions. After the war, following the new legislation, the child automatically becomes Julián's descendant. She is quickly claimed by the presumably paternal grandmother, Virtudes (Paca Gabaldón), as she considers her to be her only granddaughter, and consequently, the only possible heir in the family. Virtudes, who intends to send Ágata to a Catholic boarding school and rename her María Jesús, represents the influence of religious and wealthy loyal supporters of the regime during the postwar. From the beginning of the film we know that Iris resents Julian's mother's interference in their own affairs and she cannot allow her now to take control of her own daughter. When Iris opposes Virtudes' plans, she is accused of adultery and sent to prison, reflecting another element of the new regime's laws, which negatively impacted on women alone.

The prison scenes, which show Iris separated from her daughter, depict the exploitation and abuse by the female wardens loyal to the new regime. It is obvious that Vergés takes every opportunity to criticise the abuse of power and episodes of violence perpetrated during the dictatorship in different layers of society. Jo Evans corroborates this when she points out that 'the film links maternal grief directly to the effects of the Civil War and its aftermath but the grief is for a child who has not died,

⁴² Ian Gibson, *Fire in the Blood: the New Spain* (London: Faber and Faber, 1992), p. 88.

but has been removed from the mother by an older castrating mother figure, granted authority by the Nationalist regime'.⁴³ I would add that in Iris' case, the maternal grief is even more painful as she does not know whether Ágata is the daughter of the man she loved or the man who raped her. Gibson also emphasises that 'the tragic history of those unions illegalised by the Franco regime has never been told, nor that of their 'bastard' offspring'.⁴⁴ *Iris*, I contend, is an attempt to portray one of those disregarded accounts, showing how families were destroyed and condemned to silence their background, as happens in the case of Ágata.

The exile experienced by many men and women following the Civil War is also portrayed in the film through Iris' trip abroad after she is released from prison. This part of the film briefly touches on the experience of thousands of refugees who were forced by the circumstances to live in exile and refashion their lives far from their homeland, and, in many cases separated from their families. With a fake passport, Iris manages to cross the border with the intention of finding Óscar. She is portrayed in the grape harvest –a context quickly associated with France– working with other people from her country who have escaped from the war and have been forced to abandon their beloveds. Iris' optimism about finding her husband starts fading away when one of the other female harvesters, Pilar, suggests to her that 'maybe your husband is alive and has another life'. Iris realises that there are many parallel stories to hers after meeting Carlos, Pilar's new partner who has also left his wife and daughter behind. Witnessing how Pilar and Carlos have remade their lives together, Iris understands that she has to stop searching for Óscar. As she reflects, 'now I know that if I met him, he would not be the same, and nor would I', alluding to a common situation after the war in many broken homes. Although full of encouragement to move on, Pilar's farewell words to Iris – 'What's past is past. We have to learn to live with joy'– can be interpreted as an allusion to the pact of

⁴³ Evans, 2011, p. 339.

⁴⁴ Gibson, 1992, p. 88.

oblivion. The end of the harvest experience marks the end of Iris' search, as she seems to be resigned to forget and continue with her life without Óscar.

In the last ten minutes of the film, an ellipsis of several decades transports us to a more modern time, with recognisable retro set décor from the 1970s. Ágata (Mercé Pons) is now a professional woman, who is married to a foreigner and has a son. She explains to one of her colleagues that she became a dubber because she spent her life reading her mother's lips, aiming to discover her secrets, as the viewer witnessed in previous scenes where she was portrayed as a child. Ágata's intervention at the end of the film is crucial, as she bravely urges Iris to break her prolonged silence over so many years. One night, after the grandchild finds a black and white picture of Óscar in Iris' hidden box of memories, the mother finally confesses to her daughter the story about her uncertain paternity. Full of shame, Iris justifies herself explaining to Ágata her convoluted situation: 'I never knew if you were the daughter of hate or love. I didn't want you to suffer that pain. I only wanted to protect you'.

As indicated in Chapter Two, the interruption of the generational transmission of memory is one of the main consequences that impacted the Spanish population in the postwar period, in particular, the war's children. Iris recognises that she used silence as a strategy for survival, illustrating Labanyi's point about the diverse connotations implied by women's silence in that era.⁴⁵ Vergés, on her part, aims to portray her discovery, gained through her research, that Spanish families (and especially women) had kept many secrets, because it was dangerous to reveal the facts or their feelings. The reconciliation between mother and daughter can be seen as Vergés' contribution to promoting reconciliation among generations regarding a conflicted past. This scene is highly significant because Iris reveals her well-kept secret but also because Ágata expresses her frustration about her mother's silence

⁴⁵ Labanyi, 2009, pp. 29-31.

and its impact on her own understanding of her identity. Ágata's reaction, thus, illustrates Gibson's remarks in regards to the effects of the war on 'illegitimate' war's children. Identifying the different reactions to the memory of the Civil War and the postwar period by every generation is crucial for the comprehension of the complex politics of memory in Spain.

The very final scene metaphorically depicts the traumatic aftermath of the Spanish Civil War through the reencounter of two people, whose shared life was truncated by this historical event. Mature Iris (Mariana Cordero) visits a former prisoner (Fermí Reixach) in Franco's regime, who Ágata has identified as potentially Óscar during the dubbing of a documentary in which the man sings the lullaby that Iris used to sing her as a child. This man happens to be the only survivor in a prison where they conducted psychiatric experiments during the dictatorship.⁴⁶ Through this character, the film makes a new reference to the violence perpetrated during Franco's regime and the detrimental effects that a war can have on people's identity. Vergés' decision to use different actors for this scene preserves the enigma of whether the depicted old man is Óscar or not, representing thus a situation that might have been experienced by real people in the past. Nevertheless, it can be argued that the scene is constructed to make us believe that the man is indeed Óscar. The identity of this man, symbolically nicknamed 'Papi Cactus',⁴⁷ is based on his knowledge and love of plants since the psychiatric experiments erased his memory about the past. His passionate speech about different types of flowers reminds us of the scene at the hospital where he tries to seduce Iris before they got married. Coincidentally, the

⁴⁶ The Francoist psychiatrist, Antonio Vallejo-Najera, carried out the so-called 'experiments' on prisoners in the Francoist concentration camps in order to 'establish the bio-psych roots of Marxism'. One of his main theories to terminate with Communism –by separating children from their mothers– has recently been brought to the big screen in *Estrellas que alcanzar* (Mikel Rueda, 2010). Also starred by Bárbara Goenaga (Margari in *La buena nueva*), the film portrays the fight of a cohort of Republican mothers in the Saturrarán prison, after their children were given in adoption to Francoist families.

⁴⁷ The use of cactuses in the film is highly symbolic. In the Bible they are a sign of protection, while in the East they are refer to peace and strength. For the Feng Shui, cactuses should be place in open spaces so that they can apply their protective qualities.

old prison is located on the beach, which also prompts the spectator to think of the scene where young Iris and Óscar once planned to build their house with sea views.

During their interaction, Iris starts bleeding after touching a cactus thorn. Papi Cactus' reaction indicates Vergés' criticism of the lack of resolution in Spain about the past: 'Let's have a look at your wound. We have to disinfect first. It's the secret for all wounds. If they are not cleaned properly, they heal wrongly'. In a metaphorical way, Papi Cactus' words refer to Iris' personal experience of the war, since she was unable to ascertain her husband's death and grieve his loss accordingly. In a similar vein to Taberna, Vergés emphasises that 'the terrible thing about the disappeared that I also try to tell in the film is that, if you don't have someone to bury, this person is not dead, it simply isn't and you can't mourn properly'. According to Evans, the film 'uses the character of the grieving mother as a metonymy for the process of recovering, and recovering from, Spain's repressed twentieth century past'.⁴⁸ Consequently, the wound metaphor also applies to the lack of recovery of a country as a collective since for many Spaniards the Civil War still feels like an open wound that, as Papi Cactus highlights, 'is quite deep, I would say all the way to the heart'. Despite all the similarities (in the dialogues, the setting, and shots) to an early scene between young Óscar and Iris, Papi Cactus does not recognise Iris, even when she finally discloses her name, which he borrows to name one of his beloved cactus. Similarly to *La buena nueva*, *Iris* proposes an open end, which allows each spectator to construct their own conclusion to the story.

Female friendship as a strategy for survival

Iris presents a portrayal of the Spanish Civil War and Francoist society focusing on the suffering and the drastic transformations that women had to endure during and after the war. Vergés has stressed that 'women as protagonists of the Civil War and the role of women vindicating the historical memory disrupts daily life and is a

⁴⁸ Evans, 2011, p. 339.

silenced but very important viewpoint'. The fictional script, Vergés explains, 'comprises a great deal of documentary-style information, in the sense that much of the dialogue and many scenes are drawn from real stories'. According to her, Iris' character is inspired by the fortitude of the communist activist Juana Doña, the courage of Austrian photographer Inge Morath, and many other courageous women who survived the war. Rather than focussing on an explicit representation of the true facts of the war, the director transmits the emotions and truncated lives which derived from the war. In so doing, the film reflects how the Civil War impacted on women's freedom and status through the main female characters and changed the destiny of an incipient progressive country in which women had a voice.

Firstly, both Iris and Magdalena are depicted as modern professional women. Iris starts working as a photographer during the war, capturing the social reality in the rearguard; Magdalena is a nurse at a hospital. Vergés' choice of these two professions for the female characters is highly symbolic, as it shows women's incorporation in the public sphere fulfilling relevant roles during the war. On the one hand, war photographers, as will be explained in the following section, played a crucial role in the Spanish Civil War by presenting the first ever complete media coverage of an armed conflict. On the other hand, the role of nurses, traditionally executed by nuns, was secularised and professionalised through official training courses by the Republican government in order to replace nuns as they mostly joined the rebel side.⁴⁹

Secondly, both female characters are portrayed as independent strong women. Iris left her husband because she was unhappy and Magdalena is unmarried. Shortly after they meet, they share their common views on relationships while drinking from a flask: while they do not need a man for financial support, they express their need

⁴⁹ Dolores Martín Moruno, 'Becoming visible and real: Images of Republican women during the Spanish Civil War', *Visual Culture & Gender*, 5 (2010), p. 11.

for affection and sex. Their liberal approach to sexuality, associated with Republican values of the time, is reflected in several scenes (Iris has sex with Óscar the second time she meets him, and Magdalena maintains a sexual relationship with Damián outside marriage). In Iris and Óscar's wedding, while dancing with the men, both women hold hands as a sign of their upcoming everlasting friendship, which develops throughout the film. Magdalena supports Iris unconditionally on multiple occasions. For example, she looks after Iris when she gets pregnant and encourages her to have the baby (Figure 3.14). Later on, Magdalena takes care of Iris' daughter while she is imprisoned or goes to work abroad in the grape harvest, and it is also through her friend's endeavours that Iris is released from prison.

Like *La buena nueva*, *Iris* shows the relevance of women supporting each other, financially and emotionally, in order to survive under adverse circumstances. Vergés proudly relates writer Teresa Pàmies' observation that the film reflects a very important aspect of the Civil War, the solidarity among women, arguing that in that war women showed incredible strength and helped many families get ahead. Iris' strength is emphasised by Magdalena when she visits her in prison 'You are a very strong woman deep down, aren't you?' Similarly, in a later scene, before Iris travels abroad, Magdalena admires her friend's determination to find her husband: 'Maybe you are right, maybe it is impossible to die if someone like you wants to see you alive'. The sense of female solidarity is reinforced through Iris' short but intense friendship with the female harvester, Pilar, who helps and encourages her during her stay abroad. As a farewell present, she gives Iris a shawl, reminding us of the one her mother left her, which the viewer has seen in the initial scenes.



Figure 3.14 Magdalena consoling Iris in *Iris*



Figure 3.15 Magdalena visiting Iris in *Iris*

After losing their partners in the war both women need to look for strategies to survive in the new patriarchal and repressive society, similar to the situation experienced by the widows of *La buena nueva*. While Iris continues working as a photographer, Magdalena marries an influential lawyer. Her marriage allows her to indirectly progress in Francoist society as she has a supporting husband. In the prison scene, when Magdalena visits Iris, Magdalena is depicted as a wealthy woman, wearing an expensive fur coat and sumptuous jewellery, as shown in Figure 3.15. The viewer is led to assume that she has stopped her job as a nurse and has assumed the traditional role imposed to women of becoming 'Mrs. What's-His-Name'. As Vergés clarifies, 'they (women) were not only relegated to the home but were professionally demoted, without a chance to pave their own way. I wanted to pay tribute to all these women'. Remarkably, the director's way of honouring women's courage is through empowering female characters who manage to get ahead by supporting each other. Thus, with the help of Magdalena, Iris opens a photo studio in Damián's old bakery, which allows her to fund her trip abroad and maintain both herself and her daughter. Her lifelong friendship is represented until the end of the film, as in the final scene set in democracy, Iris mentions some news about her old friend: Magdalena is going back to study, reflecting how intrepid women would take any opportunity to improve themselves.

Reconstructing memory through photography

Starting with the title, *Iris* (which can refer both to the human eye and to the camera 'eye'), the relevance of photographs in this film deserves notice and comment. I have mentioned at the beginning of this analysis how the director was impacted by the intensity of the war's archival images which transmitted people's suffering through their gazes. As Vergés explains, 'this idea of photographing and conserving, of having the negative, of capturing what is happening... This is why the film title is *Iris*, because it is the fragility and the beauty of a flower on the one hand, and the gaze, how you can capture through your eyes everything that in your life is falling apart'. Despite the depiction of violent war and postwar experiences, Vergés has constructed a beautiful and colourful film, paying special attention to photography by incorporating numerous stills with symbolic meaning. For instance, various shots focus on Iris' expressive eyes, which convey the innocence and enthusiasm of a young lady at the film's beginning (Figure 3.16), and at the end show a life of traumatic and intense events (Figure 3.17).



Figure 3.16 Young Iris looking at Óscar in *Iris*



Figure 3.17 Mature Iris looking at Papi Cactus in *Iris*

All the pictures that inspired Vergés to make this film would not have happened without the important work by war photographers. As stated, the Spanish Civil War was the first large-scale conflict documented by professional photographers with full media coverage. As Susan Sontag explains, it 'was the first war to be witnessed ("covered") in the modern sense: by a corps of professional photographers at the lines of military engagement and in the towns under bombardment, whose work was

immediately seen in newspapers and magazines in Spain and abroad'.⁵⁰ During the Spanish Civil War both the photographic report and the figure of war photographers with their personal style emerged, since thus far most war photographs had been anonymous.⁵¹ International photographers like Robert Capa, Henri Cartier-Bresson and David Seymour documented the battles, providing a front line perspective.⁵² Much less is known, however, about women photographers who also risked their lives to record the atrocities of the war.⁵³ The most famous is Gerda Taro, companion and professional partner of Capa, who is considered the first female photojournalist to cover the front lines of a war and who died in the Brunete battle doing her job in 1939.⁵⁴

Interestingly, the female photographer that inspired Vergés' character was Inge Morath, who was too young to cover the Spanish war but collaborated later with Capa and Cartier-Bresson. The type of pictures that Iris takes during the war, displaying daily life instead of the battle front, rather remind us of the work by Hungarian photographer Kati Horna, who pioneered a new approach to photographing civilians. Her extensive collection of photographs depicting the effect of the Spanish Civil War on women, children and other non-combatants has been described as 'a journey through the human landscape of the war, tracking their wounds but also its everyday traces'.⁵⁵ Unfortunately, as is the case with many

⁵⁰ Susan Sontag, *Regarding the Pain of Others* (New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 2003), p. 21.

⁵¹ Parejo, 2011, pp. 87-88.

⁵² In 2011 Trisha Ziff released *The Mexican suitcase*, an interesting documentary about a whole set of pictures by Robert Capa that were found in a suitcase in Mexico, many years after the war.

⁵³ Spanish male photographers have also been disregarded. In 2010 Ana Pérez and Marta Arribas directed the documentary *Héroes sin armas: Fotógrafos en la Guerra Civil Española* to pay tribute to four Spanish photographers who contributed to document the war (Marín, Campúa, Alfonso and Díaz Casariego).

⁵⁴ Parejo, 2011, p. 85.

⁵⁵ Nancy Berthier, Rafael Rodríguez Tranche and Vicente Sánchez-Biosca, 'Kati Horna. El compromiso de la mirada. Fotografías de la guerra civil española (1937-1938)', *Iberic@*, 1, (Spring, 2012), p. 138, <<http://iberical.paris-sorbonne.fr/?p=466.138>> [accessed 20 November 2014].

female artists, her invaluable archive of pictures from Spain was not discovered until she died in 2000.⁵⁶

Ironically, as Nekane Parejo points out, Iris' professional pictures are barely visible in the film since most of the stills depicted in the movie stem from the protagonist's private life.⁵⁷ Thus, Vergés mainly incorporates key domestic photos (of Iris' family, her mother and Óscar), which are crucial for the development of the film's narrative and fulfil several functions. Particularly interesting is Parejo's interpretation that the co-presence in the frame of an object related with death acts as a premonition, anticipating negative events for the photographed people; this relationship is suggested in two of Iris's pictures.⁵⁸ In the first picture, a cross momentarily appears in an old photo of Iris' mother as a young woman, announcing her imminent death (Figure 3.18). The second superimposition happens after Iris has been raped by Julián, and she runs to open the door hoping to get some help from Óscar. First, we hear a noise of something falling and then we see red ink expanding over Óscar's figure (Figure 3.19), warning us of his impending disappearance. The spectator is exposed to these premonitions only for a couple of seconds, but both demonstrate, Vergés attentiveness to detail and reflective deployment of photographs in the storyline.



Figure 3.18 Photo of Iris' mother in *Iris*



Figure 3.19 Photo of Óscar in *Iris*

⁵⁶ Joanna Moorhead, 'The woman who captured Robert Capa's heart', *The Independent*, 13 June 2010, <<http://www.independent.co.uk/arts-entertainment/art/features/the-woman-who-captured-robert-capas-heart-1999038.html>> [accessed on 5 January 2015].

⁵⁷ Parejo, 2011, p. 104.

⁵⁸ Parejo, 2011, p. 106.

In addition to this function, the photograph serves –more significantly– to testify about the past and facilitate the reconstruction and transmission of memory. As Marianne Hirsch claims, borrowing Barbie Zelizer’s words, pictures “materialise” memory.⁵⁹ After finding her son Pascual with one of Iris’ old black and white pictures, Ágata finally dares to interrogate her mother about the man appearing in the concealed photographs and the family’s silenced past. This act illustrates, as Hirsch has highlighted, ‘the integral link photographs provide for the second generation, those who in their desire for memory and knowledge, are left to track the traces of what has been and no longer is’.⁶⁰ However, in this story, it is Iris’ grandchild who helps precipitate a long-awaited conversation which reconciles mother and daughter; a presage of the recent initiative to uncover Spain’s contested past by the third generation.

Conclusion

This chapter has demonstrated that the only two fiction films about the Spanish Civil War directed by women present diverse representations of the conflict and bring to light marginalised topics. Both films portray the social reality of misery during wartime –and *Iris* also of its aftermath– for the Spanish population rather than exploring the political or ideological reasons that prompted the conflict. Whereas *La buena nueva* focuses on the daily life of women in a Basque village during the war and the involvement of the Catholic Church supporting the rebel side, *Iris* is a film about the Civil War without that war being explicitly named. Although each film is set in a different context, both stories focus on how ordinary people, in particular women, experienced the war from the rearguard. For this reason, female characters have been paid great attention with the aim to highlight the determination and survival skills of all women who had to confront one of the most traumatic times in

⁵⁹ Marianne Hirsch, ‘Surviving Images: Holocaust Photographs and the Work of Postmemory’, *The Yale Journal of Criticism*, 14, 1 (2001), p. 14.

⁶⁰ Hirsch, 2001, p. 14.

Spanish history. In doing so, both films portray how structural and symbolic violence impacted on several generations of women while denouncing gender-specific punishments and laws, such as the shaving of women's heads or the incarceration of women on grounds of adultery. I demonstrated that Taberna and Vergés provide a novel perspective of the war and depict a wide range of strong, independent and captivating female characters. Therefore, by eschewing female victimisation, the directors construct a richer imaginary of female characters which avoids the stereotypical binary opposition saint/whore, as portrayed in films like *Libertarias*, which I will briefly discuss in Chapter Five.

I also discussed how the main protagonists in each film, Miguel and Iris, whose professional and personal lives are interrupted by a war, undergo an internal conflict. Both characters face a personal battle for being loyal to their principles and feelings but are not afraid to confront other people and engage in challenging situations. Miguel opposes the Church and the military hierarchies, as he cannot justify the use of violence in the name of God, and loses his job as a priest. Iris, in turn faces her powerful mother-in-law and the warden in prison as well as risking her life by taking pictures of Republicans and travelling abroad looking for Óscar. Despite being introduced as young and innocent characters, Miguel and Iris are compelled to hastily mature in the traumatic context of a civil war, which both are determined to document –through writing/mapping or photography– in the interest of future generations. Finally, this chapter has concluded that both films propose a conciliatory end that adds to the reconstruction of the country's collective memory. *La buena nueva* finishes with a spectacular and emotive homage to Republican victims and the hope that forthcoming generations will uncover the contested past. *Iris* explicitly portrays the confession of a mother to a daughter, revealing a lifelong kept secret about the identity of Iris's daughter's father.

The following chapter explores in more detail the diverse approaches to the memory of the Spanish Civil War and Franco's dictatorship by three generations of Spaniards, focusing on the war grandchildren's perspective, and reflects on the impact that the fratricidal conflict still has in current Spanish society.

Chapter 4. Confronting silence and memory in contemporary Spain: The grandchildren's perspective¹

The choice that we have is not between remembering and forgetting; because forgetting can't be done by an act or will, it is not something we can choose to do. The choice is between different ways of remembering...

Tzvetan Todorov²

A civil war is the deepest form of collective trauma that can affect a community. In post-Franco Spain, the memory of the Civil War and the consequent repressive dictatorship has been treated as a collective traumatic experience, which over the next decades prolonged many realities of the war and, in particular, the repressive side of Francoism.³ The enduring impact of the Civil War on Spanish society and politics is witnessed by the differing effects, reactions and interpretations of, at least, three generations of Spaniards. The approach of each generation towards a specific historical event is studied by generational theory. Before examining the different approaches taken within the films to the memory of the Spanish Civil War by each generation, it is relevant to clarify how the term generation and other concepts related to generational theory will be used in this chapter. An important contributor to the theory of generations is Karl Mannheim, who argues that the most salient factor of a generation is its social quality. Mannheim describes the concept of 'generational units' as specific groups which make their own particular conclusions based on their shared experiences, and, therefore, share a common destiny.⁴ Since the 1980s and

¹ A modified version of this chapter with the same title has been published in *Film, History and Public Memory: New Perspectives*, ed. by Fearghal McGarry and Jennie M. Carlsten (London: Palgrave, 2015), pp. 48-64.

² Tzvetan Todorov, *Hope and Memory: Lessons from the Twentieth Century* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2003), p. 311.

³ Julio Aróstegui, 'Traumas colectivos y memorias generacionales', in *Guerra Civil: mito y memoria*, ed. by Julio Aróstegui and François Godicheau (Madrid: Marcial Pons Historia, 2006), p. 58.

⁴ Karl Mannheim, *Essays on the Sociology of Knowledge* (London: Routledge, 1952), p. 291.

1990s, the theory of generations has been applied by other disciplines and, in particular, by memory research. The humanities and the social sciences employ now the term generation to refer to 'a group within a society that is characterised by its members having grown up in the same particularly formative historical era'.⁵

Several Spanish scholars have emphasised how the analysis of different generational memories is crucial in obtaining a diversity of perspectives on a conflicted past and how this can contribute to the creation of a more representative and inclusive collective memory. Aguilar, for instance, notes that the 'generational effect' is strongly related to the study of collective memory because it is useful to trace the development of a country's collective memory as new generations come to power.⁶ Although this investigation is going to use everyday language to address the different generations (grandparents, parents, grandchildren), it is important to emphasise the existence of a common generational identity in each group. To a larger extent, this identity has been created in a context of radical upheaval and political transformation. Julio Aróstegui observes that the evolution of the generational memory of the conflict has not always coincided with the new interpretations provided by historiography.⁷ Insisting on the plurality and dynamic nature of memory, Aróstegui emphasises its unstable and protean qualities, resulting in public manifestations of memory that are heterogeneous, fragmented and often contested.⁸ In some cases, as is exemplified by the protagonists in the films analysed in this chapter, an incompatibility arises between individual memories and the collective memory of the war. In this sense, it is important to examine the differences between 'autobiographical memory' and 'transmitted or inherited memory'. As Aguilar suggests, over time, those who lived through the war

⁵ Jürgen Reulecke, 'Generation/ Generationality, Generativity and Memory', in Erll and Nünning, 2008, p. 119.

⁶ Aguilar, 2002, p. 4.

⁷ Aróstegui, 2006, p. 63.

⁸ Aróstegui, 2006, p. 59.

had the opportunity to compare and complement their personal experience of this event with that of other individuals, as well as the official historical narrative, and the one provided by novels and films. This generation had –and still has– the opportunity to learn from history. Aróstegui terms the memory of this generation –the only one based on personal experience– the memory of *identification* or *confrontation*, according to which side they supported.⁹

In contrast, those who do not have a direct experience of the war possess a memory transmitted by multiple sources, one that cannot be contrasted with personal recollections of the event. The first version of the war learnt by this generation is the one conveyed at home, as Jesús Izquierdo and Pablo Sánchez observe, ‘it is not the war that happened in 1936, it is the war that our families explained to us’.¹⁰ However, in many families –mainly the defeated– this transmission did not occur. Then, they encountered the version of the war spread through different media (literature, newspapers, cinema and television) which could have produced conflicting memories to pass on the new generations.¹¹ Yet such were the psychological repercussions of the Spanish Civil War, the generations who did not experience the conflict were also deeply affected.¹² This could be reflected, Aguilar suggests, in the childhood memories of those who were born or were children during the war, which were associated with repression, silence, distorted historical facts and fears.¹³ Consequently, the war had a two-fold negative impact on their lives as they experienced –and transmitted– the inherited trauma of the war, as well as their own trauma of the postwar era. As a result, Aguilar concludes, ‘the postwar generation

⁹ Aróstegui, 2006, p. 81.

¹⁰ Jesús Izquierdo Martín and Pablo Sánchez León, *La guerra que nos han contado. 1936 y nosotros* (Madrid: Alianza, 2006), p. 304.

¹¹ Aguilar, 2002, p. 2.

¹² Aguilar, 2002, p. 4.

¹³ Aguilar, 2002, p. 5.

did not draw the same conclusions regarding the conflict as those who actually fought in it'.¹⁴

The silence of this second generation, Labanyi suggests, is more difficult to examine due to the lack of testimonial documentation.¹⁵ Juliá, nevertheless, has claimed that the children of both victors and defeated rebelled against their parents by rejecting the memory imposed by the victors as a fraud.¹⁶ A major challenge faced by this generation, he argues, was the impossibility of replacing the victors' memory with an alternative collective memory, since the defeated parents, shattered and traumatised, were not permitted to transmit alternative stories. Consequently, the war's children considered this chapter of history closed; although it had affected their parents, they sought to forget in order to move on or to pursue new paths to democracy.¹⁷ For this reason, Aróstegui classifies the memory of the second generation as the memory of *reconciliation*, indicating a desire to overcome collective trauma.¹⁸ However, the transition did not promote a genuine reconciliation as it did not embrace the memory of the defeated, provoking, in turn, a reaction in the following generation, which demanded a revisionist memory.

At the turn of the last century, a new social dimension of memory emerged, leading to what Aróstegui has termed the memory of *reparation* or *restitution*.¹⁹ As outlined in Chapter Two, within the last two decades, the descendants of the executed, mainly the grandchildren, have assumed the responsibility of confronting the violent past experienced by their relatives. Scholars have emphasised the significance of the third generation's demands for the investigation of the Francoist repression, highlighting its impact on debates about Spain's past and its memory. Labanyi, for

¹⁴ Aguilar, 2002, p. 6.

¹⁵ Labanyi, 2009, p. 25.

¹⁶ Juliá, 2006a, p.13.

¹⁷ Juliá, 2006a, p. 14.

¹⁸ Aróstegui, 2006, p. 82.

¹⁹ Aróstegui, 2006, p. 89.

example, observes that this generation has re-established the process of generational transmission of memory disrupted during the Dictatorship and the following twenty-five years of democracy.²⁰ According to Juliá, the generations born or raised in democracy, who lack personal experiences and memory of the war or Franco's dictatorship, confront the past with a different gaze.²¹ For them the past has a different meaning. They are more interested in finding out why their grandparents, on both sides, were so 'bloodthirsty', why so many indiscriminate killings of civilians took place, and why society after the war was so repressive. As a result, their concerns are oriented more towards the consequences than the causes of the conflict and repression. The greater detachment of the grandchildren's generation from Spain's violent past might allow them to provide a more objective and critical assessment of these events, and to translate their predecessors' political trauma into more conciliatory cultural representations. Unencumbered by Francoist repression, the war's grandchildren have taken the initiative of representing the family stories of the silenced, narratives that remain essential to the construction of identity. As Izquierdo and Sánchez have remarked,

the past belongs to those who experienced it, perhaps not completely, and that's why we keep aspiring to know it so that somehow we can share it with them; but the account we make, history, can only belong to us and to those who receive it from us, to the children, the grandchildren and the great grandchildren of those who experienced it, because we are the ones who tell it, or listen to it or read it.²²

And I would also add: 'and film it and watch it', as a new trend of films has emerged to represent the third generation's concerns from a more reflective and enquiring perspective, in parallel with the demands for the re-examination of the past.

²⁰ Labanyi, 2009, p. 25.

²¹ Santos Juliá, 'Echar al olvido: memoria y amnistía de la transición', *Claves de Razón Práctica*, 129 (2003), p. 23.

²² Izquierdo and Sánchez, 2006, p. 304.

Representing generational memories on screen

It is not surprising then that several documentaries have portrayed this renewed interest in the past and the memory of surviving eyewitnesses taking a personal approach. For instance, Koska's documentary *Mujeres en pie de guerra* (2004) depicts the director's search for women who participated in the Civil War and/or were politically active against Franco's regime. Another documentary that illustrates the grandchildren's individual enquiries about the past is *Bucarest, la memoria perdida* (Albert Solé, 2008), where the director, a journalist born in exile, wants to rediscover his roots. Directors from outside have also dealt with the topic. American production *Death in El valle* (CM Hardt, 2005) documents the filmmaker's attempt to find out the truth about her grandfather's murder in Spain in 1948. In contrast, an insightful viewpoint has been less explored by fiction films, being Trueba's *Soldados de Salamina* (2003) the most prominent fiction film to portray the interest of younger generations in the revision of ambiguous historical events.

This chapter explores how two female contemporary filmmakers portray the differing approaches to memory characterised by the three generations. On the one hand, the melodrama *Para que no me olvides* (Patricia Ferreira, 2004) portrays the influential pull of Spain's traumatic past on the lives of three generations of Spaniards. On the other hand, the documentary *Nadar* (Carla Subirana, 2008) depicts the inquisitive attitude of a grandchild pursuing the silenced story of her executed grandfather. Remarkably given the specificity of their subject matter, both films were premiered at prestigious films festivals, *Para que no me olvides* at Berlinale and *Nadar* at Seminci in Valladolid. In the interviews that I conducted with them, both directors articulate their preoccupation with the reconstruction of Spain's collective memory, evident in their film narratives. Although Ferreira has not declared a personal connection with the film's storyline, she acknowledges her responsibility as an artist 'to stand up against a situation that I consider totally

unfair'. Subirana, in contrast, demonstrates a very personal standpoint in recounting her family story within the context of Spain's divided past: 'in order to place ourselves in the present we need to know what happened in the past. It is necessary as a country to heal, to close wounds, but I have the feeling that in this country the Civil War is still an open wound, isn't it?' The chapter argues that both directors' representations of the past can be seen as interventions aiming at constructing a memory of reparation and proposing effective means of reconciliation in order to heal contemporary Spain's open wound.

The directors' divergent choices in terms of genre facilitate their original ways of confronting a troubled past. Ferreira, who seemed to feel quite confident exploring thriller, as demonstrated by her first two films (*Sé quién eres*, 2000; *El alquimista impaciente*, 2002), has chosen melodrama for her third project. Isolina Ballesteros points out the advantages of using this genre to represent the complexities of memory, arguing that 'Ferreira's melodramatic mode provides a means through which individual memory can become official history, as well as a potential therapeutic model for dealing with the trauma that generates collective empathy and affective identification'.²³ The story centres on a tri-generational family drama that addresses the hardship of losing a loved one. Early in the film, David (Roger Coma), a young architecture student, dies unexpectedly in a bike accident shortly after moving in with his girlfriend Clara (Marta Etura), who works at a supermarket. David's mother, Irene (Emma Vilarasau), a middle-class theatre teacher for the blind, completely opposes this relationship. To Irene's misfortune, her last interaction with David escalates into a heated argument as she has better prospects for her son than a supermarket checker. This tragedy has a huge impact on both women, as well as David's grandfather Mateo (Fernando Fernán Gómez), who was very close to him.

²³ Isolina Ballesteros, 'Feminine spaces of memory: mourning and melodrama in *Para que no me olvides* (2005) by Patricia Ferreira', in *Hispanic and Lusophone Women Filmmakers: Theory, Practice and Difference*, ed. by Parvati Nair and Julián Daniel Gutiérrez-Albilla (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2013), p. 43.

With the help of each other, the three bereaved characters develop strategies to deal with David's death, a process symbolising the divergent generational attitudes to the memory of Spain's traumatic past. Under the guise of a domestic family drama, the plot enables Ferreira to develop an allegorical reading of the memory of the defeated.

In the case of Subirana, her experimental debut film project portrays her own journey of discovery concerning her grandfather's execution at Camp de la Bota (Barcelona) in 1940.²⁴ Straddling documentary and fiction-film, this young filmmaker's directorial debut reveals the challenges of tracing the experiences of war survivors so many years later. Except for the details of his death and his name, Joan Arroniz, Subirana lacks any other substantive information about her grandfather when she begins her quest. Her grandmother Leonor, who had never previously talked about him, has now become unable to do so due to her contracting Alzheimer's disease. Subirana decides then to undertake and document her own investigation through archival research and numerous interviews with family members, historians and war survivors. Towards the conclusion, the focus of the film switches to her relationship with her mother, Ana, who is also diagnosed with Alzheimer's disease after Leonor's death. As Laia Quílez points out, *Nadar* recuperates the past from a 'post-memorialist' perspective, allowing Subirana to present a gaze that is dissociated from traumatic memories and, therefore, capable of combining autobiographical with politically critical elements.²⁵

Both films capture the curiosity, as well as the imperative, that has driven the efforts of the war's grandchildren to re-examine the past in order to better understand their

²⁴ Camp de la Bota was an old suburb of shacks, initially built for fishermen and later occupied by immigrants, located between Barcelona and the town of Sant Adrià de Besòs. During the Spanish Civil War, but mostly in the postwar, around 1,700 war prisoners were executed by Franco's regime. In memory of those killings a plaque was made and a monument to fraternity was built.

²⁵ Laia Quílez Esteve, 'Memorias protésicas: Posmemoria y cine documental en la España contemporánea', *Historia y Comunicación Social*, 18 (October 2013), p. 388.

own identity and place within Spain's broader collective memory. They highlight the obstacles faced by their respective protagonists in trying to fill gaps in the official historical memory, but also in personal and family memories. In each film, the role of the transgenerational transmission of memory in the construction of national and personal identity is explored. A number of articles have looked at each film individually or have contrasted them with other films.²⁶ However, a comparative analysis of *Nadar* and *Para que no me olvides* focusing on the portrayal of the divergent generational memories has not been undertaken yet. By contrasting these two family portraits, this chapter seeks to foreground the perspective of the grandchildren in endeavouring to restore their repressed family histories. Both directors, it is argued here, represent the past in metaphorical ways in order to provoke a wider reconsideration of its impact.

Reconciling trauma and memory in *Para que no me olvides*

After briefly introducing the three family members, apparently living together harmoniously, the sudden death of David is presented as a traumatic experience, one which functions as a metaphor for the Spanish Civil War. The differing responses of each character to this tragic event –that is, conscious reminiscing by Mateo, deliberate forgetting by Irene and obsessive remembering by Clara–

²⁶ For analysis on *Para que no me olvides* see Cruz, 2006; Igor Barrenetxea Marañón, '¡Nada de olvidar! El cine y la memoria histórica', *Quaderns de cine*, 3 (2008), 7-14; Ballesteros, 2013; Carmen Becerra, 'La memoria en el cine de Patricia Ferreira', *Sociocriticism*, XXVIII, 1 & 2, (2013), 147-166.

For analysis on *Nadar* see Abigail Loxham, 'Objects of memory in contemporary Catalan documentaries: Materiality and mortality', *Senses of Cinema*, 60 (October 2011), 1-12; Ryan Prout, 'River, rain, pool: Envisioning adoptive identity in three women's narratives from contemporary Spain', in *Seeing in Spanish: From Don Quixote to Daddy Yankee - 22 Essays on Hispanic Visual Cultures*, ed. by Ryan Prout and Tilmann Altenberg (Newcastle upon Tyne: Cambridge Scholars Publishing, 2011), pp. 91-104; Ryan Prout, 'Critical condition: Alzheimer and identity in Carla Subirana's *Nedar* (2008)', *Journal of Iberian and Latin American Studies*, 18, 2-3 (2012), 245-263; Fran Benavente, 'Formas de resistencia en el documental español contemporáneo: en busca de los gestos radicales perdidos', *Hispanic Review*, 80, 4 (Autumn 2012), 607-629; and Laia Quílez, 2013, 387-398; Hanna Hatzmann, 'La memoria líquida. Imaginarios colectivos y sus interrelaciones con la historia familiar en la obra de tres documentalistas españolas', in *Directoras de cine en España y América Latina: Nuevas voces y miradas*, ed. by Pietsie Feenstra, Esther Gimeno Ugalde and Kathrin Saringen (Frankfurt am Main: Peter Lang, 2014), pp. 293-311.

provides an analogy for twentieth-century Spain's politics of memory. In particular, the complex reactions of the female protagonists become the focus of the narrative.²⁷ In order to move on, Irene endeavours to forget her son by getting rid of any photograph or object that triggers the slightest recollection of him, aiming at oblivion. Irene's character represents the memory of the children's generation, born and raised in Franco's regime, and determined to forget during the Transition. Much as in Juliá's characterisation of this generation, Irene is depicted as rejecting her father's memory as she generally fails to pay attention to his war and childhood stories, and is sarcastic about aspects of that harsh historical period. For instance, in one of the initial scenes Mateo remembers his deceased wife at the dinner table and describes the gleam in her eyes that would make him spin around. Irene ironically replies back whispering: 'That was due to the hunger'.

Her attempts to blank out the death of her son, it could be argued, mirror the silencing process instigated during the post-Franco transition era. Irene's efforts to erase the memory of David conflict with Mateo's attitude to death, for which she reproaches him: 'I am not like you. I need to forget to continue with my life. If David is gone, I want it to be forever'. But just as the attempt to neglect Spain's traumatic past at a collective level was unsuccessful, Irene's determination to 'disremember' her son does not resolve her feelings of loss, or her guilt for having argued with him prior to his death. However, through the character of Clara –who tries to commit suicide– the film also warns that obsessive remembering does not resolve trauma.²⁸ Clara's plight, representing how excessive remembrance can reopen old wounds, can be seen as a critical commentary on the contemporary surfeit of repetitive memory which appears neither to disclose new information about the past, nor aim at reconciliation.

²⁷ Remarkably, both actresses were nominated for the Goya Awards in the categories of Best Actress and Best Supporting Actress.

²⁸ Cruz, 2006, p. 36.

Towards the end of the film, as their relationship improves, Irene confesses to Clara in tears her frustrated attempts to disremember David, illustrating Todorov's argument about the impossibility of forgetting through an act of will: 'Since David died I have tried to forget him, to forget everything in order to manage to keep alive. And every time I forgot something, I spent the whole day thinking of it to get it back'. Mateo's support, the freshly developed friendship with Clara and her regular work with the blind theatre students help Irene to understand that in order to move on she needs to accept David's death. Irene's profession, symbolically leading the blind, plays an emblematic role in the film, as Irene is indeed blinded by her obstinacy and her pain. During the rehearsals of Chéjov's *The seagull*, the leading female actress' determination to continue performing, despite the fact that she is going completely blind, heartens Irene. The choice of Irene's profession, Ferreira explains in the interview, was intentional 'to introduce the idea that not everything that exists can be seen', as Mateo and her student demonstrate to Irene.

The character of Mateo, a first-hand witness to the war and the dictatorship, is seen to represent a more effective middle way between the extremes of remembrance and oblivion. After losing his parents and other relatives in the war, Mateo has chosen to keep alive their memory by imagining conversations with them. Throughout the film the viewer witnesses the imaginary aloud conversations with his deceased relatives and wife, even in the presence of other characters. The opening scene, for instance, shows Mateo talking about the new stereo system that he has just bought for his daughter as a birthday present. The viewer is not able to see who he is talking to but, as the conversation progresses, it is clear that he is talking to his dead wife. After inserting a CD, a medium-long shot of his back shows Mateo sitting next to an empty chair that he softly strokes, as illustrated in Figure 4.1, while the music is playing, indicating how the loving memory of his wife is still with him.



Figure 4.1 Mateo talking to his dead wife in *Para que no me olvides*

It might be noted that the approach taken by Ferreira in this representation of the first generation's memory is unusual. Mateo's reaction to remembering the past differs strongly from the prevailing attitude of his peers who –largely through necessity of circumstances– opted for silence. However, his strategy to deal with death seems to be effective as he is presented as a happy kind old man in spite of the childhood traumas he had to endure. Ferreira's creative –even idiosyncratic– approaches to commemorating the past emphasise the important role of memory in learning to live with trauma. Throughout the film, Mateo helps the two women to understand the importance both of dignifying the memory of loved ones, and of accepting their deaths.

Conversely, the film also depicts Mateo's obsession to not forget anything and his struggle with the loss of memory involved with ageing. Although Mateo is portrayed as a very gentle character, his fear of forgetting things transforms into unexpected aggressiveness and swearing in some scenes. The most illustrative example is during a scene in the day nursing home, as the other residents think that he has become crazy when he is talking to his deceased relatives. Mateo responds violently

grabbing one of the elderly by the collar of his shirt and shouting very agitated, nearly crying: 'I am not crazy, bollocks! You have no idea, you and everyone else, you are all like sheep, they offer you a shitty course and you forget everything'. As suggested by Barrenetxea Marañón, the day nursing home is metaphorically used as a representation of the general consent to oblivion promoted during the transition in exchange for a peaceful democracy.²⁹

Having experienced her son's tragic death, Irene finds herself able to empathise with her father's lifelong suffering, finally understanding his motives for constantly remembering his own family. The ensuing reconciliation between father and daughter, as shown in Figure 4.2, is the film's most poignant and –at the same time– critical scene. It not only depicts the reconciliation between two generations which differ in their methods of dealing with the trauma of the past, it provides Ferreira's critique of Spain's politics of memory. Mateo's explicit political vindication of the need for a collective memory of the defeated is seen to justify his strategy of keeping alive the memory of the dead:

I still keep them with me because one day I realised that I couldn't allow myself to forget them. I owed it to my parents and my sister. But you have no idea how hard it has been and how many times I have wished to get rid of this burden that has become heavier with time. But I couldn't. I knew that I had to remember everything until they return the honour to all the nameless dead that the merciless regime swept away.

²⁹ Barrenetxea Marañón, 2008, p. 12.



Figure 4.2 Mateo and Irene in *Para que no me olvides*

This vindication also emphasises the discordance, observed by Aróstegui, between individual memories and the collective memory which, if sufficiently extreme, Aguilar suggests, can impede political stability.³⁰ Cruz similarly points out how Mateo's misfortune stems from the discrepancy between his own personal memory and the official memory of Spanish society.³¹ Ferreira's film culminates with Mateo's frustrated outburst, which sees him lament the absence of an official apology to the victims of the war and the dictatorship, the decline of the last remaining eyewitnesses, and the ignorance of the younger generations: 'But as days go by I realise that they will never ask for our forgiveness, that they will never put up the names of the dead in some prominent place for all to see, as they did over sixty years ago with the names of those who died for God and Spain. Young people should know'.

Through the characters of Clara and David, Ferreira addresses the relevance of the past to the younger generations. They are depicted as young people in their twenties who have been brought up in democracy and do not have a direct memory of the war or the dictatorship. David and Clara represent two differing approaches

³⁰ Aguilar, 2002, p. 8.

³¹ Cruz, 2006, p. 34.

towards the past. While David reveals a strong interest in Spanish history, particularly his grandfather's war stories, Clara admits her lack of historical knowledge during a romantic escape to Alicante. In the scene on the beach, represented in Figure 4.3, David explains to Clara about his grandfather's disappointment, waiting at that same harbour with his family and thousands of other Republicans to be rescued by foreign boats that never arrived.³²



Figure 4.3 David and Clara sitting on the beach in Alicante in *Para que no me olvides*

David is surprised about Clara's complete ignorance on the issue and asks her:

David: Haven't you ever been told about it?

Clara: No, we didn't speak much at home.

Clara's answer shows that the generational transmission of information about the past has not taken place in her family, but it also suggests that she did not learn about the conflict at school either. In my interview with Ferreira, she emphasises the lack of knowledge about this historical period in the youth of Spain: 'I know that they don't know it. Then I deduce that it is not explained [at schools]. I deduce that in the

³² Around 15,000 people, including heads of the military, Republican politicians, combatants and civilians were crowded together in the Alicante harbour from 29 March 1939. Next day, before they were able to embark on the awaited French and British boats, many of them were captured and executed on the spot, whereas other preferred to commit suicide (Casanova, 2013a, pp. 183-184).

textbooks it [the war and the dictatorship] is not explained as the most important episode of recent Spanish history'. For this reason, Clara, who apparently does not have a personal connection to anyone who experienced the war, has an attitude of indifference towards the subject. However, in a scene in which Clara travels to Alicante with her workmate Antonio after David's death, she mentions Mateo's experience of the war to him. Her recent acquired awareness of such period raised by a personal story suggests that people's interest in their own historical past would increase, if war narratives would include a more individualised as well as social dimension. David's reaction to Clara's answer is very significant and concludes the dialogue about the end of the war in Alicante between the two young people: 'Of course, as if it wouldn't have happened'. This frustrated comment indicates David's awareness of a contested past that remains unresolved for many people like his grandfather; a recent past that is at risk of being forgotten –or simply unknown– since the new generations are in many cases not familiar with it.

Following the death of David, Mateo finds among his papers several notebooks which David had begun secretly to transcribe when he realised that his aging grandfather's memory was starting to fail. The transmission of Mateo's oral recollections into a material object serves the purpose of preserving his memory for future generations. David's writings become the vehicle for Mateo's memory, which, at the same time, allows for its incorporation into the Civil War's broader collective memory. Ironically, after David's death, these roles are reversed. Mateo transcribes his grandchild's story to give to Clara, who needs to know more about her boyfriend, an act which serves also to preserve David's memory: 'He always liked tales. And he continuously asked me to tell him things from my childhood. And I liked to do it so much...The day that for the first time he realised that I didn't remember something in a story that I had told thousand times should have been the day that he started writing them'.

Towards the end of the film, both women become involved in an investigation initiated secretly by David into the potential historical significance of an old building destined for demolition. Like *Iris*, Evans observes, *Para que no me olvides* 'uses maternal grief as a motif for the reconstruction of a forgotten or silenced past',³³ yet Irene is not alone on her detective role, as she joins forces with Clara. Although David does not directly research the war, the parallel between his motives and the revisionist movement's efforts to examine Spain's recent past is clear. David, therefore, embodies the minority –mainly the grandchildren of the defeated– who have assumed the responsibility of reconstructing their country's historical memory. The property, it transpires, is Mateo's childhood home, which he was forced to leave due to the war when he was fifteen. David had hoped to show his grandfather the place that he continued to remember nostalgically at the end of his life. Described by Igor Barrenetxea as a 'posthumous homage from a grandchild to a grandfather',³⁴ this gesture provides Mateo with a memory of *reparation*, a symbolic reconciliation that acknowledges that Mateo's long remembrance has not been in vain. This discovery brings closer the three protagonists, whose mutual support becomes crucial in enduring David's absence and preserving his memory. Overcoming the trauma of the Civil War, the film suggests, requires both time and collective effort.

The film's ending conveys the importance of generational memory for identity formation, illustrating Labanyi's argument that the generational transmission of memory is dependent on a belief in some kind of collective identity.³⁵ When Mateo is taken by Irene and Clara to visit his childhood house, he finds one of his favourite old books, *Treasure Island*.³⁶ Mateo takes out of his wallet the treasure map he had

³³ Evans, 2011, p. 340.

³⁴ Barrenetxea Marañón, 2008, p. 11.

³⁵ Labanyi, 2009, p. 31.

³⁶ Stevenson's novel also appears in the film *La lengua de las mariposas* (José Luis Cuerda, 1999). Like Mateo's father, Don Gregorio (also played by Fernando Fernán Gómez) uses *Treasure Island* to introduce his pupil Moncho to reading fiction. As Moncho finishes this

preserved intact all these years to confirm, in astonishment, that it is a missing page of that novel, as illustrated in Figure 4.4.



Figure 4.4 Treasure map page in *Para que no me olvides*

Furthermore, the novel is inscribed with a meaningful dedication from his father: 'From your father, for you to pass on to your children and they to your grandchildren'. Mateo's father passed on the value of literature to his children, which Mateo bequeathed to David. However, the generational transmission of familial beliefs and memory in this film appears to both skip a generation, and to occur within gendered parameters: from grandfather to grandson. As a result, the male protagonists are not only represented as the bearers of knowledge about the past, but also as its transmitters (both writing each other's memoirs). Cruz's feminist reading of the film highlights the exclusivist role of male agency in this respect.³⁷ According to her, the male characters adhere to the sexist tradition in cinema denounced by Laura Mulvey in which the male protagonist plays the active role that allows the story to progress. The film's emphasis on male agency results in a dual discriminatory effect as its narrative revolves around the male characters' actions

adventure novel, featuring a coming-of-age story parallel to his own, the Spanish Civil War starts, and his teacher is arrested by the Nationalists.

³⁷ Cruz, 2006, p. 37.

(David's death, David's investigation, Mateo's war stories), while also perpetuating the stereotype that men are responsible for making—and writing—history.

Nevertheless, it should be noted that the story is successfully resolved by the two female characters, who locate Mateo's house, providing him with an “architectural space of memory”, from which the recovery of familial and collective trauma can be initiated'.³⁸ In addition, the stereotypical enmity between girlfriend and boyfriend's mother gives way to a friendship that enables the resolution of the story with a credible happy ending. The very final scene shows Clara and Mateo attending the premiere of *The seagull* featured by blind actors and actresses, indicating that Irene has been able to continue with her career and that Clara now forms part of their life. The closing shot, a close-up of Irene's expressive face (Figure 4.5), encapsulates the sadness of a mother who has accepted the tragic loss of her beloved son but has understood that only through his remembrance she will be able to live on.



Figure. 4.5 Irene in the final shot in *Para que no me olvides*

³⁸ Ballesteros, 2013, p. 47.

***Nadar*: Politicising personal portrayals of silence and amnesia**

I think that a country without memory is a sick country, in the same way that a man without memory is a sick man

Dulce Chacón³⁹

The relationship between silence, remembrance and oblivion in *Nadar* reflects the complexities of Carla Subirana's attempt both to retrieve and represent a combination of individual, family and historical memories. The director's autobiographical approach to memory, which combines the personal with the political, transcends that of the individual, portraying the experience of several generations to explore the troubled past. The progressive loss of her grandmother's memory (Leonor) just as Subirana is seeking to challenge Spain's collective amnesia through her quest for the phantasmagorical figure of her grandfather (Joan Arroniz) constitutes a powerful metaphor. As Ryan Prout observes, 'Subirana's act of de-personalising the illness and of reading it across a social history is in itself a political gesture'.⁴⁰ *Nadar* not only depicts how the struggle against time impedes the collection of first-hand testimony about the Civil War and the early postwar era, it also portrays the inability of victims to articulate their traumatic memories. The scarcity of information conveyed by family members, the refusal of other war survivors to testify, and the dearth of information in official records provide the central challenges to surmount both in her research and in the making of her film. The outcome is an eight-year project in which the director's present and past converge. Initially conceived as a fiction film, the script was modified from its original idea, in particular by the incorporation of subsequent events in her life (including the illnesses affecting Leonor and her mother Ana, and the birth of her first son). A key figure in Subirana's journey is cineaste Joaquim Jordà who acts as her mentor,

³⁹ Dulce Chacón, 'La mujer y la construcción del olvido', in Álvarez and Silva, 2004, p. 77.

⁴⁰ Prout, 2012, p. 250.

advising on the script in various conversations which have been included in the film.⁴¹

Contrary to Subirana's expectations, a copy of the summary trial reveals that Joan Arroniz, whose war-time activities form the subject of considerable mystery, was found guilty of three armed robberies. Later she discovers that, following the Spanish Civil War, he was part of a band of anti-Franco leftists who, it is believed, used the proceeds of their robberies to help the needy. Arroniz's criminal past is then recreated in film-noir-like fiction scenes, in which Subirana also fantasises romantic scenarios involving her grandparents. As Hanna Hatzmann notes, 'what the official report describes in a clear and cold manner, it is visually reconstructed through film-noir sequences, which correspond to the director's imagination',⁴² but are also drawn from her cinematographic background. Her fictional Arroniz, Subirana explains in the interview, was inspired by Jean Paul Belmondo's character in *Breathless* (Jean-Luc Godard, 1960).

Half-way through the film, however, Subirana learns that her grandparents never married, although they had intended to do so. To her surprise, Subirana comes across documents revealing that Arroniz's wife –who was not her grandmother– claimed a widow's pension for herself and her child. Perceiving that she forms part of Arroniz's clandestine family, Subirana's investigation takes on a new dimension. As her mentor Jordà insists, she needs to find this family in order to complete her own family history. However, after extensive archival research and numerous interviews, Subirana comes to realise that it is too late to compensate for her grandfather's absence. The director's personal approach results in an innovative film which intersperses domestic videos of her mother and grandmother, fictional black

⁴¹ Joaquim Jordà Català (1935-2006) was an acclaimed Spanish cineaste, recognised for his contribution to the documentary genre in Spain. Subirana collaborated as a cinematographer in his last documentary *Más allá del espejo* (2006). She declares in my interview that without him this film would have never happened, but unfortunately he died before it was finished.

⁴² Hatzmann, 2014, p. 305.

and white sequences with stylised images of herself reflecting in a swimming pool. Posing new questions rather than resolving longstanding concerns, *Nadar* allows the viewers to contemplate the importance of knowledge of the past and of their own family background.

The approaches to memory taken by the protagonists in this film are determined both by the gender of these three generations of women, as well as their respective historical contexts. The film reveals how aspects of female identity impart a particularity to the experiences of 'forgetting' that, in other films, are assumed to be the same for men as for women. It also portrays how the traumatic experience of the war, and the silence imposed during the dictatorship, affected the first two generations of women, and prompted, in turn, confusion and frustration for the third generation raised during the democracy. At the beginning of the film Subirana's voice-over introduces the nonexistence of male figures in her family: 'At home it was normal not to talk about my grandfather. Maybe the absence of my father was too big. That's why I never worried about this other absence'. The question of transgenerational transmission, therefore, is shown to be more problematic in *Nadar* than in *Para que no me olvides*, since the intergenerational dialogue about the past that takes place between Mateo and David is impossible between Leonor and Subirana. Certainly, Leonor's personal circumstances, together with her gendered experiences during a particularly repressive period for women, play a crucial role in her decision not to transmit her story to future generations.

Leonor's strategy of silence was presumably motivated by several factors, including her generational experience of the trauma of the war, as well as the gendered experience of unwed motherhood in a conservative era.⁴³ However, the principal reason for Leonor's silence was probably her partner's left-wing inclinations, as Jordà

⁴³ The social marginalisation and stigmatisation of unmarried mothers during the Franco era was explored by Ferreira in her subsequent documentary *Señora de* (2009), which will be analysed in Chapter Six.

observes in one scene: 'It was better being a single mother than the widow of an executed man'. As Passerini argues, 'certain forms of oblivion point to a lack of identity or to an effort to cover up some of its components'.⁴⁴ In Chapter Two it has already been explained how in the early postwar years, a connection to anyone executed by Franco's regime was cause for stigmatisation, imprisonment, or even execution. In order to protect herself and her child, Leonor did not reveal the identity of Ana's father, until Subirana's present-day curiosity leads her to break her silence. Due to the length of the dictatorship, Labanyi has noted, silence was a survival strategy that endured over several generations.⁴⁵ Consequently, Subirana is unable to obtain any information about Arroniz from her grandmother because she has been silent for too long, and from her mother because she never possessed such knowledge.

A remarkable scene at the beginning of the film is the visit of Subirana and Leonor to the cemetery with a memorial dedicated to executed people in the war, with the name of Joan Arroniz engraved on it. Leonor points at it to show it to her granddaughter. However, she is hardly capable of pronouncing a few words, which are interrupted by her own pauses: 'I have nothing else to... He is dead, then he is dead. (Pause) Those were times in which you could not think anything, and I couldn't give anything either'. While saying this, a close-up shot of Leonor's elderly hands shows a nervous hand tic between her interlaced fingers. Leonor's response illustrates a common attitude of the older generations for whom the idea of revisiting history has arrived too late, as they wonder 'recuperating the past, what for?'

Remarkably, at his point in time, Leonor is not affected by dementia, but she does not want to –or cannot– speak about it. Against Subirana's hope of triggering her grandmother's memories, Leonor appears to have difficulties in articulating her

⁴⁴ Passerini, 2006, p. 245.

⁴⁵ Labanyi, 2009, p. 24.

thoughts. Her facial expressions denote the irrelevance of speaking about that man in the present but also show her combined feelings of inner turmoil and deception. This sense of disappointment towards Arroniz will be clarified by Ana later in the film. As represented in Figure 4.6, the scene concludes by freezing the image and sound so that we can hear Subirana's thoughts in the voice-over while looking at Leonor's wrinkled aged visage: 'That day I realised that it was as if she would be saying to me: 'Don't ask me, if you want to know, now it's your turn'.



Figure 4.6 Leonor at the memorial in *Nadar*

The secondary characters among the first generation in *Nadar* offer broader insights into war survivors' memories. The reluctance of both Leonor's younger sister, Herminia, and the historian, Abel Paz, to discuss issues from the past attests to the culture of silence and censorship imposed by the dictatorship. After Leonor dies, only Herminia –the sole survivor of four siblings– is in a position to provide more details about the family history. For Subirana, discovering this silenced part of her family history has become a pressing need, essential for reconstructing her own identity. As Todorov has noted, 'if we learn something about the past that forces us to reinterpret the image that we had of ourselves and of our own circle, we have to

modify not just an isolated aspect of our selves, but our very identity'.⁴⁶ Herminia, however, repeatedly refuses to speak about the past, claiming that Leonor would not have wished it, a comment that prompts the director to respond in the voice-over: 'I hope that she understands that her sister's story is also *my story*'.⁴⁷ Although a certain detachment from our predecessors is necessary to understand who we are, as Vita Fortunati and Elena Lamberti point out, certain continuity is also required.⁴⁸ Herminia's negative attitude to Subirana's project indicates the continuing fear of disclosing a family secret that has been suppressed for decades, but also points to the shame associated with having an illicit child out of marriage in that particular historical period.⁴⁹ Herminia's fear corroborates Chacón claim that 'the conflict of the two Spains has not finished. It will finish when people are allowed to talk about the conflict. It will finish when not even a single person needs to lower their voice to tell their story'.⁵⁰

Similarly, Abel Paz, a former anarchist combatant in the Spanish Civil War and the author of numerous works on anarchist history, also refuses to answer Subirana's questions about political ideology.⁵¹ In order to complete her research, Subirana considers it essential to speak to someone who can explain Arroniz's outlook:

Subirana: And what were they fighting for? What was their goal? What encouraged them to continue fighting?

⁴⁶ Todorov, 2003, p. 165.

⁴⁷ The emphasis is mine.

⁴⁸ Vita Fortunati and Elena Lamberti, 'Cultural Memory: A European perspective', in Ertl and Nünning, 2008, p. 127.

⁴⁹ Ferreira's documentary *Señora de* explores through one of her interviewees the social marginalisation and the stigma carried by single unmarried women during Franco times.

⁵⁰ Dulce Chacón, 'La historia silenciada', *El País Semanal*, No 1353, 1 September 2002.

⁵¹ Abel Paz (1921–2009) was the pseudonym of Diego Camacho, a Spanish anarchist, former combatant and historian. In 1935 he started work in the textile industry and joined the union Confederación Nacional del Trabajo (CNT). During the Spanish Civil War he fought in the Barcelona May Events of 1937. After the fall of Catalonia in January 1939, he went into exile in France, where he was interned. During the 1940s he fought both in the French resistance to Hitler and the Spanish Anarchist resistance to Franco. He was the author of numerous works on anarchist history, the most important being his biography of Buenaventura Durruti.

Abel Paz: Fuck, oh God, are you really asking me that? (nodding with disapproval)

Although Paz's appearance in the film does not contribute much to Subirana's investigation, his testimony illustrates the *desencanto* (disappointment) of old left-wing militants with the political system and with the position of the working class in Spain. Through this testimony, Fran Benavente suggests, *Nadar* claims the legacy of Joaquín Jordà's militant cinema, as 'the resistance by historian Abel Paz seems to be the "real" trace of a rupture against any attempt to devise a line of continuity or constitute a conscious legacy of a certain memory of activism'.⁵² Paz's lack of straight answers, annoyed facial expressions, continuous silences and aggressive tone imply his discontent with the country's socio-political development and extended conformism. He concludes the interview with a sceptical comment that denotes a strong feeling of frustration: 'I don't know anything at all, do you understand? Because everything I know it's like as if I didn't know'.

By filming *Nadar*, Subirana is materialising her own memories of her grandmother, depicted in the domestic videos and, at a later stage, of her own mother as well. Ana's role in the documentary is not prominent until she is unexpectedly diagnosed with Alzheimer's disease. From this moment, the progression of her illness is incorporated in the film. Replicating her mother's behaviour, Ana has also not spoken about Subirana's own father as she was not able to replace the absence of her own father with any other memory (as Juliá claims is often the case for the second generation). This silence, spanning two generations, can only be disrupted by Subirana. In a new visit to the cemetery, this time with Ana, Subirana is able to reconcile her mother's memory of her own father's ghost by providing her not only with a physical memorial, but a heroic one. While searching for his name in the column, they briefly speak about Arroniz. Ana clarifies that Leonor never forgave

⁵² Benavente, 2012, p. 615.

him for abandoning them by dying and acknowledges that surviving during that period was extremely hard due to the terrible tension that existed when she grew older. This is the only information about the past that Ana conveys to her daughter in the film. When Ana finally spots her father's name engraved on the war memorial (as illustrated below) she looks very impressed while Subirana observes with irony on the voice-over: 'That same day she decided that her father was a hero. A stone column forgotten at a cemetery was enough for her'. Ana's lack of inherited memory has been replaced by the memory of *restitution*.



Figure 4.7 Subirana and Ana at the memorial in *Nadar*

In *Nadar* the generational transmission of the past has been inverted: from daughter to mother. The process is also transgressive as it subverts the stereotype of history as a form of knowledge passed from men to other men. In the absence of reparation at a national level, the generation of the grandchildren seeks to acknowledge their predecessors' past through individual homages, as David does by transcribing his grandfather's memories and by locating his childhood home. Subirana's homage to her family memory is corroborated in her documentary by means of a meta-cinematic device. The final scene shows Subirana watching one of the fictional scenes of her own documentary at a cinema while she dedicates the film to her already senile mother in the voice-over's final comment: 'I dedicate these [scenes] to

my mother. What a shame that I was not able to finish them before her wardrobe was untidy’.

As both the research project and film have progressed, Arroniz has become more distant, increasingly remote from Subirana’s family. Throughout the film he is represented as a shadow, the ghost that he always was for Leonor and Ana, playfully embodied in an enigmatic faceless film-noir gangster, as shown in Figure 4.8. Near the conclusion, Subirana’s visit to Arroniz’s sister finally puts a face to the ghost when she receives an old black and white photograph. Subirana relates in my interview how, looking at this photograph, she felt as if two separate historical moments had been brought into alignment to confront a ghost. In the film, the photograph (as is illustrated in Figure 4.9) is observed within a storage box, whilst Subirana’s voice-over exclaims: ‘I have the feeling that he looks at me and tells me: how the hell have you arrived here?’



Figure 4.8 Arroniz’ fictional representation in *Nadar*



Figure 4.9 Photograph of Joan Arroniz in *Nadar*

Rather than offering answers about postwar Spain, *Nadar* poses many questions, which are often voiced as Subirana is swimming, as the title symbolically suggests. The role of water in Subirana’s documentary is indeed very significant and has been previously explored in detail by several scholars.⁵³ From the opening film credits, which show black and white ultrasound images with water sounds and a foetus heartbeat, the presence of water in the film is made evident. The first scene begins

⁵³ See Prout, 2011 and Hatzmann, 2014.

with a close-up shot of two feet that walk towards an indoor swimming pool and check the water temperature. Next, a woman (Subirana) dives in the pool and, as she swims, the voice-over starts explaining: 'Swimming relieves my backache. It is strange because when I was a child I used to hate swimming'. The relationship between the director, water and memory in the documentary has been poetically elucidated by Subirana as follows:

Water is memory. Swimming to reencounter with it, diving in in the search of impossible and intangible answers... The water as the first liquid present in our lives, the amniotic, to which I return to conciliate with the most primal, with the most essential. It is a starting point from the present, a physical need which is translated into a medium to symbolise a whole inner journey towards a past as slippery as a soap bar.⁵⁴

As her grandfather's investigation progresses, Subirana shares her feelings, thoughts, and frustrations through the voice-over while swimming laps. The swimming pool becomes, as described by Prout, 'the medium between Subirana's detective work –her stymied roots journey back to a Spain separated by an ocean of time– and her day to day life'.⁵⁵ Most importantly, it is in the water where she expresses her fear about both her mother and grandmother being diagnosed with Alzheimer's disease. The film shows that water can be peaceful and relaxing but can also feel dangerous and suffocating, as Subirana's mood is reflected in the pool scenes contrasting calm swimming with frantic spinning underneath the water. While the voice-over is always clear and descriptive, the pool sequences, Hatzmann observes, condense the director's divergent emotional states.⁵⁶ The use of light in

⁵⁴ José David Cáceres Tapia, 'Entrevista Carla Subirana', *Miradas de cine*, 88 (July, 2009), <<http://www.miradas.net/2009/07/actualidad/entrevista-carla-subirana.html>> [accessed 1 May 2013].

⁵⁵ Prout, 2011, p. 102.

⁵⁶ Hatzmann, 2014, p. 307.

the swimming pool is also employed to indicate relief (brighter light) or anxiety (darker light), as it can be observed in Figures 4.10 and 4.11.

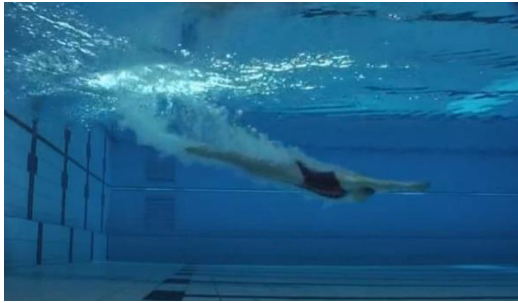


Figure 4.10 Subirana swimming in *Nadar*



Figure 4.11 Subirana swimming in *Nadar*

As the documentary reveals, Subirana's project has been transformed into a journey of self-discovery, reinforcing and validating her identity as a member of a family of single mothers. In addition, the impossibility of the transgenerational transmission of a part of her family story has made her aware of the importance of recording her mother and grandmother's past in order to pass on to her own son, who, as Subirana exclaims in the voice-over: 'has broken the family tradition, this world of women'. 'The presentation of her son', Prout has concluded, 'in the same aquatic medium that had negotiated her own journey between past and present and between the identity that her mother and grandmother created for her, *ex nihilo*, places her child in the care of a larger family and of a maternity that is as much about imagination as it is about biology'.⁵⁷

In addition to the swimming pool scenes, images of beautiful landscapes of lakes and snowed mountains are incorporated when she is travelling to her grandmother's hometown. In general, the places associated with water are depicted as a reflective space for the director, but this provides also an invitation for viewers to reflect on their own past, and to contemplate their own story. Subirana recounts in my interview the response of one ninety-five-year-old man who, after fighting on the Nationalist

⁵⁷ Prout, 2011, p. 103.

side, went into exile in Mexico. He admitted to her, with tears in his eyes, that her film had moved him, causing him to reflect on his own years of silence when he suppressed his memories by concealing his own war stories from his children. His experience suggests that Subirana's film has the capacity not only to promote constructive debate about the past but reconciliation between both sides.

Conclusion

This chapter has presented an analysis of two films that problematise the fragility of memory, while emphasising its protean nature across generations. Todorov's observations concerning the different ways of remembering the past, and the impossibility of conscious forgetting, are reflected in the diverse representations of attitudes towards memory in both films. As the number of war survivors diminishes, and their recollections become less accurate, the memory of the first generation is beginning to fade. In *Para que no me olvides*, this is suggested by Mateo's slight loss of memory in several scenes, whereas in *Nadar* the impact of Alzheimer's disease on the lives of Leonor and Ana assumes a central role. With aging, the ability to remember and transmit the past becomes no longer a matter of conscious choice, as in the case of Mateo and Leonor. In both characters, dementia has taken control on their physical ability to remember, having a minor impact in Mateo's memory, but becoming Leonor's cause of death. Consequently, both films emphasise how a more complete and inclusive collective memory depends on the collection, preservation and dissemination of a wide range of first-hand testimonies.

As it has been debated, the transgenerational transmission of memory is central in both films, although the approaches to represent it in each film are nearly opposing. *Para que no me olvides* portrays a constant intergenerational dialogue about the past between grandfather and grandson, the endeavours of these two generations to keep the family memories alive and insists in the need for younger generations to

be aware of their past. *Nadar*, on the contrary, shows the consequences of forty years of repression in a first generation which was not allowed to transmit their memories to the next generations due to the political circumstances and which now is unable to articulate those traumatic memories. What both films share is the silence of the second generation and the interest of some members of the third generation to investigate the past and materialise it in cultural products, aiming at a 'post-memory' of reparation.

The most original contribution made by both family portraits lies in their avoidance of a traumatic or nostalgic representation of the past by means of an intergenerational perspective that attempts to reconcile divergent generational memories. Both films eschew the victimisation of their characters, aiming to vindicate the silenced memories of their predecessors at an individual but also a collective level. *Para que no me olvides* focuses on Mateo's war and childhood experiences, stressing his determination to sustain the memory of his relatives until an official apology can be won. Mateo's memory of *confrontation* emphasises how individual memories diverge from the official memory. Through the character of Irene, the film suggests that addressing the past remains necessary both in order to live in the present, and to fashion a future. In this way, the film refutes the notion that a peaceful future was incompatible with remembrance of the violence of the past which underpinned the transition era's pact of oblivion.

Nadar's narration of a silenced family story over three generations of women stresses the positive –but also precarious– aspects of being raised in a fatherless family. Instead of becoming the story of an executed left-wing anti-Franco fighter, the documentary's focus shifts to the resilience of strong and independent women who were forced by historical circumstances to remain silent. The film not only explores the beautiful relationship between the director, her mother and her grandmother, but also depicts gatherings with single mothers and divorced women.

The consequent normalisation and celebration of these representations of alternative family structures that challenge the Francoist patriarchal model of family becomes Subirana's major contribution to the nation's collective memory.

Chapter 5. Susana Koska's personal cinema: Vindicating heroism in women's socio-political engagement in twentieth century Spain.

As it has been highlighted in the thesis introduction, women have historically been omitted from accounts of war. A recent investigation that analyses the role of women in time of peace and in armed conflicts throughout history concludes that women have always been present in wars and have been war victims.¹ The study points out that women mostly played a major role behind the scenes rather than on the battle front due to the association of women with weakness and other cultural patriarchal assumptions. In the case of the Spanish Civil War, women certainly had a very active role and adopted a specific political posture: either to defend the Republic or to support Franco's uprising.² However, women's participation in the war has been generally disregarded by historiography even though their contribution to the conflict, both at the front and in the rearguard, was as significant as men's.³ In particular, leftist women's involvement in the Spanish Civil War, their consequent repression in Francoist prisons, and their participation in the resistance against Franco's regime have not received the same attention as their male counterparts. As writer Dulce Chacón urges,

it is necessary that History contemplates their presence (...) in the fight against Fascism. The collective memory must also be constructed with the pain of women, who suffered death penalties, torture, exile, prison, and fought on the first line at the front as militiawomen, in the secrecy of the maquis (resistance movement) as members of the guerrilla and in the active resistance.⁴

¹ Montserrat Huguet, 'Mujeres y paz en la historia reciente', paper presented at Encuentros con la historia del centro riojano, Universidad Rey Juan Carlos, Madrid, 16 April 2012.

² For a comprehensive analysis of women's participation in the war on both sides see Carmen Domingo, *Nosotras también hicimos la guerra. Defensoras y sublevadas* (Barcelona: Flor del Viento Ediciones, 2006).

³ Domingo, 2006, p. 20.

⁴ Chacón, 2004, p. 77.

The patriarchal and highly repressive dictatorship that followed the war impeded Republican women's ability to narrate how they experienced those traumatic years. Gina Herrmann also emphasises that 'it has been the male war stories that have generally been collected up until the 1980s and the women's war history has been overlooked even by progressive historians'.⁵ At the end of the 1970s however, some women's narratives started to get published, countering women's invisibility in official war accounts, mainly those by female authors. At the foreground in this research are works by historians Antonina Rodrigo and Mary Nash, whose main studies have already been introduced. Rodrigo's trilogy (1979, 1999 and 2013) compiles numerous accounts by women who developed a political identity in the Second Republic, actively defended the Second Republic in the Civil War and, consequently, had to go into exile, both voluntary and forced.⁶ Arguing that history requires a gendered perspective, Nash is one of the main scholars to reconstruct women's recent history, with a focus on Spain. Her multiple studies provide new perspectives on women's development and position within society and politics in twentieth century Spain. Her groundbreaking study *Defying Male civilization* (1995), later translated into Spanish (*Rojas*, 1999), constitutes a thorough examination of the participation of Republican women in the Civil War in the light of gender historiography and social history. One of her latest publications, *Represión, resistencias, memoria*, compiles a varied collection of essays tackling the most up to date research on women under Franco's dictatorship.⁷

Female testimonial literature also provides a great insight into women's experiences of war and Francoist repression. In a country like Spain, with little tradition of female

⁵ Gina Herrmann, 'Voices of the vanquished: leftist women and the Spanish Civil War', *Journal of Spanish Cultural Studies*, 4, 1 (2003), p. 12.

⁶ Antonina Rodrigo, *Mujeres de España. Las silenciadas* (Madrid: Plaza y Janés, 1979); *Mujer y exilio, 1939* (Madrid: Compañía Literaria, 1999); *Mujeres olvidadas: las grandes silenciadas de la Segunda República* (Madrid: La esfera de los libros, 2013).

⁷ Mary Nash (ed.), *Represión, resistencias, memoria: Las mujeres bajo la dictadura franquista* (Granada: Comares Historia, 2013).

autobiography, Shirley Mangini observes that autobiographical works become an essential source for providing understanding of women's lives during and after the conflict.⁸ In particular, the work by former prisoners Juana Doña and Tomasa Cuevas, published shortly after Franco's death, are considered trailblazing. Doña's autobiographical novel, *Desde la noche y la niebla* (written in 1967 but only published in 1977), depicts in detail the unbearable daily routine in Francoist prisons and denounces the atrocities that thousands of women were subjected to. In the introduction to the second edition she identifies women's essential involvement in the fight against fascism and laments the lack of a narrative to describe the female contribution:

Epic stories about the male prisons and their heroic deeds were told, censorship was avoided and in the blackest secrecy actions and the suffering experienced by male fighters were divulged. Rarely was it spoken or written about the heroism of female fighters (...). You can count with the fingers of your hand, what has been printed outside and inside the country to denounce and unveil the iniquities that women have suffered and suffer in our prisons. Barely a couple of lines have been dedicated to women in this river of volumes written about the civil war and the resistance in our country.⁹

Also based on her own personal experiences and those of her fellow inmates, Cuevas collected in the mid 1980s numerous accounts by imprisoned Republican women and their acts of resistance during Franco's dictatorship in three different volumes.¹⁰ Historian Ricard Vinyes stresses that Cuevas' work constitutes 'a

⁸ Shirley Mangini, 'Memories of Resistance: Women activists from the Spanish Civil War', *Signs*, 17, 1 (Autumn 1991), p. 172.

⁹ Juana Doña, *Desde la noche y la niebla. Mujeres en las cárceles franquistas* (Madrid: Editorial Horas y Horas, 2012), p. 20.

¹⁰ Tomasa Cuevas, *Cárcel de mujeres, 1939-1945*, vol I (Barcelona: Sirocco, 1985), *Cárcel de mujeres, (Ventas, Segovia, Les Corts)*, vol II (Barcelona: Sirocco, 1985), and *Mujeres en la resistencia* (Barcelona: Sirocco, 1986). The edition by Jorge Montes Salguero (2004) compiles the three books.

combination of primary sources without equal in Europe'.¹¹ This first compilation of female oral testimonies was crucial for the country's recovery of memory but, most importantly, it assisted many Republican women to start sharing and reflecting on their experiences of prison and repression. Certainly the 1990s, and increasingly the 2000s, gave light to a greater corpus of studies which compile and explore women's war narratives for inclusion in the collective memory of the defeated. Fernanda Romeu Alfaro claims women voices, the importance of memory and the value of oral history in recovering women's identity: 'We (women) remember. We decide and write in order to avoid that women's stories remain untold. Throughout History, as women we know the importance of memory, since by recovering it we can recover our identity'.¹² Carmen Domingo's trilogy is also a significant contribution to portray women's history in twentieth century Spain. In addition to the already mentioned work on women's war accounts *Nosotras también hicimos la guerra* (2006), her other two publications, *Con voz y voto* (2004) and *Coser y cantar* (2007), depict the Second Republic and Francoism through women's voices.¹³ With a preface by Nash, Llum Quiñonero, *Nosotras que perdimos la paz* (2005), presents a new compilation of four female testimonies to enhance the memory of the defeated. The book was partly based on the accounts by some of the protagonists appearing on a previous TV documentary, *Mujeres del 36* (1998), which was also directed by Quiñonero.¹⁴

Inma Chacón, Dulce Chacón's sister, has brought to our attention the fact that women are slowly becoming the protagonists of literary narratives about the Civil

¹¹ Isabel Obiols, 'Ricard Vinyes reconstruye la biografía de la antifranquista María Salvo', *El País*, 2 November 2004, <http://elpais.com/diario/2004/11/02/cultura/1099350006_850215.html> [accessed 27 June 2014].

¹² Fernanda Romeu Alfaro, *El silencio roto: Mujeres contra el Franquismo*, (Madrid: El Viejo Topo, 2002), p.11. The first edition was published in 1993 by the author, alter being rejected by several publishing companies.

¹³ Carmen Domingo, *Con voz y voto* (Barcelona: Lumen, 2004); *Coser y cantar: Las mujeres bajo el Franquismo* (Barcelona: Lumen Editorial, 2007).

¹⁴ Llum Quiñonero, *Nosotras que perdimos la paz* (Tres Cantos, Madrid: Foca, 2005).

War and the postwar.¹⁵ While in literature and academia the number of works centred on women's war narratives is increasing, women's involvement in the war is still under-represented in films. As already discussed in Chapter Three, the amount of films portraying ordinary women's experiences of the Civil War and the postwar period is rather limited in Spanish cinema, and it has been mostly done by male directors. Similarly, few films have dealt with women's active fight against fascism during the Civil War. The already mentioned *Libertarias* (Aranda, 1996) is perhaps the first film which gives full prominence to militiawomen, representing the motivation and solidarity in fighting for a fairer Spain, without gender or class differences. However, the protagonists have a dreadful and humiliating end: they are not only killed like lambs, having their throats cut, but also brutally raped by Moroccan soldiers. Although this sort of portrayal represents the further risks and violence that women were undoubtedly subjected to, feminist scholars denounce the fact that it reinforces the tradition of presenting women as victims. For instance, Carmen Domínguez criticises that this type of death diminishes the heroism of militiawomen that the director is trying to foreground throughout the whole film.¹⁶ Instead of giving them the opportunity of dying like men at the war front, Domínguez contests, Aranda has preferred that they die as victims of gender violence, highlighting thereby their traditional female role as weak and inferior beings. In a similar vein, Herrmann problematises Aranda's portrayal of anarchist women fighters. She argues that the film bolsters old conservative stereotypes as her interviews with *milicianas* for her oral history project do not reveal that these women underwent 'the kinds of sexualisation that *Libertarias* depicts'.¹⁷

¹⁵ For a compilation of bibliographic references, including novels and academic studies, on women and historical memory see Inma Chacón, 'La mujer y la literatura sobre Memoria Histórica', paper presented at Semana de la Ciencia 2010, Universidad Carlos III Madrid, 11 November 2010, pp.12-24.

¹⁶ Carmen Domínguez, 'Mujeres y revolución en tres películas españolas de los noventa', *International Journal of Iberian Studies*, 19, 3 (2006), p. 182.

¹⁷ Herrmann, 2003, p. 28.

A decade later, the situation started to change when Emilio Martínez Lázaro directed *Las trece rosas* (2007), which drew attention to the case of thirteen young female militants who were unfairly condemned to death and executed one month after the end of the Civil War. The tragic end of the protagonists does not come as a surprise since the real story of the execution of the 'Thirteen Roses' was already known by means of two previous publications: Jesús Ferrero's novel *Las trece rosas* (2003) and Carlos Fonseca's thorough book-length investigation *Trece rosas rojas* (2004). These women's mass execution by firing squad symbolises the cruelty of the new Francoist Spain and was used as an example of punishment to anyone who seemed to oppose the new government's 'political agenda'. Even though the film is based on real facts, the director chose to sacrifice some historical details, with the purpose of transmitting these women's emotions.¹⁸ Instead of finishing with the unavoidable and expected scene of the execution, the very final scene shows Blanca (Pilar López de Ayala) reading the actual farewell letter to her son. Blanca's last words transmit the values of kindness and compassion, asking him to avoid resentment towards his parents' executioners. Despite the tragedy of the event, the director chose a conciliatory end that opens a door to future reconciliation between both sides.

Another film that explores women's life in prison after the war and the tragic end imposed on many of them is the already mentioned filmic adaptation by Benito Zambrano of Chacón's homonymous novel *La voz dormida* (2011). The storyline centres on two female characters, Hortensia (Inma Cuesta), a prisoner condemned to death, who has just had a child in prison and her younger sister Pepita (María León), who is left responsible for looking after the baby. The film not only denounces the extreme conditions in women's prisons, but also captures the courage and survival skills of women during the postwar period. The cooperation of women in the

¹⁸ Ibañez, 2010, p. 100.

guerrilla factions during the 1940s is depicted in *El silencio roto* (Montxo Armendáriz, 2002). The film portrays Lucía's (Lucía Jiménez) risky collaboration with a group of *maquis* hidden in the forest around a small village, where the abusive power of the military has promoted a culture of treachery among its neighbours. In a comparative study, Ramblado Minero concludes that the film is an example of how dissident women 'manipulated patriarchal notions of femininity and motherhood in order to serve and strengthen their own dissident ideology'.¹⁹ These two films, it can be argued, portray greater and more significant agency of Republican women than Aranda's. Their female protagonists play a pivotal role in the construction and transmission of the memory of the defeated: Pepita to Hortensia's child and Lucía to her own daughter.

While few documentaries released for theatrical distribution portray women's active involvement in the war and immediate postwar periods, television documentaries engage with the subject more frequently. The majority of the TV documentaries tend to be traditional expository documentaries that intersperse interviews with archival images and generally use a male voice-over to legitimise the female eye-witnesses accounts. Following this style we can find *Que mi nombre no se borre de la historia* (Verónica Vigil and José María Almela, 2004), a documentary that analyses the tragic episode of the 'thirteen roses' from the perspective of their surviving fellow militants and prison inmates. Similarly, *La guerra cotidiana* (Daniel Serra and Jaume Serra, 2002) compiles the voices of twenty-two women from both sides of the fighting factions to relate the daily life in Barcelona during war time and the consequences that the war had on their lives. Based on Cuevas' work, the life of women in Francoist prisons is portrayed in *Del olvido a la memoria: Presas de*

¹⁹ María de la Cinta Ramblado Minero, 'Women and the Transmission of the Republican Legacy in Contemporary Spanish Cinema', in *Legacies of War and Dictatorship in Contemporary Portugal and Spain*, ed. by Alison Ribeiro de Menezes and Catherine O'Leary (Oxford; New York: Peter Lang, 2011), p. 228.

Franco (Jorge Montes Salguero, 2007) through the testimonies by several inmates, which mostly denounce the tortures, abuse and humiliation they had to endure.

Common to all the films I have thus far discussed about the war and the dictatorship is the fact that they frequently focus on their traumatic aspects and tend to use a tragic tone emphasised by darkness and sad music. While it is important to condemn the atrocities committed in the past, there is a need for films that show different perspectives which demonstrate the very important and real contribution of women during the war and postwar period. The lack of filmic representations that highlight women's enthusiasm and dedication to the political cause reinforces the victimisation of women as historical subjects and prevents a deserved glorification that has been typically attributed to men. In this chapter I argue that *Mujeres en pie de guerra* achieves a welcome balance: besides revealing episodes of violence and suffering, numerous anecdotes are told to show the bravery, sacrifice and resilience of several anonymous female activists. Although eye-witness testimony is central to the documentary, I also discuss how the director's personal style presents an innovative intergenerational approach of dealing with memory and identity, rarely explored in Spanish testimonial documentaries about the country's traumatic past.²⁰ As already noted, the film was made at a time in which the research and representation of memory in Spain was at its peak. Consequently, the film has been –and still is– debated at numerous film festivals and universities, and examined by scholars.²¹

²⁰ An important precedent is the French documentary *Shoah* (1985), in which the director, Claude Lanzmann, interviews survivors, perpetrators, and bystanders of the Holocaust.

²¹ See Carmen Domínguez, 'Susana Koska's *Mujeres en pie de guerra*: Reclamation of memory and homage to Spanish Republican women', *Cine y ...: Revista de estudios interdisciplinarios sobre el cine en español*, 2, 1 (2009), 1-15; Inmaculada Sánchez Alarcón, 'El documental histórico y los recursos de la ficción', in *DOC 21. Panorama del reciente cine documental en España*, ed. by Inmaculada Sánchez and Marta Díaz (Girona: Luces de Gálibo, 2009), pp. 93-104; Maureen Tobin Stanley, "'Mujeres silenciosas, mujeres silenciadas': Reality and representation of the female Republican struggle against Francoist and Hitlerian nationalism within the context of the Spanish Republican Holocaust Cultural Corps', *Letras Peninsulares*, 22, 2 (2010), 113-140; Isabel Estrada, *El documental*

***Mujeres en pie de guerra*: An homage to female antifascist fighters**

Born from Koska's personal enquiry into her country's recent past, *Mujeres en pie de guerra* compiles women's remembrances of the Spanish Civil War and Franco's dictatorship in order to explore women's agency during those periods. With a minimal budget and few resources, Koska embarked on a cinematic journey that, despite not giving her straight answers, shed new light on a disregarded version of Spain's history. Her debut documentary gives voice and name to a cohort of women who fought for freedom and against Fascism in the twentieth century. The film demonstrates the incalculable value that female oral sources can add to reconstructing history by including women's marginalised outlook. As Koska has noted:

That's why a project like *Mujeres en pie de guerra* is valid, because it gives us (women) a voice, to them and to the women of my generation, and together we will be able to write, paint, record, create a new history based on reality, narrated in person, so that we don't experience black days again and to return the dignity to whoever was silenced with impunity due to the extreme hard life imposed by Franco's regime.²²

For this reason, the interviewees are presented as subjects of history, and their role as pro-active militants is highlighted and celebrated. Their testimonies reveal how these courageous women risked their lives in many occasions, and made huge sacrifices for the country. Koska's intention is, above all, to reclaim their neglected heroism and their silenced commitment in the antifascist resistance, as she explains in my interview: 'I wanted to show them as heroines because they weren't only

cinematográfico y televisivo contemporáneo: Memoria, sujeto y formación de la identidad democrática española (Woodbridge, England: Tamesis, 2013); Ramblado Minero, in Nash, 2013, pp. 159-178; Inmaculada Sánchez Alarcón, 'Las mujeres invisibles ya tienen voz en la historia: *Mujeres en pie de guerra* (2004) de Susana Koska', in Feenstra, Gimeno and Saringan, 2014, pp. 313-329.

²² Susana Koska, 'Nota de la directora', www.lahiguera.com, <<http://www.lahiguera.net/cinemanía/pelicula/1711/comentario.php>> [accessed 3 April 2014].

victims. In many cases they were as brave as men, they worked as much as men did but history has never paid tribute to them’.

Four protagonists played compelling syndicalist and home-front roles in the Civil War from a young age: Sara Berenguer (Barcelona, born 1919), María Salvo (Sabadell, born 1920), Rosa Laviña (Palagrufell, born 1918) and Neus Català (Priorat, born 1915). As their testimonies reveal, they were militants from Catalonia in various political organisations or trade unions affiliated with left-wing parties including Confederación Nacional del Trabajo (CNT), Solidaridad Internacional Antifascista (SIA) and Juventudes Socialistas Unificadas (JSU). All of them went into exile in France in 1939 but each woman faced a different fate. Sara Berenguer was perhaps the luckiest of them all because she was accepted by an anti-Fascist refugees committee in Perpignan. Settled in Béziers, she helped Spanish refugees and during the Second World War she joined the Resistance movement. Rosa Laviña, on the contrary, was sent to the refugee camp in Argèles-sur-Mer, where she worked as a nurse and met her future husband. She also managed to stay in France. From there, both women continued the fight against Fascism with the French resistance. Neus Català was sent to Ravensbrück concentration camp by the Gestapo, where she was a prisoner for fifteen months. She is one of the four hundred Spanish women who were sent to a Nazi concentration camp and one of the few survivors.²³ María Salvo was forcibly repatriated, after being arrested in 1940. She spent sixteen years in several Francoist prisons. All of them render vivid descriptions of their first-hand experiences, either as militants and/or war prisoners.

Born in the postwar period, Teresa Buigas (Alicante, 1944) represents a younger militant generation. In the 1960s she became a militant of the PSUC (Unified Socialist Party of Catalonia) at the age of sixteen and went into exile in France in

²³ Montserrat Llor, ‘Supervivientes españolas en el infierno nazi’, *El País*, 13 June 2010, <http://elpais.com/diario/2010/06/13/eps/1276410417_850215.html> [accessed 12 December 2012].

1969, after having gone underground for three years. Following Franco's death, she returned to the political scene in Spain working for the union Comisiones Obreras (CCOO).

The other three interviewees provide a different point of view of this period, as they were not directly involved in the anti-Franco fight but, unavoidably, suffered the consequences of a war and/or a repressive dictatorship. Rosa Díaz (San Sebastián, 1925) represents the experiences of thousands of children who were temporarily evacuated to other countries to avoid the suffering of the war.²⁴ She was evacuated from Bilbao to France by train at the age of twelve in 1937 but was repatriated at the request of her parents in 1940. She is Koska's aunt. The last two interviewees, who appear together on screen, are Carme and Merçona Puig-Antich, the sisters of anarchist Salvador Puig-Antich.²⁵ Condemned to death for, presumably, killing a 'guardia civil' (Spanish police officer), Salvador was the last person executed in 1974 by means of the garrote.²⁶ Although there were five other political activists who were executed after him in 1975, just before Franco's death, the case of the young Salvador was exceptional because of the merciless method used to kill him.²⁷ Of these two sisters, only Carme witnessed the final moments of her brother's life,

²⁴ For a more comprehensive portrayal of the evacuation of children during the war, see Jaime Camino's *Los niños de Rusia* (2002), which presents the testimonies of some of the three thousand children who were sent to Russia by the Republicans. A later fiction film, *Ispansi* (Carlos Iglesias, 2011) depicts the long and gruelling trip to Russia from the perspective of Beatriz, who travels as a baby-sitter hoping to find her bastard child that she had hidden in an orphanage. The interactive multimedia documentary *Los niños que nunca volvieron*, is a very interesting project that collects short testimonies of children who were evacuated during the war, <<http://www.losninosquenuncavolvieron.es>> [accessed 24 March 2014].

²⁵ His life, focusing on his activist years until his execution, has been portrayed in a later fiction film, *Salvador (Puig antich)* (Manuel Hueriga, 2006).

²⁶ Berlanga's *El verdugo (The Executioner)*, 1963) is a transgressive black comedy that parodies the use of such a barbaric method of execution, strangulation with an iron collar, during Franco's dictatorship.

²⁷ Recent news advises that the Puig-Antich family is still appealing to review the sentence passed in the 1973 trial, although the appeals have been rejected twice. The official documents of the case are not accessible forty years after Salvador's execution. Gutmaro Gómez Bravo, '40 años bajo secreto', *El País*, 2 March 2014, <http://politica.elpais.com/politica/2014/02/28/actualidad/1393610733_039287.html> [accessed 25 April 2014].

as Salvador did not want her younger sister, Merçona, to be present. Carme's testimony mainly relates the last twelve hours she spent with her brother and her older sister, Inma, before the execution.

With all these divergent perspectives, the director aimed at representing the diversity of left-wing political ideologies found amongst those interviewed. However, the choice for these women was also influenced 'by pure happenstance', as the director reveals in my interview. After reading Rodrigo's *Mujer y Exilio 1939*, her initial idea was to create a theatre play about female left-wing militants, since the director's background is essentially in acting. Rodrigo herself advised her to take advantage of the fact that certain eye-witnesses were still alive and to conduct face-to-face interviews instead. Koska could only agree: 'When narrating their own story, there isn't an actress who is going to stand on stage and do a better job than them. And it was also the last opportunity to record them'. In fact, two of the protagonists, Sara Berenguer and Rosa Laviña, passed away some years after the film was released, in 2010 and 2011 respectively. As discussed in Chapter Four, *Mujeres* also warns us of the limited time that is left to collect first-hand witnesses' accounts and learn from their experiences. In her introductory words of the documentary, Koska's voice-over explicitly makes an allusion to the precise timing of the film 'without pretending to be infallible, we are certain that we arrive at an appropriate time: yesterday it would have been too early, tomorrow, perhaps, overly late'.

Women as subjects of history

The analysis of this section concentrates on the testimonies by the five women who were politically active. In order to understand these women's involvement in the war and anti-Franco fight, it is crucial to familiarise readers with their personal background and the national context. Their upbringing in working class families would have compelled them to leave school at an early age in order to work, sometimes in multiple jobs, and assist at home. However, as explained by some

interviewees, the heterogeneous political panorama in the Second Republic promoted that social and political consciousness was raised by many women. The realisation of the injustice provoked by class and gender differences increased unprecedented female political engagement during the Republican years in Spain. As Nash explicates, thousands of women became affiliated with different anarchist and communist parties, which in turn created their own women's organisations such as 'Agrupación de Mujeres Antifascistas' (Women's Antifascist Association) and the anarchist association 'Mujeres Libres' (Free Women).²⁸ Run exclusively by women, these organisations promoted the liberation of working women, access to education and paid work. The mobilisation of female masses was vital to create a sense of being a collective and sharing a common identity that would continue during the war and the dictatorship. As exposed in the documentary, the interviewees' awareness of class, gender and politics was a key motivator in their commitment to fight for a more egalitarian society.

The following textual analysis of these activist women's testimonies elucidates the courageous deeds which demonstrate their heroism in the antifascist struggle. Their testimonies also show the lessons learned over a century of drastic transformations for women. As Gerda Lerner emphasises, 'women's history must contain not only the activities and events in which women participated, but the record of changes and shifts in their perception of themselves and their roles'.²⁹ Therefore, this analysis shows that their accounts about the war and resistance describe the everyday (finding food, hiding, nursing, connecting parties and passing information) but they also expose their political motivation and feminist beliefs. Although the documentary is not structured into clear chapter divisions, each interviewee narrates

²⁸ For a detailed analysis of women's organisations during the war see Chapter Three in Nash, 1995, pp. 63-100.

²⁹ Gerda Lerner, *The Majority Finds its Past: Placing Women in History* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1979), p. 160.

chronologically how she experienced different historical events ranging from the proclamation of the Second Republic up to the end of the dictatorship.

Sara Berenguer's wholehearted testimony transmits the enthusiasm and hope of many women for a better society, who fought against worker's exploitation and male chauvinism during the Second Republic. Her passionate account still reflects the revolutionary spirit which, as Herrmann highlights, presented the war as an exceptional opportunity for emancipation and dignity for working class women.³⁰

María Salvo highlights the cultural boom achieved during the Republican years, which promoted people's –and, in particular, the youth's– participation in the social arena and a desire to improve. Rosa Laviña, who rejects violence, remembers that time with nostalgia: 'we wanted to change society since we were very romantic'. The relevance of women's associations in promoting action and their feeling of independence is highlighted by Berenguer when describing 'Mujeres libres' as 'twenty thousand women who were looking forward to freedom, liberation and emancipation, and to do something, to live their own lives, to fulfil themselves. And such feelings boosted their self-confidence'.³¹

The outbreak of the war made women question the establishment of circumscribed gender roles for men and women, contributing significantly to the enhancement of women's prominence in the public sphere. Salvo stresses the massive incorporation of women that accelerated a radical social change, arguing that 'the war was a palpable demonstration of the disappearance of social and also gender differences'. Berenguer corroborates that the war was 'a people's beehive, a beehive of thought, ideas, action, initiative (...) At that time they did not look whether they were men or women'. Salvo, Laviña and Berenguer emphasise the fact that women held the war

³⁰ Herrmann, 2003, p. 12.

³¹ For a detailed discussion on the anarchist organisation see Mary Nash, *Mujeres Libres: España 1936-1939* (Barcelona: Tusquets 1975) and Marta Ackelsberg, *Free Women of Spain: Anarchism and the Struggle for the Emancipation of Women* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1991).

in the rearguard undertaking numerous tasks essential for survival: to look after the injured and the children, to help out during bombings, to create refuges, to organise hospitals, to plan quick training courses. As a result, the conflict provided women with the opportunity to demonstrate their organisational and leadership skills. As Salvo points out, 'it was a revelation that women could undertake positions of responsibility that had been denied to them until then'. Laviña, for instance, humbly conveys how she enjoyed feeling useful with her work as a nurse in the refugee camp in France. The emergence of independent female agency in times of conflict and the indispensable activities undertaken in the rearguard are intentionally portrayed in the film as women's heroic achievements.

Life and the active fight in the resistance inside Francoist prisons are thoroughly described by María Salvo. Her testimony stresses her political awareness and commitment to fighting for democracy as well as showing her endurance surviving incarceration. Salvo uncovers the unhuman and unhygienic conditions of the overcrowded cells such as having to sleep squashed on the floor next to each other; all of this aggravated by their gender specific condition: 'the period, the biggest torment that women have had'. Her critical narrative also comprises memories of torture and interrogations, which denounce numerous episodes of violence, including being locked up for twenty-seven days in an isolation cell. With dark humour, she clarifies that she was 'interrogated many times, but brutally beaten two nights', indicating that interrogations could become ruthless. Although it is not mentioned in the documentary, an additional consequence from the extreme beating suffered by Salvo was the impossibility to have children.³²

The worst punishment, however, was not physical but the psychological torture, as Salvo points out 'you never know in which situation you are or what they will do with

³² Ricard Vinyes, *El daño y la memoria: las prisiones de María Salvo* (Barcelona: Plaza y Janés, 2004), p. 184.

you'. The double negative connotation attributed to the term 'rojas' (red women) – involving the wrong political and moral outlook– lead to discredit female inmates.³³ Despite the violent physical and psychological mistreatment, Salvo's account corroborates her certainty about her identity and her beliefs: 'we were proud of being political prisoners. They could not transform us into a number. And we kept our personality and our dignity above anything else. We were convinced that we were right'. By speaking in the plural, Salvo stresses the existence of a shared identity with the other militant women, transforming her individual experience into a communal endeavour of resistance. Her testimony, it can be argued, could extrapolate to thousands of imprisoned women whose collective identity as 'rojas' was essential to resist the atrocities endured in prison. Egido León discusses how, under such adverse circumstances, women were able to create mechanisms of resistance that, in some cases have prevailed until recently (like the association 'Dones del 36' created in the 1990s).³⁴ For instance, Salvo talks about the association work undertaken in Madrid's prison, Las Ventas, and explains how Segovia's prison was a school of political and cultural training, with a clandestine hand-made newspaper.

Neus Català represents the hundreds of Spanish women who were deported to Ravensbrück. She emphasises in the film the extreme accumulation of people as the camp was meant to hold 'three thousand women and there were eleven thousand. Every week one thousand women died of a natural death'.³⁵ According to Rodrigo, the exact number of Spanish women who disappeared in Ravensbrück and other extermination camps is still unknown.³⁶ Català insists in the documentary that 'the only right and obligation that you had was to die, but we didn't want to'. Her

³³ Egido León, 2011, p. 29.

³⁴ Egido León, 2011, p. 21.

³⁵ For a first-hand description of female testimonies in Ravensbrück see Català's own publication *De la resistencia y la deportación: 50 testimonios de mujeres españolas* (Barcelona: ADGENA, 1984).

³⁶ Rodrigo, 1999, p. 260.

determination to survive under such appalling conditions is highlighted several times throughout the film, as she clarifies that not wanting to die was itself an 'act of rebellion'. A very strong feminist outlook of her experience can be perceived in Català's testimony illustrated by powerful statements such as: 'where there were women, there was resistance'. It needs to be noted that Català's testimony has been subtitled. At times, it is hard to understand her due to her unclear enunciation and her slightly disjointed train of thought, which, according to Koska, are consequences of the beating and trauma experienced in the camp.

As these testimonies demonstrate, there was a whole generation of women who were doubly condemned, for being 'red' and for being women. Herrmann remarks that 'Republican women in the war experienced a retrograde evolution: from some of the most repressive conditions for women in all of Europe to relative freedom and back to repression'.³⁷ Nonetheless, despite years of cruelty and humiliation, these women have continued fighting for freedom and been politically active until recently. A positive note is that they have been recognised in different ways by regional institutions or governments. After the making of this documentary, María Salvo received the honorary title of Doctor Honoris Causa by the Universidad Politécnica de Cataluña (UPC) in 2004.³⁸ Neus Català was awarded the 'Cruz de Sant Jordi', one of the highest civil distinctions awarded in Catalonia by the Generalitat de Catalunya in 2005. The following year she was selected 'Catalan of the year' for her work defending the memory of more than 92,000 women who died in a concentration camp. Other countries like France have also acknowledged the valuable contribution of these women to the struggle against Fascism. As the documentary shows Sara Berenguer was decorated with the French award 'Légion de Honor' in 1998.

³⁷ Herrmann, 2003, p. 15.

³⁸ Francesc Arroyo, 'La lucha continua', *El país*, 24 February 2004, <http://elpais.com/diario/2004/02/24/catalunya/1077588438_850215.html> [accessed 1 May 2014].

The Spanish government, however, has not granted an official recognition to the Republican women who fought during the war, and/or who were unfairly imprisoned and tortured. In the absence of a national formal apology and/or a tribute to these women, academia and documentary media have taken the responsibility of including their significant contribution into the country's collective memory. The lives of both Salvo and Català have been studied by several scholars in the last decade and divulged in several publications.³⁹ They also have appeared in other documentaries prior to as well as after *Mujeres*. Salvo first appeared in *La guerra cotidiana* (Serra, 2002) and later in *Del olvido a la memoria: Presas de Franco* (Salguero, 2007). Several weekly documentaries on regional TV channel TV3 have portrayed Català's story (*Neus Català. La voz de la conciencia*, 2008 and *El convidat*, 2012). Although it is not mentioned in the documentary, Sara Berenguer wrote her own memoirs, *Entre el sol y la tormenta*, based on her activities during the Civil War as well as a poetic work in French, Catalan and Spanish.⁴⁰

The continuation of the fight against Franco and for democratic Spain by new generations of militant women is enlightened by the testimony of Teresa Buigas. She is depicted as a determined courageous working-class woman who is very confident about herself and proud of her activism. A main difference between her testimony and those of the previous four interviewees that can be noted in Buigas' accounts is that, unlike the other protagonists, her words denote long-life accumulated resentment, or even feelings of hatred. Buigas' testimony is particularly critical of the Catholic Church and Franco's regime; both her parents were in

³⁹ Historian Ricard Vinyes reconstructs Salvo's biography in *El daño y la memoria* (2004) and Català's biography has also been recently recreated in a novel by writer Carme Martí, *Cenizas en el cielo: la vida de Neus Català* (Barcelona: Roca Editorial de Libros, 2012). For further works that include Salvo's testimony see Ricard Vinyes, *Irredentas; Las presas políticas y sus hijos en las cárceles de Franco* (Madrid: Temas de Hoy, 2002) and Queral Solé, *A les presons de Franco* (Barcelona: Proa, 2004). For studies on Català see Elisenda Belenguer Mercadé, *Neus Català: memòria i lluita* (Barcelona: Debarris, 2006); Jordi Creus, *Dones contra Franco* (Barcelona: Ara Llibres, 2007) and Mar Trallero, *Neus Català: la dona antifeixista a Europa* (Barcelona: Mina, 2008).

⁴⁰ Sara Berenguer, *Entre el sol y la tormenta: Treinta y dos meses de guerra 1936-1939* (Barcelona: Seuba Ediciones, 1988).

Francoist prisons. Buigas confesses to Koska 'I would have liked to kill Franco'. Her narrative reveals that she was deprived of schooling, like many other children, because the circumstances compelled her to start working from an early age. Despite being illegal, hiring underage people was common practice during the dictatorship, according to Buigas. In case of an inspection, she denounces, children would be hidden in boxes.

Her family's left-wing influence and a series of events related to her factory work encouraged her to join the socialist party PSUC in 1966, when her son was only six months old. For instance, she attended her first general strike when she was fifteen and participated in the creation of the union Comisiones Obreras (CCOO). In spite of the extreme pressure her father put on her, Buigas speaks with pride about him, criticising how he was forced to be 'Franco's slave'. She shares her father's supportive –but at the same time threatening– reaction to her decision to become politically involved: 'You have taken a very important step in life. It doesn't only concern you but other people too. If you are not able to bear the torture, if you get arrested and you think that you are going to inform against someone, don't continue. If an anti-Franco fighter or a communist goes to prison because of you, you will stop being my daughter'. She also witnessed the successful collective claims made by her female co-workers to improve working conditions (getting showers and being allowed to cut their overalls' sleeves in summer). That experience proved to her at a very young age that 'women are fearsome when they fight'.

Salvador's two sisters also show those feelings of resentment, showing that people were tired of a regime that could not be changed for the better. They spent the final moments of his life with their brother comforting him by sharing jokes and not saying goodbye, but 'see you later', Carme explains. In that way, they showed a tremendous amount of courage at a critical period of time when it seemed that the brutal repression of the Franco regime was never going to end. Their accounts of

how they refused to cry can be related, to a certain extent, to Neus Català and her power of will not to die, as both sisters showed strong composure in those critical moments of agony in the last stages of Francoism.

In summary, all these testimonies demonstrate female militancy, initiative and courage in times of war and repression. Despite the interviewees' unpretentious attitudes, Koska clarifies in the interview that 'all of them wanted to [participate], they knew what place they had in history and they were prepared to claim it'. The documentary allows them to conclude with some personal reflections about the merit of their struggle to achieve a peaceful and free society. Life taught Laviña a significant lesson that is key to social change: 'Through the years and your experience you realise that in order to change society you need to change the mentality first. And this needs to be done at school, from an early age'. Català laments that 'while there are people who are in prison and persecuted because of their ideas, because they are poor, because of injustices, I don't feel liberated. I have fought for peace but there isn't peace in the world'. Similarly, Salvo's closing words acknowledge women's extraordinary commitment to change but also express that the fight is not over: 'Has it been worthwhile? It has been worthwhile because what we have now is due to our fight. Isn't it what we want? Agreed, but we, who have invested a lot of blood and suffering, we would like to think that we have contributed to many generations living with some kind of peace or freedom'. Koska, as a member of a younger generation of Spanish women, who certainly has 'a lot more freedom' than their predecessors, acknowledges the immense contribution of all those silent heroines that made it possible.

Connecting past and present: promoting an intergenerational dialogue

Throughout the documentary Koska creates a link between past and present in order to highlight the interdependent relationship between them. Such an association is achieved by means of several structural filmic devices. On the one

hand, the inclusion of personal objects (photos, private letters, prizes) and archival material from the time (newspaper articles, propaganda) interspersed with the current images of the protagonists reinforces the eye-witnesses' bond with the past. As shown in Figure 5.1, all interviewees are introduced with a black and white picture from their youth. Throughout the conversations that the director holds with the interviewees, multiple images of the above mentioned documentation are shown in order to visually support their oral narration. Consequently, the viewer has the opportunity to meet these now elderly women as young militants and visualise on their faces their accomplishments –but also their suffering– more accurately. The constant use of photographs, Domínguez notes, is employed by Koska to corroborate that these testimonies are real and that such events (good and bad) happened to actual women.⁴¹ In the case of the Puig-Antich sisters, for instance, instead of photographs, newspapers articles relating to their brother's case are used in order to create the same effect, as shown in Figure 5.2.



Figure 5.1 Salvo's profile in *Mujeres en pie de guerra*



Figure 5.2 Newspaper article about the Puig-Antich sisters in *Mujeres en pie de guerra*

On the other hand, as indicated earlier, the filmmaker's appearance in the film, as a representative of the present, highlights the need of younger generations to establish a stronger relationship with an unknown and manipulated past. Koska's involvement in the documentary is not only behind the camera but also in front of it.

⁴¹ Domínguez, 2009, pp. 6-7.

We can see her conversing with the eye-witnesses; she becomes a character within her own film. By speaking about an 'us' and including herself in the film, Koska achieves a convincing degree of intimacy but also takes the film from mere factual document into something that contributes to putting women into history. In some occasions, the director's intervention might appear slightly intrusive, as she interrupts the interviewees' testimonies, finishing or rephrasing their sentences. This is particularly noticeable in her conversations with Berenguer. However, I argue that she does so to support and clarify their accounts. As a result, the presence of the filmmaker in the film plays a major role, adding spontaneity and demonstrating the director's active engagement in the reconstruction of women's history. In addition, Koska is not only shown as one more character that interacts with the interviewees but she also acts as the narrator. Her voice-over, which functions as the narrative thread throughout the film, reveals her thoughts and reflections, transmitting a very emotional viewpoint on the topic. Both her interaction with the interviewees and the articulation of her quest about the recent past reinforce the renewed interest by the third generation discussed in Chapter Four.

In the interview for this project, Koska admits her deliberate lack of objectivity: 'It's a way of being on that side of the barricade and taking sides'. She continues, arguing that her inclusion in the frame has additional advantages from a formal perspective: 'The viewpoint of the shot is nicer. It's nicer and the interviewee is warmer when she is looking into your eyes and is able to touch you. It's shown from another focus that gives warmth to the film'. For instance, Figure 5.3 shows Koska actively listening and engaging in conversation with Berenguer, indirectly stressing that such accounts usually deserve a receptive audience.



Figure 5.3 Koska listening to Berenguer's accounts in *Mujeres en pie de guerra*

With this type of shot, it could be argued, the director is reactivating the intergenerational dialogue interrupted by Franco's dictatorship and postponed by the pact of oblivion during the transition. As a result, Koska acts as a bridge between the interviewees' generation and her own or subsequent generations, who might feel detached from the reality of a war and its aftermath, as exemplified by the character of Clara in *Para que no me olvides*. The director, therefore, not only demonstrates the absence of a natural transmission of memory among generations but she also presents her film as one of many valid alternatives to replace such absence.

Koska's exhaustive pre-production work, engaging in lengthy face-to-face discussions with the protagonists before the shooting, contributed to build trust with them and start a friendship. This initial contact translates into flowing conversations, rather than formal interviews. The women's expression comes across as natural and unrehearsed, adding veracity to their narratives. The warm farewell with each interviewee at the end of the film also emphasises their humane side as well as the warm-hearted relationship developed with the director through the filming process. All of this provokes empathy for the interviewees as well as an emotional impact on

the spectator. As Isabel Estrada has noted, ‘the shared emotions between witnesses and viewers create a link between past and present which facilitates the subjective transmission of history’.⁴² Furthermore, Koska has chosen to film the protagonists at their own houses to enhance the spontaneity of their accounts and to permit the women to be seen at ease, as shown in Figure 5.3. The use of a familiar setting to the eye-witness differs from previous interview-based documentaries, which, as observed by Estrada, have usually depicted the interviewees in impersonal spaces that lack intimacy and humanity.⁴³ That familiar setting plays a similar role in Ferreira’s documentary *Señora de*, whose analysis will be undertaken in the final chapter.

The depiction of Koska’s trip to Ravensbrück concentration camp in December 2003 helps to create another strong meaningful connection between past and present. The fact that Koska is shown at the concentration camp, instead of Català, indicates that the new generations not only want to know what happened but also need to explore how their ancestors felt. The director’s intention, as disclosed in the interview for this research, was to show the spectator this place in winter, when there are no people in order to convey the disturbing impact that is produced by being physically there: ‘I wanted people to see the empty field, and what had happened there, how the place was, and I wanted to hear Neus’ voice at the same time’. Therefore, the documentary includes several scenes that show Koska walking on her own, looking at the ovens where people were cremated, and finally bringing flowers to the wall dedicated to the Spanish deportees. I argue that the visual impact of these scenes filmed at the concentration camp in the present is much more powerful than watching archival images for several reasons. Firstly, the film is able to transmit how desolate and extremely cold the place –labelled ‘little Siberia’ by the prisoners– might have felt in the past, as illustrated in Figure 5.4. These scenes

⁴² Estrada, 2013, p. 85.

⁴³ Estrada, 2013, p. 76.

pose the question in the spectator of how it was even possible to survive at such low temperatures, mostly below zero.



Figure 5.4 Koska visiting Ravensbrück in *Mujeres en pie de guerra*

Secondly, this part of the film, despite the high emotional content, creates a little break from the intense testimonies and Koska's thoughts on the voice-over invite the audience to contemplate. In that respect, such scenes create a similar effect to the contemplative swimming pool passages in *Nadar*, in which the spectator stops receiving new data, is allowed some time to digest all the facts and to relate to personal experiences. In addition to the visual impact of these images, Koska's reflection by means of the voice-over emphasises the impossibility of Català articulating her feelings about her experience in prison, despite the fact that she requested help: 'Neus says that many times she asked fellow deportees, professors, and women who are more educated than her and none of them was able to explain what they felt. They are impotent to describe the feelings that those women had back then. They are not able to express what they felt'. Consequently, the inclusion of this visit in the film assists not only in providing a better understanding of what it

means being a survivor in a concentration camp but also in creating a more heroic portrayal of this resilient woman.

Poeticising history and memory

Although the documentary intends to denounce the atrocities that these women had to endure during and after the war, it also reflects a humane side of such periods and highlights the solidarity among women. The film adds numerous anecdotal facts to counteract the accounts conveying the harsh reality they had to undergo. Unlike what may be expected from a documentary on such a serious topic, all interviewees make use of humour on several occasions, even when they are relating very traumatic experiences. For instance, Laviña remembers how the soldiers were surprised about the positive attitude of Spanish prisoners as they would constantly sing in the French concentration camps. Català explains that they sabotaged the shells for the German army by spitting on them and inserting flies or random little objects inside. Salvo jokes about how her skin changed colours after being interrogated and beaten: 'all my body was black, then yellow (laugh) and then it changed to other colours'.

The director also employs cross cutting to express subtle irony in some scenes. The most illustrative example is a sequence in which Català describes life in concentration camps. During her account several archival images are interspersed. One of the photos, which shows her with the striped prison uniform of the camp (Figure 5.6), is contrasted with a fascist newspaper page of the time. The main article states that the Nobel Peace Prize was granted to Hitler in recognition for his 'tenacious campaign against communism', as shown in Figure 5.5. A similar effect is achieved with the contrast of black and white archival images showing the police charging at demonstrators while playing simultaneously a song with cynical lyrics about how people who think by themselves and do not follow the herd are discriminated against.

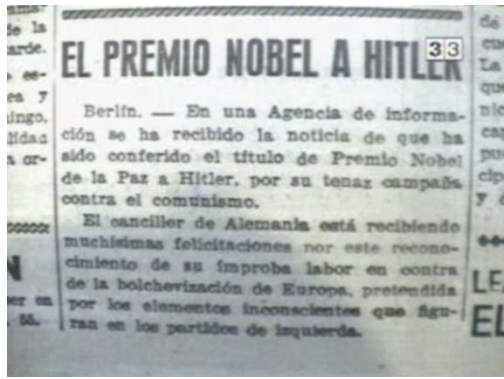


Figure 5.5 Newspaper article in *Mujeres en pie de guerra*



Figure 5.6 Català in her uniform at Ravensbrück concentration camp in *Mujeres en pie de guerra*

Other important topics tackled in the interviews are love and motherhood.⁴⁴ The inclusion of such themes –quite unusual in male war narratives– also contributes a more humane perspective on the war. Laviña, for instance, describes how she fell in love with her husband in the French refugee camp while showing love letters and pictures to Koska. Except for Salvo, the activist interviewees mention their children at some point in the documentary or there is a visual reference to them. Berenguer's experience shows that fulfilling traditional female roles of mother or wife was not an impediment to accomplishing her missions during the war and in the Resistance. She stresses her readiness to do anything, even taking her child with her, if necessary, in spite of her husband advice. As she narrates in the documentary, on one occasion she successfully delivered compromising documents in person, carrying her three-year-old child while being six months pregnant on a return day trip by train. The hustle of travelling in her state made her faint when she arrived at the overcrowded platform. To her surprise, she was helped by two German policemen who offered her a coffee and a mandarin. She exclaims in the film: 'I didn't faint again. What I did was to hold my child very tight'.

⁴⁴ For a detailed analysis on maternity and activism during the Spanish Civil War, see Chapter Two in Nash, 1995, and Herrmann, 2003.

As Domínguez points out, Berenguer's 'role as a critical link in the resistance movement was therefore intimately linked to her experience as a mother'.⁴⁵ Berenguer's testimony illustrates the perfect example of the 'combative mother', discussed by Nash, which was encouraged on the Republican side during the war.⁴⁶ Promoting motherhood's qualities of courage and sacrifice, Nash claims, was a successful way to mobilise mothers in the anti-fascist struggle. In order to emphasise Berenguer's valour, the camera shows the award *Legión de Honor* that France granted her in 1998 whilst she fervently relates this story. Similar anecdotes are narrated in Rodrigo's *Mujer y Exilio*. However, listening to them directly from Berenguer's voice and seeing her extreme excitement about her helpful contribution after so many years provokes a great impact in the audience and transmit the interviewee's enthusiasm. As Estrada has established, *Mujeres* is part of the documentary boom that emerged in the new century to recover the silenced voices and the hidden faces of the defeated by means of showing them on screen with the aim to preserve them for future generations.⁴⁷

A key way *Mujeres* is able to recover these silenced voices is through its evocation of the poetic. Koska's integration of several modes of documentary, referring to Bill Nichols' taxonomy (interactive, reflexive, performative and poetic),⁴⁸ is aimed at developing a personal style that focuses on the emotions. Koska's use of the poetic enables her to promote understanding and empathy with the interviewees' accounts. In fact, she confesses in the interview for this project that she made the documentary from a very emotional standpoint and was unaware that she was making a historical document. As Estrada puts it, Koska's film is a way of 'paying history back with poetry'.⁴⁹ In order to create a poetic effect, the director employs

⁴⁵ Domínguez, 2009, p. 11.

⁴⁶ Nash, 1995, p. 48.

⁴⁷ Estrada, 2013, p. 6.

⁴⁸ Nichols in Domínguez, 2009, pp. 7-9.

⁴⁹ Estrada, 2013, p. 84.

different elements such as the strategic use of music, the reading of emotionally affecting letters and the incorporation of aesthetic images.⁵⁰ Figure 5.7 exemplifies a remarkable scene that combines these three elements: From the distance, Koska contemplates Laviña, who is seated on a chair on an empty beach looking at the sea. Simultaneously, Koska's voice-over reads an emotive letter by one refugee sent to all women in the refugee camp Argelès-sur-Mer while a song plays in the background. The sea images refer the viewer to Laviña's previous words describing the arrival to the camp: 'I remember that it started to get dark when we arrived to the camp. Aaaaagh! It was so quiet...'



Figure 5.7 Koska contemplating Laviña in Argelès-sur-Mer in *Mujeres en pie de guerra*

The soundtrack, composed mainly by Koska's partner, Loquillo, apart from contributing to the poetic tone, constitutes a crucial narrative element in the film. In order to reinforce the relevance of the protagonists' heroic deeds, the lyrics provide historical context while paying tribute to these, as the main song says, 'silent women, silenced women'. As Estrada points out, 'the joint work between Koska and

⁵⁰ Domínguez, 2009, p. 9.

Loquillo is humanising memory by means of vindicating its emotional side, instead of manipulating it'.⁵¹ This collaborative undertaking shows the implication of new generations of both men and women working together to fight the country's historical amnesia with original alternative proposals.⁵² In her next film, *Vindicación*, Koska demonstrates that the path devised by the protagonists in *Mujeres en pie de guerra* during Franco's regime is taken over by another generation of women, already in peace and freedom, in order to improve women's conditions, armed this time with books rather than guns, so that they can change the legislation in women's favour without having to face another war or repression.

***Vindicación*: a portrayal of the feminist fight in the 1970s in Spain**

Premiered at the San Sebastián Human Rights Film Festival in 2010, *Vindicación* portrays the resurgence of the Spanish feminist movement after Franco's death. The war, and later the dictatorship, forbid feminist activity in the country and interrupted the incipient emancipation of women promoted in the early 1930s. None of the women's organisations created during the Republic survived and the main female leaders were executed or in exile.⁵³ The Republican progressive laws that made possible new entitlements for women were stopped by the war and would not be recuperated until the late 1970s and for some of them, the 1980s. The Transition period certainly initiated a new historical phase of liberation for women. In a new personal interview-based documentary, Koska discusses with nine female professionals the main women-related issues that were in the centre of the political debate during the Transition. The documentary is structured around several topics

⁵¹ Estrada, 2013, p. 84.

⁵² Koska's initiative to recreate Spain's past from a feminine perspective is part of a broader multimedia project that comprises the film, a CD, a theatrical script and original paintings by Fernando Pereira. The project, however, had to be a privately financed production since it did not receive government funding and had to be produced by Loquillo's production company, mostly sponsored by the benefits of his band concerts.

⁵³ María Ángeles Larumbe Gorraitz, 'El feminismo y la transición española', *Laberintos*, 6 (2005), p. 11.

which are announced to the viewer with intertitles before the discussion takes place: Suffragists, Feminists, *Vindicación Feminista*, Equality, Divorce, Pill, Abortion, Insumisas,⁵⁴ Networks, Male-chauvinist Violence and Sex. All interviewees are symbolically introduced in the second section (Feminists) by their full names and professional or political role: Carmen Alcalde (writer and director of the magazine *Vindicación Feminista*), Elena Arnedo (gynaecologist and writer), Montserrat Fernández Garrido (lawyer and family mediator), Mabel Cañada (eco villages builder), Manuela de Madre (Vice-president PSC), Carme Freixa (psychologist and journalist), Mertxe Agúndez (lawyer and member of Parliament), Antonina Rodrigo (historian and writer) and Sonia Ruiz (political scientist). These women's work was fundamental for promoting a feminist ideology during the Transition and for including women's issues in the political agenda.

The documentary demonstrates that feminism and the Spanish Transition belong together. However, despite the renewal of the feminist movement on Spanish society in the 1970s and 1980s, *Vindicación* is the first documentary that portrays women's endeavours in support of women's liberation. The systematic oblivion promoted during the transition also reached the feminist revolution, which went practically unnoticed once the social and political instability settled. For this reason, *Vindicación* constitutes an essential work for the recuperation of memory in order to understand the different ramifications of a key period in Spanish history. During the Transition women were also part of the fight for democracy, attended numerous strikes and demonstrations and got organised in political parties. Consequently, *Vindicación* has a much more explicitly feminist tone than *Mujeres*. The film was not screened in mainstream cinemas, even though this documentary had the potential to reach a bigger audience and have greater influence on account of the fact that

⁵⁴ The word 'insumiso' referred to men who refused to do the military service or community service. The director has used the word in the feminine form –'insumisas'– to refer to those women who were part of the fight to avoid having a compulsory military service for men.

most of the issues discussed are –or were– on the political agenda of many other countries. In addition, Koska has included a woman from a younger generation to show the existence of a generational change-over to resume the feminist fight, as she did with her previous work regarding the anti-Franco struggle. This is achieved with the testimony of Teresa Buigas in *Mujeres* and the testimony of Sonia Ruiz in *Vindicación*. As a result, both documentaries stress the importance of recreating a past through women's voices so that younger generations of women appreciate their freedom and realise that full gender equality is yet to be attained.

Filming: Koska's feminist activism

In her second quest to recuperate women's past, Koska continues with her personal cinematic style, which includes her presence on screen and her partner's music as a narrative element. Some minor differences between *Vindicación* and her first film can be observed. For instance, it is noteworthy that Koska's voice is less prominent in the more recent documentary. The voice-over narrator and the reflexive poetic scenes, characteristic in *Mujeres*, have been now omitted and the amount of scenes in which she appears listening and talking to the interviewees has been reduced. The choice of setting for filming of the interviews also differs from the choice in *Mujeres*. With the intention of highlighting the fact that the interviewees are professional women, Koska has shot the interviews at their workplace (congress, doctor's consultation, office, etc.), unlike in *Mujeres*, where many of the interviews were shot in domestic settings of the women's own homes. Some shots stress that the interviewees work in professions that are not traditionally feminine. As Figure 5.8 exemplifies, the extreme long shot with a deep focus showing only two women surrounded by numerous empty seats –which usually belong to men– accentuate the isolation as well as small amount of space occupied by women in positions of power.



Figure 5.8 Koska with de Madre at the Congress in *Vindicación*



Figure 5.9 Koska with Alcalde and Fernández in *Vindicación*

The interviewees are mostly framed with a background full of books to show that they are educated women and they are usually dressed in business attire. Another striking difference is that the director's interaction with them also takes place in the public sphere: some of them go together to a café, visit an exhibition or walk in the streets, as shown in Figure 5.9. These scenes highlight that women are no longer relegated to the “kitchen/home” and show a solidarity among them that reinforces their successful engagement in the political and social reforms of the new democratic Spain. Koska justifies her presence in the documentary contending that ‘I defend their same theses, that’s why I thought I should be included in the frame’.⁵⁵ All these devices, I argue, are used to present the interviewees as the directors’ counterparts in the feminist fight for equality, to which she contributes with her cinema. Koska is reaffirming her own identity as a feminist while depicting a positive portrayal of feminism through cinema. Filming, therefore, is presented as Koska’s choice of feminist activism. In several occasions the director has explicitly emphasised her role as a filmmaker by showing the interviewees through a monitor, as can be seen in Figures 5.10 and 5.11.

⁵⁵ Miguel Pérez, ‘La necesaria revisión del feminismo’, *www.diariosur.es*, 12 June 2010, <<http://www.diariosur.es/v/20100612/cultura/necesaria-revision-feminismo-20100612.html>> [accessed 20 December 2014].

Figure 5.10 Alcalde in *Vindicación*Figure 5.11 Freixa in *Vindicación*

The role of music in *Vindicación* is yet again a highly important narrative element which helps vindicate the importance of the feminist movement and the interviewees' endeavours to achieve equality. Koska also collaborated for this soundtrack with her partner Loquillo, who is once more the film's producer. He features *La vida es de las que arriesgan* (by Gabriel Sopena), which is played several times throughout the documentary with the intertitles that indicate a change of topic. The lyrics, originally referring to men, have been transformed into the feminine in order to compliment intrepid women: 'Life belongs to those (women) who take risks, to those (women) who bite the apple without prejudices'. To open and close the documentary, Koska draws on Mari Trini's song *Yo no soy esa* (I'm not that one), which refers to the radical changes that women went through after Franco's death and claims the disappearance of the type of women promoted by the dictatorship.⁵⁶ Before we hear the song, a message from 1939 signed by Francisco Franco appears typed on screen: 'you (women) are responsible for the home reconquest, the education of the child and the Spanish woman, to make women healthy, strong and independent'.⁵⁷ Next, Mari Trini's empowering song is juxtaposed with a selection of white-framed slides, including photographs and drawings, depicting women's Nationalist and Catholic indoctrination during Franco's dictatorship. The same song is played again at the end of the documentary to

⁵⁶ Mari Trini's strong personality and her feminist lyrics made her a key singer songwriter in the Spanish music scene during the Transition, becoming very popular in Spanish speaking countries during the 1970s and 1980s.

⁵⁷ A portrayal of those women's lives is presented in Ferreira's documentary *Señora de* (2009), which will be analysed in the following chapter.

emphasise the success of the measures and political action undertaken by the protagonists in *Vindicación* during the Transition period. The following section analyses the interviewees' accounts, which show their altruist engagement to achieve influential changes in Spanish society, and discusses their impact on current Spain.

The fight is not over

Like *Mujeres*, this documentary provides opportunity for viewers to reflect on the radical socio-political transformations that women had to undergo over the twentieth century. However, it can be argued that many of the issues exposed in *Vindicación* have not been resolved in current Spain, like the Law of Abortion. According to Koska, her second documentary 'tackles a more recent period and its protagonists can look forwards and backwards with critical stance'.⁵⁸ For this reason, the interviewees' testimonies combine an analytical discussion of the Transition period with their own personal experiences as activists. The testimonies compare the great progress reached during the Transition, stressing several actions which were crucial to modify the legislation and promote social change. One of them was the introduction of quota in politics aimed at achieving a more egalitarian gender representation.⁵⁹ Elena Arnedo remarks that 'they finally gave women a place, but they came too late'. The foundation of the Women's Institute in 1983 and family planning centres were also highlighted as major improvements to support the new Spanish woman and her active role in society.

There is a general emphasis in the film in explaining that certain rights were conquered progressively over several decades, like the laws of divorce (1981) and

⁵⁸ Pérez, 2010.

⁵⁹ The film *El disputado voto del señor Cayo* (Antonio Giménez Rico, 1986) shows as a secondary theme how women were also part of political campaigns in 1977, although they were a minority and their claims were not prioritised.

abortion (1985).⁶⁰ The divorce law is considered as one of the greatest accomplishments for women's independence. Montserrat Fernández, the lawyer depicted in the movie, emphasises that the law was achieved thanks to the massive endeavours of the feminist movement, which had to combat the pressure of the Church. She reminds us how Francoist laws treated women as 'incompetent or subnormal beings': a man could get the wife's salary, the parental rights were just for men, or women needed their husband's permission to obtain a passport or open a bank account. The decriminalisation of abortion was perhaps the most controversial issue in a society in which the morals of a religious mentality had been instilled for decades.⁶¹

The interviewees, however, were quite adamant about the need to legalise abortion. Mertxe Agúndez describes her intervention as a lawyer in the landmark case of Basauri in 1982: 'it meant a before and after in this country'. Eleven women were accused of abortion practices at a time when the use of contraceptives was forbidden. In other European countries the circumstances for abortion of all these women were permitted, whereas in Spain abortion was still considered a crime. Every woman in this case was experiencing a precarious financial situation (they already had more children than they were able to support) and some of them and/or the newborns would be affected by medical complications. Several images included

⁶⁰ The law of abortion in Spain has been recently in the PP political agenda since they came to power in 2012. The current government intended to reform the 2010 law passed by PSOE, which decriminalises abortion during the first 14 weeks of pregnancy. This law is the most progressive law since the one passed in 1937 in the Second Republic, which allowed abortion in the first 12 weeks. The 1985 law permitted abortion under three grounds: risk for the mother's physical or mental health, rape or deformities of the fetus. The new proposal to reform the current law aims to go back to the 1985 law, reducing the grounds to the first two. In response to this reform, a cohort of filmmakers from the association CIMA has made a documentary that portrays women's national protest on 1 February 2014 in Madrid against this regressive measurement. The film, titled *El tren de la libertad*, and the whole campaign against the reform can be viewed here: <<http://www.eltrendelalibertad.com>> [accessed 1 November 2014].

⁶¹ The already mentioned documentary *Después de* (1981) by Cecilia and José Juan Bartolomé tackles the topic of abortion briefly, showing that the Spanish population, focusing on women's opinion, was divided regarding its legalisation.

in the documentary show how the Basauri case became very popular in the media and it was supported with well-attended demonstrations, as shown in Figure 5.12.



Figure 5.12 News about the Basauri case in *Vindicación*.

Agúndez underlines that the sentence, which did not condemn the women, 'meant a decisive step in the legalisation of abortion in this country', adding that 'a modern government cannot impose the full force of the law in socially and financially poorer women. It cannot punish things that the popular awareness does not see as punishable'. Gynaecologist Arnedo, for her part, explains how she decided to take action with some colleagues by organising a consulting room to conduct abortions and talk about contraceptives. However, 'after a certain time', Arnedo exclaims, 'it needed to stop being a private and voluntary initiative; it was time for the government to be in charge'.

Carme Freixa, the psychologist in the movie, stresses that the patriarchal mentality instilled for so many years could not be changed within an eye blink; they had to fight against many obstacles, even in the 1990s. She describes her job: giving talks at schools as part of campaigns on sexual education, campaigns that no longer exist, as she reminds viewers. The talks would vary depending on the school type. Private schools, she explains derisively, demanded a more scientific speech which would also 'show the dangers of sexuality and prevented fomenting sexual

relationships'. An example illustrating how far sexism could go in those years was the following question by a student: 'Is it true that if parents argue the baby is female and if parents get along and love each other the baby is male?'

Despite concentrating on the fight for women's rights after Franco's death, *Vindicación* underlines that some of the concerns which are debated in the film have not been 'laid to rest' in the present. The documentary shows that these women have continued working to improve women's positions in society and many comparisons to the current situation are made. Unfortunately, their testimonies corroborate that some of these issues such as work-life balance and gender violence persist unresolved in the twenty-first century, reminding audiences that social transformation is a slow process.

Several TV advertisements created by the government are interspersed with testimonies to reinforce the claims of the interviewees, in particular when discussing the topic of equality. Many of these commercials were part of the campaign by the socialist government to promote equal opportunities at work, claim same wages for the same jobs or criticise women's double shift, at work and at home (Figures 5.13 and 5.14). Arnedo is highly critical of the concept of 'superwoman': 'We need to achieve real work-life balance. A very important educational effort needs to take place so that men stop saying that they help in the house, what does that mean? They might have to share the workload, not help around'. Her angry words are cross cut to an ironic effect with another commercial showing a man cleaning his car thoroughly with the following message: It is clear, you know how to clean, why don't you do it at home?



Figure 5.13 TV ad: 'New plan for equal opportunities. Same job, same wage' in *Vindicación*



Figure 5.14 TV ad to bolster women's life-work balance in *Vindicación*

Gender violence is presented as the worst and most serious problem, revealing that it has not improved in the last decades despite the existence of laws and numerous awareness campaigns. Alcalde calls it male-chauvinist violence and explains how men were not able to come to terms with women's individualisation in the 1970s and 1980s. In her formulation, violence was men's reaction. The documentary shows images of demonstrations against rape and gender violence while ironically playing the song 'la mataré' ('I will kill her') –written by Sabino Méndez and performed by Loquillo– to denounce the extant male-chauvinist mentality. Numerous advertisements criticising violence against women are also shown to create an impact on the viewer. For instance, one ad exposes for a couple of seconds brutal images of a woman being strangled against a wall or another one shows a sad woman putting some make-up on, which, instead of hiding, discloses black eyes and bruises. Fernández reveals her astonishment when they discovered that gender violence was not an exclusive issue from Spain. However, she highlights that other countries like Sweden, Norway or England have taken action and provide more support to the victims, including admission in women's shelters or free housing for single mothers. The youngest interviewee, Sonia Ruiz, claims that men's associations which help men to reflect about their masculinity or violence against women do a great favour to equality and the feminist movement. Real equality, Ruiz

concludes, can only be achieved if both genders work in cooperation: ‘We need to include men in our discussions and we have to share with them, to also make them responsible for the claims in the same way that we make the estates responsible as well as political parties, other associations, the community, etc. Men also need to become responsible for the fight for equality’.

Homage to *Vindicación feminista*

During the Transition period art and graphic activism was a popular accessible strategy to affect social and political change. Koska has taken advantage of this rich variety of street material and has included numerous examples of it in her film. Fanzines, magazines, graffiti, posters, plates, announcements, cartoons and TV advertisements are interspersed with the interviews to support the testimonies’ narratives. In some instances, Koska has used insolent images combined with contemptuous language ‘Military service: poo’, as illustrated in Figure 5.15, in order to show the strong opposition of people to archaic institutions such as the military service. In others, as Figure 5.16 parodies, they add humour and irony with the intention of disputing old prejudices against women: ‘Today: What women think –Ah, do they think?’



Figure 5.15 Example of graphic activism in *Vindicación*



Figure 5.16 Example of graphic activism in *Vindicación*

Particularly influential was the magazine *Vindicación feminista*, which has been granted a significant role in the documentary, being presented as the third main

topic of discussion.⁶² This publication, edited between July 1976 and July 1979, was co-founded by Lidia Falcón and Carmen Alcalde, who appears in the film as the magazine's representative.⁶³ Although there were other emerging feminist magazines during this time, *Vindicación* stood out because it was the only publication that managed to be printed consistently for three years nationwide and identified itself as being purely feminist. For instance, similar periodicals like *La mar* and *Opción* only printed two and six numbers each, *Dones en Lluita* and *Leihoa* had regional scope in Catalonia and the Basque Country respectively and *Mujeres Demócratas* was linked to a particular political ideology.⁶⁴ In spite of its short life, *Vindicación Feminista* had a massive impact in the discussion of a wide range of issues that affected women's rights as well as their private and professional life. Acting as an educational tool, it was one of the first publications to openly tackle topics that were very controversial at the time and considered totally taboo during Francoism. As shown throughout the documentary, the magazine designed provocative front pages with sassy headlines and scandalous images which often included partial nudity. Figures 5.17 and 5.18 illustrate two different issues of the magazine 'graphic slaps'⁶⁵ for the following headlines: 'Solution: divorce' or 'Lesbians, are they like other women?'

⁶² For a detailed study on the emergence, evolution and closing of the publication see María Ángeles Larumbe, 'Prensa y periodistas feministas: una escritura al servicio de la liberación de las mujeres. El ejemplo de *Vindicación Feminista* (1976-1979)', in *Escritoras y pensadoras europeas*, ed. by Mercedes Arriaga Flórez, Ángeles Cruzado Rodríguez, José Manuel Estívez Saá, Katjia Torres Calzada, Dolores Ramírez Almazán (Sevilla: Arcibel, 2007), pp. 389-423.

⁶³ Lidia Falcón is a Spanish politician and writer, who staunchly promoted the feminist movement in Spain, especially during the transition. She was a PSUC militant and was persecuted for her political ideas during Franco's regime. In addition to *Vindicación feminista* in 1976 she created the Colectivo Feminista de Barcelona and the publishing company Ediciones de feminismo. She has written numerous essays, novels and theatre plays, mostly around women and feminism.

⁶⁴ Larumbe, 2007, p. 400.

⁶⁵ Pérez, 2010.



Figure 5.17 Example of the magazine's cover in *Vindicación*



Figure 5.18 Example of the magazine's cover in *Vindicación*

Alcalde, who talks passionately about the magazine, describes it as 'a programmatic magazine and with a real praxis of left-wing ideas, and above all of women's freedom of thinking', whose main goal was 'to recuperate the thinking of the time of the suffragists and, on the other hand, of significant female writers to recuperate that spirit of radicalism and for women's thinking'. Rescuing the voices and faces of these women, as Nash has established, was paramount for the development of the emerging feminist movement in the 1970s, as it restored a genealogy of revolutionary and antifascists foremothers who had fought for democratic freedom and female emancipation.⁶⁶ The magazine, therefore, as explained by Alcalde, contributed to the fight against collective historical amnesia about the Second Republic and the Civil War imposed by Franco's regime, which, as this thesis demonstrates, had been even more acute for women. This enterprise was supported by contemporary emerging female writers such as Ana María Matute, Ana Moix, the Alberdi sisters, Carmen Sarmiento, Maruja Torres and, of course, Antonina Rodrigo. Rodrigo briefly comments in the documentary how a publication of that sort had been long-awaited, as people were very 'thirsty for information'.

The documentary highlights, above all, the importance of this magazine in promoting women's visibility and articulating feminists' claims on women's rights. A small exhibition about the magazine took place in 2009, the same year that the

⁶⁶ Nash, 1995, p. 3.

documentary was filmed. In a small homage to the magazine, Koska has included some images of her visit with Alcalde and Fernández to this exhibition (Figures 5.19 and 5.20).



Figure 5.19 Koska with Alcalde and Fernández at the magazine's exhibition in *Vindicación*



Figure 5.20 Several original copies of the magazine in *Vindicación*

Contrary to what it might be thought, the film title is not inspired by the magazine's name but by the meaning of the word itself 'defence of something or someone who has been outraged'. It is also a reference to Mary Wolstonecraft's work *Vindication of the Rights of Women 1792*, as Koska explains in an interview.⁶⁷ Nevertheless, the design of the film cover has borrowed the image of one of the magazine's front page, as it can be compared in Figures 5.21 and 5.22. That issue claimed housework as 'real work' showing a raised fist coming out of a bucket full of water and soap. With this image Koska refers the viewer back to the resistance against Franco –this was the salute by Republican Forces during and after the Spanish Civil War– by using the raised fist as the feminist symbol. With this powerful image, the director, supported by the interviewees' accounts, aims to persuade the viewer that, as many feminist activists currently claim in Spain, 'the revolution will be feminist or it won't be'.⁶⁸

⁶⁷ Ana Oliveira Lizarribar, 'Entrevista a Susana Koska', *Diario de Noticias de Navarra*, 15 junio 2010.

⁶⁸ Tania González, Cristina Castillo and Jara Cosculluela, 'Las mujeres somos el cambio. Es ahora y con nosotras', *El país*, 8 March 2015, <http://politica.elpais.com/politica/2015/03/08/actualidad/1425846206_211870.html> [accessed 20 March 2015].



Figure 5.21 Magazine's front page with the title: 'Is housework work?' in *Vindicación*

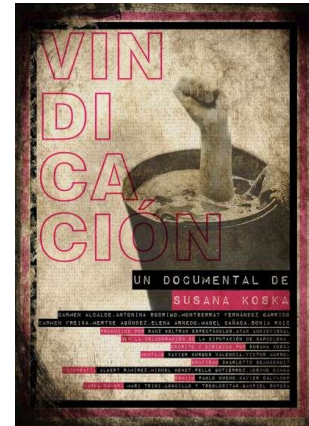


Figure 5.22 *Vindicación*'s film cover

Conclusion

Chapter Five examined Susana Koska's documentaries which counter the invisibility of women in war/historical accounts in the most significant periods of twentieth century Spain. My textual analysis demonstrated that, through the interviewees' testimonies, *Mujeres en pie de guerra* emphasises not only the importance of women's engagement in the Spanish Civil War but also their disregarded long-life commitment to fight for a democratic and more equalitarian society. Koska has proven that, in spite of the tragic events that took place in these women's lives, Spain's conflicted past can also be remembered positively by the 'defeated', as she claims in the interview: 'I think that the good thing about *Mujeres* is that, even though it is very moving, it has a positive reading. All of them have transformed the lemons into lemonade. And this is one of the greatest lessons in life'. *Vindicación*, for its part, rescues from oblivion the accomplishments of the Spanish feminist movement in the post-Franco period, whose struggle and achievements were crucial for the development of Spain as a democratic nation.

Although eye-witness testimony is central to both documentaries, I argued that the personal approach taken by the director presents a powerful and inclusive way of dealing with memory and identity, barely explored in Spanish documentary, while

contributing to a more heroic and humane portrayal of the interviewees. In *Mujeres*, the director's appearance on screen re-establishes the intergenerational dialogue about the past interrupted during Franco's dictatorship and perpetuated in the transition period, whereas in *Vindicación* it corroborates filmmaking as Koska's means of feminist activism. To sum up, both documentaries constitute, without a doubt, a pioneering thematic and stylistic contribution to create awareness in younger audiences who are ignorant of recent women's fight to recuperate basic democratic and human rights.

Chapter 6. Counter-heroic portrayals of silenced women in Francoism: (Re)constructing an identity through testimonial documentary in twenty-first century Spain.

Is it possible that women devote themselves to achieve heroism? It is possible, although in women, heroism consists in doing something rather than in dying heroically [...] And, this is so because their temperament bears better the constant self-denial of everyday life than the extraordinary deed.

Sección Femenina, *Enciclopedia elemental*, 1957¹

Political and sexual repression during Franco's regime in Spain was particularly strong for women as they were considered second class citizens and forced to be legally and economically dependent on their fathers or husbands. In the immediate postwar years women's contribution from the domestic sphere was considered a priority for the formation of a nation based on the principles of National Catholicism, which conferred on the Catholic Church absolute control over all aspects of public and private life.² As Assumpta Roura notes, 'the war belongs to men; the postwar era to women. They are now responsible for straightening out everyday life as if nothing had happened, to play dumb in regards to the past to avoid going mad'.³ Because women were made responsible for the repopulation of the country and the upbringing of the new Spaniards, their indoctrination according to totalitarian, patriarchal and Catholic values was of great importance. To this effect, Aurora Morcillo Gómez highlights how 'education became the new "crusade" for the forces of tradition. The Francoist educational system aspired to dismantle that of the

¹ Luis Otero, *La Sección Femenina* (Madrid: EDAF, 1999), p. 24.

² For a detailed description of National Catholicism see chapter seven in Stanley G. Payne, *Spanish Catholicism: An Historical Overview* (Madison; London: The University of Wisconsin Press, 1984).

³ Assumpta Roura, *Mujeres para después de una guerra: informes sobre moralidad y prostitución en la postguerra española* (Barcelona: Flor del Viento Ediciones, 1998), p. 23.

Second Republic'.⁴ As a result, one of the main goals was to re-educate women and re-establish their subordinate role in society. This was achieved, Gibson explains, by discouraging university studies for women and consequently, hindering their access to high-level employment, as they were educated to accept and be content with the traditional roles of 'mother, domestic worker and helpmate'.⁵

The ideological manipulation of women was the responsibility of the Church and the Sección Femenina (Women's Section) of Falange Española, a nationalist party inspired by Fascism. Founded in 1934, and in force until 1977, Sección Femenina was conceived to inculcate the belief of women's submissiveness to men. This organisation was headed by Pilar Primo de Rivera, the sister of Falange's founder, José Antonio Primo de Rivera. Following her brother's beliefs about women's role in life, Pilar was a staunch advocate of men's superiority. The only woman with political responsibility in Franco's regime stated that 'women never discover anything: they obviously lack the creative talent that God reserved for the male intellect; we women can only interpret what men have done in a more or less competent way'.⁶ This patronising discourse, insisting on the inferiority of women, was crucial to the successful indoctrination of girls and women. Sección Femenina was in charge of strategically promoting women's subordinate role from the initial stages in children's education through textbooks at school, and later on through magazines targeted at adult women, such as *Medina* or *Consigna*. This chapter will use various original excerpts extracted from Luis Otero's compilation of key texts disseminated by Sección Femenina to reinforce the analysis of the interviewees' accounts in *Señora de*.⁷ As illustrated by Otero, female teachers were obliged to attend a prescriptive

⁴ Aurora Morcillo Gómez, 'Shaping true Catholic womanhood: Francoist educational discourse on women', in *Constructing Spanish Womanhood: Female Identity in Modern Spain*, ed. by Victoria Lorée Enders and Pamela Beth Radcliff (Albany, N.Y.: State University of New York Press, 1999), p. 55.

⁵ Gibson, 1992, p. 89.

⁶ Julián Casanova, 'La iglesia de Franco y el destino de la mujer', in Nash, 2013, p. 98.

⁷ Otero, 1999.

course and all young women were required to do a six month social service called 'Servicio Social'.⁸ Organised summer camps, the teaching of gymnastics in sports centres and classes on domestic tasks were additional tools to influence women's upbringing.⁹ As a result, girls received a different upbringing from boys and studied different topics centred on highlighting the importance of their feminine role looking after their husband and children.

Although historiography has generally paid limited attention to the effect of Francoist politics in regards to women, the number of studies about different aspects of the conditions of women's lives during Francoism has increased in the last two decades, as pointed out by Carme Molinero.¹⁰ The representations of women's experiences of Francoism can be divided into two main bodies of work. On the one hand, women's involvement in the fight against Franco during and after the war, in particular imprisoned or exiled women, has been the main focus of study in academic circles, as discussed in Chapter Five.¹¹ On the other hand, there is an extended corpus of literature on Sección Femenina and the Francoist political initiatives to mould the type of Spanish woman required by the new regime.¹² However, what both sets of scholarly studies fail to capture is the experiences of 'ordinary' women who were victims of repression in a patriarchal dictatorship and relegated to the domestic sphere. The lack of oral history projects prevents an analysis of the effects of Francoist education on women's lives during the dictatorship and in the early years of the period that followed. Although women were essential for the financial and population recovery of the country after the war, their contribution is yet to be

⁸ Otero, 1999, p. 170.

⁹ Martín-Márquez, 1999, pp. 91-92.

¹⁰ Carme Molinero, 'Mujer, franquismo, fascismo. La clausura forzada en un "mundo pequeño"', *Historia Social*, 30 (1998), pp. 97-98.

¹¹ See Romeo Alfaro, 2002; part two for internal exile and part three for exile in Domingo, 2006; Domínguez, 2009.

¹² See Molinero, 1998; Victoria Lorée Enders, 'Problematic portraits: The ambiguous historical role of the Sección Femenina of the Falange', in Enders and Radcliff, 1999, pp. 375-397; Morcillo Gómez, 1999; Kathleen Richmond, *Women and Spanish Fascism: the Women's Section of the Falange, 1934-1959* (London: Routledge, 2003); Domingo, 2007; Nash, 2013.

recognised. Novelist Dulce Chacón insists on the historical amnesia around Spanish women:

The construction of oblivion is a perverse strategy. From higher entities, the construction of oblivion was systematic. The Francoist dictatorship did not only persecute the Republicans physically, but also the spirit of the Republic. And there is a sector that was a victim twice: the women. Much has been said about silence, about oblivion. And the most forgotten of all were the women. Women lost the war twice: they lost the war and the postwar. They lost the rights achieved during the Republic, which were multiple, and they were subject to a double construction of oblivion. Women had to renounce what they were and what they could have been.¹³

The impact of the domestic role imposed by Francoism on several generations of women and its consequences for Spanish society have been under-explored in Spanish cinema, and in particular in non-fiction productions. For this reason, this chapter examines two documentaries which give voice to women whose personal experiences have not been examined by scholarly literature or represented in cinema. It is important to note that the interviewees in each documentary belong to different generations and, at the same time, to different stages of Francoism. The women interviewed in *Señora de* (Ferreira, 2009) spent their youth in the immediate postwar period, an isolation phase characterised by ration cards, black outs, water cuts and the coal shortage. The protagonists in *El tren de la memoria* (Marta Arribas and Ana Pérez, 2004) are one generation younger and became adults in the 1960s, when Spain was opening its doors to Europe and starting an economic development in the so-called 'Tardofranquismo' (Later Francoism).

¹³ Chacón, 2004, pp. 75-76.

With regard to scholarly literature, *El tren de la memoria* has been included in several publications tackling the representation of Spanish migration in cinema,¹⁴ but there are no studies focusing on the feminine migratory experience and the implications that it had on their identity. Being a later documentary, *Señora de* has only recently received some consideration from scholars in the last two years.¹⁵ This chapter looks at how, in both cases, the protagonists are given the opportunity to claim an individual identity, which was neglected by a patriarchal society in *Señora de*, and manipulated by the official memory in *El tren de la memoria*. I argue that both films provide what I call counter-heroic portrayals of these generations of women since they do not fit the stereotypical heroine profile from either the militant Republican women (as discussed in Chapter Five) or the Francoist model of heroine characterised by self-denial, introduced at the beginning of this chapter. As I will demonstrate through my analysis of the interviewees' accounts, many of these women broke the moulds in that era. For instance, *Señora de* presents transgressive profiles for the time such as a woman who separated from her husband, a single mother and an ambitious widowed lawyer. In the case of *El tren de la memoria*, the determined young girls who sacrificed their youth in the benefit of their families' wellbeing, also acquired a political identity and became the representatives of Spanish migrants in Germany. In addition, the interviewees' reflections on their past portrayed in each documentary demonstrate that these brave and resilient women are proud of their personal achievements but also of their significant contribution to Spain's history.

¹⁴ See Eduardo Moyano, *La memoria escondida: Emigración y cine* (Madrid: TR, 2005); Norberto Mínguez, 'Historia y memoria en el documental español contemporáneo', *Revista de Occidente*, 300-303 (2006), 80-99; Chema Castiello, *Con maletas de cartón. La emigración española en el cine* (San Sebastián: Gakoa, 2010); Thomas G. Deveny, *Migration in Contemporary Hispanic Cinema* (Lanham: Scarecrow Press, 2012), pp. 15-19.

¹⁵ See Begoña Gutiérrez San Miguel, 'Cuatro miradas sobre el documental rural español en la primera década del siglo XXI', in *Campo y contracampo en el documental rural en España*, ed. by Pedro Poyato and Agustín Gómez (Málaga: Centro de Ediciones de la Diputación de Málaga (CEDMA), Cinemáscampo, 2013), pp. 193-222; Becerra, 2013; Zecchi, 2014, pp.184-188.

***Señora de*: claiming a stolen past**

Multi-talented Patricia Ferreira is prepared to embrace every film genre.¹⁶ After having made several TV documentaries and a short film as part of the collective work *En el mundo a cada rato* (2004), Ferreira further explores the non-fiction genre in her fourth feature-length project.¹⁷ Commissioned by the Galician production company Raio Verde, *Señora de* presents a sample of testimonies by ordinary women who spent their youth and maturity under Franco's regime. The interview-based documentary, premiered at Seminci (Valladolid International Film Festival), constitutes a relevant historical visual text for representing a disregarded sector of Francoist society in Spanish cinema. As elucidated by Ferreira: 'Everyone expects that we speak about the victims of the war and reprisal, but *Señora de* speaks about common people who were also suffering the consequences of a historical situation without even realising it'.

The protagonists' accounts cover a wide variety of topics (work, marriage, sex, motherhood, education, etc.) to depict an accurate picture of women's secondary roles and subordinate status in that era. The themes are not explicitly announced and are intertwined with no apparent order, although frequent cross cutting between the interviewees is used to contrast testimonies on the same subject. Each interviewee is progressively introduced throughout the documentary by their full name, with the purpose of stopping the anonymity they have been subjected to most of their life. By giving them a voice but also a name, the film stops treating them as 'señoras de' (Mrs. what's-his-name) and offers them an opportunity to claim their own identity.

¹⁶ Her last film, *Els nens salvatges* (2011), is a family drama and in the interview she expressed her desire to try comedy, for which she already had a script called *Salsa de arándanos*.

¹⁷ Ferreira's documentaries for TV include *Un sueño de cine. Homenaje a Ana Belén* (1995) and the TV series *Paraísos cercanos* (1997). *El secreto mejor guardado* is her contribution in *En el mundo a cada rato* in collaboration with her colleagues París, Mañá and Gutiérrez.

After interviewing more than three hundred candidates, ten women from Galicia and two women from León were selected to describe their everyday life during Franco's dictatorship.¹⁸ With the aim to provide a representative portrait of different social classes in the region, a rich array of characters with diverse educational and professional backgrounds is presented. The rural areas are represented by Filomena Fraga Rey, Pilar Pets, Asunción Fernández Pico and Josefa González. They are traditional housewives belonging to the working class who report having lived a very humble and gruelling life. Their testimonies concentrate on the financial hardship and social constraints experienced in small villages. Also from a lower socio-economic class, Alicia García and Segunda Portabales talk about taboo topics at the time, mainly related to sex, and their current perception of them. Professional women are also represented by Ana Blasco –who used to be a school teacher before she got married– lawyer Romana San Luis, and midwife Valentina Riesco. A former instructor of the Sección Femenina, Carmen Osuña, gives an insider perspective on the institution and its members. Finally, Concepción Gómez and María García present a point of view from, probably, the most stigmatised women in Francoist society: a lesbian woman and a single mother.

Their personal stories are contextualised by the arguments of sociologist Mercedes Noval, who is a scholar in the Sección Femenina. Her intervention provides a historical framework which highlights the interviewees' indoctrination undertaken by Sección Femenina. Her discourse, based on her PhD study about the institution, is

¹⁸ Ferreira notes with frustration in my interview that some women who were initially interviewed at the casting did not participate in the project because their sons opposed: 'It was also important that they wanted to do it and that they were allowed to do it because sometimes there were people who refused after they had accepted. Sons, sons who didn't want their mothers to speak'. Such a controlling attitude is clear evidence of the prevalence of patriarchal values in the following generations of Spaniards, one of the legacies from Francoism, which, as Ferreira emphasises, 'is still there, it's a mental structure very hard to change'.

usually related to the topic being discussed by the interviewees.¹⁹ Although she is younger and notably more articulate than most interviewees, Noval is depicted in black and white to distinguish her from the eyewitnesses. Zecchi points out that the black and white sequences are used to make a clear visual contrast between the grey past in which the Sección Femenina existed and the present, where the interviewees are filmed in bright colours.²⁰ What is remarkable in this documentary is the inclusion of an expert aimed at reinforcing the protagonists' accounts. It is clear that the expert is positioned not as a 'superior voice', as is sometimes seen in expository documentaries.²¹ The documentary does not incorporate any sort of archival footage and builds a narrative based solely on the eye-witnesses' experiences and the expert's explanations. Although this has been criticised by some as 'narrative laziness',²² it can be argued that Ferreira has deliberately chosen to grant full prominence to these women, whose voice has never been heard. For this reason, the director's –or any other interviewer's– absence on screen reinforces the interviewees' accounts, which are never interrupted by audible questions. As Carmen Becerra notes, they are 'women whose present can only be explained through their past, a past that has been silenced and neglected by nearly everyone, suppressed by history, relegated to the margin to those who were (and still are) at the margins in the system'.²³

Dealing with an imposed identity

Señora de starts with consecutive medium and long shots of the backs of a number of individual women, edited together, while the film credits roll. This is a very symbolic beginning: the protagonists cannot be identified because they are

¹⁹ Mercedes Noval completed her PhD thesis on the influence of the Sección Femenina in the region of Murcia in 1999.

²⁰ Zecchi, 2014, p. 187.

²¹ Bill Nichols, *Introduction to documentary* (Bloomington, Ind.: Indiana University Press, 2001).

²² Javier Ocaña, 'Otro documental', *El País*, 5 November 2010. <http://elpais.com/diario/2010/11/05/cine/1288911613_850215.html> [accessed 30 March 2013].

²³ Becerra, 2013, p. 164.

introduced from behind, as shown in Figures 6.1 and 6.2. Such a powerful visual introduction prepares the viewer for an insightful journey around Galicia and León searching for the memories of a generation of women who were not even allowed to dream. The camera follows these women walking through a range of diverse settings: a town, a village, the countryside, a park, a road, the harbor. Zecchi interprets the distancing from the camera as a way of metaphorically representing that the heavy past that these women have carried on their backs is gradually going away from us.²⁴ While I agree with this interpretation, I would add that this recurring ‘trope’ of showing numerous shots of the women’s backs is mainly aimed at emphasising their anonymity. At the beginning, they are all shown from behind but, as the documentary comes to an end, they have become distinctive individuals, as demonstrated by their accounts. Ferreira brings them out of oblivion by turning them around, revealing their faces and full names and giving them a voice that shows their significant contribution to Spain’s history.



Figure 6.1 Ana Blanco in *Señora de*



Figure 6.2 María García in *Señora de*

The title of the documentary, apart from paying homage to Max Ophüls’ film *Madame de* (1953), has been strategically chosen as it denotes women’s submissiveness to men in that era.²⁵ Before the film title is shown, the opening

²⁴ Zecchi, 2014, p. 188.

²⁵ The following extract from a 1968 schoolbook by Sección Femenina illustrates the manipulative discourse that indoctrinated women to accept their only possible destiny as wives using a patronising, and insulting, tone: ‘When you are married, you will write in your card your name, your first surname and then the particle ‘de’, followed by your husband’s surname. Like this: Carmen García de Marín. In Spain we say Mrs. Durán or Mrs. Peláez. This formula is nice as we don’t lose our personality, but we are Carmen García, who belongs to Mr. Marín, that is Carmen García de Marín’. In case such an explicit explanation

words by an unidentified interviewee (Filomena) emphasise this lack of decision-making which was imposed on their lives: 'I would like to be a journalist, I would like to be a painter, I would like to be so many things but I couldn't be any of them because my life was already marked, I couldn't decide it. I had to be what had been selected for me'. Filomena's statement perfectly exemplifies the earlier mentioned discourse by Chacón on the double victimisation of women and the manipulation of their destinies after the war, which Ferreira is trying to counter with this documentary. The following textual analysis illustrates the interviewees' outlook and reflections of how they experienced (or not) education, work, sex and motherhood,

Education and Work Life

Regarding education, an important difference can be noticed between the accounts by the interviewees belonging to lower classes living in the country, mostly without or with very brief schooling, and those who are educated or belong to higher classes. The lack of schooling is mentioned by all the interviewees living in rural areas (Filomena, Asunción, María del Pilar, Josefa, Segunda), where education was regarded as unnecessary and useless, in particular for women, as Filomena confirms: 'Women didn't need to know much to work in the fields and to look for gorse in the hills'. Basic literacy skills were learnt at home, generally with one single book, which was related to religion. Segunda, for instance, explains that she had to learn to write and read as an adult.

Most interviewees from the rural areas report having had a strenuous life due to the double workday. They describe their daily routine as a housewife and emphasise the difficulties of those times to do the house chores, such as having to wash their clothes in the river or baking their own bread. In most cases they also were required to work outside of the house, undertaking very arduous jobs in the fields, working in

did not suffice, there was a further clarification indicating that such recommendation was only valid for women named Carmen García who were married to Mr. Marín, and not otherwise (Otero, 1999, p. 183).

farms or selling fish. Some of them had to work during the weekends to obtain an additional income, for example, washing the teacher's clothes. In addition, they were in charge of raising their children and looking after their parents or their in-laws. 'Thousand jobs. I don't even want to think about it. I don't even know how I am alive', comments Filomena, mockingly. As Figures 6.3 and 6.4 show, these interviews are shot at their own homes, mainly in the kitchen sitting on a chair, with the intention to highlight women's relegation to the domestic space, but also to provide a sense of intimacy. It is clear that the women trust the interviewers and want to share their stories.



Figure 6.3 Asunción Fernández in *Señora de*



Figure 6.4 Filomena Fraga in *Señora de*

In contrast, the interviewees from more well-to-do backgrounds have been shot at different settings and are depicted in more elegant attires to present a clear contrast between the experiences in different socio-economic contexts. At her house, Ana Blasco is sitting on an armchair in her opulent lounge, suggesting a higher social class, as depicted in Figure 6.5. The former school teacher provides a reflective approach to her past experiences and the society she was brought up in, acknowledging that women 'were seduced by the idea of being the wife of someone with status'. Later on, she explains how wives were discouraged by their husbands from working due to the little monetary and social value attributed to women's work: 'As we earned so little money, he used to say that the bank gave him points for the wife, just as if we were cows. So, if the wife worked, they would take away those

points. And it seems that the points that the bank gave him were more than what I earned as a teacher. So I left my job and became Mrs. Romani'.

Ana's testimony is a clear example of how women's identity was mainly constructed based upon that of their husband. Becoming a wife was the best profession that a woman could aspire to as promoted by the Sección Femenina: 'Women's destiny is being the man's wife and partner, forming a family and educating and looking well after their children. The place where a woman does her activities is the house, because the family lives there'.²⁶ This prevailing discourse to relegate women to the private sphere was twofold: on the one hand, women would be excluded from political decision and power; on the other hand, by being at home they could concentrate on having children in order to increase the population reduced by the war. Ana's account also shows how women not only accepted their submissive role as wives, having to sacrifice their personal and professional identities, but also that marriage was considered as an achievement in Francoist society.

From all married interviewees, however, Ana appears to be the only one who is happy. For the rest, marriage is perceived as very negative and restrictive, especially –but not exclusively– in the rural areas, as expressed by Filomena, 'because here, in the small villages, once you were married, you were buried'. Ironically, for Romana San Luis her husband's death became an incentive that enabled her to develop in her career as a lawyer: 'Then, professionally, it's wonderful. You have a family but you don't have anyone who bosses you around, you can dedicate all your time to your job'. Despite the different socio-economic backgrounds, both Filomena's and Romana's words contradict Francoist discourse claiming that 'every woman's life, despite how much she wants to dissimulate, is nothing else than an eternal wish to find someone to obey'.²⁷

²⁶ Otero, 1999, p. 183.

²⁷ Otero, 1999, p. 185.



Figure 6.5 Ana Blasco in *Señora de*



Figure 6.6 Romana San Luis in *Señora de*

It is evident from her first appearance in the film that Romana is portrayed as a career-focused woman who based –and still bases– her identity on her professional activity. She is introduced entering the court and in the subsequent scenes she is always shown sitting at her desk in her office, furnished with antique shelves filled with law textbooks, as Figure 6.6 illustrates. In fact, Romana was the first female lawyer registered in the Bar Association of Vigo. Her testimony provides key information on the different legal rights for men and women as well as revealing the intricacies of studying and practicing such a masculine profession in that era. In addition to the settings, the social class differences are highlighted by their physical appearance. Both Romana and Ana are presented wearing smart clothes and jewellery, with feminine hairstyles and have had the manicure done. Asunción and Filomena, on the contrary, are portrayed wearing modest clothes, with a very short haircut and have not been made up. All these testimonies demonstrate that, even though there were obvious differences in opportunity and quality of life between the women from the different classes, they all shared a subordinate role to a masculine figure and the lack of decision-making.

Let's not talk about sex

The influence of Catholic religion in society is emphasised by most testimonies. Romana stresses that the social influence was absolute and reminds the viewer to keep in mind that 'education was in the hands of nuns and priests. Therefore, religion imbued absolutely everything'. In particular, the Church is mentioned when

the interviewees share their views on topics dealing with sexuality. As Alicia García describes, 'we were saints, virginal. Everything was church. Everything was a sin (...). We used to go to church often and the priests were the ones to talk to us about it'. As illustrated in Otero's publication, the Sección Femenina had religious advisers to guide the Catholic formation of women 'so that they can distinguish clearly between good and bad'.²⁸ Thus, it also was common to read advice for women on proper behaviour and conduct written by priests in the institution's magazines.

The general consensus from all the interviewees is that in the past topics such as menstruation and sexual relationships were never discussed at home or school. Ana insists that 'everything was taboo' and even mothers would not explain to their daughters about basic biological issues such as menstruation; instead, it was treated with excessive 'secrecy'. Alicia relates how she panicked when she had her first period: 'I was a child and didn't know anything. I got very scared. You couldn't go in the water, you couldn't shower because it would be harmful'. Overall, these women's testimonies illustrate not only the lack of information regarding sex, but also the strong belief in superstitions that were taken to be scientific knowledge.²⁹

Similarly, Alicia relates her ingenuous beliefs about contraceptive methods like washing herself very well after the sexual act or provoking an abortion by introducing parsley in the vagina. The most striking aspect of Alicia's testimony is that she is still unaware of the ineffectiveness of such practices as she keeps questioning it throughout her account. Midwife Valentina confirms the existence of such beliefs with the story of a seventeen-year-old girl who nearly died as a result of inserting parsley in her vagina to stop the pregnancy. As Gibson points out, 'under

²⁸ Otero, 1999, p. 49.

²⁹ This type of popular irrational beliefs, which lack scientific argumentation, has kept alive for years after the dictatorship. They have been orally transmitted over generations and have had a strong influence in girls' upbringing and development as an adult woman. As a personal anecdote, I would like to note that I was brought up with some of such beliefs. For example, coinciding with Alicia's account, as a girl I was not allowed to wash my hair when I had my period. Please note the age gap, Alicia was born in 1934, whereas I was born in 1979.

Franco both the sale and use of contraceptives had been crimes'.³⁰ Finally, Ana reflects on the impact that the lack of contraceptives, as we know them today, had for women because the methods they had to use were very unreliable:

The real sexual revolution for women happened in the last century: contraceptives. Because we always used to live thinking about it... we used the rhythm method and *coitus interruptus*, that's all. And then you had a headache and you couldn't. Another day you had a sore throat and you couldn't. It was very hard for men and for women, poor us, as we weren't ready or used to it at all.³¹

Despite the lack of contraceptive methods, sexual relationships were presented to women as a marital obligation that had to be obeyed when required by the husband, regardless of the women's own will. Josefa, for instance, boldly declares her lack of input into the matter: 'I had to do it, whether I wanted it or not'. The interviewees' testimonies illustrate the lack of sexual education in Franco's Spain, and their ignorance in regards with the female orgasm, as highlighted by Gibson.³² Segunda corroborates the belief that sex was only pleasurable for men: 'You would offer your body and he was the one who enjoyed it. You didn't even know that you were able to enjoy it'. Segunda also acknowledges her innocence at the time about conceiving: 'When my husband kissed me for the first time, I thought I was pregnant, I felt my tummy was getting bigger, I felt like vomiting'. However, she admits that later she learnt to enjoy sex just before her husband passed away. Such a declaration is courageous bearing in mind the repressive education these women received.³³ Not all the women were so open to talk about sex so explicitly and some of them showed that they are still conditioned by their previous lack of a proper education.

³⁰ Gibson, 1992, p. 91.

³¹ This lack of control about sex also appears in Miguel Delibes' book *Cinco horas con Mario* (1966), considered by many critics to be an accurate portrayal of Spain during the sixties.

³² Gibson, 1992, p. 88.

³³ Although nowadays openly talking about female sexual pleasure does not provoke a reaction in the audience, it was a taboo topic for years. Groundbreaking Josefina Molina's *Función de noche* (1981) is the first Spanish film in which a woman claims her sexuality and confesses to her husband that he never gave her an orgasm.

As Alicia, comments 'it's difficult because I don't know if a woman does it for pleasure or because it's her obligation'. Ana, in contrast, provides a very thoughtful insight regarding the privation of a joyful sexual life for both, men and women: 'You miss the fact that you didn't enjoy sex, but you don't blame the man, your partner. You blame that terrible education that you had been given'.³⁴

The influence of a male chauvinist mentality and the existence of a permitted double morality for men at the time are pointed out by Filomena: 'And there was something else, men were very macho. Once they got a woman, they would go for the next one, you didn't interest them anymore. And to top it all, they would throw it in your face. Now you are not worthy for another man'. This double morality was experienced by several interviewees since their husbands committed adultery. While adultery was socially accepted for men, it was considered a crime for women until 1973. The difference in the allowances for adultery for each gender was so remarkable that Romana ironically comments: 'Adultery was one of those weird treasures we had in the Spanish Criminal Code until the reform from 1973. It read: Adultery is committed by the woman who lies with a man who is not her husband and adultery is committed by a man who has a lover at home or, notoriously, outside his home'. Therefore, adultery for men was not only mostly legally permitted but socially accepted. Segunda confesses that she had to forgive her husband's cheating because she felt ashamed and feared what people would say.

The theme of lesbianism is tackled by Concepción and Romana. Each of them offers a very different perspective. Concepción briefly talks about her own love story with another woman, a school friend, although she never mentions having a concrete sexual orientation. She and her friend kept their love affair to themselves

³⁴ Writer Carmen Martín Gaité comments on both gender's ignorance regarding sexuality and the opposite sex in *Usos amorosos de la postguerra española* (Barcelona: Anagrama, 1987). In her study she documents with periodical literature the official policy and rhetoric employed to shape young women's attitudes towards sex and relationships.

and she seems to still be conditioned by the secrecy of their relationship, as her sharp comment denotes: 'I fell in love with a person. Full stop'. Romana confirms not only the invisibility of lesbian women during the dictatorship but sarcastically emphasises that female homosexuality was an inconceivable concept: 'Were lesbian women visible? We didn't even know that lesbianism existed! So seeing them was absolutely impossible! It was something we hadn't even thought of! At the most you might hear something about men but it took a long time for me to know that it existed also among women!'

Sacrificed motherhood

The interviewees also share their views on motherhood and describe the conditions to give birth in those times, which were particularly precarious in the rural areas. Even though becoming a mother was promoted as the most important mission for women by Sección Femenina, the testimonies do not reflect motherhood as a particularly positive experience. Josefa, for instance, deems motherhood as a huge burden for women: 'For a mother it was a serious thing. You knew that if you had a son, you would become a slave to look after him'. The concept of slavery suggested by Josefa contrasts strongly with the heroic perception of the regime when defining maternal qualities: 'No heroism is as clean, as quiet, as tenacious as the one from a mother'.³⁵ Ironically, the education to prepare women to become mothers, which was centred on the caring aspect, did not include information on the labour process. This is emphasised by midwife Valentina who comments about the ignorance of most pregnant women when assisting them to give birth. She also remarks upon the undervaluing of feminine professions like hers, being regarded derogatorily as 'a women's thing'.³⁶ In fact, medical assistance during births was not considered a

³⁵ Otero, 1999, p. 106.

³⁶ Roura comments that, due to the association of this occupation with sexuality, and consequently with the possible sinful influence in women, this profession was to be learnt and practiced by single women over twenty-three, but if married or widow, over twenty (1998, p. 110).

priority because it was very expensive, as related by some interviewees. Filomena very proudly reports managing perfectly well without the help of a doctor: 'All my labours went very well, all at home. Once I gave birth on my own. Today I would be on television'. Asunción, who even tied the umbilical cord herself to her two children, related similar experiences: 'They were born miraculously; I didn't have a midwife, a doctor or a hospital'.

Having a child had especially major implications for single mothers, who were not accepted in Francoist society. Drawing on her own experience, María García elucidates the humiliation that single mothers were subjected to. The documentary allocates a fair amount of time to her personal story, allowing for a public denunciation of the unlimited power and abuse of the Church in regards to unwed mothers. Separated from her parents for the first time, she was taken away from her hometown to be put in a centre for pregnant women run by nuns. She compares her stay in the centre with prison, as the blinds were locked and the women were only allowed visits every fourth Sunday of each month. On several occasions María draws an analogy between the single mothers and animals: 'they would sell you, as if you were livestock', revealing how nuns made a profit from selling these women in the (ironic) care of the church to men who needed a wife. She also describes the terrible conditions of giving birth for 'sinners' like her 'as if you were a cow'. In addition to the inhuman treatment received by the nuns, María highlights with teary eyes the social stigma attributed to them: 'Since I am a single mother any son of a bitch has the right to abuse me'. The chastening experience at court when she applied for a pension from the father's child nearly led her to commit suicide, and she saw other women who did. As Figure 6.7 shows, her testimony is mostly shot in low light, suggesting the shame and the secrecy she had to endure for a long time.



Figure 6.7 María García in *Señora de*

Although the documentary aims at denouncing her traumatic experience as a single mother in Franco's regime, it concludes by highlighting María's achievements in the present. The prevailing embittered tone of her account changes towards the end when she talks proudly about her idea of creating an association for single mothers in the 1980s. In the final scenes, filmed in the already established association, María is portrayed as a confident professional interacting warmly with the other employees, who show respect and admiration for her. The success of this project in helping other mothers, together with the satisfaction of raising a child on her own, realises María's heroic overcoming of a stigma unfairly instilled for decades by a patriarchal and retrograde society.

A reflective portrait of the Sección Femenina

The documentary outlines a portrait of the organisation Sección Femenina from three different points of view: the sociologist, the lawyer and one of its ex-instructors. Sociologist Mercedes Noval highlights from the beginning of her testimony the lack of studies on the Sección Femenina and their instructors: 'The women of the Sección Femenina, who were characterised by doing a silenced job remained also

in silence'.³⁷ In the film, Noval describes the leaders of such institution as educated, independent women who generally held a university degree, had strong organisational and leadership skills but who never married or had children. Ironically, their profile did not coincide with the traditional model of perfect mother and housewife that they so devotedly promoted. For this reason, Noval questions with astonishment their absolute rejection of women's intellect when they themselves were an example of it: 'How is it possible that those women with such education could deny everything related to intelligence or to the possibilities that women had to develop a job or do any other thing?'

In spite of being Franco supporters, the leaders and the members of the Sección Femenina, Noval insists, were manipulated, underpaid and used by the regime. In addition, later, after the end of the dictatorship, these women were marginalised, as they were never able to find their place in post-Franco Spain. They lost their jobs and did not fit in any of the new institutional democratic structures since their work was not required anymore and their qualifications could not be validated. Consequently, in 1977 the Sección Femenina was dismantled and Alfonso Osorio, vice-president of the Government headed by Alfonso Suárez, thanked Pilar Primo de Rivera for the services provided over forty three years with only two words: 'Thanks, Pilar'.³⁸ For these reasons, Noval claims a double victimisation of the women working for the Sección Femenina. In contrast, the consequences for the male members of Falange, the sociologist argues, were not as detrimental, as the Falangist party split into several political factions that have continued into the twenty-first century.

³⁷ An observation needs to be made about the fact that it has been more than fifteen years since Noval finished her PhD thesis and that she only used Spanish references. At the beginning of this chapter I have outlined detailed studies on the Sección Femenina.

³⁸ Otero, 1999, p. 13.

Former instructor Carmen Osuña provides an insightful perspective that expands our understanding of the women working for Sección Femenina. Her testimony provides further evidence of the disparity in the upbringing of each gender in Francoist society. She describes her main duties teaching namely physical education, home economics or the so-called politics of the time, while acknowledging being uninformed of what topics were included in the males' curriculum. What is striking is her lack of political awareness: 'I never thought that what I was doing was because of politics. We did it because we were really involved, we liked that task and we just did it'. Carmen is shown visiting one of the old schools and admits her disappointment when the institution disappeared: 'When democracy arrived I was a bit old, and I only taught physical education but all the young people kept working until it collapsed, everything was cancelled and we all had to go home. It was the end of all that'. Carmen's account contributes to Noval's argument claiming that these women were, unwittingly, victims. Romana's cynical views on the institution also considered them as 'just some poor women who hardly earned their salary'. Her comments demonstrate that their endeavours to indoctrinate the female population were not always effective:

The Sección Femenina was a group of ladies that came to give some lessons on Formation about the National Consciousness. They gave us a green book that nobody ever read. They also taught us how to sew, we had to embroider a cloth and if we made some mistake we tried to hide it by putting saliva on it, which was actually useless. They also taught us gymnastics wearing some baggy trousers.³⁹

In her last intervention in the film, Noval argues that the impact of Francoism in the lives of several generations of women is an issue that has not been thoroughly

³⁹ The uniforms described by Romana can be viewed in Isabel Coixet's *La mujer, cosa de hombres*. The documentary, which was part of the TV series *50 años de* (2009-2010), reminisces Spain's collective memory by incorporating the audio visual archive of Spanish television. Coixet strategically juxtaposes the No-Do footage, targeted at the female population, with contemporary news about domestic violence in the last decades.

analysed and asks the viewer: 'What is the remnant from all of this?' Based on the conclusion of her PhD thesis, Noval claims that 'it is clear that when democracy arrives in Spain, (...) all those women, we all urge to conquer democracy, I would dare to say with more energy than men'. In the interview, Ferreira expands on this argument adding that 'in this moment in Spain seventy or eighty-year-old women are enjoying democracy; they do things they didn't do before; they think things that they didn't think before. They have dared to think and act'. The protagonists' accounts have amply demonstrated these women's embrace of democratic freedoms in this 'optimistic and empowering documentary', as described by Zecchi.⁴⁰ *Señora de*, I propose, answers Noval's question by presenting varied portrayals of women, who either accepted or transgressed their traditional designated role in Francoist society, but whose reflective accounts, as demonstrated by my analysis, question the concept of heroine.

For this reason, Ferreira presents a positive closure to the documentary emphasised by upbeat jazz music playing while the interviewees are portrayed in their current lives undertaking everyday activities at home, in the garden, shopping or working at the office. Now these women are not anonymous characters as we are able to see their faces and we have learnt their names and their counter-heroic stories. In this concluding section of the film, they are given the opportunity to express some of their silenced dreams, desires and aspirations. Many of them emphasise the longing for having an education. The testimonies also reveal a strong desire for independence: 'Being independent, doing whatever I want, I would love that. I have always depended on somebody... Always...' They particularly admire the financial independence that the new generations are able to enjoy and the help that many men provide at home with cleaning and looking after the children. Freedom is also highly valued: 'I absolutely respect the freedom that young people and all people

⁴⁰ Zecchi, 2014, p. 187.

have today'. To sum up, the interviewees show their understanding about the limitations for women that their historical era imposed by wishing 'I would be born nowadays, if I could'. The following documentary to be analysed, *El tren de la memoria*, also rescues women's silenced voices from the Franco era: the voices of a younger generation, whose lives would have not differed much from the ones in *Señora de*, had they not decided to migrate to another country.

El tren de la memoria: filling a historical gap and paying off a debt

As mentioned in the introduction, in the last fifty years Spain has shifted from being a country in need of migration to becoming a host country for immigrants. In 1959 the Spanish government approved the national plan for economic stability, a set of financial measures aimed at the stabilisation and liberalisation of the Spanish economy.⁴¹ The plan meant the rupture with the politics of autarchy instigated in early Francoism and made possible the beginning of economic growth in the country. Part of the plan was to reduce the high unemployment rate by organising an economic migration scheme to other European countries including France, Germany, Switzerland, Belgium or The Netherlands. This controlled migration program was arranged according to the needs of Spanish economy, targeting unskilled people from poorer rural areas like Andalucía, Extremadura, La Mancha or Galicia. Qualified workers, on the contrary, were recruited for the national industry. Official numbers provided by the Spanish Institute of Migration amount to around one million migrants between 1959 and 1973 (1,066.440); however, it is estimated, that in total 51% more people than were officially reported migrated in that period.⁴² Three decades later, Spain faces the inverse situation. From the mid 1990s, and increasingly in the 2000s, waves of migrants from different parts of the world have arrived in Spain in search of a better future. The public debate comparing the type of

⁴¹ Castiello, 2010, p. 121.

⁴² Castiello, 2010, pp. 122-123.

immigrant arriving in the country in the last decades and the type of emigrant who left the country in the 1960s has been rather controversial. A remarkable difference has been assumed between ‘them’ –the illegal immigrants arriving to Spain without a work permit– and ‘us’ –the ‘welcomed’ legal Spanish migrants, who were truly needed to increase the neighbour countries’ workforce.

Writing-directing team Marta Arribas and Ana Pérez, who have worked together for many years, decided to delve into the issue and hear the stories directly from those Spaniards who migrated to Northern Europe not so long ago.⁴³ Searching for testimonies from different associations of returned migrants, they found Josefina Cembrero. She was not only keen to participate in their project but also encouraged the directors to ask questions beyond the emigrants’ first impressions, if they wanted to find out what the Spanish migrant experience actually involved. Arribas commented in the interview for this project that ‘at first the migrants sold you a very successful story but then other themes were unfolding and at the end we made the conclusion that we had been sold an official history that didn’t correspond with the real one’.⁴⁴ The result of their investigation was their first full-length documentary, *El tren de la memoria* (2005), which reveals the hardship of the migratory experience directly through migrants’ voices. The film, awarded with the Jury Prize at the Málaga Spanish film Festival in 2005, intends to pay homage to the first generation of migrants in the 1960s and record their sacrifice in the country’s collective memory.⁴⁵ For this reason, it has been the focus of attention in numerous debates about migration and historical memory at universities and film festivals, since the

⁴³ Documentary makers Marta Arribas and Ana Pérez started their cooperation in Spanish Television. They have directed two more feature-length documentaries *Cómicos* (2009) and *Un lugar donde quedarse* (2014).

⁴⁴ This study interviewed Marta Arribas on behalf of both directors, since Ana Pérez was unavailable when the interview was conducted in 2012.

⁴⁵ Arribas’ and Pérez’s interest in continue recuperating the memory of significant but disregarded people in Spanish history has already been commented on Chapter Three, when mentioning the documentary *Héroes sin armas* (2010) about four remarkable Spanish photographers at the beginning of the twentieth century.

migrants' contribution has not yet been recognised at a national level and remains unrepresented in Spanish cinema.

Very few documentaries, apart from the No-Do productions, have dealt with this significant phenomenon of Spanish history. As Arribas corroborates in the interview, 'those Spanish migrants have had no presence in the media since that time. Only some fiction films had been made but not much more'. Several scholars stress the marginal cinematic representation of this episode of Spanish migration to Europe. Chema Castiello notes that, despite the social impact of the migratory process, barely a few secondary characters feature in contemporaneous and current films.⁴⁶ According to him, the most significant portrayals of this period, which centred their storyline around the migrants experiences, were released in the 1970s.⁴⁷ The comedy *Vente a Alemania, Pepe* (Pedro Lagaza, 1970) narrates in a parodic tone the adventures –or rather the misfortunes– of an amusing character from the country, who has never left his village and tries his luck in Germany. The nostalgic and patriotic approach not only results in an unrealistic portrayal of migrants' arduous reality but is instead used to extol the 'uniqueness' of Spanish culture promoted by the regime. In contrast, Roberto Bodegas' *Españolas en París* (1971) is considered the most authentic representation of the impact that migration had on people's lives.⁴⁸ Combining the stories of four Spanish women working as maids in France, Eduardo Moyano explains, the film reveals that migration at the time was not a choice but a necessity and shows the complexities of integration.⁴⁹ With a similar intention to *Españolas en París*, *El tren de la memoria* contributes to the disregarded representation of female migrants by making a documentary focused on women's accounts of migration.

⁴⁶ Castiello, 2010, pp. 128-130.

⁴⁷ Castiello, 2010, p. 128.

⁴⁸ For a detailed analysis on both films see chapter four in Moyano, 2005, pp. 83-102.

⁴⁹ Moyano, 2005, p. 23.

Centred on the reunion of Josefina and her friend Leonor in Nuremberg, *El tren de la memoria* takes us on a tour back to the 1960s and early 1970s to convey an untold version of the Spanish economic migration to Germany. The promise of a prosperous future led both women to catch one of the special trains arranged for migrants to that same destination in 1961. Hoping to increase the financial support to their families, they left their rural villages for the first time to become part of the working class in a foreign industrial world. That train journey was the beginning of a life-changing experience that would mark their lives forever and would have a massive impact on the women they have become. Due to health issues, Josefina decided to return to Spain in 1977, whereas Leonor chose to stay, and became a social worker in Germany for a non-profit organisation, Caritas. Forty years after she first left, Josefina is shown repeating the same train trip to confront her past and reveal her concealed memories.

Through the testimonies of both friends and other Spaniards who remained in Germany, the documentary sheds new light on the unspoken difficulties that migrants had to endure living and working in a foreign country. The interviewees' narrative uncovers how migrants were a double business for the country since one Spaniard in Germany, or abroad, meant one less unemployed person in the system who was also sending money. The whole migrant experience is recounted in chronological order: starting with the uncomfortable train trip and the not so welcoming arrival, followed by their work and living conditions, and finishing with their union fight and the return of some back to Spain. In spite of all the hindrances they experienced working abroad (mainly as factory workers), the film shows that their migratory journey did more than just assist Spain's economic development. It also contributed, I argue, to the transformation of their sense of identity in a cohort of Spaniards who donated their youth for their so-called 'patria querida' (beloved fatherland). In this chapter I investigate, in particular, the building of the female

protagonists' sense of transnational identity and the raising of political awareness during their stay in Germany.

Reflecting on the migrant identity: A feminine perspective

The Spanish economic migration to Europe in the 1960s, aiming at wage increase and saving, is rarely associated with women. Very few studies have focused on female migration, as it was a smaller phenomenon whose financial contribution was considered secondary, but also because the decision to leave Spain was generally attributed to men.⁵⁰ The most attractive destination for women was France (44% in 1962 and 47% in 1968).⁵¹ As depicted in the previously mentioned film *Españolas en París*, most women migrated to the capital to work as maids or caretakers. However, female migration to Germany was also quite popular and increased considerably over a decade. Whereas the percentage of female workers in 1962 was only 25.8%, in 1975 it had increased to 39.4%, becoming very similar to the percentage of male workers.⁵² Until the mid 1960s, the average profile of Spanish female migrants was young single women with previous working experience, mainly in agriculture or in the service industry.⁵³ In spite of being unqualified, many Spanish female migrants joined the German industrial workforce because it was better remunerated and they aimed at saving quickly. *El tren de la memoria* is the first film that portrays on screen women's experiences of migration in Germany and gives voice to the pioneers of industrial female migration.

According to Arribas, the directors initially thought that they had randomly selected more female testimonies but after interviewing numerous migrants they realised that

⁵⁰ Alicia Mira Abad and Mónica Moreno Seco, 'Españolas exiliadas y emigrantes: encuentros y desencuentros en Francia', *Les Cahiers de Framespa*, 5 (2010), <<http://framespa.revues.org/383>> [accessed 3 May 2014].

⁵¹ Laura Oso Casas, *Españolas en París. Estrategias de ahorro y consumo en las migraciones internacionales* (Barcelona: Bellaterra, 2004), p. 29.

⁵² Gloria Sanz Lafuente, 'Mujeres españolas emigrantes y mercado laboral en Alemania, 1960-1975', *Migraciones y Exilios*, 7 (2006), p. 33.

⁵³ Sanz Lafuente, 2006, pp. 37-38.

'women are much more honest with themselves and they have less problems admitting bad experiences'. For this reason, the directors decided to make a documentary about Spanish migration told mainly through female perspectives. And yet, as my analysis will demonstrate, the film is not exclusively centred on women's issues in the migratory process, but on the radical transformation on women's lifestyle and mentality. Although the negative aspects of migration are highlighted in several scenes, the film also shows that Germany provided women with opportunities that they would not have found in Spain at that time. Besides becoming financially independent, they received education, learned a foreign language and some of them became politically active. Therefore, I argue that one of the main contributions of the documentary, which has not been pointed out in other studies, is the depiction of the significant impact that the migrant experience had in shaping the identity of the protagonists. Such impact is particularly relevant in the cases of the two protagonists, Josefina and her friend Leonor but not as influential in a third main character, Victoria Toro. Although the film includes other testimonies, the documentary pays special attention to the personal stories of these three women. As I will discuss next, their initial experiences as migrants are very similar but the effects of the migratory process are considerably different in each character.

It is not surprising that Josefina's story has been selected to lead the narrative of the documentary as her case is particularly outstanding. In a few years she changed from being a poor Spanish country girl to being a factory worker in Germany and soon becoming a union leader abroad. Her testimony shows that her maturity and development as a person were due to very hard working conditions that incited her to take action in order to change an unfair situation. In the interview Arribas reflects on the impact that the migrant experience had in Josefina's personal and professional identity, claiming that 'if she had stayed at her village, she would have probably been happier in her personal life, she would have had greater emotional

and family stability but she definitely wouldn't have been more than an illiterate country bumpkin (...) I don't think she would have become a union leader here'. In spite of her major achievements in Germany, Josefina's testimony is rather humble and does not present her actions as heroic. Her account, mostly told with a pensive facial expression, shows the anguish and exhaustion suffered throughout her adult life, which is reinforced by close-ups of her wrinkled visage, as illustrated in Figure 6.8.



Figure 6.8 Josefina in *El tren de la memoria*

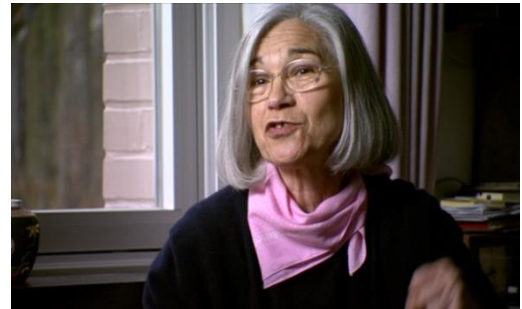


Figure 6.9 Leonor in *El tren de la memoria*

Leonor had a parallel experience to Josefina, as both of them were factory workers and then fought together for Spanish workers' rights in Germany. Little is explained about her background, but she seems to have had a more privileged situation in Spain than the other two protagonists and perhaps a better education. From her initial accounts, Leonor appears to be more aware of her condition as a migrant and the unfair treatment they received sometimes. For instance, she reports refusing to work underpaid extra hours: 'who refused to do them [extra hours]? I did, but I was an exception (...) because I became aware of my rights and at least I wanted to convince myself that I wasn't being so used'. Even when describing adverse circumstances, Leonor is able to relate a couple of funny anecdotes with a smile in her face, as shown in Figure 6.9. Overall, she is depicted as a much happier woman, who seems to be content with the German lifestyle. She appears to be very integrated in German culture as she is shown riding her bike around the city, doing her errands and interacting with German people, indicating thereby a sense of a

manifest transnational identity. Unlike most of the other migrants, she never mentions feeling nostalgic about Spain or expresses the wish to return in the future.

Victoria, in contrast, provides a very critical account about her migrant experience, emphasising the negative aspects of her stay including xenophobia and the language barrier. She specifically notes feeling discriminated against and patronised by German people. On one occasion she complains about the difficulties learning German since native speakers would simplify the language when talking to them. She also remembers a situation in which an old German lady addressed her and her friends as smelly foreigners while holding her nose, as she impersonates in Figure 6.10. Victoria contends with exasperation, 'we were young girls, nobody smelled'.



Figure 6.10 Victoria in *El tren de la memoria*

Victoria is portrayed at her house wearing comfortable clothes and surrounded by cardboard boxes since she is in the process of packing to finally return to Spain. She looks extremely excited about leaving Germany, giving the impression of not having had a good experience in that country. In fact, her very first words in the documentary, directed lovingly to her old mother who sits on a wheel chair, are 'are we going to Spain, my dear?' Only towards the end she shows some positive feelings for Nuremberg and talks about the friendships developed in that city with a big smile, confessing she will miss it all. Living in Germany for four decades does not appear to have transformed her Spanish identity or political awareness as much

as Leonor's or Josefina's, as this chapter will discuss later. It is clear, through her informal and spontaneous expression, that Victoria represents a lower social class as her discourse is not particularly articulate and she largely expresses herself with body language. Her testimony highlights the precarious conditions in the Spanish countryside at the time, without running water and electricity, and the insecurity of working in agriculture in a dry region, always weather dependent. Victoria's description and the accompanying black and white images, which seem to be from two or three decades earlier, help visualise the living and working conditions described by some protagonists in *Señora de*. The lack of opportunities in these underdeveloped regions in Spain compelled brave women, like Victoria, to leave their villages for the first time.

A fourth female character, Josefa, sheds some light into women related issues and the implications of migration for mothers. She addresses the hardship of being a migrant mother, as the heavy workload was incompatible with mothering tasks. Forced to send her children back to Spain with their grandmother, she explains with teary eyes, that her children would not recognise her as their mother and had an aggressive behaviour towards her. Ironically, Franco's early policy of motherhood, described by the interviewees in *Señora de*, has now been prioritised by an economic and expansion plan, adapting once more women's role to satisfy the country's needs. Josefa's moving testimony demonstrates the frustration and desolation experienced by many women in order to be able to provide for their families. She also makes an observation about the noticeable differences between German and Spanish women's habits. Many of them found it striking that a woman would be seen smoking in the streets or sitting alone at a bar having a beer, as in Spain it was inconceivable. This lack of independence and limited social life that women had in Spanish society at the time has been discussed throughout the analysis of several testimonies from *Señora de* in the first part of this chapter. The

following sections present a textual analysis of the migrants' testimonies combined with a discussion of the structural devices employed by the directors to juxtapose the migrants' version with that presented by Franco's regime.

Becoming a migrant

The migrant experience in the 1960s started at the train station. Throughout the entire documentary the train plays a very symbolic role as it represents the link between the past and the present. The train metaphorically connects two worlds, two historical periods and two mentalities. The documentary opens with an unidentified lady (Josefina) getting ready for a trip, packing her suitcase at home with winter clothes and an umbrella, and then arriving in Madrid's Atocha train station by taxi. The viewer, however, is still unaware of her destination. The following opening scenes, shot at a train station, are very significant as they intertwine current colour moving images of Josefina with old black and white footage, presenting a comparison between the conditions of travelling then and now. The lack of a voice-over or background music in these very first scenes accentuates the original sound of the old and the contemporary footage. This is aimed at emphasising the different social conditions at a train station in each period. For example, a contrast between the bustle and chaos of people at the station in the past with the orderliness of current trips can be perceived through both images and sound. Another noticeable difference between the two sets of footage is the type of luggage and the infrastructure at the stations. Figure 6.11 depicts how in the past suitcases, frequently made out of cardboard and tied tight with a rope, had to be carried on the shoulders up and down the stairs. Most people are shown carrying only one piece of luggage, indicating the hardship that was awaiting them (they are prospective migrants), as all their belongings would fit in one suitcase. In contrast, nowadays Josefina has a suitcase on wheels that she can easily pull around the

station, which in turn has been made more accessible for travellers with the incorporation of escalators, as illustrated in Figure 6.12.



Figure 6.11 Archival footage of a station in *El tren de la memoria*



Figure 6.12 Current footage of a station in *El tren de la memoria*

The continuous presence of a train on screen in the initial scenes, not only through moving images or photographs, but also through continuous rattling noises, metal squeaks and rumbling invites the viewer to join Josefina in this meaningful journey. Forty years ago Josefina embarked on this trip as a migrant, today she is doing it as a traveller. After this introduction, old black and white images of a train passing fast are displayed. The evocative film title (*The Memory Train*) appears for several seconds until the images swap suddenly into the colourful landscape that Josefina is seeing from the train. The journey to the past has begun. From now on the archival black and white footage is interspersed with the accounts of Josefina and the other eyewitnesses, and with the testimonies of several government officials or professionals, whose perception of migration differs strongly from that of migrants.

The inclusion of both archival and private material, including photographs and videos of the time, is aimed at supporting the migrants' narration. Photography, Castiello notes, is the most valuable documentary source for researchers and historians to document the phenomenon of Spanish economic migration in the 1960s.⁵⁴ Luckily for the directors, their protagonist, Josefina, had her own footage of

⁵⁴ An abundance of images of the time is available in archives and documentation centres, and many of these photographs have been compiled in several studies and have been exposed in exhibitions in Spain and Germany (Castiello, 2010, pp. 126-128).

the time in super 8 format, shot both in Spain and in Germany. Josefina's domestic videos add authenticity to her account and refute the official version of migration bragging about the wellbeing of migrants. Figure 6.13, for example, shows a young Josefina who looks worn out and concerned after having worked abroad for several years.



Figure 6.13 Young Josefina in *El tren de la memoria*

Undoubtedly, the use of real videos or photographs belonging to either the protagonists or historical archives reinforces the contrast with the sweetened and misleading version presented in Spain by the official No-Do newsreels. As shown in the documentary, a selection of the No-Do's staged images, usually accompanied by a manipulated discourse in the voice-over, portrays a folkloric and propagandistic vision of the migrant experience. This representation is remote from the interviewees' narrative. As explained in detail by Deveny, the documentary uses cross cutting in numerous examples to compare the migrants' personal accounts with the official version of migration by the organisers, or by the No-Do newsreels.⁵⁵ This juxtaposition exposes the viewer to two opposing versions of history (the official and the one related by the migrants), which had not been questioned before. However, as this analysis shows, the interviewees' testimonies have evidently more

⁵⁵ Deveny, 2012, pp. 15-19.

weight in the construction of the film narrative, as the documentary intends to portray the migrants' feelings and impressions and how this experience transformed their sense of identity.

The train trip and the chaotic arrival appear to have marked the migrants as the interviewees are able to provide a vivid recollection of how they experienced such events, emphasising their feelings of humiliation and fear. The testimonies describe their journey as an unpleasant experience and indicate the deficient state of the train. Victoria, for instance, remembers a very uncomfortable stinky train and feeling intimidated for being one of the few women travelling in it. The train trip, Leonor admits, was so humiliating that many people denied it, even though, she insists, everyone who came with a contract came on that type of trains. The testimonies' descriptions suggest that migrants were treated like merchandise that needed to be carried from one place to another in order to fulfil the country's financial needs of the time. A comparison with animal handling is made on several occasions, reminding the viewer of the animal analogies used by Ana and María in *Señora de*.

The archival images reflect the anxiety about the future in people's gazes, as they are unsure of what is expected of them in an unknown land; some looking scared like animals which are going to be taken to the abattoir.⁵⁶ For most of them it was the first time they left their hometowns and many did not even know where their destination (Germany) was located in the map, as Victoria stresses. This feeling of uncertainty is emphasised by the cross cutting of two sequences showing a lady in the past and Josefina looking through the train windows with pensive faces, as shown in Figures 6.14 and 6.15. Each frame faces opposite directions to stress the

⁵⁶ The opening archival images at the station, the director explains in the interview, which capture the faces and gazes of those Spaniards carrying suitcases, were filmed by an amateur cineaste in Barcelona, currently located in the film archives in Barcelona. The rest of the archival footage had to be sourced from foreign film archives in France and Germany, which was usually quite expensive.

different reasons for the journey; whereas the young lady's gaze denotes hope, Josefina has a tougher expression, which reveals her suffering and disappointment.



Figure 6.14 Female migrant in the sixties in *El tren de la memoria*



Figure 6.15 Josefina in the present in *El tren de la memoria*

The idea of being handled as goods or animals is further stressed with the protagonists' accounts about the arrival in Germany. After showing archival images of the overcrowded train station, as Figure 6.16 shows, Leonor provides a very detailed explanation about her feelings of embarrassment for being in such a degrading situation:

The arrival at that platform..., to me it was such an impression... look, I forgot about my parents, my siblings, I forgot about myself, because you couldn't believe it was real, it looked like a movie... That platform was covered with men mainly, some seating, some lying, groups, lots of suitcases, of cardboards, of everything. I don't know if it was an instant or a minute. I felt ashamed of myself, of seeing myself in such situation, and I thought: if my parents knew and saw where I am now, they would never forgive themselves for letting me come.

Josefina also explained in the media how getting on one of the special trains determined her new social status: 'In my town I was one more, loved by everyone, from a working-class family and used to working hard. But you get on a train and, suddenly, you become a migrant, and they have the right to give you a complex and

humiliate you'.⁵⁷ Her first feeling of being considered 'different' was instigated by the unwelcoming prejudiced words at the station, warning them in Spanish 'that anyone throwing things on the platforms or the line would be fined, the money to be docked from their wages'.



Figure 6.16 Archival images of a train station in *El tren de la memoria*

On several occasions, the interviewees report feeling treated in a similar way to how Jewish people were handled during the Second World War. Victoria remembers having to wear a piece of cardboard with a number and reflects on its meaning: 'They treated us like sheep and nobody realised it at the time. And years later, I said to myself: Goodness, just like with the Jews. With the numbers'. In contrast, Leonor's reaction to having to wear those numbers was to discourage people to do it as they were not 'sacks of potatoes'.

Following their arrival, the harsh everyday life is described by the eye-witnesses. According to all of them, their new lifestyle involved humiliating living conditions, compared with concentration camp-style huts, and a very intense workload, summarised as 'a donkey's life: eating to work and working to eat'. During a visit to

⁵⁷ Ricardo Aldarondo, 'El tren de la memoria destapa la «mentira» de la emigración de los 60', *El diario vasco*, 17 marzo 2007, <http://www.diariovasco.com/prensa/20070317/cultura/tren-memoria-destapa-mentira_20070317.html> [accessed 13 March 2013].

her old workplace, the Quelle factory, Josefina and other Spanish migrants, currently still working in Germany, describe the hard physical working conditions in long shifts, enhanced by the psychological pressure from home and at the workplace. While we are exposed to current images of people working on an assembly line, Josefina shares her feelings of insecurity when she was faced to do factory work for the first time in such a foreign environment with unfamiliar machinery. She remembers her work at the factory as exhausting and challenging, and emphasises the stressful environment created around for migrant workers: 'we were living in a kind of wonderful world, but everything was forbidden, we were guarded, and we were frisked on our way out to check that we were not taking anything with us'. The levels of stress were such that one day, Josefina relates, after a package containing chocolate bars fell over, she desperately opened it to share it with her co-workers.

The migrants' stress was aggravated by the limitation of only being able to renew work permits on a yearly basis, which hindered the prospects of staying and settling down. At the same time, this feeling of being in the country on a temporary basis, Leonor explains, gave them the strength to work and live under such conditions and resist one more year. This vicious cycle of working hard, scrimping and saving to return quickly, referred to as the 'emigrant syndrome' by priest Torga (a Spanish priest living in Nuremberg), prevented migrants from enjoying themselves and aiming to integrate in German society. In addition, the challenge of coming to terms with a culture shock was intensified by the extreme cold climate and the language barrier, which prevented the appreciation of German culture.

Being faced with common difficulties developed the solidarity between migrants, as the documentary portrays. Most importantly, they shared the same feelings of solitude, uprooting and nostalgia, to which viewers with similar experiences of migration might be able to relate to. For this reason, the migrants' support for each

other was essential to survive and carry on. In some cases, Josefina explains, her illiterate compatriots needed assistance to read and write the letters from their families, which contained very private information. Josefina's camaraderie went a step forward, as will be explained in the next section, because after a few years she was providing help to all Spanish migrants at a national level.

Becoming a union leader

The next part of the film focuses on the unforeseen new direction that Josefina's and Leonor's lives took as a result of becoming politically active. Arribas comments that the story of these two friends was particularly exemplary and exceptional because 'everything was pretty bad but at a certain point they became aware and change things, and fought for it'. In spite of the continuous intense workload and the dire living arrangements, their accounts demonstrate that Josefina and Leonor fought tirelessly to improve their own and their workmates' situation. Even after all these years, the testimonies of both women are highly enthusiastic and show their high level of commitment to improve migrants' conditions.

Josefina became aware of her own working rights after being involved in a workplace accident in which her colleague lost two fingers. This daunting experience initially made her fall into deep depression but soon motivated her to fight against the extreme working and living conditions that migrants had been enduring for years. She discovered the existence of unions and the organisation Juventud Obrera Católica, JOC (*Catholic Working Youth*), which provided information about human and working rights. In 1968, a remarkable year of protests and revolutions throughout Europe, as stressed by Josefina, she became the JOC representative for all Spaniards in Germany. In her new role she was responsible for organising strikes, conferences and meetings aimed at improving workers' rights. One of the main goals of this organisation was to raise awareness of the working class since ignorance made Spanish people accept work situations that Germans would not. All

these tasks required Josefina to resign at the factory, provoking in her feelings of excitement but also of guilt, she confesses, because her family would receive less money. However, Josefina's appreciation for JOC and its impact on her development as a syndicalist is clear in her discourse: 'we had more freedom to meet up than in Spain. And we took advantage of it. JOC was like a popular university. It assisted us to become mature and committed people'.

Leonor, in contrast, recognises not being aware of how she became involved in the union fight, but argues that the need to solve conflicts and injustices demanded that someone get ready for the fight: 'you become a bit of a leader, or they make you one'. As a result, she started to defend cases and help her compatriots with her only working tool 'die Menschliche Gesetz/The human law'. Images of demonstrations and mass meetings at the time supported with protest songs by singer songwriter and poet Pablo Guerrero in the background are intertwined with their passionate accounts. These images are used to show that their actions to raise political awareness were part of major political initiatives that mobilised many people. The background music with libertarian lyrics adds a feeling of nostalgia for a revolutionary period in which people strived for freedom and social justice.

Other testimonies assist in explaining the successful outcomes of the strikes. Josefina's old workmate Pedro Serrano, who has a prominent secondary role in the documentary, and his wife, Virginia Sánchez, explain that the collective refusal to work led to the building of a 'proper residence for human beings'. Earlier in the film, they described the atrocious living conditions in barracks designated for animals. In a later scene, Pedro is depicted remembering this period of fight and strikes with a smile of pride while playing domino with his friends. However, it is important to note that the documentary clarifies with other testimonies that not every migrant got involved in the political fight. Priest Torga made it very clear that there was only a minority of people committed to raising awareness in other people. Victoria, for

example, admits not knowing what communism was at the time but that she would attend meetings following the most popular tendency because she knew that it meant something important.

Becoming a returned migrant

The return to Spain was unexpectedly the hardest part of the migration process for most people. Often such events provoked instability and confrontations with family members. The international oil crisis in 1973, which resulted in more than 700,000 unemployed German workers, forced many migrants to go back to their home countries in the mid 1970s. The lack of understanding by their families and friends complicated their re-adaptation in their own country, as they were different people but Spain had also started to change. Motivated by exhaustion and a fragile health that did not improve in spite of seven operations, Josefina decided to return to Spain after working abroad for sixteen years. This decision, however, seems to have had detrimental repercussions in her life as her testimony reveals great disappointment. She admits feeling the lack of gratitude by her family upon her return, whereas in Germany she restricted herself to buy a chocolate bar to avoid postponing her return or sending less money back home. Footage, already in colour, of migrants returning by train in the late 1970s is shown, while she confesses her frustration about feeling financially and socially disadvantaged towards those who stayed: 'It's too hard, especially when you go back and see family members or neighbours who didn't emigrate and precisely because you left there were job vacancies here and now they are civil servants...or have good jobs. They're better off than you or any emigrant'.

The recognition for their great financial contribution to the country, which allowed Spain's recovery, did not take place either at a national level. As Josefina laments, 'I realised how important we were. They looked down on us, ignored us, we were marginalised but we were important to their economy'. Therefore, the success of

migrants was measured by their savings or their material assets. Josefina stresses the importance for many migrants of bringing back a brand car, a big TV or German curtains, since they could not bring anything else that would show improvement. Many people, Leonor explains, would unfortunately embellish or lie about their migrant experiences to avoid acknowledging the humiliation they had to undergo: 'There was a lot of denial. People who could hardly read or write would say that they hadn't come over to work but to learn German. It was pathetic. But it was a defence mechanism in order to be able to survive'. For this reason, this documentary plays an important role in transforming the collective memory of a positive and successful economic migration, constructed by the financial interest of Franco's regime and the shame of migrants. By providing migrants an opportunity to admit the actual circumstances of migration, and by showing real footage of the time, the film unfolds a debate that might allow other migrants to validate their experiences.

Recuperating a transnational identity

From the beginning, the parallel portrayal of past and present contributes to the recuperation of Josefina's transnational identity and the acknowledgement of her migrant experience. Upon her arrival in Nuremberg forty years later, Josefina is picked up by Leonor in a taxi. The taxi scene, it can be argued, begins the reestablishment of Josefina's disregarded transnational identity that did not have a place back in Spain. The interaction between the taxi driver and the two women is highly empowering for Josefina for many reasons. Firstly, this time they are not treated as migrants but as travellers. Secondly, catching a taxi denotes a higher financial and social status. Thirdly, the taxi driver praises Josefina's good command of the German language, which was overlooked and worthless in Spain. This is the only scene where Josefina speaks in German, demonstrating that she is still very fluent. While they pass the Quelle factory, as shown in Figure 6.17, she becomes excited and explains with pride and a smile to the taxi driver about her stay in

Germany. This amicable conversation contributes considerably to the creation of a positive image of her migrant identity as Josefina speaks about her experience without feelings of shame.



Figure. 6.17 Leonor and Josefina passing by the Quelle factory in *El tren de la memoria*

The consolidation of her transnational identity, and by extension her migrant identity, takes place in the following scenes, specifically during her visit to the Quelle factory (which has already been discussed) and the reunion with old Spanish friends at the end of Sunday mass. Particularly relevant is the reencounter with her friend Pedro Serrano, because it shows that men and women had the same social status; they belonged to the working class. They talk to each other as old workmates who were exposed to the similar intense working conditions and shared common experiences of struggle. It is unlikely that this relationship of equality and collegiality would have developed in Spain at that time, when the gender differences were still quite substantial, as exemplified by the testimonies in *Señora de*. After her visit to the Quelle factory, Josefina is depicted walking around Nuremberg at the present time, while reflecting on the migrant lifestyle and extremely saving-oriented mentality. This trip and her time in current Nuremberg have allowed her to understand that at the time it was impossible to appreciate how great Nuremberg was due to their young age and their circumstances. The contemporary beautiful images of the city,

showing a relaxing and peaceful place, contrast strongly with the migrants' testimonies of suffering and isolation. Josefina finishes her reflection concluding that 'we lived in another world'.

This strong sense of a transnational identity is also perceived in most migrants who decided to stay, as they managed to keep their national identity but after several decades they have also embraced attributes of German culture. The maintenance of Spanish culture and traditions is depicted in several scenes, for instance, they go weekly to Sunday mass in Spanish, or men meet at a bar to play cards and domino. The duality of the migrant identity is addressed by Juan Chacón, a migrant who returned to Spain after thirty-seven years, describing very accurately the first generation of migrants as 'the "split-in-two generation" because their heads are there and their minds are here. Their bodies are there and their hearts are here a little'. A very good example of these mixed feelings is portrayed by Victoria, since she represents those migrants who always longed to return to Spain after having saved enough. Now, she is moving to Madrid to fulfil her mother's dream of returning to Spain before she dies. However, her discourse also reveals an appreciation for Nuremberg that also points to a transnational identity, although to a lesser extent than the other interviewees: 'A part of me stays, but another part leaves'. Other migrants like Virginia admit loving Spain but not wanting to move from Germany, arguing that her youth memories are from the latter country, where she was never hungry unlike in Spain.

Josefina's trip concludes where it started, at the train station. The end song 'El emigrante', also by Pablo Guerrero, starts playing while Josefina is saying goodbye to Leonor. The lyrics –a poetic description of migration– start exactly after the train departs and Josefina is portrayed looking pensive through the window. This end

presents an invitation to the viewers to reconsider their views and prejudices on migrants. One day, the film is warning, they could get on a similar train:⁵⁸

One day everything changed:

New landscapes and the same pains.

The hands have corns, but not from ears

And the heart without wine, how lonely it feels.

Conclusion

Chapter Six has demonstrated how twenty-first century women directors use interview-based documentary to empower silenced generations of women whose female identities were shaped by Francoist discourse and society. Both documentaries pay homage to those women who were essential for the financial and population recovery of Spain. The protagonists in *Señora de*, victims of a patriarchal and religious dictatorship for at least four decades, have been given the voice that Franco's regime suppressed in order to provide a reflective account of women's daily life during the dictatorship. Their testimonies conclude that they were not allowed to pursue professional aspirations, receive an education or enjoy their sexuality, but the documentary enables them to realise their attainments and articulate their current dreams.

In a similar manner, *El tren de la memoria* provided migrants with the first opportunity to speak up publicly and uncover the official version of the economic migration to Germany in the 1960s. Through the voices of female migrants, led by Josefina, the documentary reveals the sacrifice that many women made for their families and the country. In addition, Josefina's trip to Nuremberg and her reuniting with her old friend Leonor allows her to appreciate her valuable work as a migrant

⁵⁸ In fact, the documentary's warning has become a reality. In the second decade of the twenty-first century thousands of young Spanish people are compelled to migrate to Europe again due to the global financial crisis.

and to be proud of her achievements as a union leader. The personal stories and reflective accounts of these ordinary women, I argued, present counter-heroic female portrayals which show personal strength, spirit of overcoming and, in most cases, lack of resentment. Finally, my analysis showed that both films greatly contribute to the cinematic reconstruction of Spain's historical memory by incorporating the marginalised perspective of female eye-witnesses and by challenging the official memory.

Conclusion

This thesis believes that Spanish cinema's depiction of history and society is only partial, due to the underrepresentation of women in front of and, especially, behind the camera. Despite the limited number of women-authored cinematic representations of Spanish history, this thesis identified and examined emerging portrayals of twentieth century Spain directed by women from 2001 to 2010. These films reconstruct disregarded aspects of Spain's contested past and incorporate those aspects into the country's collective memory; in doing so they help build a feminine version of history. I argued that the work of Helena Taberna, Rosa Vergés, Patricia Ferreira, Carla Subirana, Susana Koska, and directing team Marta Arribas/ Ana Pérez called for a different way of thinking about the role of Spanish women in society and their active engagement in making history over the twentieth century. Through the integration of textual and formal film analysis and interview material with the filmmakers, this thesis produced new knowledge in regards to cinematic representations of the Spanish Civil War, Franco's dictatorship and the Transition period.

Chapter One provided a historical overview of women directors' evolution within the Spanish film industry, highlighting the unprecedented increase of female production since the 1990s and concluding with the challenges that women directors still face in the twenty-first century. Drawing on face-to-face interviews with the filmmakers, the chapter demonstrated that, in spite of considerable advances in the last two decades, in general Spanish women directors still encounter many obstacles in their attempts to project onto the screen their particular perspective of the world. This became particularly relevant in the context of the historical component of this thesis as, in most cases, Spanish cinema does not accommodate the point of view of women as historical subjects. This chapter concluded that in the new century three

generations of women directors have found a collective voice through the association CIMA to achieve two main goals: a more realistic cinematic representation of women and equal working conditions and opportunities in the film industry.

Chapter Two began with an overview of the politics of memory regarding the Spanish Civil War and its impact on the construction of a national identity in the relevant historical period in the twentieth century. After discussing the impact of the 1977 Amnesty Law, the subsequent pact of oblivion and the 2007 Law of Historical Memory, I outlined how Spanish people dealt with the traumatic and repressive past through cultural production and, in particular, through films. My review of post-Franco cinema dealing with the past, however, brought to light the limited representation of women's experiences and remembrances of twentieth century Spain from the perspective of women directors and female eyewitnesses.

Chapters Three to Six examined eight feature films, comprising three fiction films and five documentaries, which present a more truthful view of Spanish society and historical events as they incorporate a feminine narrative. In Chapter Three the exploration of the only two women-authored fiction films set in the Spanish Civil War showed that both representations of the conflict deal with unexplored themes and present a conciliatory end. With the aim of denouncing the involvement of the Catholic Church supporting the Nationalist side, *La buena nueva* (Taberna, 2008) portrays the internal struggle of a Catholic priest embroiled in a fratricidal war that went against his religious and humanitarian principles. My analysis called special attention to the priest's commitment to paying homage to the war victims with a dignified ceremony and ensuring that their sacrifice would be remembered by future generations. The chapter also elucidates how the director pays tribute to ordinary women, in particular the Republican widows, rarely seen in films about the war. *Iris* (Vergés, 2004), the second film studied in this chapter, portrays the Civil War and its

aftermath amongst the civil population through the lenses of a woman determined not to forget but to keep alive the spirit of her disappeared husband. I claimed that her reconciliation with the traumatic past is achieved by the metaphorical exhumation of her memories through her grandson and her daughter, who was condemned to silence even before her birth. In addition, this chapter ascertained that, although both films denounce how women suffered physical and psychological wounds, they highlight how solidarity amongst women assisted them and their children to survive in the rearguard.

Chapter Four contrasted two family portraits that, despite using different genres and styles, capture the recent curiosity and the imperative of the war's grandchildren to re-assess the past and their own identity. The analyses of the melodrama *Para que no me olvides* (Ferreira, 2005) and the autobiographical documentary *Nadar* (Subirana, 2008) established the urgency of collecting the few remaining first-hand testimonies and preserving their memory. I argued that both directors represent the past in metaphorical ways in order to provoke a wider reconsideration of its impact in three different generations currently coexisting in Spanish society. The chapter also pointed out how the transgenerational transmission of memory is central to both films, with *Para que no me olvides* signalling the relevance to younger generations of knowing their past and *Nadar* amply demonstrating the terrible consequences of not doing so. Aimed at recovering the silenced stories of war survivors, both films emphasise the advantages of reconciling generational memories so that a nation can accept its contested past and learn from history.

Women directors' strong interest in recuperating female testimonies was further underlined in the next two chapters, each of them examining two interview-based documentaries. Chapter Five analysed Koska's documentaries, which depict a personal reflection on women's socio-political history in twentieth century Spain in a combination of historical document, road movie and personal search. I claimed that

her debut film, *Mujeres en pie de guerra* (2004), renders a contemplative –but not less confrontational- portrayal of women’s experiences of war and resistance which transmits their suffering but, most importantly, their enthusiasm for fighting for a better world. The discussion of her second film, *Vindicación* (2009), portraying women’s feminist fight in the transition period to reclaim the rights revoked during the dictatorship, revealed that certain issues (i.e., abortion law and the work/family balance) remain unresolved in the new century. The examination of Koska’s personal approach used in her two films indicated that the interaction of the director with the interviewees in combination with music and several poetic elements accomplished a more heroic and, at the same time, humane representation of these women. As well as depicting the renewed interest by the third generation to revision the past, both documentaries venerate the memory of all women who fought for a democratic and equalitarian society.

The final chapter proved how, by giving voice to two silenced generations of women, *Señora de* (Ferreira, 2009) and *El tren de la memoria* (Arribas and Pérez, 2004) not only empower and pay homage to the interviewees but also challenge the Francoist official memory. My analysis of these two documentaries shed new light into the impact of the domestic role imposed by Francoism over several generations of women as well as the consequences for young women of the arranged migration scheme in the 1960s. I argued that the portrayals (which I qualified as ‘counter-heroic’) of ordinary women show how these determined housewives and migrants, who initially are presented as not having much merit, made a great contribution to Spain’s population and financial recovery at different stages of Franco’s dictatorship.

As I have noted earlier on, the analysis of the selected films confirmed that the role of testimonies is essential for the reconstruction of women’s history and the recovery of a feminine memory. Although the five documentaries present divergent stylistic approaches, this study stressed the directors’ endeavours to give full prominence to

the eyewitnesses' narratives, even when experts or the filmmakers themselves (like in the cases of Subirana or Koska) appear on screen. Similarly, the documentaries that convey a more journalistic style, such as *El tren de la memoria* or *Señora de*, avoid a narrator to foreground the interviewees' accounts. For this reason, this thesis maintains that the cinematic reconstruction of all these suppressed stories constitutes an invaluable legacy of Spain's cultural memory, especially since many eye-witnesses are now deceased (Rosa Laviña, Sara Berenguer, Josefina Cembrero and Subirana's grandmother). Overall, it can be concluded that these films shape our understanding of the present by highlighting that women were not only victims of history but also social actors whose participation –whether from the rearguard, prison, home, their workplace or another country– was paramount to achieve the formation and evolution of current democratic Spain.

As well as producing new knowledge in regards to the representations and concerns of these women directors, the study of all eight films under a framework focusing on memory and identity showed how their narratives share similar features, complement each other, and, overall, construct a feminine collective identity. Some topics such as the changing role of women in society and the relevance of female friendship and solidarity among women in the face of unfavourable circumstances were depicted in both fiction films and documentaries. My analysis also revealed how traumatic historical events can have an impact on ordinary people's lives several decades later and suggested the need for more films to depict the underlying relationship between past and present. As demonstrated by my findings, the selected films show how twenty-first century women directors propose new forms of accessing the past, which tackle uncharted topics, foreground female agency, present innovative ways of gender representation and pursue a more egalitarian and humanitarian reconstruction of history.

Remarkably, when I started my investigation only a few articles had been written about the films analysed in this dissertation. However, through the writing of this thesis, the scholarly attention to these films and documentaries has augmented considerably, as validated by the broad range of secondary sources that reinforce the findings of my film analysis at present. It is positive and encouraging that so much attention is being placed on these filmic representations and also that different perspectives are being explored so that a more complete understanding of recent Spanish history can be gained. This thesis corroborates that more perspectives of the war and postwar periods are needed to create a collective memory that is all-embracing and exhaustive, and above all, that includes the feminine perspective.

With the exception of the already mentioned short film *Héroes sin armas* (Arribas/Pérez) and Vergés' segment on Catalan female poet Ferida Arrel, none of the directors interviewed for this study have continued making feature films depicting Spain's historical memory. Nevertheless, in the second decade of the twenty-first century a different cohort of women cineastes show interest in reconstructing women's history in a Spanish context both through fiction films as well as documentaries. Two good examples are the TV movie *Clara Campoamor: la mujer olvidada* (Laura Mañá, 2011) and the documentary *Las constituyentes* (Oliva Acosta 2011). Both films depict the involvement of women in writing an equalitarian democratic constitution in 1931 and in 1978, respectively. Mañá's concern to represent important female historical figures is constant as proven by her next TV movie, *Concepción Arenal: la visitadora de cárceles* (2014), which concerns the Galician feminist lawyer's struggle to improve the living conditions of women's prisons in the nineteenth century. Other remarkable TV productions, conceived and written by the current president of CIMA, Virginia Yagüe, are the popular drama series set in the 1920s, *La Señora* (2008-2010) and the two-season spin-off *14 de abril. La República* (2011), with the second season to be screened in 2015.

At the centre of recent productions lie not only the figures of pioneering and influential females, but also the stories about anonymous women whose valuable contributions to Spanish history deserve to be rescued. For instance, Goya award-winning documentary *Las maestras de la República* (Pilar Pérez Solano, 2013) pays homage to the Republican female teachers and their ideological and pedagogical legacy. Although not exclusively centred on women, the documentary *Barcelona, abans que el temps ho esborri* (Mireia Ros, 2010) depicts strong female entrepreneurs in Barcelona who contributed to the industrial revolution in Catalonia at the beginning of the twentieth century. The cases of Mañá, Ros, Yagüe and Pérez Solano –all of them prolific professionals in different areas of the film industry– demonstrate how, nowadays, due to the lack of financial means, women cineastes are able to develop their careers working for TV or making documentaries. They have shown with their latest films that they are pioneers in exploring overlooked themes and in using innovative aesthetics.

As a result of my study, and taking into account the above mentioned new productions, further research might well be conducted on other women-authored films that represent Spanish contemporary history and foreground women's voices. I have identified three new avenues that deserve further exploration: a) Films that depict different historical periods, in particular the Second Republic or the beginning of the twentieth century are quite rare, and their study is still in its infancy; b) There is no doubt that the documentary deserves further attention in future studies due to the popularity and growth of the non-fiction genre in the twenty-first century and the fact that many established women directors are making work in this medium; c) TV series and movies are also of interest as a point of further research, as the ones produced until now are a great addition to the recuperation of memory and are able to reach wider audiences than films can. Certainly, all three of these areas deserve scholarly attention as women's media practices undergo change.

Conclusion

Throughout this research, I have been immersed on a self-growth journey, which has consolidated my knowledge of twentieth century Spain as well as the history of Spanish cinema but, most importantly, has aroused a new interest in my own family background. When I was a little girl, my grandmother Rosa used to tell me, 'you are so lucky, you have been born when all goats produce milk'. Years later, through the writing of this thesis, the wise words of my illiterate grandmother, inscrutable to me at the time, became part of the rationale and motivation for this project. Despite being only two generations apart, our education, opportunities and views of the world are immensely different. This investigation has raised multiple questions about my identity and my place in history as an educated Spanish woman in my middle thirties. It is clear to me now that, as a member of the war grandchildren's generation, I have joined the social movement to recover and rewrite disregarded aspects of the collective memory of Spain's contested past. Having done so, I have created a thesis aimed at shedding new light on the varied and original representations of the Spanish Civil War, Franco's dictatorship and the Transition period by twenty-first century women directors. My analysis demonstrated that these directors' portrayals and interpretations of the past –inspired by both historical research and/or actual testimonies– contribute to the country's collective memory by incorporating the commonly marginalised perspective of women. On a personal level, this thesis is my contribution to write back to history, to thank and revere the memory of all those women who have made it possible that nowadays 'all goats produce milk'.

Appendices

Appendix A

Year	Director	Film	Genre
2001 (6)	Ana Díez Mónica Laguna Eva Lesmes Luna (María Lidón) Manané Rodríguez Maite Ruiz de Austri	<i>Algunas chicas doblan las piernas cuando hablan</i> <i>Juego de Luna</i> <i>El Palo</i> <i>Stranded</i> <i>Los pasos perdidos</i> <i>La leyenda del Unicornio</i>	Drama Drama Comedy Sci-Fiction Drama Animated
2002 (8)	Ana Díez Daniela Fejerman/Inés París Patricia Ferreira Yolanda García Serrano Chus Gutiérrez Julia Montejo Mercedes Segovia Nuria Villazán	<i>Galíndez</i> <i>A mi madre le gustan las mujeres</i> <i>El alquimista impaciente</i> <i>Hasta aquí hemos llegado</i> <i>Poniente</i> <i>Sin retorno</i> <i>El estado de Florida contra JJ Ramírez</i> <i>Machín, toda una vida</i>	Documentary Comedy Thriller Comedy Drama Drama Documentary Documentary
2003 (8)	Dunia Ayaso Icíaí Bolláin Isabel Coixet Ángeles González-Sinde Laura Mañá Silvia Munt María Ripoll Helena Taberna	<i>Descongélate</i> <i>Te doy mis ojos</i> <i>Mi vida sin mí</i> <i>La suerte dormida</i> <i>Palabras encadenadas</i> <i>Elena Dimitrievna Diakonova (Gala)</i> <i>Utopía</i> <i>Extranjeras</i>	Comedy Drama Drama Drama Thriller Documentary Thriller Documentary
2004 (10)	Mercedes Álvarez Marta Arribas/Ana Pérez Marta Batllebó-Coll Susana Koska Luna (María Lidón) Teresa de Pelegrí Silvia Quer Gracia Querejeta Pilar Ruiz Gutiérrez Rosa Vergés	<i>El cielo gira</i> <i>El tren de la memoria</i> <i>Seigné (Julia Berkówitz)</i> <i>Mujeres en pie de guerra</i> <i>Yo, puta</i> <i>Seres Queridos</i> <i>Febrero</i> <i>Héctor</i> <i>Los nombre de Alicia</i> <i>Iris</i>	Documentary Documentary Drama Documentary Drama Comedy Drama Drama Drama Drama
2005 (11)	Elisabet Cabeza Isabel Coixet Daniela Fejerman/Inés París Patricia Ferreira Chus Gutiérrez Laura Mañá Elena Medina Ana Murugarren Ariadna Pujol Nely Reguera Lola Salvador	<i>La doble vida del faquir</i> <i>La vida secreta de las palabras</i> <i>Semen (Una historia de amor)</i> <i>Para que no me olvides</i> <i>El calentito</i> <i>Morir en San Hilario</i> <i>Cambia de vida, el viaje de Xixón Sound</i> <i>Esta no es la vida privada de Javier Krahe</i> <i>Aguaviva</i> <i>Muxia, a ferida</i> <i>La niebla en las palmeras</i>	Documentary Drama Comedy Drama Comedy Comedy Documentary Documentary Documentary Documentary Documentary

2006 (9)	Arantxa Aguirre Lola Barrera Mireia Gabilondo Lola Guerrero Ione Hernández Luna (María Lidón) Lupe Pérez García María Ripoll Mireia Ros	<i>Hécuba un sueño de pasión</i> <i>¿Qué tienes debajo del sombrero?</i> <i>Enséñame el camino Isabel</i> <i>El crimen de una novia</i> <i>Uno por ciento, esquizofrenia</i> <i>Moscow Zero</i> <i>Diario argentino</i> <i>La vida en 65 minutos</i> <i>El triunfo</i>	Documentary Documentary Comedy Drama Documentary Thriller Documentary Drama Drama
2007 (12)	Olivia Acosta/Elena Ortega María Mercedes Alfonso Roser Aguilar Icía Bollaín Judith Colell Estela Ilárraz Mabel Lozano Inés París Gracia Querejeta Azucena Rodríguez Manané Rodríguez Lucinda Torre	<i>Reyita</i> <i>El amor se mueve</i> <i>Lo mejor de mí</i> <i>Mataharis</i> <i>53 días de invierno</i> <i>Próxima estación</i> <i>Voces (contra la trata de mujeres)</i> <i>Miguel y William</i> <i>7 mesas de billar francés</i> <i>Atlas de geografía humana</i> <i>Un cuento para Olivia</i> <i>Resistencia</i>	Documentary Drama Drama Drama Drama Documentary Documentary Comedy Drama Drama Drama Documentary
2008 (16)	Dunia Ayaso Irene Cardona Bacas Natalia Díaz Candela Figueira/Maitena Muruzábal Ángeles González-Sinde Susí Gozalvo Chus Gutiérrez Gabriela/Sally Gutiérrez Dewar Belén Macías Silvia Munt Ana Rodríguez Rosell Lilian Rosado Maite Ruiz de Austri Carla Subirana Helena Taberna María Pilar Villalain	<i>Los años desnudos (clasificada S)</i> <i>Un novio para Yasmina</i> <i>Rompe el día</i> <i>Nevando voy</i> <i>Una palabra tuya</i> <i>Zhao</i> <i>Retorno a Hansala</i> <i>Tapólogo</i> <i>El patio de mi cárcel</i> <i>Pretextos</i> <i>Espera Fati</i> <i>La mala</i> <i>Animal Channel</i> <i>Nadar</i> <i>La buena nueva</i> <i>El canto del loco-Personas (la película)</i>	Drama Comedy Documentary Drama Drama Drama Drama Documentary Drama Drama Documentary Drama Animation Documentary Drama Documentary
2009 (25)	Arantxa Aguirre Regina Álvarez Marta Arribas/Ana Pérez Dunia Ayaso Ana M ^a Bofarull Elisabet Cabeza Isabel Coixet Mar Coll Ana Rosa Diego Ana Díez Sonia Escolano Daniela Fejerman Mercedes Fernández Martorell Patricia Ferreira Alicia Garajalde Etxebertz Aitzpea Goenaga Lucía Herrera Laura Mañá Meritxell Nicolau Isona Passola	<i>El esfuerzo y el ánimo</i> <i>Gitanos de Buenos Aires</i> <i>Cómicos</i> <i>La isla interior</i> <i>Notes al peu</i> <i>Máscaras</i> <i>Mapa de los sonidos de Tokio</i> <i>Tres días con la familia</i> <i>Héctor y Bruno</i> <i>Paisito</i> <i>Myna se va</i> <i>7 minutos</i> <i>¿No quieres saber por qué las matan? Por nada</i> <i>Señora de</i> <i>El secret de la lluna</i> <i>Secretos de cocina</i> <i>L'escaezu. Recuerdos del 37</i> <i>Ni dios, ni patrón, ni marinero</i> <i>Chus Lago: sola ante el hielo</i> <i>Cataluña-Espanya</i>	Documentary Documentary Documentary Drama Documentary Documentary Drama Drama Drama Drama Drama Drama Comedy Documentary Documentary Family film Comedy Documentary Drama Documentary

	Dolores Payás Antonia San Juan Pilar Távora Anna Sanmartí Sandra Serna	<i>¡Mejor que nunca!</i> <i>Tú eliges</i> <i>Mi madre amadísima</i> <i>La tierra habitada</i> <i>La estación del olvido</i>	Comedy Comedy Docudrama Documentary Drama
2010 (19)	Mercedes Álvarez Anna María Bofarull Icíaí Bolláin Judith Colell Helena Taberna Arantza Ibarra Gemma Larrégola/Clara Vinardell Mabel Lozano Juana Macías Laia Manresa Laura Mañá Maidier Oleada Assumpta Rodríguez Manané Rodríguez Mireia Ros Lilian Rosado González Maite Ruiz de Austri Merce Solé Viñas Elena Trapé	<i>Mercado de futuros</i> <i>Hammada</i> <i>También la lluvia</i> <i>Elisa K</i> <i>Nagore</i> <i>Zigortzaileak (Los castigadores)</i> <i>Menores: infancia en riesgo</i> <i>Las sabias de la tribu</i> <i>Planes para mañana</i> <i>Morir de día</i> <i>La vida empieza hoy</i> <i>Amaren Ideia</i> <i>Globalización</i> <i>Memorias rotas (La balada del comandante moreno)</i> <i>Barcelona, abans que el temps ho esborri</i> <i>Donde el olor del mar no llega</i> <i>El tesoro del rey Midas</i> <i>Horizonte</i> <i>Blog</i>	Documentary Documentary Drama Drama Documentary Comedy Animation Documentary Drama Documentary Comedy Documentary Documentary Documentary Documentary Drama Animation Documentary Drama

Appendix B

Interview with Inés París

(26 July 2012)

Acabas de dejar ahora la presidencia de CIMA, Asociación de cineastas y de medios audiovisuales en España, de la cual has estado a cargo durante seis años. Haciendo balance, ¿cuáles son los logros más destacados que ha conseguido la asociación?

Yo diría que básicamente poner sobre la mesa un problema en el que nadie había pensado nunca, es decir, la ausencia de mujeres en los puestos directivos del audiovisual en España. Este era un tema que dentro de toda la problemática del cine y la televisión nunca se había ni considerado, y nosotras hemos conseguido que se haya convertido en un tema importante, que además ha transformado incluso la legislación y del que ahora son conscientes casi todas las instituciones y una parte importante de la sociedad. El otro gran logro ha sido unir a todas las mujeres del audiovisual con un objetivo común más allá de las diferencias de sector. La profesión del cine es una profesión muy parcelada donde los intereses están muy divididos, los productores son una cosa, y los distribuidores y los guionistas o los directores otra. Y aquí de pronto hemos encontrado un terreno de trabajo común. En seis años hemos pasado de ser de catorce o quince directoras, que constituíamos el núcleo inicial de CIMA, a casi trescientas mujeres del audiovisual.

¿Y no es necesario ser directora, puede ser cualquier otra profesión relacionada con el cine?

Cuando empezamos el único criterio que sí teníamos claro era que tenía que ser detrás de la cámara. Pensábamos en las directoras, las guionistas, las productoras, que básicamente son los puestos donde no había nadie, en todas las técnicas, sobre todo decíamos al principio directivas, pensábamos en las jefas de equipo y pensábamos mucho también en el criterio de profesionales. A partir de ahí esto empezó a cambiar un poco. En los dos últimos años ya decidimos que no solo de detrás de la cámara, que las actrices compartían gran parte de nuestras inquietudes, de hecho pedían estar con nosotras. Entonces también se dio entrada a las actrices en la asociación.

Al tiempo comprobamos que entre los sectores que más interés demostraban por lo que estábamos haciendo, eran más activas además y aportaban un montón, era

gente joven que estaba empezando su carrera profesional. Y decidimos que ellas también estuvieran. En un principio decidimos evaluar la profesionalidad a través de la producción, al menos que tuviera un corto. Hoy en día con los nuevos medios digitales casi todo el mundo tiene un corto. Entonces esa vía de entrada también la hemos permitido. En quienes al principio no pensamos mucho y que luego han sido esenciales en la asociación, aunque a veces en un segundo término pero ayudando un montón, han sido las universitarias y las teóricas que hacen teoría del cine y del feminismo. Ellas también han sido muy importantes. Y además las hay en España y fuera de España, en EEUU.

Una de mis preguntas está relacionada precisamente con la investigación, ¿piensas que la investigación académica favorece la labor de las directoras?

Muchísimo, muchísimo. Para nosotras fue una de las grandes sorpresas. En primer lugar, porque nos da dimensión, nos da importancia, incluso nos da existencia a veces. Cuando de pronto nadie te hace caso en tu propio país y tú descubres que en una universidad americana resulta que hay un congreso en el que se habla de nosotras, de las cineastas españolas, pues es una gratificación enorme. Nos salva digamos del ninguneo.

¿Hubo uno en Massachusetts, no?

Sí, hubo uno en Massachusetts este año por ejemplo.

¿Cómo fue esa conferencia?

Pues muy, muy interesante. Fue organizado por la teórica Barbara Zecchi. Hacía unos años ella ya me había escrito una carta muy elogiosa comentando que en España se había producido un curioso cambio con respecto a las cineastas: hacía diez años incluso las propias cineastas evitaban declararse feministas, como si las fueran a llamar brujas, y, en general, no tenían un criterio de género, puesto que en lo que insistía era en “somos iguales que nuestros compañeros varones”. Este era un discurso que intentaba, por supuesto, reivindicar la misma capacidad, pero que no se había detenido a reflexionar sobre las dificultades en el acceso a determinados puestos, hasta qué punto determina tu carrera profesional el hecho de ser mujer. Y esto ahora existe. Es un movimiento importantísimo encabezado por profesionales que no existe nada más que en Women in Film and Television y que en Europa apenas existía. Por lo tanto, lo han contemplado con mucho interés. Y luego para nosotras todas aquellas mujeres que nos han aportado capacidad de teorización han sido fundamentales también. Esto pasó ya en España con un

proyecto de investigación encabezado principalmente por Fátima Arranz, Pilar Aguilar y Pilar Pardo. Fátima Arranz ha sido la directora del proyecto. Y Pilar Aguilar habla de los contenidos, lo cual obviamente nos interesa muchísimo. Pilar Pardo es una estupenda mujer, un poco más joven incluso, que estudia la parte legislativa. Entonces Pilar nos ayudó muchísimo a la hora de elaborar en los términos apropiados nuestra demanda de acciones positivas en la ley de cine y en las órdenes sucesivas. Sin su ayuda hubiera sido imposible.

¿Cómo dirías que ha influido CIMA en la producción cinematográfica de las directoras? ¿Ha habido una mayor producción, una mejor calidad, más oportunidades?

Esto ya me resulta muy difícil de evaluar realmente. Mi impresión es de manera más concreta y por mi propia experiencia a mi alrededor. Lo primero que ha conseguido es mentalizarnos a nosotras. Sí que nos hemos hecho como mucho más conscientes de que los personajes femeninos tenían que ser cuidados, que teníamos que evitar caer en estereotipos porque nosotras también caemos muchas veces en ellos. Y de que podían tener interés películas y temáticas que nosotras mismas descartábamos porque pensábamos que eran más difíciles de vender. Los contenidos de las películas desde luego habría que estudiarlos aunque es una cosa difícil.

Sin embargo, me parece mucho más difícil cambiar de manera inmediata los hábitos enquistados de una industria. Eso me parece muy complicado. Pero sí hemos conseguido pequeños logros. Por ejemplo, como hemos podido estar presentes en los premios nacionales de Cinematografía, hemos podido llevar ahí por lo menos el debate. Ni siquiera hemos conseguido sacar a ninguna mujer todavía, pero está ahí el debate. Hemos conseguido que se haya recuperado la memoria de mujeres como Josefina Molina, con el Goya de Honor, que más merecido no puede ser, pero creo que si no hubiéramos estado ahí a lo mejor no se le habría recordado y homenajado como se debía. También en cosas como la difusión del libro de Arranz. En la creación del debate sin duda.

En la producción me parece más difícil de saber. Yo veo a las más jóvenes en CIMA y sí que siento que están más empoderadas, más seguras de sí mismas, más convencidas de que tienen que ir adelante. Y sí se ha notado de manera inmediata que empieza a haber mucha pequeña producción. Tengo la sensación de que hay mucho documental de mujeres aunque también creía que había muchas más cortometrajistas y el otro día me lo negaba alguien que había visto lo que pasaba

en estos dos últimos años en el ministerio. Entonces, esto no está evaluado, me parece un poco difícil de saber.

Otra cosa importante es que en la Ley de cine hemos conseguido introducir medidas de acción positiva pero hasta que lo conseguimos fue una batalla larguísima y complicadísima. Y además tuvimos unos enemigos tremendos en la propia institución pese a tener a Ángeles González Sinde de ministra. Pues no, nos costó muchísimo. Además, lo que logramos ha sido muy muy pequeñito, o sea no creo que transforme o consiga cambiar algo, es más simbólico. Luego encima nos ha tocado la época de crisis. Incluso yo creo que a veces cuando hay un movimiento de este tipo se produce una cierta reacción en el sector. A medio plazo sí conseguiremos que se note. A corto plazo no soy tan optimista.

¿Qué opinas de las Muestras de cine de mujeres? ¿Crees que siguen siendo necesarias?

Sí lo son, lo que no deben de convertirse nunca es en un gueto. Lo malo de las muestras de cine es que por el hecho de que haya un festival maravilloso en Cuenca de Mujeres en dirección o los festivales europeos, solo se vieran allí nuestras películas. Lo que sí hemos pedido siempre es que las mujeres accedan a altos presupuestos y sus películas estén en los grandes festivales, en San Sebastián, en Venecia, en Berlín, en Cannes. Ese sería el único problema, pero es verdad que es absolutamente necesario también que haya muestras dedicadas específicamente a las películas de mujeres porque muchas no se ven, sobre todo debido a la mala distribución. Entonces es importante que se consiga que lleguen también aquí películas de nuestras compañeras directoras en el resto de Europa o en África.

Como una forma de publicidad.

En eso yo creo que nos ayuda, es que son un escaparate importante. Y luego hemos comprobado, sobre todo en el contexto europeo, que los festivales de cine de mujer sirven también en la creación de movimientos reivindicativos y asociativos. Por ejemplo, alrededor del festival "Elles tournent" en Bruselas se ha creado todo un movimiento de estudio y análisis de lo que está ocurriendo en el país. Con lo cual pues cumplen una tarea muy importante, sí.

¿Cuáles consideras tú que son los mayores obstáculos con los que se topa una directora?

Yo diría que, en primer lugar, el hecho de que sea una profesión tan masculinizada.

Creo que las cosas serían más fáciles, si hubiese más mujeres también, por ejemplo, decidiendo qué películas se hacen o no se hacen. Con esto quiero decir más mujeres no sólo en la dirección de contenidos, que sí hay algunas en las televisiones en puestos medios, sino en los últimos, en los que toman de verdad la decisión, o sea en las directivas de las televisiones, a la hora de llevar a cabo las películas y también de las series. Creo que también en la producción, a la cabeza de productoras que tengan realmente capacidad, para empezar, de inversión, en desarrollo, que es donde ahí paran también muchas de las historias. Es decir, menos masculinización del propio sector. Es que si no, es una pescadilla un poco que se muerde la cola.

También es muy importante que realmente se lleven a cabo medidas de ayuda, como en cualquier sector donde existen indicios de discriminación claros se llevan a cabo medidas, pues aquí creo que tendría que haberlas. Ayudas mucho más claras de las que hay a la producción femenina. No están además en la ley incluidas las productoras, que tendrían que estarlo. Y desde luego creo que lo que tenemos es muy poco. Tendría que haber algún tipo de estímulo para la inversión privada y para las ayudas institucionales mucho más claras a la producción de las mujeres. Y también a las películas que temáticamente establezcan otra mirada, miradas no estereotipadas, que recuperen la memoria histórica de las mujeres. O sea, estímulos en todo su universo. Una parte más compleja es la transformación de la educación que recibimos de cara a plantearnos el mundo profesional. Yo creo que sobre las mujeres sigue pesando una carga que es esta idea de cómo se compatibiliza tu mundo personal y profesional que los hombres no se tienen ni que plantear.

El tema de la conciliación.

Sí, un tema muy significativo es que la mayoría de las películas en este país se dirigen alrededor de los treinta y tantos años. Los hombres suelen hacer su primera película cinco años antes que las mujeres. En cambio, una mujer suele tener treinta y muchos años cuando se plantea el primer largometraje. A los treinta y muchos años ahora mismo las españolas estamos sobre todo con el tema de tener hijos, o con bebés, o empezando a pensar cómo con un panorama muy complicado. Tienes que tener en cuenta si tienes a alguien que lo quiera tener contigo, si no te has justo separado de tu primera pareja, si te vas a un banco de semen o no. Todo esto nos sigue siendo un peso que es una lata.

¿Y tú personalmente te has sentido discriminada por ser mujer en esta industria? ¿Recuerdas algún capítulo?

Sí, un montón. Lo que creo es que curiosamente las que digan que no es porque no

saben qué es la discriminación. Hay una primera cosa que hay que definir, dentro de la discriminación en esta profesión, yo de las menos discriminadas. Yo sí que he conseguido hacer una carrera profesional. También es verdad que yo procedo de un medio intelectual, no de gente que tenga dinero pero sí digamos donde he tenido todos los estímulos para poder crear. Y soy de una capital en España. Todo esto habría que combinarlo y se va sumando para que esté bastante protegida. Además, soy de una familia de izquierdas y con un padre feminista. A mí, para empezar, ya me han empujado para que pueda estar aquí.

A partir de eso, en primer lugar, hay cosas que tienen que ver estrictamente con mi condición femenina. Por ejemplo, yo sí he tenido un matrimonio en el cual mi profesión se convirtió en una amenaza para la relación. Porque la profesión de directora de cine es muy absorbente, es algo que exige una vocación brutal, y que pones por supuesto por delante de casi todo eso. Cuando nosotras estamos incluso escribiendo, o queremos sacar adelante una película, es lo que queremos básicamente en nuestra vida. Y esto muchas veces no es fácilmente comprendido. A mí desde luego sí me pesó en relaciones afectivas. Hasta que encontré a un hombre con el que esto no pasaba. Luego yo he tenido que criar como consecuencia de esto a una hija muy en solitario y casi todas las mujeres todavía en este país nos vemos en esa posición. El cuidado de los hijos cae sobre nosotras, y son muchas, muchas, muchas horas. El otro día oí a Vargas Llosa que agradecía profundamente a su mujer que le hubiera permitido tener su carrera, dice, porque él vive solo exclusivamente para leer y escribir, gracias a que ella se ocupa de todo. Yo no. Yo busco el hueco para ganarme la vida y poder además dentro de ese ganarme la vida hacer lo que yo quiero, que no siempre en esta profesión hago lo que quiero. Y además me ocupo por supuesto de sacar adelante a una familia con el peso básicamente sobre mí. Y eso te lo cuentan todas las mujeres de la profesión. Las más altas productoras que están al tiempo evaluando o preparando cuál va a ser los presupuestos semanales y si han podido hacer la compra o no por internet. O sea la condición femenina en sí.

Luego, por supuesto, yo he tratado con productores profundamente machistas. Uno de los casos que yo considero paradigmáticos fue una reunión en la que estaba presente también otra mujer, Daniela Féjerman, con la que yo codirigí los dos primeros largos. Una reunión que fue una discusión profesional. Y no monstruosamente tensa, pero sí una discusión con un productor de las típicas que se producen en la preparación de una película, donde nosotras queríamos un actor para que protagonizara esa película y él no. Fue una lucha de poder, como son estas cosas. Aparte de los argumentos racionales que se utilicen hay una lucha de poder. Ganamos la batalla. Conseguimos a nuestro actor. Por supuesto, también nos colocó

en cambio a otro personaje pero a la salida nos dijo: “No sé qué me gusta más si el culo de una o las tetas de la otra”. Yo solo me di cuenta después de que este comentario, que además a nosotras nos pilló como contentas y nos reímos, acababa de convertir la relación profesional y de iguales en una relación en la cual está haciéndonos un favor como productor porque en realidad somos dos chicas que estamos en su despacho porque tenemos buenas tetas o un buen culo.

Por supuesto, en el set también me he encontrado con tíos muy machistas. He tenido a un director de producción pegado a nosotras, que estoy totalmente segura de que no se hubiera comportado igual con un tío, cuestionando nuestro trabajo. He vivido cómo estaban continuamente alerta, si las chicas, las niñas, lo están haciendo bien o no. Paternalismo todo el tiempo, ¡qué listas! La verdad es que sois muy listas, qué rápidas, estáis aprendiendo muy bien. Esta actitud no, qué genial, qué películas, qué artistas.

Y luego la otra cosa es la presión de ser autoritaria. Yo soy de carácter negociador en general y ejerzo muchísimo el liderazgo, soy mandona, etc. Pero lo soy de una manera suave. Pues a mí también me han presionado enormemente. En rodaje siempre me ponían como ejemplo a Pilar Miró. Entonces, me decían que no, que el equipo me tenía que odiar, que porqué me quería a mí el equipo.

¿Qué más? Reportaje en una revista donde al saber que habíamos cumplido los cuarenta años nos dijeron ¡uy qué horror! No lo vamos a decir porque como parecéis más jóvenes pues colará. Y en esa misma revista había protagonizando reportajes tíos de más edad, a los que no se les había cuestionado el aspecto físico, del cual tú tienes que estar siempre pendiente. Las cosas que tienen que ver con la propia condición femenina y con que en esta profesión hay muchísimo machismo. Sin duda ninguna. Y como presidenta de CIMA también he tenido que pelear, por ejemplo, con un director general de cine profundamente misógino, jugándome mi carrera profesional para defender ciertas cosas. Una y otra vez he vivido los obstáculos, las dificultades, etc, etc.

Y la discriminación.

Sí, sí, sí.

Después de estos seis años, ¿qué tipo de ayudas o acciones piensas que serían necesarias para que más mujeres llegaran a la dirección?

Punto número uno: en las escuelas de cine un verdadero cuidado o acciones positivas o lo que quieras para que realmente las chicas entren, en dirección, en

producción, sobre todo en dirección, que es donde menos hay. En los tribunales de ingreso hay que estar pendiente, y además yo no digo que sean 50-50, porque a lo mejor no se presentan tantas chicas, pero tienes que evaluar y decir, ahí va.

¿Te refieres dentro de la carrera en la especialidad?

Sí, para empezar digamos ya en las propias escuelas de cine en la admisión. Lo mismo te diría a la hora del profesorado, etc., para que se creen otros modelos. Hay que dar cancha a las mujeres que estamos en la profesión en todos los ámbitos. Yo ahora que estoy aquí en SGAE (ahora mismo estábamos elaborando un programa de un encuentro), pues una de las cosas es tan simple como decir cuando se plantean las mesas, primero que yo me conozco a los [palabra incomprensible] de la profesión, pero bien que he visto que la mayoría de gente, mucha gente no las conoce o no se acuerda de ellas y se repiten una y otra vez los mismos nombres masculinos. Faltan chicas, faltan mujeres para hablar de estos temas y hay muchas y muy preparadas.

Luego creo que tiene que haber ayudas a la creación femenina desde todos los ámbitos. Creo que si se plantea la ley de mecenazgo ahora también debería de contemplarse, del mismo modo que hay ayudas para las empresas que tienen políticas que en todos los ámbitos hacen una política de igualdad. En muchas cosas bastaría con que se cumpliera la ley de igualdad, que no se cumple. Y luego en las comisiones, en los jurados, que es lo que siempre hemos pedido, en los comités que seleccionan las películas para los festivales de cine, en los jurados de los festivales de cine, en todo esto mucha más presencia femenina también.

Principalmente hay que conseguir que haya muchas más mujeres en todos los puestos decisivos, que van creando la cosa y luego que haya ayudas concretas. Y un compromiso, es ya lo último que te diría, por parte de las televisiones, muy concretamente de las públicas pero yo creo que hay que hacer un llamamiento también a las privadas para que piensen en la necesidad de crear otro tipo de contenidos para las televisiones y que son las mujeres las que mejor pueden hacerlo, tanto en los guiones como en la dirección o en producción.

Vale, tenemos una lista muy grande ya. Pero yo creo que una de las cosas principales que tenemos que cambiar es educar a las personas en este medio audiovisual porque no recibimos una educación. Además, la educación en igualdad se debe empezar desde la escuela porque ahí es donde empieza esa

desigualdad de poder donde los niños pequeños ya se empiezan a sentir superiores a las niñas por el simple hecho de ser niños.

Tienes toda la razón. Hay cosas a veces elementales como la formación en la igualdad mínimamente y no se acaba de entender lo importante que es. Hay que cambiar muy profundamente los valores para que las chicas también quieran ser directoras de cine y para que no se encuentren nunca con hombres que se lo intenten impedir. Eso es lo decisivo. Una de las cosas que ha hecho CIMA es incidir en los contenidos. Y es que nos falta además una educación en toda la enseñanza en España ya no sólo en el cine, sino en la alfabetización, por llamarlo de alguna manera, audiovisual. Cuando hoy los chicos y las chicas están todo el día con los teléfonos móviles grabándose unos a otros, colgando sus fotos, etc. Hablar del contenido, del significado de eso que están retratando sigue siendo muy difícil, y no se les forma, así como se les forma en la lectura, por ejemplo. Pues aprender que si tú retratas en primer plano significa una cosa, que si sacas a alguien al fondo, que si dos personas comparten el plano o si están cada una por separado.

Si uno, por ejemplo, no sale...

Exacto, cómo se construye en general la narración. Yo incluso hasta en el cine me encuentro con gente que lleva años estudiando y no acaban de dominar ciertas bases de la narrativa. Además hoy también la invasión brutal de imágenes y de un tipo más de montaje que sobre todo les impide la reflexión, que lo que buscan es más bien atontar a la gente, impide el análisis objetivo y la construcción narrativa con una lógica y con un discurso. Lo cual no está reñido ni con la imaginación ni con lo no convencional ni con nada.

¿Qué personajes o colectivos piensas que necesitan más representación en el cine?

Lo que sí tenemos además estudiado y visto es que, en general, el colectivo femenino tiene una muy mala y poco realista representación en el cine español. La mayoría de las películas están protagonizadas por hombres, con lo cual las mujeres son seres pasivos, que no se dedican a resolver conflictos, que no tienen una profesión, a veces no tienen ni nombre propio en las películas, que entre sí las mujeres no se comunican, que las profesiones más representadas son las de prostituta y ama de casa, etc. El colectivo femenino claramente está muy poco representado, y luego dentro de ese yo iría claro reduciendo porque además todas aquellas que pasan de los cuarenta años todavía menos. Si además son mujeres rurales o pertenecen a una clase social baja, no te quiero ni contar. Todo eso va un

poco en cadena. Muchas veces los personajes femeninos me parece que tienden a ser un poco seres como muy chiflados y muy marginales, o son locas de algún tipo. Eso también le gusta mucho al cine español.

Y luego digamos todo aquello que es novedoso en la sociedad española pues es lo que todavía está poco representado. No están representadas, por ejemplo, las mujeres emigrantes en la ficción. Además la mujer emigrante tópica que llega aquí con una mano delante y una detrás. Yo estoy ahora preparando un trabajo sobre la emigración subsahariana femenina en España y me he encontrado con la cantidad de pequeñas y medianas empresarias que están viniendo. Además, que son como primera oleada. No es que vengan a reunirse con su familia, vienen ellas las primeras. Pues para mí era un colectivo desconocido, que desde luego nunca he visto retratado en el cine.

¿Existen todavía temas tabú en el cine español?

Yo no diría que existen temas tabú, lo que tenemos es una industria que determina qué tipo de películas y qué géneros interesan más. Hoy lo que pasa es que quienes mandan en qué se hace en este país son las televisiones, y muy concretamente, por lo tanto, los equipos de dirección y de contenidos de las cadenas televisivas. ¿Y ahí con qué criterios mandan? Con la idea de que la película pertenezca a un género que últimamente parece estar de moda, hace mucho por mimesis. Si hacen una película de terror que ha ido bien, pues entonces quieren películas de terror. Las comedias suelen funcionar en general. Y entonces es un poco lo que tienden a pedir.

Dentro del mundo de la comedia en España gusta mucho lo que se llama lo políticamente incorrecto, que parece que es un humor más salvaje, atrevido. Pero lo políticamente incorrecto en nuestro país siempre se mete con los más débiles. Se mete con mujeres porque tienen muchas o pocas tetas, mucho o poco culo, porque son muy viejas o porque son demasiado sabiondas o repipis. Se mete con los colectivos de emigrantes. Con los que no se mete, que para mí se merece también un territorio, es con las instituciones, lo que es un ministerio, lo que es la monarquía, lo que es el ejército, la iglesia... Eso no. Eso yo sí creo que en España no lo hay. No hay películas, como hay en Inglaterra, por ejemplo, sobre la monarquía española. O muy poquitas sobre el ejército. O que no sea la guerra civil. Hay pocas todavía, pero bueno hay y no existe claro una censura.

Un ejemplo además que es muy rotundo pero que a mí no me importa decirlo. Todas las películas que muestran a una mujer que aborta la presentan como un drama espeluznante, pero la realidad es que hay una cantidad enorme de mujeres

para las cuales un aborto es una liberación impresionante. Y esto nunca se cuenta, nunca se ve en el cine. Me falta ver esa escena en la que alguien brinde con champagne porque ha resuelto una situación que le podía haber destruido la vida.

Has comentado antes que la mujer sigue estando infrarrepresentada en el cine español pero ¿no crees que el hecho de que ahora haya más directoras está empezando a crear una imagen más positiva y real de la mujer en la pantalla?

No es que estén infrarrepresentadas en el sentido de que sí debe de haber por número, seguramente muchos personajes femeninos, pero son secundarios y en un tramo de edad. Es decir, lo que no existe es una representación realista o compleja de la mujer española. Y lo que existe también poco es la creación de modelos positivos. Y lo que existe también muy poco todavía, aunque que está empezando, es el llevar a la ficción la memoria histórica de las mujeres, como protagonistas de nuestra propia historia. Por ejemplo, la TV movie de Clara Campoamor ha estado muy bien. Pero todavía faltan muchas. Hay mujeres muy importantes en nuestro país. Falta representación realista de las mujeres o también un poco la creación de modelos.

¿Y te planteas ese como uno de tus objetivos como directora?

Sí, estoy trabajando en un nuevo proyecto, pero no sé si lo conseguiré sacar. Tengo una película sobre Rosalía de Castro, pero Televisión Española la desestimó hace unos meses. No les pareció de suficiente interés. A la hora de decidir qué películas se hacen, la propia televisión española en este país no se implica en una película de Rosalía de Castro. Y no existe ninguna. Y el guion les gustó, pero el resto del proyecto no tanto. Yo aún así insistiré en sacarla porque en Galicia sí ha gustado mucho. Y también tengo un documental sobre mujeres emigrantes subsaharianas esperando a ver si conseguimos una ayuda, una inversión, en este caso privada.

En el cine, como en otras muchas disciplinas artísticas, hay una falta de modelos femeninos, ¿ha habido alguna directora de cine que te haya inspirado?

Sí, muy claramente Jane Campion. Aunque no tenga mucho que ver con lo que yo hago, a mí todas las películas de Jane Campion me entusiasman. Entonces, por ejemplo, esto que he escrito sobre Rosalía tiene muchísimo que ver con *El piano* y tiene que ver mucho también con la película que ella hizo sobre uno de los románticos ingleses, *Bright Star*. Y luego, me ha gustado muchísimo en estos últimos años la directora de *Fish Tank*, Andrea Arnold. Ahora tengo una pendiente de ver, también la última suya me gustó un montón. Ahora me fijo mucho, con mucha

atención cuando es una película dirigida por una mujer. También citarí a Agnés Jaoui en el contexto francés porque además es una directora de comedia. Y *Maldito Felpudo* de Josiane Balasko, es una comedia que me hizo mucha gracia en su momento. En las francesas también siempre me fijo mucho. Luego, siendo muy jovencita a mí me chiflaba Liliana Cavani. No solamente sus películas, sino que recuerdo que fue para mí en una entrevista que vi con ella un modelo de mujer. Cuando la vi, y yo era muy cría, pensé, “joder qué tía tan interesante”. Es de las únicas veces que recuerdo haber visto una entrevista con una mujer que me impactó profundamente y no lo había vuelto a pensar hasta que lo hemos hablado ahora.

¿Piensas que las directoras españolas estáis empezando a crear referentes y estáis teniendo ya influencia en directores, tanto mujeres como hombres?

Yo creo que hay dos grandes figuras, sin duda ninguna, que son Isabel Coixet e Icíar Bollaín. Y yo creo que sí. Además, he oído a muchos hombres hablar de ellas, y de Isabel muchísimo, porque además como Isabel tiene una estética muy peculiar y empezó haciendo unas películas tan internacionales, tan americanas. Yo creo que esa ha sido una entrada como de un cine *indie*, una estética *indie* que ha influido muchísimo a sus compañeros. Y luego creo que Icíar tiene este modelo de cine muy cercano y al tiempo muy comprometido que también es una línea que en la nueva cinematografía ha sido muy importante. El resto, yo creo que lo que hay es muy buenas directoras pero que estamos teniendo, un poco toda mi quinta, una carrera profesional muy difícil. Creo que esto de que nos haya agarrado la crisis en este momento realmente nos va a perjudicar mucho, especialmente a aquellas que habíamos conseguido una mínima estabilidad, haber hecho de pronto tres largometrajes. Estos últimos años han sido devastadores.

Sobre todo me imagino que también afecta en los temas que tenéis que tratar.

Claro, ¿qué es lo que consigues sacar adelante? Yo estoy segura de que mi película sobre Rosalía tiene mucho que ver con las cosas que yo estos años he pensado y he reflexionado. Y además, para mí es un cambio de género, no es una comedia. Pero ves no lo acabo de sacar adelante. O sea, que es difícil. Yo me he refugiado en otras cosas muy muy muy interesantes para mí también. Es decir, he rodado en África. Además, *Ellas son África*, yo dirigí un proyecto de película que está entre el documental y la ficción que además es una película colectiva. Cuatro mujeres Chus, Patricia, Laura Mañá y yo fuimos a rodar allí. Y monté un poco aquel tinglado y entonces esto fue muy gratificante, pero claro no tiene la repercusión que tienen otras cosas, que si hubiera sacado mi siguiente largometraje. Y luego conseguí hacer para

televisión seis programas que se llamaban *Igual-es*, que son mujeres en profesiones tradicionalmente masculinas. Así que como ves a mí lo de CIMA es que me ha inspirado mucho también creativamente, pero claro, ya te digo, no he conseguido sacar en estos años la siguiente película. Esperemos que sí, tengo ahora la de Rosalía y una comedia también ahí en la cola, vamos a ver.

Una de mis preguntas era si te habías planteado cambiar de género porque has hecho hasta ahora bastante comedia.

Yo he hecho comedia como directora. Escribiendo, me interesa mucho el género del thriller o del cine político, son las dos cosas que tal.

¿Con Patricia, no?

Bueno, hice el guion de *Sé quién eres* con Daniela como cine así más político y luego he hecho bastante thriller para la televisión. Una serie como guionista, estaba también Daniela, pero ese fue más mío, que se llamaba *El pantano*, una especie de *Twin Peaks* aquí en España. La verdad es que ha gustado mucho a la gente. Se convirtió mucho en serie de culto porque la quitaron pero se publicó en DVD y la gente la ve. Y eso que fue una serie muy maltratada porque nos la hicieron terminar muy rápidamente... Pero aun así es una serie muy interesante en su momento. Llevo estos años, yo creo que ese ha sido uno de los problemas, es que yo he intentado cambiar de género. O sea, tuve un proyecto en Telecinco para hacer un thriller. Primero una película de alto presupuesto que pasaba en Shanghái. La historia de una adolescente, hija de diplomáticos, que creía que tenía en su pasado una hermana y que nadie le hablaba de ella, pero ella tenía recuerdos de una hermana. Y en un momento dado decidía regresar y buscar a su hermana. Y esta película que a mí me gustaba mucho, mucho, muchísimo no acabó de hacerse. La reconvertí. Tú fíjate como son estas trayectorias porque me dijeron no porque es en Shanghái, el tema no nos interesa. La reconvertí en una historia en Galicia, que se llama *Las niñas de cristal*, y que creo que es una de las cosas mejores que he hecho. Yo creo que voy a terminar haciendo una novela de esta película y no la quisieron tampoco. Me gusta hasta el título.

Las niñas de cristal, es precioso.

Voy a hacer una novela en cuanto tenga un poquito de rato y dinero. Luego un amigo me ofreció un guion que había escrito él. Yo acabé trabajando con él para que aquello cambiase. Se llamaba *El club de los onironautas* (los viajeros de los sueños). También era una cosa muy entre la ciencia ficción, pero no digamos aquí mismo

sobre el mundo de los sueños, no la saqué porque no era una comedia.

O sea que tú sí que quieres, pero no te dejan.

Sí, sí, yo llevo estos años... Además, yo soy muy, muy productiva, mucho. O sea, yo tengo a veces, yo creo que demasiadas ideas y además las llevo a cabo. Yo las escribo. A veces consiguiendo financiación y a veces no, pero es que no he conseguido sacar ningún proyecto.

¿Y has pensado irte al extranjero?

A mí me encantaría. Es que no sé muy bien cómo. Además, yo hablo bien inglés y francés. Me he atado mucho también aquí. Yo tengo una hija, pero bueno ahora ya es mayor, tiene 19 años. O sea que ya es otra situación mayor de libertad. Yo simplemente no he tenido la oportunidad. Tuve una llamada de la BBC en un momento dado para hacer una serie. Lo mismo. Les hice un planteamiento pero la productora que lo llevaba no acabó de sacarlo. Me hubiera ido ENCANTADA. También cuando he estado en Estados Unidos dando clase, que eso sí lo he hecho, el año pasado les propuse un proyecto que tendría que intentar retomar, que era rodar en una universidad americana una pequeña película colectiva. Que el curso además consistiese en escribir y rodar una película, un medimetroraje. Ojalá, vamos a mí me encantaría. Y luego se iba a hacer un remake de *A mí madre le gustan las mujeres* en Estados Unidos, pero es que lleva muchos años dándosele vueltas al proyecto y no acaba de concretarse. Y yo este año me fui a Nueva York y conocí a la persona que lo lleva allí, pero me encontré con que no. Era una mujer muy entusiasmada con la historia pero no lo va a sacar.

¿Cómo te ha afectado a tu carrera como directora ser presidenta de CIMA?

Con los contenidos y el tipo de películas.

Yo creo que ser presidenta de CIMA ha sido una cosa muy, muy buena y también problemática. Muy, muy buena porque yo creo que a mí me ha enseñado muchísimo. Yo estudié fue filosofía pura y tengo una tendencia hacia la reflexión, el mundo universitario muy importante. Entonces esto me ha hecho aprender un montón, cosa que me ha gratificado mucho. He leído mucho, he escrito mucho sobre el tema y ha sido fenomenal. Además, me ha creado también un montón de relaciones personales y creativas entre todas las mujeres de la industria que también han sido una fuente de satisfacciones todo el tiempo. Y también he conocido a muchas mujeres estupendas en el mundo que estaban en las instituciones, o que están en otros mundos profesionales, a las que lo de CIMA les

ha interesado mucho. He hecho hasta grandes amigas. Ahora, también es verdad que he trabajado muchísimo para CIMA, muchísimo, porque esto es una organización que es a base de voluntad, ya que no tenemos nada. He trabajado mucho, mucho, mucho y gran parte de lo que he trabajado, lo he dejado de trabajar para mí misma y para mis proyectos. Y luego me he definido como feminista, cosa que en este país se paga.

Otra cosa curiosa. Si hubiera sido de entrada una mujer que me hubiera dedicado a cine social, comprometido, político, hay cierta contradicción porque yo soy autora de comedia y además de comedias comerciales y de pronto ha aparecido otra parte de mi personalidad que no era la más esperable. Es decir, que el tipo de productor con el que yo trato, muchas veces no es aquel que valora el compromiso social. O sea, si yo hubiera hecho cine de autora, por ejemplo, Judith Colet está más en ese mundo. Entonces, pues dices qué coherente es. Ella hace un cine muy de compromiso. Serían hombres también esos productores como muy progresistas y comprometidos. Pero yo trato en teoría con comedias de muchísimas copias y con aspiraciones a ser un éxito de taquilla y lo puede ser o no, es eso lo que se busca en mi caso. Entonces claro, dicen ¡joder!

Entonces, ¿es eso lo que te atraía principalmente de la comedia, que es más comercial quizás?

No, no, no. A mí es que la comedia es un género que me va de una manera casi genética. A mí me ocurre que es que gracias a dios, porque creo que es casi de lo mejor que tengo. Yo tengo mucho sentido del humor y además el sentido del humor creo que me ha permitido afrontar situaciones muy complicadas y muy difíciles en la vida. Y entonces es que tiendo a ver las cosas con ironía y con optimismo. Yo diría que incluso porque yo no soy de un humor sarcástico o muy destructivo, yo soy más bien de la comedia que da una visión optimista de la vida, con ironía o con cierta carga de profundidad.

Pero bueno a través de la comedia también se puede hacer cierta crítica social. De hecho *A mi madre le gustan las mujeres* trata el tema del lesbianismo y de la inmigración.

Y *Semen* es un cachondeo sobre el instinto maternal, que es un hombre el que tiene instinto paternal y *Miguel y William* plantea la imposibilidad de que las mujeres sean autoras. Siempre en lo que he hecho por supuesto que hay... Yo creo que, además, la comedia es una forma maravillosa de hablar de la realidad, de poner el mundo patas arriba y entonces poderlo ver de otra forma. Lo que pasa, que bueno,

cuando yo vendo junto con Daniela *A mí madre le gustan las mujeres* no decimos que vamos a hacer una reivindicación de la sexualidad e independencia femenina a cualquier edad. No, digo, “mira qué comedia tan graciosa sobre una chica que se siente confundida si le gustan los tíos o las tías porque su madre se ha vuelto lesbiana”. Esa es la forma de venderla al productor porque tal y como es este país que tienes enfrente, de hecho muchos nos dijeron, ¿pero es una película sobre una mujer, en el caso de la madre, de cincuenta años que se vuelve lesbiana y es una comedia? Pero si nos parece un drama... Entonces claro vendes esta otra cosa, pero las comedias son para mí..., es un género además muy difícil, muy transgresor y muy interesante

Porque las directoras tienden más a hacer dramas por lo que he estudiado y por lo que he visto.

Sí, hay muy pocas mujeres haciendo humor. Además es un tema que yo he estudiado mucho porque me gusta además teorizarlo. El humor que está más en manos de las mujeres es el de la comedia romántica, y más por el lado de romántica que el de comedia, aunque sí ha habido en los últimos años una irrupción de las mujeres como autoras en el terreno de lo humorístico. En Estados Unidos muy claramente. Además hay también muchas mujeres ahora ya monologuistas, autoras de tiras cómicas en el cómic, o en el cine empezando a hacer mucha más comedia. Creo que es una cosa además muy interesante para estudiar. También la utilización del humor en el feminismo es una cosa novedosa. Pero es verdad que todavía los personajes femeninos, muchos, tanto en las películas dirigidas por mujeres como en las películas que dirigen hombres sobre mujeres. Teóricos especialistas o interesados en el mundo femenino, pon a Rodrigo García, por ejemplo el hijo de García Márquez que ha hecho un montón de películas que giran alrededor del universo femenino, pero son mujeres dolientes y sufrientes siempre y a las que les pasan cosas terribles

Víctimas.

Muy víctimas, que se pueden sobreponer, o que salgan un poco más o menos adelante pero hay muy pocas películas sobre personajes femeninos muy potentes y en el terreno de lo positivo, del cachondeo, del disfrute de la vida, muy pocas.

A mí hay una película, creo que es inglesa. Se llama *Happy-Go-Lucky*. ¿La conoces?

No.

Que me encanta. Búscala. No sé si la ha dirigido un hombre o una mujer. No recuerdo el director, pero se llama así *Happy-Go-Lucky*. Te la recomiendo porque es la visión de una chica que vive en Londres y va por la vida súper feliz, está intentado sacarse el carnet de conducir, el profesor la trata fatal y a ella no le importa nada.

De todas maneras, sobre esto estuve el otro día leyendo que hay un tipo de personaje femenino que ha proliferado en el cine que son las chicas como aéreas completamente, que no se sabe muy bien ni en qué trabajan, ni a qué se dedican, ni a qué nada pero que ellas son como megafelices, un poco ingenuas, convierten el mundo en color de rosa siempre. Y que es un poco un estereotipo masculino y hay bastantes pelis, esta no va por ahí, ¿no?

No, ella es maestra. Tiene una actitud ante la vida que tú normalmente no la ves en las mujeres, descuidada, muy desastre. Va riéndose todo el día, es súper feliz. Es lo que decimos, las mujeres en el cine la tendencia es que están sufriendo o que sean malas, que tengan mala leche y que le hagan la vida imposible, si no al hombre, a la mujer también. Esta película me sorprendió y fui al cine con mi amiga y nos lo pasamos genial. Y dije pues yo voy a tomar esta actitud ahora y si se meten conmigo les voy a decir pero qué me estás contando.

Un ejemplo además que es muy rotundo pero que a mí no me importa decirlo que es, todas las películas que muestran a una mujer que aborta la presentan como un drama espeluznante, pero la realidad es que hay una cantidad enorme de mujeres para las cuales un aborto es una liberación impresionante. Y esto nunca se cuenta. Me falta ver esa escena de que alguien brinde con champagne porque ha resuelto una situación que le podía haber destruido la vida, no se ve nunca en el cine.

De hecho yo no conozco ninguna película española por ejemplo que trate el tema del aborto, ni que haya un personaje que aborte. Y me llamó la atención porque hay una compañera en la universidad que es de Indonesia, y se ve que este es un tema que se está tratando bastante en el cine. Y me puse a pensar pero a mí no me suena y no es porque podamos hacerlo libremente, y menos ahora, y sigue siendo un tema muy...

Tabú, sí cuando decías esto, quizás este sea uno

Porque imagino que habrás visto *Juno*, que a mí me gustó muchísimo y se la comenté a una amiga que había tenido un aborto y me dijo “yo la odié la película, me pareció horrible”.

Bueno, es que *Juno*, que a mí me divirtió muchísimo, los diálogos son buenísimos, pero yo todo el tiempo cuando la estuve viendo pensé mucho también. Sí, pero la opción es una chica que va a tener el niño.

Claro y ella se queda embarazada, sufre todo el embarazo y da a su hijo.

Y esto no se pone nunca en cuestión.

Sí, lo hace de una forma súper feliz.

Que a lo mejor hubiera sido mucho más razonable desde luego que hubiera abortado.

Y luego la presión que tiene la niña delante del hospital.

Además, con estos seres siniestros que se han dedicado a fastidiar. Además, lo ves mucho cuando tienes una hija en estas edades. Yo he tenido a mi hija, ahora tiene 19 pero cuando tenía 16 años, 17, en el colegio hubo una discusión en una clase de filosofía o de algo relacionado donde presionaron muchísimo a las chicas diciéndoles que si eran mayores para tener relaciones sexuales lo eran también para tener el hijo. Y fue la única que en clase dijo ¿Pero qué está usted diciéndonos, que tengamos hijos? Me parece una cosa increíble. Lo que hay que tener es métodos anticonceptivos primero y pero luego, vamos, si hay un accidente.

Que también fallan.

Si hay un accidente es una demencialidad pensar que hay que tener un hijo. Es que me parece demencial completamente. Y esto no lo ven nunca en el cine para reforzar. También opciones de este tipo. Si en las mismas escuelas están reforzando la otra opción, o sea... Creo que sería una película bastante difícil de, que te la subvencionen. Sí, ésta de momento no.

Bueno y en estos momentos menos. La última pregunta, ¿qué consejos les darías a las mujeres que quisieran ser directoras?

Que peleen por ello a muerte. No hay otro consejo que dar. Que crean en sí mismas, esto es una cosa fundamental. Esta es una industria que tiende mucho a machacarte. Vas a recibir muchos nos. Desde no me gusta, no me interesa, no es suficientemente bueno. Entonces digamos que frente a todos estos se pongan la armadura y estén

convencidas de que tienen algo que contar y que se tienen que hacer un hueco para contarlo. Y luego yo creo que ayuda muchísimo, muchísimo realmente pertenecer a CIMA. Creo que ves que no es un problema personal, que descubres que es un problema de todo un colectivo, con especiales y específicas dificultades por el hecho de ser mujer. Y que estar en una asociación primero puede cambiar muchas cosas y segundo además estás con otra gente a la que vas a conocer, que se crean núcleos de trabajo, de creatividad, de ayuda, etc, etc.

Porque el compañerismo profesional es esencial en cualquier profesión.

Esencial, sí, entonces eso creo que se crea ahí y que en ese sentido yo también lo recomiendo. Y fíjate, que no hablo de que se formen más. Yo creo que la mujer está muy formada. Lo que falta es que entren y lo hagan.

Claro, que sean más activas. Bueno, pues muchísimas gracias.

Interview with Helena Taberna

(17 July 2012)

PART 1 (0:00.0 - 2:00.0)

Mi tesis versa sobre la representación de la España del siglo XXI en el cine dirigido por mujeres. De tu filmografía he podido seleccionar tres películas que tratan temas muy diferentes, pero todos en cierto modo de denuncia social: la inmigración, la violencia doméstica y la recuperación de la memoria histórica. ¿Por qué es importante para ti hacer este tipo de cine? ¿Piensas que el cine es un medio efectivo para concienciar a la gente sobre problemas sociales?

En realidad a mí lo que más me importa es hacer cine y hacer buen cine. Lo que pasa que sí, que creo que en una construcción, en una narrativa, como cuesta tanto hacer una película en este país, yo prefiero aprovechar y que las películas tengan también un contenido...un contexto, ¿no? Que a la vez que tú estás viendo la historia que podría estar descontextualizada, tenga la posibilidad de que los espectadores reflexionen sobre el tiempo que están viviendo. Y sí que creo que tiene cierta vitalidad el cine porque es un ejercicio de memoria. Y toda memoria que se pone en pantalla es una memoria reflexiva. Sin pensar que se puede transformar el mundo pero sí que creo que los temas que son tratados en el cine son importantes para construir sobre todo ese debate y esa reflexión social sobre temas que están ocurriendo en el momento.

Sobre todo en el siglo XXI

Es una sociedad tan cambiante y la fuerza que tiene el cine es muy grande porque conlleva la parte reflexiva, la estructura pero tiene sobre todo elementos emocionales. Y yo soy de las que creo que la reflexión a través de la emoción tiene una categoría nada desdeñable.

PART 1 (2:00.1 - 20:05.0) Extranjeras¹

PART 1 (20:05.0 - 23:20.0) Nagore

PART 2 (0:00.0 – 14:50.0) Nagore

¹ This interview also enquired about other films by Taberna, which initially were going to be part of this research but were discarded after choosing the topic of historical memory. For this reason, the parts tackling those films have not been included in this transcript.

PART 2 (14:50.1 - 24:40.0) –La buena nueva

También me gustaría hacerte unas preguntas sobre *La buena nueva*, que tanto éxito tuvo, y el tema de la recuperación de la memoria histórica que ha sido tan popular desde principios de este siglo. ¿Cuál es tu reacción cuando la gente comenta “otra película sobre la guerra civil”?

Bueno, me encanta que me hagas esa pregunta porque es así. Yo creo que...

Porque es un tema inagotable ¿no?

Inagotable, pero fíjate, por ejemplo, películas sobre nazis. Miles de millones que hay.

Y nos las cascamos todas.

Todas. Y en cambio está puesto en valor. Quiero decir, ¿qué pasa? ¿Cómo se puede decir otra película de la Guerra Civil? Porque la película es o buena o mala. Las películas hay que calificar en esas dos. O coge temas nuevos, novedosos y te aporta luces sobre un pasado o un presente, y está bien construido el relato o no está bien construido. No me empieces a decir eso porque a mí me vino muy bien cuando leí la frase de Juan Helmann que dice ‘Se fueron los dictadores y aparecieron los organizadores del olvido’. Es preciosa, ‘los organizadores del olvido’, que tiene muchos disfraces, pero no deja de ser organizador de olvido, quien dice esa frase tan frívola y la lanza por ahí. Fue curioso porque en el festival de Montreal, estando en un programa de televisión con un cineasta argentino, que hacía una película sobre la dictadura argentina, dijo que en Argentina dijeron, otra película de la dictadura. Y dijo, he contabilizado, solo hay 27 películas de la dictadura, ¡27!, que no es nada. Y otra película de la dictadura, ¿entiendes? Porque claro es un machaque. Porque tú quieres hacer una película y si hay cuatro malas sombras que te dicen esa frase, pues tienes que ir contra eso, ese viento. O sea, si hay mucho viento y mareas, y se tiene que traficar una película que coincida con eso, pues es eso, es malo, pero bueno, pudo con todo. La verdad es que afortunadamente y ahora se ha convertido en una película clásica en el sentido que ahora en el pase por televisión española tuvo la máxima audiencia, por encima del programa La Noria, un programa basura de estos de tal, que me llenó de gozo y luego la han vuelto a pasar en televisión vasca. Ha tenido otra vez máxima audiencia en el programa de cine de los dos últimos años y dices qué bien. Tiene esa persistencia, ¿no? Que no solamente se ve en dos salas cuando se estrena, que luego tiene el recorrido mayor. Y eso también le pasa si las películas cinematográficamente no envejecen y tocan temas que siempre se puede volver a

ellos, ¿no?

¿Piensas entonces que los españoles prefieren pasar página y olvidar ese capítulo de la historia de España? ¿O depende de las generaciones?

No, no porque las generaciones jóvenes son las que tienen más curiosidad. Son los nietos, los que fueron a ver la película fundamentalmente. Por ejemplo, yo vi a Unax Ugalde cómo le apasionó el guion y la historia. Yo creo que hay una parte que tiene mala conciencia por lo que pasó. Y yo creo que al contrario mi película no es rencorosa, ni transmite odio sino que abre la posibilidad del abrazo. Pero no hay abrazo posible si no hay reconocimiento del horror. Y aparte esa frasecita que si no aprendemos de la propia historia pues volveremos a repetirla. Yo creo que es así.

Totalmente. Bueno ahora se está estudiando mucho el tema, qué paso durante la guerra y el Franquismo. ¿Crees que llegaremos un día en el que conoceremos la verdad, o qué pasó con los crímenes perpetrados? ¿Llegará un día en el que la investigación será exhausta y sabremos? Porque en Alemania lo tienen todo apuntadísimo y perfectamente sabido ¿De qué modo puede ayudar al país saber la verdad?

Y han asumido su papel y tal. Difícil papeleta porque han pasado setenta y tantos años y se nos han ido muriendo todos los testimonios. Pero bueno, por lo menos sí que ha habido ciertos momentos, como lo de Garzón, de abrirse otra vez el tema. Y bueno, hay una curiosidad que está siendo también alimentada con el cine y la literatura que sigue empeñándose en saber, que es uno de los temas grandes para hacer ficción y para hacer documental. O sea que yo espero que se siga.

Tu película pone de manifiesto el apoyo casi incondicional de la iglesia al bando nacionalista, pero tu protagonista es un poco como la oveja negra, descarrilada de ese rebaño eclesiástico ¿tuviste algún tipo de enfrentamientos o críticas por parte de la iglesia?

Te cuento, en el pasado, porque yo cuando empiezo a hacer cine, empiezo a hacer cortos, empiezo a experimentar, el primer trabajo que hago en cine así largo es un medimetraje que se titula *Alzazua 36*, que es una especie de boceto de lo que luego sería *La buena nueva*. Entonces, cuando estuvo en las nominaciones de los Goya, lo que ocurre es lo siguiente. Hay un productor de Madrid que me propone hacer un largometraje sobre esta historia. Estamos hablando antes de *Yoyes*, antes de hacer mi primer largometraje y entonces cuando estaba en televisión española dice que le preguntaron a ver si tenía permiso de la iglesia este proyecto. Entonces,

evidentemente esto fue un elemento de censura que impidió que se hiciese en ese momento. Entonces bueno, yo me olvido del proyecto, y es cuando veo después *Amén* la película de Costa Gabras, que habla de la implicación de Pío XII en el nazismo, cuando yo recupero esta historia que además es familia para decir, bueno, si esa historia sí se conoce que Pío XII estuvo implicado en el nazismo, tan interesante es que la gente reconozca que Pío XII no solamente estuvo implicado sino que apoyó en primera persona y llamó además a la Santa Cruzada. Y felizmente la pude hacer.

Y una vez estrenada, ¿tuviste algún tipo de críticas?

No, porque ya ha aprendido también que es mejor que se calle porque es una promoción indirecta que no le trae a cuenta.

El padre Miguel está basado en un personaje real, ¿no? Y si no supiéramos que es un personaje verdadero, pensaríamos que lo has idealizado: un cura bueno, que limpia y cocina, ayuda a las mujeres (incluso a las ateas), juega al fútbol con los niños, y además acuesta a la niña. ¿Estas escenas forman parte del guion o son verdaderas?

Son bastante verdaderas. Fíjate que la hija de Marino Ayarra, que es el personaje real me llamó y me dijo, ‘¿sabes que me recuerda Unax mucho a mi padre?’ Fíjate que bonito, ¿no? Menudo premio de interpretación, yo le dije, chaval. No te habrán dado un Óscar, pero...

Porque mi supervisora me dijo: “Esto es muy anacrónico, esto no puede ser que en aquella época”.

Era un cura adelantado a su tiempo. Y han existido personajes románticos en toda la historia de la humanidad, está llena. Aparte que la profesión del sacerdocio ha estado siempre muy rodeado de mujeres y aparte que imagínate que es una situación especial en la que los hombres van al frente o huyen. Es que era un pueblo solo con mujeres. Todo eso, lo de la cooperativa, todo eso es real. Lo que no es real es la historia de amor esa que me pareció a mí muy bonita.

Lo que decías, algo que me gustó mucho y que me llamó la atención es que ofrece una perspectiva femenina de lo que fue la guerra, y esta realidad no está suficientemente representada en las películas ¿piensas que deberíamos retratar más esta realidad?

Fíjate que es la primera película sobre la Guerra Civil dirigida por una mujer. O sea

que no ha habido ninguna mujer que haya cogido el tema. Y es evidente que hablas más de lo que más conoces. Y aparte había un homenaje, porque yo cuando era pequeña las mujeres de mi pueblo me preguntaban con mucho respeto sobre la figura de Marino Ayerra. Entonces, yo tenía una curiosidad. Y luego con el tiempo, cuando leí el libro *No me avergoncé del evangelio* pues ahí tuve la referencia de eso, pero vamos. Aparte que no es un personaje blando, fíjate que no puse un discurso de las dolorosas, que hizo un sermón hablando de que tal. O sea que ni la cuarta parte de bondad aparece. No me parece a mí que es tan bondadoso tampoco. Tiene sus partes oscuras. Tiene sus momentos. Lo que pasa que ante la situación aquella, había una manera de actuar u otra y fue valiente. Y luego pagó su precio, claro. Porque la película se acaba ahí, pero luego lo que tuvo que pasar porque los tentáculos de la iglesia son infinitos. Le ofrecieron un puesto de Obispado, con todo, económicamente de todo, y él renunció y entonces pasó a... Le trataron de sobornar. Le castigaron luego porque toda su vida vivió en la miseria incluso trabajó en una editorial en Argentina y la iglesia consiguió que le sacaran. O sea que sí, tuvo una vida durísima. Durísima, durísima, sí. Por el precio de la honestidad, vamos.

Sí, sí, sí claro. Creo que de *La buena Nueva*, ya lo tenemos.

PART 2 (24:40.0 – 31:40.0)

¿Me puedes contar un poco en qué proyectos estás trabajando ahora o es un secreto?

Eso no se puede decir, pero es una historia...

Un poquito

Un poquito, poquito, poquito... Es una adaptación de una novela, de una escritora muy famosa que no te voy a decir y estoy en la escritura de guion ahora. Tardará un poquito en salir. Para cuando publiques igual ya está más adelantado.

Lo dejamos en misterio.

Pero tiene también, vamos no te va a sorprender que haya un trasfondo temático...

¿Es una película de ficción?

Es de ficción, sí.

¿Te está afectando la crisis a la hora de seguir con tus proyectos?

Pues, es que afecta en el aire. Está una cosa. Y ahora como estoy en la fase de escritura, pues quiero que me afecte menos porque ahí todavía no se juegan los dineros y la necesidad de armar la película.

¿Pero te está influyendo en los temas que estás eligiendo?

No, no, no. Como también de alguna forma he sido yo bastante corredora de fondos. Tú imagínate que las películas me las he producido yo todas prácticamente. Entonces ahí tengo un territorio ganado, que no he tenido una gran facilidad para hacer las películas, sino que ha sido cada proyecto una aventura infinita desde el principio hasta el final.

Me lo imagino.

Y encima dando gracias porque todas han existido, han tenido repercusión. Vamos me siguen dando alimento, pero la verdad es que no ha servido. Mucho éxito con una película, pues ya la siguiente es fácil. Ya pensaba que iban a estar todos los productores diciendo a ver, qué tienes, qué tienes. Y por poco me paso el tiempo ahí perdiendo...

Entonces finalizamos ya con algunas preguntas sobre la situación de las directoras en la industria del cine. ¿Crees que el aumento de directoras en las últimas décadas está creando una imagen más positiva y real de la mujer? ¿Y es ese uno de tus objetivos?

Yo insisto siempre, mi objetivo es hacer buen cine. Lo logre o no, ya es otra cosa. Y evidentemente como soy mujer y me preocupa esto pues aparecen en los relatos que cuente en esa historia. Sí que creo que influye. Por ejemplo, tú has destacado, ¿no? ciertos aspectos de *La buena nueva* o, y de *Nagore*, y en *Extranjeras*, o en la misma *Yoyes* hay matices que producen una identificación más grande, más fácil en las mujeres y también un conocimiento en los hombres. O sea, porque no es, yo creo que por lo menos en mi caso no genera agresividad la forma en la que cuento la presencia de las mujeres, sino que es más una función integradora. Y yo creo que está siendo bueno para el cine español la aparición de mujeres porque creo que hay muchísimas directoras con talento, o sea que creo que se está notando y eso que sólo estamos el 7%.

¿Crees que estáis empezando ya a crear referentes?

Bueno, no soy tan pretenciosa, pero algo sí que..., yo creo que cada persona que hace algo, genera un mimetismo. El otro día me sorprendió con la hija de una

amiga mía que me dice ‘oye, mi hija me ha dicho, yo de mayor quiero ser directora de cine’. Bueno, pues eso me parece una maravilla porque a mí ni se me hubiera ocurrido de pequeña decir eso. O sea, que algo está cambiando. Con el hecho de ponerte en el otro lado ya hay una transgresión porque estábamos previstas para ser miradas, ahora miramos, y al hacer cosas, pues hay nuevas generaciones que ya con siete años dicen “yo de mayor quiero ser directora de cine”. ¡Qué bonito!

¿Te has sentido discriminada en la industria cinematográfica por el hecho de ser mujer alguna vez?

Hombre, yo creo que sí, sin duda. Yo creo que si he rodado y he estrenado 4 películas en la década del 2000, yo si no hubiese tenido que hacerlo todo, o sea, si hubiese tenido la producción, tal y cual, podría haber hecho ocho, por ejemplo. Pues aquí yo veo a mis compañeros de generación cuando hacen una primera película que tiene éxito, automáticamente han tenido ya productoras. Sí, evidentemente que la hay, hay porque...Mucha de esa discriminación es inconsciente. Es lo que estamos hablando. O sea que no piensan. Cuando piensan en un guion, en una historia piensan casi siempre en los que tienen más cerca porque es que en los bares se juntan con ellos. Es así, ¿no? Y porque todavía estamos demasiado pocas.

¿Tienes alguna directora de cine que te haya inspirado?

Muchas. Bueno, Margaret von Trotta, por ejemplo, fue fundamental cuando yo en la Muestra de Cine de Mujeres de Pamplona que vi sus primeras películas. Hay dos cosas que a mí me marcan como cineasta. Una es la aparición del video, con el cual yo puedo experimentar, a pesar de que me dicen que no se puede hacer cine en video. Fíjate luego el tiempo cómo ha venido. Y después el ver películas como de Agnes Kajola, por ejemplo, que me parece magnífica, Margaret von Trotta especialmente y luego pues Agnés Varda. Hay muchas directoras, Sofía Coppola, por ejemplo me gusta mucho también. Y sí que percibo que hay matices interesantes que aportan, que la mirada del mundo se completa con las dos miradas. Creo que el mundo será más rico cuando el mundo estemos contándolo desde todos los lados.

Vale, última pregunta y nos vamos ¿qué consejos les darías a las mujeres que quisieran ser directoras como esta niña?

Pues que adelante con los faroles. O sea que se preparen porque la pelea es total pero la satisfacción también es de la misma índole. Y que desde luego ahora tienen

unas herramientas al servicio que tú puedes esperar a estar en una escuela de cine o puedes empezar a escribir tus relatos con tu iphone por ejemplo. Y que puedes escribir un guion y empezar a probar, a experimentar y a jugar con esto y a colgarlos en youtube y tal. O sea, que adelante, adelante. Las vías se han multiplicado por 10.000. Entonces, vamos a aprovechar esa técnica. No esperemos a lo que es la industria formal y tal porque si esperamos ahí... Si yo hubiese esperado, nunca hubiera entrado. No habría hecho nada. Exacto. Y sin embargo, apareció el video, y dije ostras. y me decían en Madrid la Asociación de cortometrajistas que no se podía hacer cine. Si era video, era otra cosa. Y yo dije vamos a verlo, que yo voy a contar mis historias, voy a experimentar, a ver qué pasa. Y ya fui haciendo yo mi función de autodidacta. Hay que ver muchísimo cine, y cine muy bueno. Que se acerquen a las filmotecas, que hay cine barato. Ahora por internet también hay servidores que te permiten y que vayan a los clásicos que siempre se aprende mucho de los grandes.

Muy bien, pues muchísimas gracias.

Interview with Rosa Vergés

(26 September 2013)

Mi tesis versa sobre la reconstrucción de la memoria histórica de España en el cine dirigido por mujeres durante la primera década del siglo XXI. De tu filmografía he seleccionado el largometraje *Iris*. Esta película difiere bastante de tus anteriores largometrajes. ¿Cuál fue tu principal motivación para hacerla?

Pues mira, precisamente mi principal motivación vino de la memoria histórica porque hice un documental sobre el pabellón de la República que se construyó en París en el año 36 y que luego se reconstruyó en Barcelona para las Olimpiadas. Entonces yo hice el documental de lo que había sido ese pabellón, ¿no? Y fue un trabajo muy interesante que hice con un historiador y documentalista, que es Jordi Barrachina. Y aparte de que era el edificio de ser, tenía como una cajita de cerillas, tan pequeña tan frágil, y contenía todo tenía todo el dolor de España por la guerra a través de la cultura, ¿no? Porque el Guernica se hizo para este pabellón, estaba Miró, estaban todos, ¿no? Estaba Buñuel. Y delante de los grandes pabellones alemán y francés, que eran unos edificios muy arrogantes, de repente, allí Miró con aquel cartel de E de l'Espagne. Era todo un grito en el exilio de lo que estaba ocurriendo en España. Y a raíz de ese documental, vi muchas imágenes, las que más se ven de archivo, de todas, estos niños y mujeres, familias que corren por las calles con los paquetes y que, y aquella cara de decir de repente “¿dónde ha ido mi vida, la que estaba viviendo todos los días? ¿Qué ha pasao?” Entonces empecé a pensar mucho en las víctimas vivas de las guerras, ¿no? Y las personas que tienen que asumir la desaparición de los seres queridos solamente por haber ido a comprar pan, o... Me preguntaba continuamente todas estas hileras de niños comiendo así en comedores anónimos, en hospicios. ¿Qué pasa? ¿Cómo se ha roto su vida, no?

Y teniendo en cuenta que el primer bombardeo contra la población civil fue el Guernica porque hasta entonces en las guerras, pues se morían los soldados porque iban a la guerra. Y si ahora nos fijamos por cada soldado que matan, ha habido miles de civiles. Y ese fue mi interés. Después, tuve la oportunidad de conocer a una mujer impresionante sobre la que ha hecho ahora una cosa Agustín Villaronga, que es Juana Doña. Juana Doña, te recomiendo muchísimo que leas lo que ha escrito porque es que cuenta su experiencia en la cárcel. Una joven comunista y cómo se salvó de ser fusilada, no así su pareja.

¿Está viva todavía?

No, no, no. Le pasó una cosa curiosísima, esto te hablo de Agustín Villaronga, esta cosa que se llama *Cartas a Eva*, que es el encuentro entre Eva Perón, Juana Doña y Carmen Franco. Porque cuando Eva Perón visitó España, le perdonó la vida porque iba a ser fusilada.

¿Es para TVE?

Sí, sí. Muy bonita, ¿eh? Muy bonita. Y desde luego para centrar el tema está muy bien. Y Juana había escrito, publico un par de libros tan emotivos y tan difíciles de leer que eran impresionantes. A su pareja sí que le fusilaron. Entonces ella consiguió lo que llegaban a conseguir la gente para comunicarse en la cárcel. Ella consiguió recibir por parte de él una carta antes de que le fusilaran, que tenía como dieciseis páginas. Entonces, poco antes de morir publicó un libro que Vázquez Montalbán hizo el prólogo, que lo presenté yo, que se llamaba *Querido Eugenio*, y era que contestaba a esta carta. Es una relación epistolar, ella al principio te pone la carta de él, de cómo cree en todo por lo que han luchado y a continuación, ella responde, pero sesenta años más tarde. Y, entonces, poco después de escribir esta carta se puso muy enferma y murió. Yo creo que tenía la necesidad de poder contestar y ya no tenía nada más que hacer en esta vida. Entonces la aparente fragilidad de esta mujer y la valentía delante de las circunstancias adversas e imprevisibles me hizo pensar en crear un personaje, que es el de Iris, que está bastante inspirado en ella y en otras muchas mujeres.

Una de las cosas de las que me siento más orgullosa de esta película es que después gente como Teresa Pàmies. Teresa Pàmies me dijo una cosa que me gustó mucho, que en la película se reflejaba la solidaridad entre las mujeres y que eso era una cosa muy importante y que en esa guerra que había todas estas tradiciones, etc, que las mujeres supieron sostener mucho y tener una fuerza muy grande para sacar adelante muchas familias. Y de hecho, yo sí que empecé a investigar y descubrí que en todas las familias había muchos silencios, muchos secretos, muchos y casi todos estaban en manos de mujeres que no contaban, que no habían podido contar su versión de los hechos, lo que había ocurrido, quién había traicionado, lo que habían sentido al perder, porque no podían permitirselo. No podían, ni pueden. Porque en realidad, yo lo que hice con *Iris* es intentar no hacer una película sobre la Guerra Civil española, sino sobre las víctimas de cualquier guerra. En la película en realidad nunca salen uniformes ni se habla de política, simplemente se trata cuando el conflicto, y la más incivil de las guerras como es una guerra civil entra en una casa y estalla dentro de una familia.

¿Te interesaba más reflejar el aspecto doméstico de las guerras?

Sí, porque cada grano de arroz en una paella contiene toda la paella, pues cada ser humano que sufre de una forma atroz una guerra, entonces por eso de una forma un poco metafórica la protagonista queda embarazada, acaba de conocer el gran amor y su ex marido la viola. Entonces, nunca sabrá esta mujer si su hijo, el hijo que está esperando, en este caso una niña, es fruto del odio o del amor porque han convivido. Entonces supongo que esto son cosas que tú tienes que decidir quién es el padre para poder sobrevivir a ello. Lo que sí es cierto es que, con Jordi Barrachina, trabajamos también este guion de ficción, que en realidad oculta mucho documental. En el sentido de que hay muchos de los diálogos de la película, muchas de las escenas que están extraídas de historias reales. Por ejemplo, este desenlace, esto de que a la gente la encerraran en psiquiátricos y les dieran el electroshocks, porque no les cabían en las cárceles. Este personaje que queda convertido en un cactus, también es muy metafórico en el sentido de que este hombre que lleva toda la vida, pues sí lo encuentra pero ya no es él, ni siquiera sabe si la reconoce. La gente sobrevive a estas tragedias y a esta presión personal tan fuerte, a las torturas y a todo el horror que hay en la humanidad a base de pinchos para defenderse, no para atacar y de buscar el agua a la distancia que esté del suelo. No importa cuál sea.

Además, hay un personaje que interpreta Abel Folk que lo que cuenta le ocurrió a Gila, está en las memorias de Gila, que decía: "a mí me fusilaron mal". Le dieron por muerto, iban cayendo cadáveres y oía que había una fiesta que bebían y comían y se quedó quieto no sé cuánto tiempo. Pues todos estos testimonios sirvieron para buscar todo el recorrido del guion. Y voluntariamente quise separarme de contar las cosas que habían ocurrido y quedarme con las emociones y las vidas truncadas que de ahí salían. La hija que interpreta Mercé Pons, Agatha, es dobladora porque toda su vida ha estado escuchando detrás de las puertas. La niña, nunca le han contado nada directamente. Y creo que la posguerra española es una herida mal cerrada, nunca se ha hablado en las casas de lo que había ocurrido con este tío, con el hermano de no sé quién, quién es éste de la foto, quién es aquella. Y había toda una generación que ha vivido con todo eso. Por eso la hicimos dobladora porque al no contarle las cosas ella de pequeña había aprendido a leer las labiales y por eso era buena en esta profesión hasta que al final se encuentra un documental que, a quien tiene que poner voz, es una voz en off en un documental, que descubre que es su padre, no? Pero todo eso no pretende ser anecdótico sino detenerse un momento a contar otras cosas. La película la pasé por ejemplo en uno de los sitios... Ha habido pases muy impresionantes que eso es

lo que le da valor a una película cuando la haces. Uno fue en Santiago de Chile, que en el Palacio de la Moneda ahora está la filmoteca, en el sótano además. Entonces, hicieron un pase de la película allí y entre el público había gente que había sufrido la historia de los desaparecidos. Lo terrible de los desaparecidos que trato de contar también en la película es que, si no tienes alguien a enterrar no está muerto, simplemente no está y no puedes hacer el duelo bien. Bueno, pues la reacción de esta gente impresionaba mucho porque era... Me acuerdo de un señor que estuvo desaparecido mucho tiempo, y que lo habían torturado y lo había pasado verdaderamente mal. Y me decía que él era consciente que lo había pasado peor su mujer en casa esperándole porque lo que tú te puedes imaginar que le hacen a un ser querido es mucho peor que lo que tú puedes soportar.

En este sentido yo creo que las mujeres como protagonistas en la Guerra Civil, y el papel de la mujer reivindicando la memoria histórica es la de esta cotidianeidad que se rompió y un punto de vista muy callado pero que ha sido muy importante. Y desde luego no hay abuela que conozcas y por lo que sea consigas que te cuente algo y descubras que estás rodeada de mujeres maravillosas y que no tenías ni idea.

Además, la mujer también tuvo un papel muy activo durante la guerra y se refleja en la película con la enfermera y la fotógrafa.

Claro, esta es otra cosa que impresiona cuando estudias la época. Lo más triste en este país era que con la República la mujer española había dado un paso no, estaba a un nivel, en el mundo de la cultura, la educación, en el mundo profesional, era una cosa que ves luego el retroceso que supuso perder esta guerra y perder la democracia y todos esos años oscuros. En realidad, piensa en una cosa que también sale en la película y es cierta, y duró años, que el Franquismo derogó todas las decisiones judiciales de matrimonios, divorcios, etc., que según ellos eran de los jueces 'rojos'. Entonces si en aquel tiempo, tú te habías divorciado de un señor, como pasa en la película, super de derechas y que ha tomado partido por la zona nacional y que ha sido un carnicero y habías rehecho tu vida en otro lugar, el segundo matrimonio no valía, y a la gente la obligaban a volver con su familia anterior, que eso me imagino que debería ser un horror de convivencia. Cada caso de estos mirado con la lupa cuenta.

Claro, es que está muy bien reflejado en la película, que tiene unas consecuencias terribles para ella que acaba en la cárcel por haber hecho algo legal porque ella se ha divorciado.

Pero todo esto está sacado de la realidad. Y por eso Ana Torrent representa esta mujer que ya había conquistado un lugar en la sociedad y que ve como se lo arrebatan, entonces también la quisimos, no de buenos y malos. Ella acaba bien y con una vida burguesa, que también pasó. Mucha gente de alguna manera tenías que pactar con lo que tenías delante.

Era una forma de supervivencia.

Era una forma de supervivencia que hubo gente que fue consecuente toda su vida y lo pasó mal. Y gente que pues pactó, ¿no? Y en este sentido me gustaba meterme en la piel de estas mujeres. Por ejemplo, la protagonista quisimos que fuera fotógrafo como... También bastante inspirada en Inge Morath que era una fotógrafa que estaba casada con Arthur Miller, que se casó con Marilyn y que estuvo acompañando a Cartier Bresson por España y tienen unas fotografías maravillosas. O sea que había... que esta idea de retratar y de conservar, de tener de negativo, de captar lo que está ocurriendo, pues... Por eso se llama Iris, porque es la fragilidad de la flor por un lado y la belleza, y la mirada, lo que a través de los ojos cómo puedes captar todo lo que en tu vida se desmonta. Por eso empieza la película con un bombardeo en un mercado porque también es un homenaje a Guernica, en el sentido de vamos a inaugurar la gran idea que tuvieron de bombardear centros que ahora ya es cada día. Que fue cuando se le dio la vuelta al asunto y los niños, las mujeres eran el objetivo, y siguen siéndolo.

Queríamos sobre todo, insisto, homenajear a las víctimas vivas por la fuerza que han tenido y tienen, por eso no lo queríamos situar en el año..., intentábamos que fuera, no quedaba claro cuando ocurría porque era una forma de decir que sigue ocurriendo. Y que cada día hay miles y miles de almas deambulando, imagínate tú ahora en Syria cuántas Iris hay. Y de hecho cuando hice la película fui consciente de cuántas Iris había conocido yo en mi vida sin saberlo. Tenía una gran amiga que nos llevábamos muchos años. Yo trabajaba, tenía veinte años, quería hacer cine, pero trabajaba de telefonista en una agencia de viajes y a mi lado tenía una señora que se ocupaba del correo que nos hicimos íntimas amigas. Y con el tiempo, claro, ella no contaba mucho de su vida, ¿no? Ella era una mujer que había estudiado, que cantaba, que tenía una educación que sus padres le habían dado. Era de estas mujeres que nombrábamos antes, ¿no? De repente todo cambió y una ha sido profesora de instituto, una no sé qué, o sea que no solamente quedaron encerradas en sus hogares muchas de ellas sino que otras quedaron profesionalmente muy degradadas, y sin posibilidad de abrirse camino. Yo quería homenajear a todas estas mujeres.

¿Cuál es tu reacción cuando la gente comenta “otra película sobre la guerra civil”? Porque es una actitud bastante...

Yo tengo un problema con el cine español, con todas mis películas en realidad que es: Cuando hice *Boom Boom* era una comedia y en ese momento estaban muy mal vistas las comedias. Suerte de Almodóvar. A continuación, cuando hice *Souvenir*, que era una película que contaba una historia de amor entre un, bueno la protagonista era Emma Suárez que era una azafata y él era un japonés. Aquí todavía no había muchos extranjeros. O sea, esta cosa de ir en metro y encontrarte..., aún no habían pasado las Olimpiadas... Esta cosa de, no sé, que luego nos ha parecido muy normal en la película de Sofía Coppola, *Lost in Translation*, aquí era como... Cuando quise hacer *Tic Tac*, me decían que a los niños no les gustaba la magia porque era antes de *Harry Potter*. No sabes lo que me costó convencer de que no es verdad que a los niños no les gustara la magia, que los niños eran niños, lo han sido siempre y lo seguirán siendo, en todas partes y en todas las culturas.

Y concretamente, en el caso de *Iris*, era un momento en que no se quería hablar del tema de la guerra civil. Es justo después que sí interesó recuperar la memoria histórica y tuvo un valor, o tiene un valor y muy importante. O sea esta pregunta claro, por ejemplo, fuera de España sí que hay una idea de que, yo lo sé porque cuando viajaba a festivales, ahora ya evidentemente hay una pluralidad temática y el cine español ya tiene como un abanico temático, una identidad, un imaginario mucho más amplio, pero la idea que tenían es que ibas a Japón, bueno, pensaban que solamente se hacía cine sobre la Guerra Civil, ¿no? Y bueno, además, pienso que el cine que se hizo sobre la Guerra Civil tuvo, o sobre el conflicto, o sobre el país que había quedado, con todo el talento de cineastas como Berlanga o Saura, desafiando la censura, Buñuel, creando estos lugares metafóricos dónde contar lo que ocurría. *La caza*, o sea, tú ves ahora *La caza* es que claro, o *Furtivos*, son películas que cuentan mucho toda esta oscuridad, este pozo donde cayó el país, y no se quería hablar directamente de cómo habían sido las cosas.

Bueno, no se podía tampoco durante mucho tiempo.

No, no, no, evidentemente. Pero después cuando se pudo, quizás se hizo, una forma, no sé si diría que hay muchas películas, yo vi bastantes, ¿no? Faltó aquí quizás más documental, que hubiera la posibilidad de hacerlo hasta que no se hicieron. Y se han hecho algunos y muy buenos, pero esto ha sido como en los últimos diez años. Pero estas cosas si no se investigan muy en serio, y si no hay un punto de vista... Así publicado sí que hemos podido leer.

Muchos autores dicen también que hay muchas, pero hay muchas de lo mismo. Faltan más perspectivas sobre la guerra. Por ejemplo, la perspectiva femenina.

Exactamente, o sea esto de que en aquel pueblo y el tal y el cura, y el cual y el guardia civil, pues esto, sobre todo yo creo que a quién está ocurriendo todo esto, es como si lo miraras desde fuera. O lo haces como *¡Ay Carmela!*, ya es directamente cambiando el tono de lo que estás contando. Pero verdaderamente hay un derecho que tienen las nuevas generaciones a conocer lo que ocurrió, conocer a sus ancestros. Y para mi gusto conocer cómo han sido unas mujeres que han vivido unas vidas que no son las que tenían que haber vivido. No tuvieron oportunidad de tener otra, tanto las que vivían mejor como peor.

Bueno, Patricia Ferreira hizo el documental de *Señora de*, que también lo voy a incluir en mi tesis.

Claro, que está muy bien. Pero todo esto es ya como de más tarde. Hubo una época que se hacían como, bueno, las películas de la guerra eran como frescos diría, pero ninguna tenía la fuerza que tenía el cuadro de Goya del 2 de mayo. ¿Qué pasa? Cuando ves aquel hombre con aquella camisa tan blanca impoluta es como que le conoces, estás personalizando mucho lo que está ocurriendo. Y esto muchas veces es lo que es difícil, saber desde dónde se cuenta y hay algunas que sí ¿eh?, pero tampoco diré nombres pero es verdad que era como una letanía.

¿Quizás pienses que les será más fácil a la generación de los nietos, que se llama, hacer este tipo de películas porque están un poco más alejados del tema?

Sí con el peligro de que hay una serie de información que ya no la pillas.

Claro, una de mis preguntas también era sobre los testimonios directos que ya casi que no nos quedan. Estamos ahora en una época...

Aquí hay una gente, no sé si están funcionando todavía... A mí me encantaron. Es otra de las, del grupo de gente a quien más me gustó ofrecer la película. Hay una asociación que se llama "Las mujeres del 36". No sabes lo guerreras que son y las historias que llegan a contar. Son mujeres que se han ido encontrando a lo largo de los años, algunas de ellas deben de estar muertas ya. Presentaron un libro, no sé si lo tengo yo. Se llama "Les dones del 36". Pero yo he ido a charlas de ellas. O sea, ellas todos estos años quisieron recordar el papel de las mujeres y de lo que habían

sido o no habían podido ser, etc. Y en este sentido pues sí que puedes recoger testimonios, pero claro se te van marchando, ¿no? Se te van marchando.

¿Consideras necesario un reconocimiento oficial del Estado a las víctimas o a sus descendientes? Cómo que todavía no ha sucedido, ¿no?

No, todavía no ha sucedido. Yo evidentemente creo que es este duelo del que te he hablado que no ha podido hacerse. Aquí ha habido... Se cometen atrocidades tan grandes, se han cometido atrocidades tan grandes, cada vez que encuentran estas fosas comunes y aparece la historia de alguien, es que te pone los pelos de punta, ¿no? Que sus nietos no puedan sentir orgullo y conocer cuál es la historia de su familia, a mí me parece como que algo te descoloca y te falta, ¿no? O sea qué demonios puedes estar orgulloso de..., de qué sirve conocer a los grandes nombres de la historia si hay muchas cosas que no han pasado a la historia y que son necesarias para poder andar ¿no? sobre terreno seguro. Yo sí creo que haría falta, evidentemente, pero es que lo veo tan... Es que en este momento este país, como para plantear cosas así tan bonitas.

¿Cuál es tu opinión sobre la 'Ley de la memoria histórica', la del 2007?

Sí, ¿Cuál es mi opinión? Yo no sé si las leyes son opinables. Todo lo que se haga para restablecer, yo lo veo más adelantado, más bien hecho, y a lo mejor es por la distancia, en Argentina. Porque veo tan claro que se cargaron toda una generación. Ahora se presentan a las elecciones gente muy joven, pero han estado muchos años que eran todo abuelos porque es que había una generación que había desaparecido completamente, ¿no? Pues esta necesidad de legalmente poner como un camino a todo eso, a mí me parece importante, pero claro como todas las leyes en este país, como hay tan poco debate en el congreso se quedan muy difuminadas, por eso digo que no son bastantes contundentes. Se quedan 'aigualidas', que decimos aquí.

¿Crees que tu película ha contribuido a reflexionar sobre la necesidad de reconstruir este pasado, o de reflexionar o pensar en este pasado?

A mí me gustaría que esta película sirviera para, si ahora fuera esto la rueda de prensa porque la vamos a presentar hoy, te diría que lo que quiero contribuir es al futuro, no al pasado, que cuando te detienes en la absurdidad de algo tan incivil y bestia como cargarse a la gente así...

Pero si no conocemos nuestro pasado no podemos proyectar un futuro...

Por eso, por eso. Digo el futuro en el sentido de alertar qué cosas pueden ocurrir. Y sí creo que hay que conocerlo bien para poder no repetir una serie de errores. Y a través del cine, tú puedes comunicar, pues mira, solidaridad, por ejemplo. Solidaridad y deseos de sobrevivir ante tragedias que se convierten en personales cuando son de fuera. En eso sí me gustaría mucho haber colaborado. Y sobre todo la colaboración es cuando pasas la película y hay debates y entonces te encuentras con gente que cuenta sus experiencias, o que cuenta sus vivencias o... Es súper bonito

¿Recuerdas alguna anécdota de alguien que te contara algo, o te felicitara?

Sí, bueno, desde luego esta de Mujeres del 36, lo que te he contado antes de Teresa Pàmies, que salió muy emocionada. Bueno, gente que se identificó mucho con algún familiar suyo, sobre todo madres. Muchas mujeres te venían a decir es que ahora me doy cuenta, me has hecho pensar mucho en mi madre. Esta posibilidad tan pequeña de cambiar un poco el punto de vista de cosas que ya sabes. Yo más que informar de cosas nuevas, lo que te decía del futuro, me refería exactamente, que el hecho de poder ver una película, te dé un clic de decir, "ostras, pues mi tía aquella no sé qué". "O La señora aquella que todo el mundo la encontraba tan rara, pues resulta que..." Claro lo que había pasado. Gente que se esconde y se disfraza, gente que tenía que disfrazarse bajo una capa de lo que no son, saberlo, más que nada es aplicarlo. Diría, más que tener un conocimiento de lo que ha sucedido en la historia en mayúsculas me gustaría que a través de esta película pudieras detenerte a mirar las fotos de tu familia en lugar de, no sé.

Sí, porque por ejemplo en mi caso, yo tengo una conexión personal con la guerra porque mi abuelo estuvo luchando y estuvo preso, porque somos de Alicante y es zona republicana, estuvo siete años en una prisión en el norte, se casó en la prisión, mis tíos nacieron mientras él estaba en la guerra, entonces yo tengo una película ahí que quizás en un futuro me quiera animar a contarla, pero ha pasado justo que ya están muertos. Entonces, he despertado un poquito tarde porque realmente en la escuela no se cuenta nada. Toda la historia de España, los reyes visigodos...

Sí, el Cid, los Reyes Católicos y cuando ya tienes que entrar en materia no se cuenta nada pero en las familias tampoco se contaba nada porque tampoco se podía contar nada y había una herida mal cerrada. Y por eso está muy bien que ahora se rescaten a través de libros, y a través de películas y a través de documentales, y a través de conversaciones con los familiares que quedan.

De hecho, ayer estaba hablando con mi padre y le estaba intentado sacar información y me decía “no sé, es que el yayo no hablaba mucho”. Mi padre tampoco tiene esa información.

Tu padre sería pues como la Agatha de mi película, que lo que pillas lo pillas así de, “bueno, de estas cosas no se habla”, “no ahora no hablemos de esto”. Y era todo un mundo de silencios y un silencio muy sofocante. Y en este sentido es que si tienes como curiosidad evidentemente no podrás tener el puzzle completo nunca, te tendrás que inventar una parte pero es que te será tan fácil inventarte con cosas de otros.

Así es un poco como tú has construido tu película.

Es como se puede hacer, como hay que hacerlo. No sé, yo hice un documental sobre Alberti y tuve la suerte de poder hacerlo con la hija. Y me contó todo lo de Alicante. Ella se llama Aitana porque lo último que vieron sus padres cuando salieron de España en avión era el monte Aitana. Otra mujer impresionante, María Teresa León, una de estas mujeres que también quedaron hundidas con todo eso, ¿no? Entonces estos pequeños ejemplos, no tienes que ir muy lejos, cada uno en su casa con un álbum de fotos de tres generaciones se encuentra este agujero en medio, este cráter, y lo puedes llenar, pues con historias de otros. Pero que la historia colectiva está hecha de muchas historias individuales. Y que las historias individuales muchas veces están protagonizadas por mujeres aunque no se les vea el rostro y que han tenido un papel decisivo y que es importante reconocérselo, o devolverles, a ellas ya no porque muchas ya no están, pero sí ver reflejado en sus nietas que sean capaces de luchar y de estar orgullosas del pasado de su familia. Y aunque no sea exactamente el suyo, pero se parezca, yo creo que eso es importante. ¿No? Ir del pasado al futuro pero sobre todo teniendo en cuenta las nuevas generaciones. Yo quería hablar a gente joven que no está interesada en el tema, que no sabe, que muchos ya cuando se les habla del Franquismo no sabe ya de qué se les está hablando. Por eso que sobre todo por lo que me has preguntado antes ¿otra de la guerra civil? Pero bueno ¿para quién es? Para gente que ya no quiere saber nada porque ya lo han contado en sus casas, no. Es para gente que tiene ahora veinte años y que tiene derecho a preguntarse cosas al salir del cine sobre su propia familia, sobre las mujeres que han formado parte de sus familias.

¿Hay algún motivo especial por el que decidiste cambiar de actores para representar a los protagonistas a una edad más avanzada?

Ah, sí, sí, porque fue una cosa muy criticada y yo estoy encantada. Mariana Cordero me parece que podía haber sido Silke, una mujer impresionante. Además, gente de esta generación ya te cuentan también sus cosas ¿no? En el caso de él porque me gustaba que quedara la duda de si era él o no. Hay gente que ve la película y está convencida de que no es él. Y hay gente que ve la película. Yo por ejemplo estoy convencida de que sí que es él, pero porque yo quiero que sea él, pero no estoy segura tampoco. Igual que tampoco sé si Agatha es hija de Óscar o es hija de Julián. Y en el caso de Silke, yo no sé si me gustan mucho las películas en que una actriz disfraza unas arrugas hasta donde no da. Lo veía un poco postizo y mira que está mucho tiempo. Me gustaba la idea primera porque no sé hasta qué punto queda reflejado en la película, pero había una cosa como poética, vale es ella, pero le puede haber pasado a cualquier otro. No está ahí esperando verla disfrazada, es que...

Yo también lo interpreté como, bueno, ellos ya no son los mismos tampoco.

No son los mismos, aparte que puedes evolucionar hacia... ¿Qué película he visto yo ahora de Leonardo Di Caprio que está de Viejo? Y es que dices está súper bien caracterizado pero no me está contando más porque sea él. No, era un corte tan grande de años que no, ni me lo planteé. Me gustaba hacerlo así, de hecho.

¿Y estás trabajando en algún proyecto ahora mismo, en algún largometraje nuevo?

Sí, estoy trabajando en, trabajando es un decir. Mira una de las cosas que tengo pendientes y muchas ganas de hacer es y que me encuentro con muchas dificultades. Quiero hacer un documental sobre Pilar Miró. Porque considero que Pilar Miró es una mujer que ayuda muchísimo a conocer la transición en España. Ella es hija de la posguerra. Un libro que te recomiendo, el de Diego Galán. Yo creo que te ayudará porque ella se siente culpable desde que nace porque nació después de la guerra. Y entonces como que todo es su culpa. Hasta los niños sentían toda la desgracia que caía en esta casa, lo que ha ocurrido. Hija de militares y aparte de que era una mujer. Si quieres conocer de dónde sale que haya tantas directoras en España. Bueno, yo presenté ahora una película suya que era *Gary Cooper que estás en los cielos*, no sé desde pensar que había muerto ya Franco y por *El crimen de Cuenca* le pedían siete años de cárcel cuando a Tejero le pedían tres. Mira tú qué despropósito. Con qué fuerza ser atrevió, se atrevió. Pero esto es difícil porque depende de TVE.

¿Y por qué estás teniendo dificultades?

Porque no le ven interés. Porque ya encargaron... Diego Galán escribió este libro y luego hizo un reportaje. Es que los personajes que son interesantes. Yo estoy detrás de mujeres que han sido muy importantes y son muy desconocidas. Y me gustaría hacer unos retratos en películas de algunas de estas mujeres porque me sorprende mucho continuamente con cada trabajo que hago, digo, busco, ah, esta, ah, ¿qué hizo? Ni idea, ¿yo me dedico a esto y no la conocía? Una de las primeras directoras que hubo aquí, se llamaba Rosario Pi, yo tengo una tía que fue actriz y he descubierto que han hecho una película juntas. Pero ahora está muerta mi tía, ya no le puedo ir a preguntar nada. Tengo un proyecto... Tengo varios. Tengo un proyecto que me gusta muchísimo, que quiero hacer una cosa que no se ha hecho nunca aquí, que es hacer una película sobre una novela de Ana María Matute. No entiendo por qué no han hecho nunca nada. Y tengo una comedia porque la comedia ayuda a contar estas cosas. Se llama *Puzzle* y va también de una familia, pero en este caso lo que puede acarrear una herencia entre hermanos y lo poco que conocen de la familia, con secretos también, pero bueno otro género. No mira, hoy lo pensaba con el caso este de Galicia que parece ser que todo es por la herencia. Los abuelos le dejan la herencia a la niña. ¿Y dices? ¿Una madre puede matar a un hijo? Tengo ganas de llamar al coguionista para decirle "oye nos quedamos cortos con el guion". Que aparecía un hermano de África, y peleas por dinero, pero la cosa esta de que te vas a ir de este mundo y no te podrás llevar nada y el valor que tienen las cosas materiales. Pero en plan de comedia. Y estoy en ello.

¿Te está o ha estado afectando la crisis a la hora de seguir con tus proyectos?

Completamente, mucho.

Los directores no se salvan, ¿no?

De hecho por definición, por el oficio que escoges estás en crisis siempre porque como vales lo que vale tu última película y siempre tienes que empezar de cero y cada proyecto genera un interés u otro, pues tienes que estar siempre como adelantándote a buscar cosas. Esta ansiedad de ay no sé si mañana podré vivir de esto o voy a poder hacer lo que quiero es una cosa que ya forma parte de tu ADN, desde el día que decidiste dedicarte a esto ya estás en la cuerda floja. Lo que pasa que ahora es todo tu alrededor, toda la estructura se tambalea. Y en el sentido del horror este del IVA que se ha cargado toda una red de producción, se ha roto la

cadena de transmisión de todo el proceso, ¿no? Tanto de los que hacemos como de los que ven. Es que tú ahora puedes ir un fin de semana al cine y no hay nadie.

¿Cuánto cuesta una entrada ahora?

Nueve euros. Es que claro, una familia de cuatro, coche, canguro. Y claro que sí que afecta aunque bueno yo también doy clases en la universidad. Y escribo. Hago otras cosas con lo cual vas compaginando. También quiero hacer teatro, quiero hacer una cosa muy bonita con Lola Salvador, otra mujer interesantísima. Lola, ella nació en Barcelona y también tiene una historia que no conoce de su familia y siempre que viene aquí quiere buscar en archivos y tal. Hay tanta gente que se entera de cosas. Queremos hacer una cosa de Emilia Pardo Bazán y Benito Pérez Galdós, que también interviene el Franquismo de por medio, pero bueno. Tengo muchas ganas de rescatar todos estos personajes que han sido muy importantes y no se han.... Hemos vivido una etapa muy bestia en que no se ha valorado a nadie, y menos a mujeres. Al revés, se han ninguneado totalmente. Eso es un hecho.

¿Crees que el aumento de directoras en las últimas décadas está creando una imagen más positiva y real de la mujer en la pantalla?

En la pantalla, para mí son dos temas distintos. Uno es el papel, si tú diriges una película depende del contenido de esa película de cómo trates a las mujeres en tu película. No por el hecho que lo dirija una mujer significa que estén mejor tratadas. Es posible que haya menos mujeres florero y haya más mujeres profesionales, personajes femeninos en las tramas.

Más complejos.

Sí más bien contruidos. Esto seguro, pero bueno, como que aquí ahora hay, es un campo en que creo que no solamente hay directoras, hay productoras. Hay muchas mujeres en este sector. Que lo había con bastante normalidad en el mundo literario porque desde hace muchos años han sido apreciadas, pues desde Carmen Martín Gaité hasta Josefina Aldecoa, bueno es que hay muchas mujeres, Cristina Fernández Cuba. Pero esta sorpresa de que las mujeres dirigieran sus películas, al revés. Ahora mismo yo todas las amigas directoras que conozco están rodando o a punto de rodar. Silvia Munt va a rodar ahora, María Ripoll, Judith Colell. Y de alguna manera, no sé, desde el punto de vista profesional creo que está bastante equilibrado, desde el punto de vista de mejorar la imagen de la mujer en la pantalla, es que hay una labor a hacer educacional y aquí en este país que no hay todavía una alfabetización artística seria, pues los patrones de cómo tienen que ser las

mujeres, no solamente es en el cine, desde luego en la publicidad, es en muchas otras cosas.

Bueno, pues sí, de repente haces películas que son así, que hacen cosas magníficas, pero a veces es que hay unos patrones, en la política, por ejemplo, las mujeres que vemos más en los medios, es que no te puedes sentir identificado con estos trajes chaqueta y estas maneras de hablar. Ya no te digo lo de Ana Botella en Brasil, que está estudiado que tenía que ser una chica Almodóvar. Eso era el propósito. Entonces está mejorando el papel de la mujer en la sociedad y esto lo ves con los jóvenes. En la universidad yo no sé qué ves tú, pero yo veo... Me hace gracia porque precisamente esta semana que estamos empezando con un grupo de diez alumnos hacen un ejercicio que acabará siendo un corto. Y hay una chica que siempre escribe lo que presenta, es un hombre el protagonista, y ayer ya leyó la última versión que ya tenía nombre. Se llamaba René. Bueno, todos entendimos siempre el resto de los alumnos y yo que estaba hablando de una mujer. Y es que está clarísimo que ella tenía ganas de contar esta misma historia a través de una mujer pero se empeña en hacerlo a través de un hombre.

Porque se piensa que le va a llegar a todo el mundo.

No lo sé por qué lo hace. Hoy era esta mañana. Hoy le he dicho, oye, René decídetes si es hombre o mujer pero es como más fácil porque se nota que las cosas que cuentas son más de mujer que de hombre.

¿Alguna vez te has sentido discriminada en la industria cinematográfica por el hecho de ser mujer?

Yo no. Yo he visto que... A ver. Es que yo empecé de meritoria, dirección auxiliar, script, ayudante y yo lo he pasado peor, por ejemplo, yendo a llevar el coche a arreglar. Entrar en un taller de coches siendo mujer es peor que entrar en un rodaje porque sinceramente la gente que se dedica al cine... Yo sé que hay directoras que dicen que los distribuidores, yo eso no lo he vivido así por lo tanto no lo voy a decir. No es en este país, para los jóvenes ha habido muchas dificultades. O sea, debutar con tu primera película, que te escuchen, hacerte un sitio, pero les ha costado también a los chicos, bastante. Entonces, también le costó mucho desde luego. Antes te hablaba de Pilar Miró, cuenta unas cosas atroces y no tendría derecho a decir que he tenido estos problemas porque los he tenido de tipo con el megáfono, dar órdenes y de repente pues encontrarte hombres que no les gusta que les mande una mujer, pero eso no creo que sea exclusivo, pero no me he sentido discriminada.

En el cine hay una falta de modelos femeninos, ¿tienes alguna directora en especial que te haya inspirado?

¿Alguna directora en especial que te haya inspirado? Yo tengo varias mujeres que me han inspirado y te he nombrado algunas. Sobre todo, ya no tanto directoras, si no actitudes. Hombre, la directora que no puedo decir que me haya influenciado pero que me tiene fascinada hasta la muerte es precisamente la primera directora que hizo una historia de ficción en el mundo y no ha pasado a la historia. Se llama Alice Guy. Esta señora secretaria de Monsieur Gaumont.

Que hizo muchísimas películas.

Muchísimas películas.

Se está haciendo ahora un documental sobre ella, no sé si lo conoces.

¿Quién lo está haciendo?

Creo que se está haciendo en EEUU pero vi una campaña para recaudar fondos porque es que están que no lo pueden terminar y... Si quieres la información yo te la puedo pasar.

Yo tengo su biografía. Me acuerdo perfectamente que yo descubrí a esta mujer. Aquí hay unas mujeres, las que organizan el festival de cine de mujeres, la Mostra de dones, que son la bomba, Marta Selva y Ana Solà. Pues mira, el año del centenario del cine me invitaron a presentar una película de Alice Guy, y yo no sabía quién era, claro. Lo miré. Y me impresionó tanto estar en la filmoteca, la sala a tope y ver cómo reía la gente. Y yo pensé, desde luego esto de que te ignoren, ya pasaba desde el primer día. Me sentí muy identificada con las cosas, cómo las contaba, etc. Tú antes me has preguntado ¿te has sentido discriminada? Yo creo que tenemos un problema las mujeres que nos auto apartamos del, no sé si es de carácter, pero que no te das una importancia artística muchas veces. No hay muchas mujeres que les guste figurar. Entonces hay muchas que hacen un trabajo muy bien hecho y lo tienes que descubrir después porque no te enteras. En todas las profesiones además. No es casualidad que cueste tanto en un museo nacional ver obras de mujeres. En este sentido sí que es una clara discriminación.

Claro, es una discriminación social.

Pero que ya pactada y no sé, y tampoco hay muchas mujeres que, hay algunas que han luchado mucho pero no se les ha notado. Y esta pobre la Alice Guy acabó en una casa en Francia.

Sí, yo tengo muchas ganas de leer la biografía.

Yo te la recomiendo. Tienes mucho para leer pero...

Sí tengo bastante. Entonces vamos a terminar ya, ¿qué consejos les darías a las mujeres que quisieran ser directoras?

Que se fíen de su mirada, que tengan mucha curiosidad. Es que creo que en esto las mujeres tenemos una ventaja brutal para el cine, para dirigir. Por ejemplo, tú entras en esta habitación y eres una mujer y te fijas, si está ordenado o desordenado, qué estás leyendo, qué está encendido, qué está apagado, cómo es el cubrecama. Entra un hombre aquí y se va y a lo mejor tú le dirías, "hombre, bonita mesa la de cristal", "ah no me he fijado". De entrada las mujeres durante milenios han estado organizando familias. Y un rodaje hay toda una familia, hay mucha psicología de unos y de otros. Y cuando diriges tienes esta sensación de gran familia que ya lo manejas, ¿no? Por eso digo que se fíen de su intuición, y de su curiosidad y de su mirada. Y a por ello porque bueno, de hecho, creo que todo el mundo tiene talento. Y estos trabajos como el cine que son trabajo en equipo, en realidad saber convencer a la gente que tienes a tu alrededor de que te preste su, de que te dé lo mejor que tiene, su creatividad para componer la tuya es un regalo tan grande, que tener el arte de hacerlo solo puede ser si tienes generosidad y mucha curiosidad y mucha intuición y tienes claro que quieres luchar por lo que crees.

Vale, pues muchísimas gracias.

A ti.

Interview with Patricia Ferreira

(25 July 2012)

Mi tesis versa sobre la representación de la España del siglo XXI en el cine dirigido por mujeres. De tu filmografía he seleccionado dos películas *Para que no me olvides* y *Señora de*, ya que abordan el tema de la recuperación de la memoria histórica que tanto auge ha tenido en estos últimos años. ¿Por qué te interesa retratar este tema en el cine?

Supongo que es por un tema, porque tiene que ver con la justicia. Creo que todo el mundo, y más los que trabajamos en el mundo de la creación, hay temas con los que nos sentimos más implicados o que nos tocan más, ¿no? Y esa sensación de justicia o de injusticia que viene muy unido al tema de la memoria histórica es lo que más me motiva. Creo que es por ahí, el sentido de la justicia lo que me mueve a plantearme temas que creo que se han tratado de una forma injusta en este país. Fundamentalmente eso. No es que tenga, concretamente en este tema de la memoria histórica relacionada con la guerra civil y la posguerra, no tengo ningún antecedente familiar que me acerque a ello, no me ha tocado de cerca. Me ha tocado de cerca, pues claro la posguerra nos tocó a todos los españoles. Pero digamos que no he tenido ningún caso concreto que me haga ser más sensible al tema, creo que simplemente es un deseo de justicia y una especie de levantarme ante una situación que veo profundamente injusta.

¿Crees que tus películas han contribuido a reflexionar sobre la necesidad de reconstruir ese pasado que parecemos haber olvidado durante tantas décadas?

Pues no, supongo que los que nos dedicamos a cosas creativas, a la creación no pretendemos cambiar el mundo con lo que hacemos, ni siquiera influir un poquito. Lo contamos porque necesitamos contarlo. Lo contamos porque queremos contarlo, porque queremos contar esas historias concretas pero no entra en el planteamiento voy a influir sobre... Quizás sí, en un momento dado piensas que puedes poner un granito de arena, que es una voz más en la marea de voces que se pueden alzar sobre un tema, pero no, ¿que si ha significado algo? Quizá, quizá *Señora de* pueda tener un significado mayor en este sentido que *Para que no me olvides*. En definitiva, *Para que no me olvides* es una historia, es una ficción. En cambio, *Señora de* sí trata de personas reales, ¿no? Y sí es muy cercana porque al estar tratando un tema que no es especialmente político con mayúsculas, como es el de la vida cotidiana de las mujeres normales de una época concreta, pues es más

inesperado. O sea, todo el mundo espera que hablemos de las víctimas, los represaliados, y *Señora de* habla de gente corriente y sin darse cuenta estaban también sufriendo unas consecuencias de una situación histórica. Entonces, creo que en ese sentido sí puedo haber hecho un poquito más, puedo haber incidido más en algún pensamiento en algunas personas ¿no? Al mostrarles de cerca unos personajes que reclaman que les han quitado parte de su vida y de lo que hubieran querido ser, ¿no?

Ya que te has puesto a hablar de *Señora de* ¿me puedes contar cómo escogiste a las protagonistas? ¿Había algunos criterios de selección?

Sí, había bastantes criterios de selección. Al final son trece mujeres y se llegaron a entrevistar a unas trescientas. El ámbito de estudio eran Galicia y alrededores, León; no por nada, no porque en Galicia sea diferente. Esto se podría haber hecho en cualquier otra parte de España y el resultado hubiera sido muy, muy similar. Pero bueno, era una iniciativa de una productora gallega y por eso se hizo allí. No hay ninguna otra explicación de por qué es en Galicia y no en otro sitio. Entonces sí se vieron, se llegaron a ver hasta trescientas personas. Buscaban unos perfiles muy concretos, o sea, que fueran representativas de muchos estratos sociales, de diferentes tipos de educación, con diferentes problemáticas, de diferentes partes de Galicia para que fueran del campo, de la ciudad, o sea que fuera como un muestrario muy representativo de mujeres que habían pasado su adolescencia, no juventud, su madurez en la época franquista de la posguerra. Y luego era muy importante que quisiera también, que quisieran hacerlo, que de verdad quisieran hacerlo porque lo que no podíamos arriesgarnos es a que durante una entrevista todo el mundo te cuenta cosas y llega el momento de que te ponen la cámara delante pues no te atreves, o te da vergüenza, ¿no? Entonces era muy importante que además quisieran hacerlo y que las dejaran hacerlo porque a veces había personas interpuestas que después de decimos que sí ellas, nos decían que no. Hijos, hijos que no querían que sus madres hablaran. Y luego también necesitábamos una capacidad de comunicación al contar las cosas. O sea que sí, fue un proceso de selección largo y con objetivos muy concretos.

Vale, ya has contestado a varias de mis preguntas, si fue difícil que participaran en la película. Y también había leído el caso de que un hijo no dejó a su madre participar en el...

Uno no, varios.

Varios casos. ¿Te parece entonces que la influencia del franquismo y su estructura particularmente patriarcal sigue aún viva en nuestra sociedad?

Yo creo que está ahí, está ahí. No de una forma virulenta ni exclusiva. Esa estructura sigue estando ahí, es una estructura mental muy difícil de cambiar, ¿no? Es más cuando cambiamos de régimen político, no de régimen perdón, de gobiernos, de partido, de partido político se nota. Evidentemente cuando un partido más a favor de la igualdad de la mujer y todo esto está en el poder, pues se nota una relajación de esas costumbres. En cambio, cuando vuelve un partido político más de derechas pues se nota que vuelven esos patrones a poner más en marcha, ¿no? Pero está ahí, está ahí. Evidentemente no es lo que se cuenta en *Señora de*, donde las mujeres prácticamente no podían salir a la calle ni abrir una cuenta en un banco, ni cosas así, ni trabajar sin pedir permiso, no es eso. O sea, legalmente está todo, como sabes igualado, ¿no? Pero sí sigue habiendo un sustrato de organización patriarcal con tintes machistas. Sí, lo sigue habiendo en España. Yo creo que sí.

¿Te parece que la vida de estas mujeres ha cambiado con la democracia? Y según sus respuestas y las entrevistas ¿crees que están disfrutando de una tercera edad más plena y más rica que su juventud?

Yo creo que las mujeres que salen entrevistadas en *Señora de* con toda la rabia que tienen dentro por no haber podido hacer lo que querían en el momento que podían haberlo hecho, pero con toda esa rabia, sí han llegado a la democracia con una pasión absoluta y lo han abrazado con auténtico deseo, ¿no? Y sí, o sea, las mujeres de 70, 75, 80, 85 años en este momento en España se han dedicado a disfrutar de esa democracia, a hacer cosas que antes no hacían, a pensar cosas que antes no pensaban. A atreverse a pensar y a hacer. Yo creo que sí, que esas mujeres concretamente, las que salen en *Señora de*, pero muchas otras que, hay muchas más que esas trece en España.

Claro, es una representación.

Sí, yo creo que sí, que son unas generaciones de mujeres que han sabido aprovechar la democracia y se han lanzado a ella con verdadero, vamos con placer y disfrute, en general. Sí, sí, creo que sí. Es más, lo dice la teórica, la que habla de la Sección Femenina. Mercedes lo cuenta, cómo las que más disfrutamos de la democracia porque éramos las que más habíamos estado sometidas a unos criterios que no eran los nuestros, ¿no?

¿Mercedes se llamaba la socióloga?

Mercedes Noval, me parece ¿no?

El testimonio de la socióloga es muy interesante y contrasta mucho con los testimonios de las señoras y ¿ella hizo su tesis sobre la sección femenina? Entonces complementa con información más teórica. Me llamó mucho la atención que comentara que las líderes de la Sección Femenina no se ajustaban a los cánones de mujeres que ellas tanto promovían. Eran mujeres independientes, cultas, solteras... Y por otra parte, ellas tuvieron bastantes problemas para integrarse en la democracia porque eran rechazadas.

No tanto por ser rechazadas. O sea, es verdad. O sea, lo curioso es que Pilar Primo de Rivera y todas las dirigentes de la Sección Femenina, mientras decían a las demás que tenían que quedarse en casa, todo lo que les decían ¿no? Que si iban a trabajar que por lo menos tuvieran un trabajo de menos importancia que el de su marido para no hacerle sombra, pero que lo importante era la familia. Y que lo que había que aprender era a bordar y a cocinar. Y que la unión de la familia y la madre como pegamento de esa unión es lo que iba a llevar a España a la grandeza. Pues bueno, ellas predicaban eso en los colegios, en los centros, en todas partes, todas las niñas fuimos educadas así. Y en cambio ellas eran mujeres independientes, mujeres con profesiones, mujeres que ganaban dinero, mujeres que muchas veces no se casaban, que se dedicaban en cuerpo y alma a una profesión y no eran monjas tampoco. Entonces sí, eso era curioso como entendían que ellas sí podían llevar ese papel de iniciativa y de profesionalidad y en cambio recomendaban, bueno, obligaban a todas las demás a que no lo hicieran. Y es verdad que claro llega la democracia y estas mujeres se quedan en el aire. No tienen cabida en las nuevas estructuras institucionales, en las nuevas estructuras de funcionariado. Ellas, en definitiva eran funcionarias del régimen. Cuando el régimen desaparece, se quedan sin trabajo y no hay forma de recolocarlas en los estamentos públicos. Y sí, la caída fue absolutamente brusca, cosa que como dice Mercedes no pasó con los hombres de la Falange, que sí que todos encontraron su camino. Y a ellas pues llegó la democracia, se acabó la Sección Femenina y ellas se encontraron en la calle directamente.

Me interesaba saber por qué el testimonio de la socióloga aparece en blanco y negro. Si hay algún motivo.

No, es un motivo de gramática, quiero decir de gramática de cine. Cuando estás haciendo un documental que te interesa mucho que las ideas queden claras y que

lo que quieres contar quede claro. No es como cuando estás haciendo la ficción en la que entra la imaginación del espectador. También cuando estás haciendo un documental los signos de puntuación gramaticales del lenguaje cinematográfico hay que utilizarlos, ¿no? Entonces es simplemente para decir no. Ellas son las mujeres que dan su testimonio y esta mujer no da ningún testimonio simplemente habla como una especialista o como una teórica. No tiene más sentido.

Y el espectador directamente conecta.

Exactamente. Ahora me van a dar un poco de explicación histórica, ahora nos van a meter en historias de mujeres con nombre y apellido concretas.

Me pareció curioso porque ella tenía un *look* así muy de la época de antes. Quizás es coincidencia... Bueno el testimonio que más contrasta con todas es el de la abogada. Y me gustó mucho porque también demostraba que había mujeres avanzadas para la época... Y además recuerda ese pasado con un gran sarcasmo. ¿Cómo la encontrasteis?

Bueno buscábamos una, queríamos encontrar una profesional que hubiera sido de las primeras en su carrera. El cómo, ni me acuerdo, porque cuando haces una búsqueda de este tipo preguntas a todo el mundo, investigas en todas partes, llamas a los colegios profesionales. No es que lo hiciera todo yo. Tenía un estupendo equipo de dos personas de apoyo de documentación. Y bueno, pues supongo que me lo ofrecieron así. Seguramente llamamos al colegio profesional de abogado de Galicia y me han dicho que las mujeres más antigua colegiadas son tal y tal o algo así. No creo que fuera más complicado.

Pero no había muchas, ¿no?

No, no había muchas. De hecho, no fue difícil escoger. La suerte es que una de las que podía entrar en esos parámetros pues encima era tan comunicativa y con tanta capacidad de contar cosas como era esta mujer, ¿no? Eso también es cuestión de suerte, que eran pocas pero justo una fue estupenda.

Vale, creo que podemos pasar a *Para que no me olvides*. Tanto *Señora de* como *Para que no me olvides* nos ofrecen una mirada retrospectiva de diversos aspectos sobre la guerra civil y la posguerra, ¿cuál es tu reacción cuando la gente comenta “ah, otra película sobre la guerra civil”?

Normalmente pienso que no están haciendo más que hablar por no callar. Es una muletilla. Es como quien dice, “qué tiempo hace hoy”. Es como hablar con frases

hechas. No tiene mayor verdad, ni siquiera mayor verdad objetivamente, ni siquiera mayor verdad subjetivamente. Cualquiera persona que diga eso, si a continuación le preguntas cuántas películas sobre la guerra civil o la posguerra ha visto o recuerda simplemente de nombre, no te va a saber decir más que una o ninguna. Entonces no es real, es una frase hecha. Es una frase hecha. Ahora la pregunta sería, ¿cómo se ha llegado a eso? O sea, como en lugar de que la frase hecha no sea ¡ah, qué bien, otra película que trata de nuestra historia!, o sea ¡oh, qué horror, otra película sobre la guerra civil! Cómo hemos llegado a esa segunda postura.

Volviendo a qué pienso yo cuando me lo dicen, pues hablo de otra cosa, no se trata de ponerse a discutir, a no ser que sea una persona que merezca la pena, que te des cuenta que merece la pena hacerla cambiar de opinión, por el motivo que sea. Si no es imposible porque sabes que la gente utiliza frases hechas para hablar, para ir por la vida, es muy difícil que cambien de opinión. No, no es fácil cambiarlo. Ahora cómo hemos llegado en este país a decir eso en lugar de decir ¡oh, qué bien otra película sobre nuestra historia! Esa sería la pregunta, ¿no? Y ahí pues no sé supongo que tiene que ver toda nuestra historia, el pacto de la Transición que tanto se nos ha alabado, pero que efectivamente en ese pacto se tuvieron que ceder muchas cosas como no hablemos del pasado y fundamentalmente ahí se creó esa idea de que de la guerra civil mejor no hablar. Entonces, lo del enfrentamiento de las dos Españas mejor no hablar, vamos a superarlo. A mí me parece un error, me parece que se cometió un error en ese momento histórico, pero bueno tampoco sé cómo lo hubiera hecho yo, quiero decir (risas).

Bueno, comentaba con otra directora que por ejemplo películas sobre los nazis o Alemania vemos un montón y no tenemos ningún problema y ellos han hecho películas hasta la saciedad. Pero luego cuando parece que es tu pasado, como que los españoles prefieren pasar página, ¿no?

Sí, pero es por eso, eso viene de..., quizás denota la hondura de esa tragedia, ¿no? El hecho de haber tenido que decidir en el momento de la transición que para conseguir tirar para adelante era mejor olvidar, eso demuestra una brecha muy fuerte, ¿no? Demuestra mucho miedo a que vuelva a ocurrir, ¿no? La pena es que ya se nos podía haber pasado. Ya sabemos que no va a volver a ocurrir, por ahora. Pues entonces volvamos a decir “¡qué bien que tenemos películas españolas que hablan de nuestra historia. Y qué bien que las haya!” Ahora yo cuando veía las conclusiones sobre el curso este de “ETA vista desde el cine”, que estuviste tú la semana pasada un día, pues estaba leyendo las conclusiones y era estupendo, decía sesenta películas, no sé cuántas películas que han tratado este tema en

España, ¿no? O sea poderlo estudiar así, poderlas reunir y poder estudiar cómo se ha visto desde el cine el tema de ETA desde los propios cineastas, vascos mayormente. ¡Qué bien tenerlas! ¿no? Si no las tuviéramos sería una pena.

Y probablemente cómo ha influido el cine también a tratar ese asunto.

Sí, claro. Cómo ha salido de la pura noticia del periódico, a ser eso interpretado por creadores, por cineastas o por guionistas también. Entonces, eso me parece fantástico que pueda existir, ¿no? Pues qué bien que haya cien, doscientas películas sobre la guerra, o 200 películas sobre la transición. Pues es fantástico.

¿Y consideras necesario un reconocimiento oficial del estado a las víctimas o a sus descendientes?

Bueno, se han ido haciendo pequeñas cositas. Sí, de hecho, ya con la Ley de la Memoria Histórica ya se supone que ya se ha cumplido. O sea, claro, ya está. En la ley está. Tampoco soy una especialista en la ley. Si se llevara a cabo todo lo que pone en la ley, podríamos decir, se ha hecho justicia. El problema es que no se lleva a cabo. Ha sido pues a lo largo de muchos años actos muy inconexos, realmente no ha habido un pronunciamiento absoluto de decir: “reconocemos lo que pasó, reconocemos que sí hubo víctimas, que sí, que los vencidos sí se convirtieron en víctimas, y que hubo una represión brutal durante la posguerra”. Y que estas personas deberíamos, debería pedirles perdón alguien. Bueno, pues así tan claro como eso no se ha hecho. Se han ido haciendo pequeños actos, cosas, ¿no? Lo que pasa es que efectivamente a mí me parece profundamente injusto que quien no lo ha sufrido diga que los que lo han sufrido pues ya tienen bastante (risa sarcástica). Es realmente injusto, ¿no? Yo, o sea no yo, yo quiero encontrar el sitio donde está enterrado mi abuelo en la cuneta de no sé qué y porque he vivido toda mi vida queriendo saber qué fue de mi abuelo al que fusilaron. Y de repente sale otro y dice “por dios otra vez con las cosas de la guerra”. “No oiga, mire, es mi abuelo, es mi tragedia, o sea, respétemela”. Es una situación que me parece profundamente injusta.

¿Crees que llegará un día en el que se sabremos toda esa verdad que todavía no sabemos sobre los crímenes?

Yo creo que ya se sabe, ¿no? O sea, se sabe, hay mucho historiador, mucha gente que ha estudiado la época y se sabe, lo que pasa es que no se divulga, que no es materia de estudio en los colegios. Claro que está ahí escrito y claro que está documentado todo, pero no divulgado.

Pero sigue habiendo gente que no sabe dónde están enterrados el cuerpo de sus familiares.

Sí, eso sí, pero eso ya es suerte que te lo hayan contado o no, que lo hayas averiguado o no.

Para que no me olvides nos muestra muy bien la diferencia entre generaciones con respecto a esta forma de afrontar el tema y nos recuerda que ya casi nos estamos quedando sin testimonios directos. ¿Qué pasará una vez que esto suceda? ¿Te parece que es urgente rescatar todos estos testimonios antes de que desaparezcan? ¿Y tuviste en consideración esto mientras estabas haciendo el guión de la película?

Claro que es urgente. Cada vez quedan menos y no queda ya casi nadie que haya vivido en primera persona una represión, la represión de la posguerra, o sea, cada vez queda menos gente. Sí hay hijos de represaliados, o hijos de asesinados, hijos de encarcelados, pero bueno cada vez queda menos gente. Lo que es un deber que apetece mucho cumplir de los historiadores de no dejar que nadie se muera sin haber contado su historia. También un poco lo intenté yo con estas señoras. En definitiva, no eran represaliadas directas, eran simplemente víctimas de una situación social, pero sí, sí tenía una idea de por favor, antes de que se mueran dejen dicho lo que querían haber dicho. Y sí, claro que es urgente en muchos casos. Todavía quedará mucha gente que tiene cosas que contar y no lo han hecho. Hay mucho, hay mucho hecho. Lo que pasa es que es verdad que es un problema de difusión. Parece que todavía cuando estás haciendo algo así como intentar reconstruir una historia de un pueblo, de los represaliados en un pueblo o algo así, parece como que lo hagas todavía de forma clandestina.

Como que te tengas que justificar...

Es una sensación, en lugar de decir, mira qué bien, este historiador o historiadora se va a dedicar a estudiar cómo fue la represión en este pueblo. Pues en lugar de eso parece que tengas que pedir perdón por estar haciéndolo.

La historia personal que nos cuenta Mateo ¿está basada en un caso real?

No, no está basada en un caso concreto, está basada en muchos casos. O sea, la historia de Mateo pues tiene trocitos de historias que yo había conocido, leído, me habían contado. No es una historia lineal de nadie concreto, sino un compendio de historias.

En esta película es clave el hecho de no olvidar. Y David escribe para no olvidar lo que su abuelo le cuenta y Mateo a su vez escribe para no olvidar a David. ¿Hay algún simbolismo en el hecho de que el árbol en el que Mateo se escondía es precisamente un olivo, porque se considera el árbol de la paz?

(Risas) No.

Es una forma como de reconciliación. ¿O es una coincidencia?

No, no, es una coincidencia.

Los investigadores siempre vamos más allá.

No, no, no, en este caso, no. O sea, las películas muchas veces se..., o sea hablo de películas que es de lo que sé ¿no? Pero me imagino que las novelas, o cualquier acto, cualquier otra creación, se nutren de muchas fuentes, de vivencias personales, de recuerdos que ni siquiera recuerdas que tienes, de estudios, aquello es una amalgama de cosas, y cuando llega el momento de ponerte a escribir o ponerte a pensar, unas imágenes surgen, te salen. Seguramente el olivo sale de mi infancia, sale de los olivos del sitio donde yo pasaba todos los veranos, y de que nos escondíamos allí para lo que sea. Es como una amalgama que tienes y de repente todo se va plasmando al servicio de una idea, al servicio de un argumento o de una historia. No, no, es más prácticamente no me pongo nunca a buscar un simbolismo. A veces sale sin darte cuenta y otras veces sí eres consciente.

El color azul de *Sé quién eres*, *Sé quién eres* pues tiene un color azul. En cambio, *Para que no me olvides* tiene un color dominante rojo toda la película, está buscado porque es una película muy a golpe de corazón de meterse en el corazón de los protagonistas. Entonces ese simbolismo del color rojo sí está buscado, pero pocas cosas más se buscan así de una forma consciente. O quizás hay más de las que en este momento te digo. Lo que pasa es que las buscas en este momento y luego tampoco te acuerdas. Sí, seguramente a la hora de decidir, los directores tomamos decisiones continuamente, ¿no? Estamos reconstruyendo una realidad que antes no existía, tenemos que construirla. Antes no existía. Llegas ahí, a ese rincón de ahí y existen cuatro sillones de colores. Y ahí tienes que recomponer una historia de unos señores mafiosos que se han reunido para ver cómo cruzan con un camión de cocaína desde aquí hasta Francia y entonces bueno, pues eso tienes que reconstruirlo, aquello tiene que parecer que de verdad es una reunión de mafiosos. Entonces empiezas a construirlo: cómo van vestidos, qué están tomando. Cada cosa tienes que decidirla y cada cosa la decide la directora o el director, nada es por casualidad. Entonces en estas selecciones continuas que haces pues muchas

veces sí, estás introduciendo elementos que son simbólicos. Dándote cuenta o sin dártela, pero sí. Ahora concretamente el olivo, no (risas).

En Alicante David le explica a Clara los últimos momentos de la guerra y le pregunta sorprendido “¿nunca te han contado estas cosas?”. Si en casa no se suele hablar de este tema ¿crees que les toca a las escuelas contar mejor este capítulo de nuestra historia y hacerlo de una manera imparcial? ¿Debería mejorarse en general la forma de explicar la guerra y el franquismo a los jóvenes?

A ver, no puedo presumir y decir exactamente de cómo se explicaba porque no lo sé. Lo que sí sé es que no lo saben. Entonces deduzco que es que no se explica. Deduzco que en los libros de texto no se llega a explicar cómo el episodio más importante de la historia reciente española. Entonces me da la sensación de que no. Pero la verdad es que no soy la persona indicada para...

En mi caso recuerdo que dimos toda la historia de España, los Reyes visigodos, etc. Llegabas al siglo XX, vimos la república y la guerra, cuarenta años de franquismo, uy se nos ha acabado el curso, no podemos seguir hablando. No sé ahora en estos momentos cómo se tratará el tema.

Tú lo estudiaste seguramente y seguramente es por el estilo.

Yo tengo 33 años.

Seguramente es por el estilo ahora.

No es una coincidencia que Irene sea profesora de arte dramático para invidentes.

Bueno, como te decía antes nada es una coincidencia. Todo responde a algo, lo que pasa es que ese algo muchas veces no lo has elaborado del todo. No es algo que te has sentado en una mesa y has dicho “quiero que Irene sea profesora de invidentes porque...” A lo mejor no lo has llegado a elaborar ni has elaborado su significado simbólico. Es el resultado de una serie de experiencias o de vivencias que te parece que la mejor forma de comunicarlas un día la encuentras ahí y dices: profesora de arte dramático y además de actores ciegos. Casualidad no es. Ya me acuerdo. Era el personaje de Mateo que habla con las personas muertas aunque no las ve. A través de ahí llegué. La existencia no tiene muchas veces que ver con la mirada, pueden existir cosas que ves, y no estoy hablando de nada mágico ni de nada esotérico porque esa presencia continua que tenía Mateo de los personajes,

de su hermana, de sus padres, luego de su nieto, esa presencia real, están aquí, están a mi lado, eso era real para él, aunque no lo viera y de ahí me llevó a pensar en el mundo de la ceguera y de ahí me vino la idea de que los alumnos de Irene fueran ciegos, para poder también introducir la idea de que no todo lo que existe se ve. Por ahí iba la cosa.

Hemos estado hablando antes un poco de la crisis también en la charla ¿te está afectando a la hora de seguir con tus proyectos? ¿Y te está influyendo en los temas que eliges para escribir películas?

Supongo que me está influyendo. Lo que pasa es que en este momento por las circunstancias concretas por las que yo he pasado este año pues no puedo decir que me haya influido. Claro, o sea, termino película, la estreno, premio y los productores con los que he trabajado quieren seguir adelante con otra. Pues bueno, en principio no me está afectando directamente, pero llegará, llegará porque..., llegará mañana cuando vea que esta que buscamos financiación pues no la encontramos. Llegará, sin duda, porque está ahí para todos, no para uno sólo. Para todos, nos va a llegar a todos.

También me gustaría hacerte unas preguntas sobre la situación actual de las mujeres directoras en la industria cinematográfica. ¿Crees que el aumento de directoras en estas últimas décadas está creando una imagen más positiva y real de la mujer en la pantalla? ¿Sería ese uno de tus objetivos como directora?

Yo lo que quiero es deshacer esa idea del aumento de las mujeres en los puestos directivos, concretamente en la dirección, porque no es verdad, o sea. Hubo, sí es verdad en la década de los 90, aumentaron mucho las directoras, pero seguimos siendo el siete o el ocho por ciento del total. Entonces, ¿de qué se habla cuando se habla de gran aumento? O sea, ¿de qué estamos hablando? No existe ese gran aumento. Unos años pasamos de ser del 7% al 9% o al 10% y otros años pasamos al 10%, pero una media del 8%, pongamos. Entonces no es verdad, no es un aumento real. No es así, entonces no sé por qué hablamos de eso. Que hay más que en los años 40 en España. Sí, ya claro, faltaría más. Quiero decir, que ya tendría maldita gracia, ¿no? Pero porque no hace falta. No hace falta la fuerza ni nada. Para ser bombero, me imagino que piden una serie de requisitos, que a lo mejor es más difícil que una mujer consiga, pero para ser director de cine no hace falta más que tener oficio y saber manejarte en el medio y tener cierto talento y ya está. Y haber estudiado. No hace falta nada más. Con lo cual no es real que haya

más. Seguimos estando en el 8%. Y en otros puestos directivos en el cine pues lo mismo, guionistas, directivos o productivos, guionistas, productores, los porcentajes van por ahí, por el 10, por el 15%, pero no salimos del 20% en algunas cosas como productores. O sea que no es verdad. Ahora cambiando sí, seguramente lo que sí conseguimos las guionistas y las directoras mujeres es, sin proponémoslo, no es una cuestión voluntaria, pero sí introducimos en las películas mujeres protagonistas que tienen importancia, que conducen la acción, que son activas. Que es lo normal porque las conocemos, las introducimos y en eso puede que esté cambiando algo y la visión de la mujer en el cine, pero vamos en un 10% de las producciones.

¿Piensas que ya estáis empezando a crear referentes y están y a tener influencia en otros directores, tanto hombres como mujeres? En el caso de Josefina Molina es obvio, imagino.

Yo aquí le daría un gran valor, tremendo, a CIMA, a la asociación de mujeres cineastas. Y el hecho de habernos asociado y de habernos reunido nos ha dado una fuerza y una autoestima que es lo que hace que sí estemos influyendo. O sea, en este momento contamos, pero contamos porque estamos reunidas. De una en una, no contaríamos. Contamos y actualmente hemos machacado tanto con que los personajes femeninos no son reales, con que el cine va por detrás de la sociedad. Hemos machacado tanto a la gente, a nuestros compañeros, a los periodistas en esta red de CIMA que hemos formado, que hemos conseguido que haya un cierto cambio a la hora de plantearse pues un personaje, de plantearse un jurado en un festival. O sea, ahora la gente se plantea que los personajes femeninos tienen que ser creíbles, tienen que ser adaptados a la realidad, pueden ser activos también. Yo creo que eso es mérito, no de cada una individualmente, que además ni siquiera lo hemos intentado individualmente porque no habría servido. Yo creo que eso es mérito de CIMA, es mérito nuestro en definitiva pero es el mérito de haber conseguido una voz común en este momento.

Sí yo creo que es una iniciativa excelente. ¿Alguna vez te has sentido discriminada en la industria cinematográfica por ser mujer?

Sí, claro, sí muchas. Alguna que me haya enterado, y muchas que no me habré enterado. O sea, evidentemente. Desde el principio de mi carrera. Cuando yo empecé en Televisión española yo era un bicho raro. Ya estaban Josefina y Pilar Miró, pero luego las que veníamos detrás, pues éramos bichos raros. Nos reían las gracias. Decían mira esta chica que quiere ser realizadora. Y bueno, más o menos te dejaban. Pero luego llegado el momento de un presupuesto mayor, un proyecto

más grande pues nunca me lo daban. Efectivamente. ¿Por qué? Porque era peor que los demás, pues no creo porque ahí están mis compañeros realizadores que se quedaron ahí en realizadores de televisión y yo llevo cuatro largometrajes, cinco, si cuento *Señora de*.

Sí, sí. Lo contamos.

Quiero decir que bueno, pues al final la vida ha demostrado que a lo mejor yo no era menos talentosa que mis compañeros, a lo mejor lo era más porque de hecho he tenido mejor carrera que ellos después, pero durante mucho tiempo no se confiaba en mí para un presupuesto más alto, para un programa más importante, para una empresa, un proyecto de más riesgo. ¿Por qué? Pues me da la impresión de que a lo mejor porque era mujer, a lo mejor. Porque si no ¿por qué?

Es una discriminación un poco inconsciente, ¿no?

Es una discriminación un poco inconsciente, sí. No creo que nadie se plantee realmente “a esta no que es chica”. También lo hay, ¿eh? Pero es una discriminación inconsciente que te hace elegir siempre como más fiable, como más seguro, como más profesional entre dos perfiles, entre dos personas, al hombre antes que a la mujer. Entonces sí, supongo que de forma, de algunos he sido consciente y de muchos otros no habré sido consciente. Mejor no ser consciente porque si no te pararías en la vida. No puedes ser consciente de las limitaciones que te crea el ser de un género o de otro porque si no pues te quedarías en casa que es lo que se hace en muchas ocasiones.

Y ahora un poco la pregunta contraria, ¿has contado con algún apoyo en el mundo cinematográfico que te haya ayudado a convertirte en directora?

Con mi primer apoyo estoy enfadada con lo cual (risas). Sí, hay un momento en que hay un productor que confía en mí y en un proyecto. Y eso es fundamental. Por mucho que en este momento yo le pueda poner muchas pegas a la trayectoria de Gerardo Herrero tengo que reconocer que Gerardo Herrero es el productor que en un momento dado confió en mí y puso en marcha mi primera película. Y eso es así. Siempre se lo reconoceré, ¿no? Y luego he encontrado apoyo también lo mismo digo a partir de la creación de CIMA. O sea, a partir de la creación de CIMA, la sensación es que nos apoyamos mucho mutuamente, que estamos pendientes de las directoras, las guionistas, todas las que somos miembros de CIMA estamos pendientes de las carreras de unas y de otras y procuramos colaborar en la medida de lo posible. Aparte de que somos competidoras muchas veces por el mismo

proyecto. Evidentemente yo puedo competir por el mismo proyecto con Inés o con quien sea, pero da igual. Sí siento que ha sido un gran apoyo.

Y estábamos hablando antes de nombres de directoras, ¿ha habido alguna directora específica que te haya inspirado?

Bueno y concretamente, perdona, una figura fundamental yo creo que para todas está siendo Josefina. No hay mejor embajadora, ya la has visto. Ella ya se ha olvidado de quien es ella. Es la embajadora de las cineastas españolas. Es nuestra mejor defensora. Ella que ya es una figura con todos los premios del mundo. No sé si has llegado a la lista de premios que ha hecho Fernando, o sea los tiene todos ya, todos, no puede tener más, los tiene todos. Bueno, pues una persona así, que podría desentenderse e irse de viaje a Chicago y sigue ahí pero no por ella. Sigue en plan de absoluta defensora de las mujeres cineastas. Ha sido un apoyo fundamental.

La pregunta era si hay alguna directora específica que te haya inspirado y que haya sido tu modelo.

Modelo cinematográfico no lo recuerdo, modelo vital sí. Pilar Miró y Josefina Molina eran mis, eran los modelos en los que yo me fijaba y decía bueno, ellas están aquí son realizadoras de televisión, como yo quiero ser algún día, cuando era auxiliar, son directoras de cine, o sea evidentemente ellas dos son un referente. También Cecilia evidentemente, Cecilia Bartolomé, sí claro esos son unos referentes muy claros.

¿Y de directoras extranjeras?

Referentes como modelo vital al que querer acercarse, no. Sé que cuando todavía era una adolescente de quince años y empezaba a ir a ver películas difíciles, no las del cine de la vuelta a la esquina sino películas de arte y ensayo. Sí tenía un especial interés en ver películas de Agnès Varda o de Lina Wertmüller porque me parecía que iba a encontrar cosas más cercanas, pero no, me notaba como con ganas de verlas pero no podría nombrar a una concreta. Te digo estos nombres, pues Vera Chytilová, la checa. O sea, nombres que ahora ya son unos clásicos, en ese momento pues yo quería ver sus películas. Supongo que me habrán influido, pero no lo sé.

Para concluir, ¿qué consejos les darías a las mujeres que quisieran ser directoras?

Seguramente el mismo que les daría a los chicos. Que no se lo daría diferentes por ser mujeres. Lo que les diría es que esta es una profesión muy difícil, muy competitiva, que mucha gente quiere serlo y entonces lo que tienen que hacer fundamentalmente es prepararse y prepararse, estudiar, trabajar y luego practicar muchísimo, todo lo que sea. Y la tercera cosa, creo que la más importante de todas. Ver mucho cine. Ver mucho cine porque llega un momento en que los estudiantes que quieren incorporarse a la profesión, una idea que tienen creen que eso es original, ¿no? Pero es evidente una cuestión de que no han visto todo lo que se ha hecho, ¿no? Entonces si ves mucho, ves mucho, ves mucho empiezas a deslumbrar cuál es tu personalidad. Creo que eso es importante. Y por ser mujer, pues nada, que no la corte nada. No hay nada en el mundo que te vaya a dar más satisfacciones que haber escogido bien a lo que quieres dedicarte. No hay nada más, ni hijos, ni padres, ni familia, ni maridos, ni nada. No hay nada más. Si escoges bien y si llegas a hacer lo que quieres hacer, eso no te va a traicionar, todo lo demás te va a traicionar, el novio, los hijos, todo (risas). Pero el trabajo, si has escogido el que has querido y te has empeñado a fondo, no te va a traicionar. O sea, puedes estar sin trabajo, puedes ser una parada, pero seguirás siendo directora de cine. Pero sin ningún corte, sin ningún tipo de precaución vayan a por ello.

Interview with Carla Subirana

(21 June 2012)

Mi tesis versa sobre la representación de la España del siglo XXI en el cine dirigido por mujeres. Uno de los temas centrales de mi investigación es la recuperación de la memoria histórica, que tan popular ha sido desde principios de este siglo. Tu película me ha llamado la atención porque me ha parecido una forma muy innovadora y nada dramática de contribuir, con tu historia personal, a la reconstrucción de una parte trágica de la historia de este país. ¿Crees que tu película ha ayudado a reflexionar sobre este tema o ha hecho que la gente se plantee ciertas cosas sobre su pasado?

Bueno, *Nadar* es una película muy abierta y a pesar de que hay un trabajo de guion muy estructurado y pensado está lleno de lagunas, más que plantear respuestas o afirmar, dar certeza sobre el tema de la posguerra o de la vivencia de familias similares a la mía plantea preguntas y todo ese espacio vinculado con el agua está pensado para dar espacio al espectador. Las piscinas son un poco la metáfora de la memoria para que el espectador pueda ir respirando entre toda la información que se le va dando y pueda proyectar su propia historia. O sea que sí que tiene de una manera consciente, se busca ese espacio de reflexión para el espectador. Luego que lo consiga o no eso ya no lo puedo decir yo, puedo tener el feedback de los diferentes pases que he hecho en el cual yo he presentado la película. Y luego los espectadores algunos se han acercado a mí y me...

¿Recuerdas algún testimonio?

Sí, hubo uno en Méjico que me llamó mucho la atención. Después de un pase vino un señor de unos 95 años, y me dijo que él por cuestiones vinculadas a la guerra era un exiliado pero curiosamente del bando nacional, y que él pues durante muchos años había cerrado la puerta a la memoria. O sea, había querido cerrar ese episodio de su vida y nunca más había hablado ni con sus hijos que habían nacido en Méjico y que él había sido reticente a la hora de ir a ver esa película. Finalmente había ido con un amigo suyo y le había emocionado la película. E incluso me lo dijo con lágrimas en los ojos y que le había emocionado mucho la película y que le había hecho reflexionar después de todos esos años y que me felicitaba por la película. Ver a un señor de 90 años con lágrimas en los ojos es bastante impresionante.

Esto está relacionado un poco con la siguiente pregunta. A lo largo de la película vemos una actitud muy negativa a la hora de hablar del pasado. Tanto tu madre como tu abuela nunca te han hablado de tu abuelo, tú no sabes qué pasó. Luego cuando intentas investigar te encuentras con otras personas que se niegan también rotundamente, como la hermana pequeña de tu abuela, o uno de los entrevistados, no recuerdo muy bien el nombre, pero se niega en banda a decirte nada ¿piensas que la generación de nuestros padres y de nuestros abuelos aún no está todavía preparada para hablar del tema y nos toca a nosotras hacerlo, como a los nietos de la guerra civil?

Abel Paz es el que tú dices, anarquista bastante significado y que ha escrito muchos libros. Murió hace un par de años o así (silencio).

¿Entonces crees que nos toca a nosotros rescatar ese pasado?

Sí. Después del estreno de *Nadar* curiosamente muchos periodistas o críticos me decían: es curioso porque sois los nietos que estáis recuperando la memoria sobre la guerra civil. La generación de nuestros padres es como la generación de la transición es igual a la generación del olvido. Digamos que para crecer para ir hacia delante necesitaban olvidar, no hablar de ese tema. Evidentemente ese no hablar venía directamente cosechado por sus propios padres, o sea, la generación de nuestros abuelos, que no hablaban porque lo habían vivido, por el miedo, por todo lo que significó después la represión franquista sobre todo si estabas en el bando republicano. Entonces era como una ola de silencios que la primera generación, la que lo vivió genera una ola que provoca el olvido en la segunda generación vinculada a un momento político muy claro en España que es la transición que es igual a levantemos la moqueta, barramos y escondámoslo todo debajo de la alfombra, y volvamos a bajar la alfombra. Y luego ya la tercera generación que oye ecos de una historia que le es muy cercana pero a la vez muy lejana porque sus abuelos, nuestros abuelos vivieron, combatieron, murieron y de ambos lados. Entonces te llega eso pero sin saber bien, bien qué y ahí es cuando nacen las preguntas. Yo creo que nuestra generación tanto a nivel de literatura o cine ha querido levantar la alfombra y saber por qué...

Yo recuerdo en nuestras clases de historia de España aprendíamos todo desde el principio llegaba la guerra civil y pa, pa, pa

¡Y se acababa!

En un día ya terminabas

O precisamente nunca llegabas al episodio de la guerra civil porque se había acabado el colegio, ¿no?

Estaba todo muy bien planificado.

Pum. Justo junio fin de curso, y nos quedamos en la preguerra.

A lo largo de tu investigación descubres que tu abuelo había sido sentenciado a muerte por atraco a mano armada, o por varios atracos y que tenía otra mujer, e incluso que tenía otro hijo. Estos son hechos que desmitifican la figura que tú habías creado de tu abuelo, ¿crees que uno de los motivos por los que la gente no se atreve a investigar en su pasado es por el miedo a la decepción y prefieren idealizarlo?

Sí, yo creo que muchas veces la situación cómoda es aceptar el legado o el discurso del legado familiar tal y cual nos lo dan, esa es la vía más cómoda y a veces pues incluso la más natural, pero yo creo que todos estamos obligados a investigar sobre nuestro pasado, no para descubrir cosas terribles sino para descubrir un poco qué hay detrás de esos relatos unívocos y de bloque.

Qué hay de verdad y qué de mentira.

Entonces ahí cada uno tiene que construir su propio relato vital y nuestro propio relato vital está lleno de presente pero también de pasado y es ese pasado es la memoria, entonces yo creo que es interesante que cada uno pueda mirar hacia atrás. Para reconstruir tu propia historia, para situarte mejor en el presente, si entiendes de dónde vienes, te ubicas mejor en el día de hoy.

Espero que esta no sea una pregunta muy personal, pero hay un momento en la película en la que tu abuela te confiesa que ella no sabe nada de la historia de tu abuelo. Paradójicamente, poco después tu abuela enferma gravemente y pierde toda la memoria. ¿Fue este un evento que te impulsó a llevar a cabo tu investigación y seguirla hasta el final?

Digamos que *Nadar* es el fruto de muchos años de trabajo. Entonces yo empecé filmándola a ella, que son las imágenes más domésticas, de cámara doméstica, con la cámara de la universidad, sin ningún objetivo concreto. O sea, no existía el proyecto de la película. Simplemente la filmaba porque era un ser querido. Y era como el hecho de filmarla era la manera de mantener su memoria y su presencia. Entonces, fue pasando el tiempo y esas imágenes, después nace el proyecto, y esas imágenes se incorporan al proyecto. Yo estuve como, el proyecto en sí se

alargó durante ocho años entonces, durante todo ese tiempo la vida iba transcurriendo. Entonces el proceso de mi abuela y esa metáfora digamos tan clara entre su proceso de pérdida de memoria, y la pérdida de memoria histórica y la búsqueda de esa figura fantasmagórica fantasmal que es mi abuelo estaba muy claro. Lo que sí que sucedió de manera no planeada es el diagnóstico de mi madre. Esto sí que fue posterior al hecho de que la película existiera. Yo cuando estaba trabajando en la película mi madre fue diagnosticada de alzhéimer. Digamos esa realidad vital se incorpora de una manera brutal en la película porque no podía dejar de explicar eso, ¿no? Era como una historia que se repetía. Una desmemoria a través de una enfermedad que se volvía a repetir a través de primero de mi abuela y después de mi madre.

Vemos que los consejos de Joaquín Jordá te van guiando y te van mostrando un camino. ¿Crees que sin su ayuda habrías hecho otra película diferente?

Quizá sin su ayuda no la hubiese hecho. Él digamos que fue la primera persona que confió en esa historia y me decía literalmente “Carla tienes una historia cojonuda, tienes que hacer una película. Tienes todos los elementos de guion”. Él era un gran guionista y una persona muy brillante. Entonces yo le iba contando pues los avances en mi investigación sobre la figura de mi abuelo. Y de esas conversaciones fue naciendo sobre todo el relato mítico, ese relato en blanco y negro que es un poco el resultado de decir: yo no soy periodista y yo no quiero, no pretendo hablar de la historia en mayúsculas, yo me voy a centrar en un relato familiar sobre cómo la sombra de la guerra se proyecta sobre una familia en particular. Qué sucede en esa micro familia, cuando la historia en mayúsculas ataca, agrede inevitablemente a la historia en minúsculas, que es la historia familiar. Entonces yo hubo un momento que me di cuenta de que por mucho que siguiera buscando era como buscar una aguja en un pajar. Yo ya no podía reconstruir la historia de Arroniz. Era demasiado tarde, había pasado demasiado tiempo. Entonces esa cronología está ahí llena de agujeros y vacíos. Cuando yo me di cuenta que eso era así, entonces en vez de ir en contra de eso y aferrarme a la búsqueda de datos y más información, me di cuenta de que *Nadar* era precisamente eso, una película llena de lagunas y de ausencias y de preguntas sin respuesta.

¿Y estas escenas de ficción fueron idea tuya?

Entonces de alguna manera las conversaciones con Joaquín, yo le explicaba cosas sobre Juan Arroniz, y entonces él de un pequeño dato del sumarísimo, en el

sumarísimo pues había descripciones de los atracos, de como él iba vestido: “Juan Arroniz, iba, encabezaba el grupo, iba con..., era el que llevaba la voz cantante”, me acuerdo de aquella frase, “iba con sombrero típico de la época años 30 de alas y con un traje de chaqueta gris”. Entonces, de esos pequeños adjetivos Joaquín decía, claro, claro, debía de ser un hombre muy carismático y seguro que fumaba tabaco de liar en aquella época. Él construía el personaje como guionista está acostumbrado a través de unos pequeños datos a construir un personaje, entonces a mí su relato me fascinaba, pensé e hice esa reflexión. Él está construyendo un personaje de ficción y yo a través de lo que leo en el sumarísimo proyecto una serie de imágenes. ¿Cuáles son esas imágenes? Son las imágenes de mi imaginario personal y del imaginario colectivo que podemos tener a través del cine, de la historia del cine.

¿Esas imágenes las habías tenido tú durante años sobre él o empiezan a crearse a raíz de estas conversaciones y estas descripciones?

Bueno, al leer el sumarísimo y al haber estas descripciones de alguna manera me viene a la mente esa imagen de gánster, de personaje así un poco canalla como el personaje protagonista Jean Paul Belmondo en *À bout de souffle*, ambientado en el cine negro. O sea ese cine con claros y sombras donde no acabas de ver la cara del malhechor de alguna manera porque anda ahí entre luces y sombras, ¿no? Entonces claro digamos que se mezclaba ese imaginario personal con ese imaginario colectivo generado a través del cine y de ahí nacen las imágenes y secuencias de ficción.

Justo estas escenas rompen bastante con las películas que tratan el tema de la guerra civil o el franquismo. Están dotadas de una estética que nosotros no relacionaríamos con esa época de España, son siempre películas sobre la miseria, ¿crees que en ellas radica el éxito de tu película?

No, para nada.

Porque para mí me pareció muy original, muy extravagante. Y todas las películas de la guerra civil son un poco como tenemos que saberlo, pero qué duro. Acabas y tu película no era así.

Pero tú ¿hablas a nivel estético o a nivel de lo que transmiten las secuencias?

Un poco de las dos cosas porque son más reales siempre, mas visuales, ves a la gente pobre pasando hambre no tenemos esas imágenes de héroes.

Claro, yo precisamente con estas imágenes en blanco y negro al utilizar de una manera muy consciente la estética del cine negro, precisamente lo que quería era desmarcar de cualquier tipo de reconstrucción histórica de alguna manera poner muy evidente que eso era una ficción y que eso formaba parte del relato de la mitificación del héroe, en este caso del personaje ausente y esta figura femenina la cual deja un espacio y crea esta familia de mujeres donde su ausencia marca el carácter específico de esta familia digamos. O sea que y de alguna manera también es una decisión formal el hecho de que existan estas imágenes en blanco y negro porque desde un principio sí que tenía muy claro que era una película muy de mosaico, de imágenes muy variadas porque allí el cine, las imágenes más domésticas cuando yo filmo a mi abuela, luego están la parte más estética, visualmente que son las imágenes de la piscina donde hay todo un trabajo de la luz, un trabajo de planificación y de estetización de alguna manera y luego está este cine negro, que es la ficción, yo tenía muy claro que había como esta suma visual y que estos tres elementos que finalmente daban la película.

Tengo curiosidad por saber qué fue lo primero que te vino a la cabeza cuando viste la foto de tu abuelo. Si recuerdas ese momento. Si ha pasado a la historia.

Sí, yo creo que es curioso porque se mezcla como yo creo que... A ver cómo lo puedo explicar. Cuando hacemos el relato de una historia mezclamos la realidad con nuestra propia ficción o nuestro propio relato. Yo creo que mi respuesta iría por ahí. El recuerdo del momento es una mezcla entre una sensación que pude tener en ese momento, una impresión y el trabajo, el relato que he creado alrededor de ese momento. Porque al final todo relato está lleno de fantasía y de un poco de realidad y un poco de ficción. Entonces no me acuerdo. Sinceramente yo creo que lo que más se acerca a la respuesta sobre lo que me preguntas es lo que hice en la película. Es un poco...en realidad lo que más importa es el rostro, más que el rostro en sí, cuando veía esa foto la constatación que dos momentos históricos en ese momento se estaban mirando. La pregunta en la película dice algo así como la voz en off, como si él me mirara y dijera “¿cómo demonios has llegado hasta aquí?” Es como de repente los años 30 se confrontan de una manera brutal a través de una mirada de una nieta a un fantasma a través de una foto de dos momentos históricos que nunca se han tocado, nunca han podido ir de la mano.

¿Cómo conseguiste la foto?

Cuando conocí a la hermana de Arroniz ella tenía la foto colgada en su salón. O sea mi tía-abuela, la tenía ahí colgada y durante toda la conversación la foto estaba presidiendo la conversación, entonces era algo (eso sí que lo recuerdo) que pesaba mucho. Después de tanto tiempo digamos yo estaba hablando con su hermano o sea lo más cercano que podía haber llegado, incluso tuve suerte porque ella era muy mayor, estaba muy bien de memoria justamente. Y claro toda la conversación la presidió su foto. Eso era muy bonito y a la vez muy curioso.

Tú en cierto modo llegaste a conseguir tu verdad sobre tu pasado, pero ¿crees que se llegará a conocer la verdad sobre los crímenes perpetrados durante la guerra civil y el franquismo algún día?

Yo creo que la palabra verdad es muy incierta, muy injusta. Yo a través de *Nadar* no llegué a ninguna verdad y la verdad es una palabra tan fuerte. ¿Cuál es la verdad? Cada individuo sobre una historia personal tendrá una verdad, ¿no? Luego ya esto ya es una cosa vinculada a la historia en mayúscula pues claro todo el tema vinculado con las fosas comunes, si poder averiguar aún hoy en día pues dónde están físicamente.

Creo que esta pregunta se refiere más a los hechos históricos más que a las historias personales como puede ser en tu caso. Bueno quizás una pregunta más general. Por qué se está haciendo mucho, mucha investigación por saber y descubrir.

Sí, hombre yo creo que ha habido tantos años de desmemoria en este país que todo trabajo que ahonde y trabaje en profundizar sobre la memoria aportará luz a una época digamos oscura por la tristeza de los hechos. Porque una guerra civil es lo peor que le puede suceder a un país y luego por el proceso de desmemoria en el que hemos vivido, o sea, el proceso de transición de alguna manera a través de... El pacto de la Moncloa no deja de ser una manera de decir bueno pues para tirar para adelante borrón y cuenta nueva. No hablemos del pasado, incluso el PP sigue teniendo ese discurso. Eso ya forma parte del pasado. Bueno señores pero es que para situarnos en el presente necesitamos saber qué ocurrió en el pasado. Es necesario como país para cicatrizar para cerrar heridas y me da la sensación de que la guerra civil en este país sigue siendo una herida abierta, ¿no? Y cuanto más silencio y más se trabaje en línea de la memoria más tiempo va a tardar en cicatrizar.

En este documental haces una investigación muy extensiva sobre la vida de tu abuelo pero al final el documental acaba siendo un homenaje a tu abuela y a tu madre, y a tu familia, en general, ¿te sorprendió este giro?

No, es una decisión de guion. De alguna manera el proyecto nace como de esta búsqueda de este fantasma, con esta obsesión de quiero saber quién fue este hombre, qué hizo, dónde vivió, cómo murió etc, etc. Pero a lo largo de la investigación fui encontrando algunos datos en los cuales yo iba llenando la hoja que yo me había puesto como título cronología de Juan Arroniz. Iba poniendo algunos datos pero me di cuenta de que esa cronología era imposible de rellenar, era absolutamente imposible. Entonces digamos que ahí es cuando sucede el giro, el punto de partida de la película. Bueno voy a hablar precisamente de esas ausencias, de ese no poder saber más, en vez de rellenar los datos, hablaré de lo que no sé.

Entonces ¿fue a raíz de ahí que escribiste tu guion?

Sí, hice toda una serie de entrevistas a nivel de historiadores, gente vinculada con el derecho para poder interpretar el sumarisimo de urgencia, hice todo un trabajo de campo sobre el tema histórico y luego a nivel personal hice todo un trabajo personal de decidir dónde estaba la frontera entre mi intimidad y mi historia personal y una historia que podía traspasar a una pantalla y ser vista por otra gente, son como dos trabajos en paralelo. Uno es el trabajo interior y el otro es el trabajo de investigación, más trabajo de campo. Entonces *Nadar* es como una fusión de esas dos cosas.

¿Podemos deducir que tu pasión por el cine te la ha transmitido tu abuela?, ¿te hubiera gustado que ella hubiera visto la película?

Me hubiese encantado que la hubiese visto. Pues no sé. Ella trabajaba en los lavabos del cine "Alexandra" y yo iba muchos fines de semana, ella me cuidaba y estaba pues horas y horas allá en el hall. Es un hall precioso con una moqueta así grande y hacía pues acrobacias, volteretas, el pino. Cuando no estaba el jefe pues corría por ahí y según qué películas hacían, me colaba en las salas de cine. Puede ser que mi pasión por el cine venga de ahí, no lo sé. Si no fuera así...está bonito pensar que fue así.

Digamos que sí. También me gustaría hacerte unas preguntas sobre la situación actual de las mujeres directoras en la industria cinematográfica. Espero que no te moleste mucho. ¿Crees que el aumento de directoras en las

últimas décadas está creando una imagen más positiva y real de la mujer en la pantalla? ¿Sería este uno de tus objetivos como directora? Por ejemplo, en *Nadar*, vemos la realidad o cotidianidad de madres o mujeres solteras, y eso es algo que no se ha representado mucho en el cine, son más bien inexistentes.

Bueno, el hecho de que haya más directoras guionistas de cine es una posibilidad, no tiene por qué ser una realidad, una posibilidad de que haya más personajes protagonistas femeninos, personajes protagonistas que decidan por sí mismos, que sean personajes activos, no sólo pasivos de las decisiones masculinas que es un poco lo predominante en el cine que nos inunda actualmente. Cuantas más directoras y guionistas, más personajes femeninos habrá. De todas maneras es muy difícil tener... No estar invadido por una mirada patriarcal sobre el mundo porque nosotros hemos estado criadas así y es muy difícil separarse de esa mirada y tener una mirada propia pero bueno en ello estamos.

¿Te has sentido discriminada alguna vez por ser mujer en la industria cinematográfica? ¿Has tenido alguna experiencia?

Yo creo que en el cine como en todos los sectores, sobre todo si adquieres o quieres adquirir ciertas responsabilidades o tomar ciertas decisiones tienes que ganártelo a pulso. Se te exige un poco... Es algo como muy invisible, muy intangible pero existe. Cuando entras en el despacho de un productor y eres mujer y joven entre comillas, o con un aspecto más juvenil, a priori no se va a confiar en ti. Tienes que demostrarlo de una manera muy clara que tú puedes dirigir una película y que podrás llegar hasta el final. Y a veces te obliga a hacer un doble esfuerzo. No puedes relajarte de una manera natural, a priori tienes que marcar un poco el terreno y creo que eso pasa y sigue pasando en casi todos los sectores, no solo en el cine. Lo que pasa es que en el cine al moverse tanto dinero digamos... Porque el número de productores es mayor, entonces el hecho de tener que confiar, sea en un hombre o en una mujer, un productor tiene que ver si esa persona va a ser capaz de tirar adelante un proyecto en el cual se invierte mucho dinero, sobre todo el estado. Antes, porque ahora ya eso ha desaparecido. Es una carrera de fondo que necesitas mucho tiempo para levantar un proyecto, hacerlo y luego montarlo. Entonces, de alguna manera el que toma la decisión, sea productor o productora, tiene que ver que esa persona va a hacer eso. Y no sé por qué demonios pues muchas veces solo por el hecho de que seamos mujeres sigue habiendo prejuicios o esa sensación de fragilidad de que esa persona no va a poder llevar a cabo un proyecto. Eso sucede por un lado. Y luego sucede, porque yo soy profesora de la

universidad y tengo mucho contacto con alumnos y alumnas y muchos amigos que están vinculados con la docencia. Y muchas veces tenemos esa conversación de decir en la clase los proyectos más buenos o potentes muchas veces son de chicas pero no sé qué pasa que no llegan a hacer todo el camino. Luego que den el paso de decir yo con este proyecto continúo y sigo adelante y lo dirijo, se pierden por el camino. ¿Qué sucede en ese camino? No lo sé pero sucede. Debe ser una mezcla de cosas, con la propia autoestima. Sí, evidentemente tú tienes que creer, seas hombre o mujer, que tú puedes hacer eso. Y luego digamos es como una especie de reflejo de lo que la sociedad rebota. Si de alguna manera tuviéramos más claro que eso lo podemos hacer y no hay ningún problema para hacerlo seríamos más, porque si no, no entiendo. No sé qué sucede en ese camino. De todas esas cantidades de estudiantes con cantidad de potencial con proyectos fantásticos y luego el porcentaje de mujeres y productoras antes siempre se hablaba de un 7%, no sé si ahora hablan de un 10%.

En el siglo XXI creo que era la primera década era sobre un 10.

Pero sigue siendo una cifra irrisoria. Entonces ¿qué sucede en ese camino? Es una pregunta que a nivel de sociedad, porque el cine no deja de ser un reflejo más de nuestra sociedad, por qué, qué pasa en ese camino que esas estudiantes, esas potenciales directoras se borran, desaparecen. Un tema claro es la maternidad. Eso está clarísimo. Una mujer entre que es la edad en la que tú puedes llegar a dirigir con una cierta madurez puede ser muy avanzado y dirigir con 20 años, pero eso serían las menos. Pero en la edad en la que un ser humano, un hombre o una mujer, llega a una cierta madurez para poder dirigir ronda, coincide con la edad, actualmente las españolas tienen hijos.

La mayoría de las directoras tenéis hijos y estáis haciendo todas películas.

Mi pregunta sería cuántas posibles estudiantes con proyectos maravillosos llegan un momento de su vida que renuncian, deciden no seguir avanzando.

Quizás se necesita un tipo de personalidad más ambicioso, que tome la iniciativa, porque tienes que estar peleando por tu proyecto.

A ver, yo creo que... El otro día hablando con un amigo decía un director/directora es una persona que rema en el desierto y me parece una imagen tan clara. Quizá una directora es una persona que rema el desierto pero con un solo remo, que tiene más dificultades por temas históricos, culturales, por temas de propia autoestima porque al final, sobre todo en la primera película, solo tú crees en tu proyecto, nadie

más. Entonces si tú no estás muy convencido de que tú puedes hacerlo no lo harás, ningún productor/productora te va a perseguir para que hagas tu primera película, entonces es una mezcla de cosas.

Y luego la mayoría de directoras acaban creando sus propias productoras.

Directoras y directores, es un fenómeno muy extendido dentro del cine, sobre todo si intentas hacer un cine más personal, no vinculado a un cine más comercial en el cual tú quieres tener un control sobre tu historia, sobre tu película, qué circuitos después va a hacer del proyecto. Entonces, inevitablemente acabarás cayendo en la creación de tu propia productora. Y yo lo he hecho con este último proyecto que estoy haciendo ahora.

¿Ha habido alguna directora de cine que te haya inspirado?

Yo admiro muchísimo tanto su trayectoria personal como cinematográfica el cine de Agnés Vardá. Hace poco vino al instituto francés e hizo una charla y para mí fue muy emocionante poderla ver así en directo y fui con una amiga directora, con Roser Aguilar, y me acuerdo que le comenté: yo no soy nada mitómana pero una foto con Agnés Vardá me hace mucha ilusión. Y estuvimos hablando con ella y fue fantástico. En la mostra siempre muestran sus películas porque es un referente como cineasta directora. Ella ha trabajado antes que nadie, su primera película es del 56, pues imagínate la trayectoria que tiene. Ha trabajado el cine personal, el cine en primera persona y como yo me muevo en ese terreno y es donde me gusta investigar, ella es un referente. Sobre todo porque por ejemplo *Los espigadores y la espigadora*, por decir alguna película, tiene esta estructura de mosaico, de imagen de puzzle que ella a través de la voz en off va avanzando en la película como esta voz interior que te va narrando y guiando como espectador.

¿Crees que las directoras españolas ya habéis empezado a ser referentes para otros directores, tanto directores hombres como directores mujeres, o aún queda?

Yo creo que el cine es un arte universal entonces antes podíamos haber hablado de por qué hay pocas mujeres o qué les sucede en ese camino entre la universidad y la escuela de cine y realizar la película pero después una película, es una película, es cine, da igual quien la haya hecho. Creo que así tiene que ser. El cine es universal, por tanto tiene que llegar. Cada uno lo va a recibir de una manera diferente pero, si es una buena película, llegará a la gente. Y haya quien lo haya hecho puede haber una sensibilidad más hacia un lado o hacia otro. Quizá,

evidentemente, más personajes femeninos, o tocar ciertos temas desde otro punto de vista, desde otra mirada, eso existe y está muy bien que exista pero luego caer en esas afirmaciones de, bueno pues el cine de mujeres....

Es un término que he querido evitar a lo largo de la entrevista.

Sí, sí, sí, eso es muy peligroso y además si caemos en ciertas afirmaciones puede crear como una especie de idea de gueto. Algunas veces, no sé si era Mercé Coll, o alguna persona vinculada con la Mostra de Dones, dice 'ojalá no tuviera que existir', el día que tenga que dejar de existir la "mostra de dones" querrá decir que no hace falta un trabajo para visibilizar, para trabajar de una manera de discriminación positiva, para nivelar un poco ese desnivel que hay. Como ese nivel realmente no existe hay que hacer un trabajo a través de las asociaciones, a través de las "mostras", de charlas. Tiene que seguir existiendo porque realmente hay un desnivel, y existe.

Hasta ahora te has decantado siempre por el documental, ¿qué es lo que te atrae de este género?

Bueno, el documental es un género muy rico porque caben todo tipo de narrativas y todo tipo de cines, entonces eso te da una libertad creativa impresionante. Dentro de un mismo documental trabajar con una estructura de ficción pero a la vez con personajes reales en el caso de *Nadar* y muchas otras películas. Mezclar la ficción con la realidad te permite moverte en un terreno muy, muy libre y eso es por lo que me interesa.

¿Te interesaría hacer alguna película solamente de ficción?

Sí, cuando, cuando sea mayor. La ficción me interesa mucho, pero me parece que hay que encontrar un tema como muy claro y trabajar mucho el guion, un guion de ficción me parece muy muy muy complejo pero sí, sí que me interesa, sí.

¿Te está afectando la crisis económica a la hora de seguir con tus proyectos y te está influyendo en los temas que tienes que elegir para tus películas?

La crisis nos afecta a todos y en el sector del cine de una manera radical. En cuanto a los temas pues de momento no te sabría decir porque yo ahora estoy acabando una película sobre el ejército y llevo ya cuatro años con ella y hasta que no acabe no me voy a poner a pensar en nuevos proyectos, en nuevas ideas pero sí que afecta a los ánimos, a la hora de querer seguir haciendo. Si hacer cine en este país es como subir una montaña o hacer un deporte de alto riesgo y de alto nivel por el

nivel de exigencia que tiene y lo difícil que es levantar un proyecto, ahora más. Si antes un director remaba en el desierto ahora es una persona que rema sin remos. Ya no tiene remos, directamente con los brazos, que siempre ha sido un poco así, pero ahora ya es como muy, muy exagerado.

¿Este nuevo documental se llama *Volar*?

Sí, es el título provisional.

Tienes entonces *Nadar, Volar...* ¿Vas a completar una trilogía con un tercer documental... *Caminar*, ¿quizás?

Bueno, no sé. Cuando acabe esta película que yo llevo ya cuatro años en ella y es un proyecto complejo y complicado por el tema y por la mirada que hay que posar sobre ella, pues por qué no, podemos hacer *Caminar*.

Para concluir, ¿qué consejos les darías a las mujeres que quisieran ser directoras de cine?

Pues la misma que le doy a los estudiantes chicos. Que perseveren. El cine es una carrera de fondo y que solo se puede llegar a dirigir si tú tienes una fe en tu proyecto y tienes algo que contar. Si tú tienes algo que contar que es muy potente y es superior a ti acabará saliendo en forma de libro, de cine, de fotografía o de lo que sea. Pero el cine por sus dificultades añadidas, porque para escribir un libro solo necesitas mucha disciplina y mucho rigor y un papel y un lápiz, pero para un cine es mucho más complejo. Es la perseverancia.

Interview with Susana Koska

(28 June 2012)

Mi tesis versa sobre la representación de la España del siglo XXI en el cine dirigido por mujeres. Uno de los temas centrales de mi investigación es la recuperación de la memoria histórica, que tan popular ha sido y está siendo desde principios de este siglo. Tu película *Mujeres en pie de guerra* me ha parecido absolutamente necesaria para reconstruir la historia de España porque hay una falta tremenda de documentación sobre la lucha de las mujeres en la guerra civil y durante el franquismo. ¿Fue esta una de las razones que te llevó a hacer el documental?

Ahora ya casi ni me acuerdo de por qué me puse a hacer este documental. Pero sobre todo sí que uno de los objetivos era el siguiente. Todos los documentales que yo veía sobre la guerra civil eran documentales donde aparecían señores contando batallitas, heroicos, guerreros y militares de carrera, políticos. Cuando aparecían mujeres eran víctimas de la guerra. Y eso no era así, pero nunca salía ninguna mujer que hubiera sido presa y no mujer de preso, que hubiera militado y no hubiera sido víctima de las bombas, o sí, pero que hubiera militado y que hubiera tomado partido igual que hubieran tomado partido los hombres. A mí eso me molestaba y me dolía muchísimo. Y eso fue un poco la necesidad de elegir una serie de mujeres que hubieran militado y que representaran muchas de las variantes. O sea, que hubiera una representación de la izquierda, además, pero de las izquierdas diferentes y de lo que pasó durante el exilio, de las personas que se quedaron y de las personas que marcharon, ¿no? Sobre todo de mostrarlas para mí como heroínas porque no solamente fueron víctimas. En muchos casos fueron tan valientes como los hombres, trabajaron tanto como ellos y la historia no les ha rendido tributo nunca. Todavía hoy tampoco les rinde tributo. Fíjate que en *Mujeres en pie de guerra* salen dos mujeres que se quedaron en Francia y que las dos tienen la legión de honor francesa por haber estado en la resistencia. Y sin embargo nunca han sido reconocidas en este país por su lucha y por su trabajo. Eso dice mucho.

Sí, bastante. ¿Te parece que hay mucha gente en este país que prefiere pasar página y olvidar ese capítulo de la historia de España?

Yo pienso que a estas alturas ya no lo sé porque igual ahora la gente está pensando en pasar otra página que corresponde al mismo sentir para mi gusto. Es decir, quisieron pasar aquella página y quieren pasar esta también y quieren pasar

todo lo que ha ocurrido después y todo lo que ha ocurrido con ETA y todos sus alrededores y sus efectos colaterales que no son propiamente los de un atentado y el propio terrorismo sino cómo vivió una parte de la sociedad española. En relación a la guerra civil yo creo que también lo quisieron hacer pero no han podido. No han podido porque hay una generación de nietos que no lo hemos permitido. A ellos de alguna manera les pudieron callar la boca a base de miedo, a base de cárcel y a base de mucha persecución, pero los nietos ya no los han podido callar la boca. Yo creo que esa generación de nietos es la que está rescatando algo que ellos no pudieron decir en su momento.

¿Nos toca a nosotros ahora?

Sí, yo creo que está muy bien el ser testigo, es una manera de implicarnos en nuestra propia historia. Me parece muy bien. Ellos hicieron su trabajo. Ellos ya hicieron su trabajo.

Sí porque sobre todo es muy común escuchar “uff, otra película sobre la guerra civil”. A tu parecer, ¿es un tema inagotable para hacer películas ya sean basadas en hechos reales o completamente de ficción?

Sí, me parece inagotable, tanto de ficción como históricas. Este año hemos visto una película excelente sobre la división azul que se llama *Silencio en la nieve* de Gerardo Herrero. Y habla sobre los divisionarios. Es un thriller con un asesinato de por medio y tal, pero está hablándote de los divisionarios que fueron a Alemania. Fueron algunos contentísimos de ir y otros no tan contentos de ir porque se les conmutaban penas de cárcel a costa de ello. Y es que a través del cine se cuenta la historia del país. Yo tengo un hijo de trece años y cuando él me hace preguntas existenciales yo le pongo una peli. Igual es mi manera de contarle la vida pero es muy ilustrativo. Ellos son una generación que tiene la imagen únicamente como referente. Ellos no leen, ¿no? Por ejemplo. Pero sí ven películas. Entonces tú le pones *Sweet Sixteen* y va a entender muchas cosas sobre la sociedad y le pones *This is England* y va a entender muchísimas cosas. Ayer, por ejemplo, veíamos este documental sobre lo que ocurría aquí. Pues para él es muy ilustrativo y yo creo que a través de las películas podemos contar lo que pasaba y desde luego que sí, es inagotable. Todavía hay muchísimas historias por contar, algunas fascinantes. Yo me sé muchas, o a mí me han contado muchas. Y a mí me han llegado muchas. Durante los coloquios de *Mujeres en pie de guerra* se contaban cosas espectaculares. Pero habrá, muchísimas, muchísimas y muchísimas.

El problema es que estas generaciones no podían hablar o no querían hablar de ello.

No querían hablar, pero yo creo que luego también se les dejó de escuchar. ¿Sabes? Una parte dejó de escuchar. Hay mucha gente que decía, “ay calla”. Y cuando te decían “otra tenéis que pasar”, “que haya una guerra, que haya una guerra”. Pero no, a muchos se les calló. A otros los callaron en casa y a otros los callaron en las calles, ¿no? Es así, había gente que no quería hablar, pero yo por ejemplo no tuve ningún problema con ninguna de las mujeres con las que me senté. Todas ellas querían, sabían cuál era su lugar en la historia y estaban dispuestas a reivindicarlo. Y me parece vamos, de chapeau.

¿Y cómo las seleccionaste? ¿Cómo encontraste a estos testimonios? ¿Tuviste unos criterios de selección o fue un poco casualidades de la vida?

Pues un poco casualidades de la vida. Yo leí un libro de Antonina Rodrigo que se llamaba *Mujer y exilio* donde aparecían las biografías de tres de las mujeres que aparecen en el documental y yo me puse en contacto con Antonina. Mi primera idea además, era hacer una obra de teatro porque yo soy actriz de formación. Mi formación no es de dirección para nada. Entonces yo quería hacer una obra de teatro y en principio mi selección de personajes era una selección de personajes pensando en un escenario. Y Antonina me dijo, “pero chica si están vivas, ¿por qué no hablas con ellas?” Entonces claro, cuando te lo cuentan de viva voz, ninguna actriz va a subirse al escenario y lo va a hacer mejor que ellas. Y era la última oportunidad para grabarlas, además. Y empecé un poco a buscar, pues eso a través de Antonina que me facilitó el contacto de Neus Catalá, por ejemplo, o el contacto de Sara Berenguer, que murió el año pasado, el contacto de Rosa Laviña. Y ajustando, por ejemplo, el anarquismo, dentro de esa historia, todo el movimiento libertario en Cataluña.

Todas contaban, por ejemplo, una cosa que a mí me llamaba mucho la atención. Todas contaban cómo se iban de Barcelona. Todas contaban el mismo camino de diferente manera. Y entonces me di cuenta de que aparte de anarquistas, tenía que haber comunistas y de que la historia pedía que avanzáramos hacia adelante, ¿no? Qué pasó después, cuando termina la guerra, cuando algunas se quedan allí, cuando algunas entran en la resistencia, cuando otras regresan y van a la cárcel. Y qué ocurre con los primeros hijos de esos encarcelados, que toman partido político y pasan a la clandestinidad. Y de allí llegamos un poco pues eso, al último justiciado, a Salvador Puig Antic, lo que podíamos. Ahí nos podíamos haber extendido hasta la extenuación, pero bueno era una muestra. Luego, yo quería

incluir la historia de mi tía que era, pues recoger la historia de los niños, que sin comerlo ni beberlo, pues se encuentran dentro de una marea humana muy tremenda y que además tienen una lectura positiva de ella. Yo creo que lo bueno que tiene *Mujeres en pie de guerra* es que por muy emotivo que sea tiene una lectura positiva. Todas han convertido los limones en limonadas. Y esa es una de las enseñanzas más grandes de la vida.

Entonces contestaste una de mis preguntas porque a lo largo del documental, se te ve muy afectada, muy reflexiva. Claro en el documental no aparece esa relación personal que tú tienes...

¿Con mi tía?

Sí, no se llega a decir.

No, no se llega, bueno sí. Debe de haber algún comentario tipo y “el abuelo se quedó en la cárcel”. Algo así, “el abuelo”. “Y mi madre bajó con tu madre en brazos”, o algo así.

Pues mira que he visto la película un montón de veces y no he conseguido ver

Hay así un par de detalles muy mínimos, muy mínimos.

Y luego el viaje que hiciste a...

¿A Alemania?

A Ravensbrück. ¿Fue debido a Neus Catalá o tenías otro tipo de conexión?

Fui por Neus y fui por una razón muy sencilla. Porque cuando yo fui a ver a Neus la primera vez, yo pensaba que me iba a contar una historia muy atroz, lógicamente. Pero yo con Neus me reí muchísimo (risas). Igual tenía un día bueno. Luego la he visto en días muy malos, y me contaba cosas muy horribles, pero el primer día fue muy bueno y pensé: “¿Pero esta tía de qué va?”. ¿Cómo que corridas de toros en el campo? Vamos a ver. Sí, sí, hacían corridas de toros y hacían claveles de papel, y entonces una hacía de toro y la otra hacía de torero y entonces así se pasaban con las boklovas. Y mucha cosa de vida de campo y... A mí me resultaba, yo quería ilustrar lo que Neus decía estando allí. Era muy difícil encontrar imágenes. No quería poner imágenes de archivo porque no quería ensuciar las mentes de los demás con las imágenes de siempre del traje de rayas y las cabezas rapadas. Yo quería que la gente viera el campo vacío, y que vieran lo que allí había ocurrido,

cómo era aquello y quería oír mientras la voz de Neus. Además, el problema con Neus es que Neus pues habla muy mal porque recibió mucho golpe y no se le entiende nada.

Pero ella también es catalana...

No, no, no, pero es porque, y luego aparte pues Neus tiene la cabeza un poco perjudicada. Y es muy difícil hilarla. Muy difícil, de hecho, hay que subtitularla la mayoría de las veces. Cuesta mucho comprenderla. Entonces era muy difícil a veces cuadrar su imagen tremenda, además, porque tiene un aspecto muy duro y tal con su voz y tal. Y bueno, yo pensaba, no sé, llenemos esto de otra cosa. Entonces hacer ese viaje, además para mí era importante. Hacer ese viaje, hacerlo en invierno, hacerlo cuando aquello no fuera un centro turístico. Y escuchar de nuevo lo que decía Neus pero estando allí. Y de alguna manera enseñar eso, como nosotros no hemos ido allí. Ellos te lo cuentan y te lo pueden contar mil veces y puedes leer doscientos millones de libros sobre los campos de exterminio pero hasta que no lo ves y entras en el horno, no te puedes hacer una idea. Y estás a cinco u ocho bajo cero no puedes entender cómo se podía sobrevivir allí, aunque solamente, solo fuera el frío. Entonces, la gente que salió de allí es gente que era de una pasta muy especial, gente que volvió.

Completamente. ¿Te planteaste en algún momento no aparecer en el documental?

Me molestó cuando lo estaba editando, verme, pero era un viaje. Y a mí me gusta mucho *Kandahar*, el documental. Y me gustaba mucho su punto de vista. Y a pesar de que me daba mucha vergüenza y me sigue dando cuando lo veo, pienso que es una manera de estar de ese lado de la barricada y de tomar partido. La gente lo toma como un ataque de ego, pero no lo es (risas), pero no lo es. Es una manera de estar, de tomar partido, y luego porque el punto de vista del plano es más bonito. Es más bonito y ellas, la entrevistada es más cálida cuando te está mirando a los ojos y te puede tocar. Y tú la interrumpes. Es más real que cuando la cámara está en frente y está mirando la cámara, por mucho que tú te pongas detrás del objetivo. Y luego además...

Es otro enfoque diferente.

Es otro enfoque por darle calidez a la película. Y luego además, yo antes de grabar las entrevistas establecí una relación con ellas, con todas. Entonces, yo iba a visitar a mis amigas. Era una conversación grabada que ya habíamos hablado muchas

veces, ya habíamos visto muchas veces, excepto en el caso de Sara, pero nos habíamos escrito muchísimas cartas. Para cuando nos vimos, sí que era la primera vez que nos encontrábamos físicamente, pero yo con todas intenté allanar siempre el terreno para que no contaran algo que no conoces, es muy difícil, no se cuentan las mismas cosas.

Y más señoras de esa edad que no estaban acostumbradas.

Ellas estaban acostumbradas porque tanto, por ejemplo, María Salvo, que es la que estuvo en prisión tantos años como Sara, como Rosa Laviña, todas han contado su historia, ¿no? No eran mujeres que no habían contado sus experiencias, excepto mi tía. Bueno, las había contado a su auditoria familiar, pero nada más. Sí que sabían contar la historia, pero aún y todo la historia se cuenta diferente a una cámara que a una persona. Y más cuando estás hablando de cosas tan absolutamente tremendas.

A mí personalmente me parece que le dan mucha fuerza a los testimonios.

A mí me parece que le dan mucha calidez. Luego otra cosa es y no lo niego, a mí en edición me satura verme ahí todo el rato, “pon una foto, pon una foto”, ¿no?

De hecho en el último testimonio de las hermanas Puig Antic aparece solo tu mano cogiendo el vino.

Sí, porque ya era como, por favor, no me saques (risas), por favor no me saques. (16:53)

Entonces ¿tú crees que va a llegar un día en el que se va a conocer la verdad sobre todos estos crímenes?

No, ya no.

¿No va a pasar?

No, no va a pasar. ¿Cuántos años han pasado, setenta años, más? Y las verdades es que son tantas y tan poliédricas.

Si no las verdades, quizás no sea la palabra correcta, sino los hechos.

Muchos ya tienen luz. Yo creo que lo que ha ido pasando en estos años ha sido que muchos investigadores y mucha gente tenga curiosidad por saber y se va a seguir investigando de la misma manera que han aparecido en España todas estas historias sobre los niños que se robaban a las madres solteras, pues yo creo que ya

no hay miedo para investigar. Y ya los papeles están abiertos. Ya se pueden consultar todos los papeles. Antes no se podía y ahora sí, esa es la diferencia. Entonces, bueno, podemos seguir sabiendo muchas cosas. Pero vamos a saber más de lo mismo de todas maneras. Los datos básicos de la represión desgraciadamente ya los conocemos.

Y ¿tú has encontrado las respuestas que buscabas haciendo este documental?

No sé si las respuestas pero cierta paz conmigo misma puede ser que sí. Yo tenía la necesidad de entenderlas y de escucharlas y sentarme con ellas. Para mí, yo lo he hecho desde un punto de vista muy emocional. Yo no tenía la sensación de que estaba haciendo un documento histórico. Era más inocente que todo eso mi puesta en escena, por decirlo de alguna forma. Yo quería acercarme a ellas de una manera emocional. No pensaba que *Mujeres* iba a ser un documental que diera que hablar, por ejemplo. Era un primer trabajo detrás de la cámara, no sé. No tenía, no lo hice con una idea preconcebida de tal. Yo simplemente quería contar una serie de cosas, quería contar una serie de historias, quería unir las y contar un todo y contar cómo las mujeres, pues bueno, estamos ahí a todas. Tenemos muchísimo valor y de la misma manera que entonces se podía contar con ellas ahora. Luego además, yo tengo 46 años, mi madre tenía tres cuando estalló la guerra civil, mi generación ha vivido a unos padres achantados por el franquismo, ¿no? Las mujeres no salieron de la cocina de sus casas y nadie nos contó que antes del franquismo las mujeres podían abortar, cosa que ahora no, todavía estamos otra vez bailando en la cuerda floja de si vamos a poder o no, de que había leyes que cuando yo era pequeña las mujeres tenían a su favor y entonces no. Entonces para mí eso también fue una sorpresa, lo que venía en los libros de historia no era lo que a mí me estaban contando en mi casa. Había cosas que no concordaban, para nada. Y yo sí que tenía esa necesidad de explicar, yo creo que hay una generación de mujeres, todas esas mujeres, la generación de mi madre, por ejemplo, igual la siguiente, que fue desaprovechada porque no les dejaron hacer nada, nada, absolutamente más que estar en la cocina de sus casas y achantar.

Incluso más tarde porque mi madre nació en los cincuenta. Y mi madre directamente se casó, tuvo los hijos...

Y se acabó lo que se daba. Y que lo puedes hacer por elección, pero por elección, no porque no te quede otra y porque no te permitan hacerlo. Yo por ejemplo mis hermanas pues eran de las que se empezaron a marchar a Londres y esas cosas y

en casa eso parecía como algo sobrenatural y dices ¡pero bueno!. A mí me sorprendió mucho sobre todo eso, encontrarme con que no, con que antes, cuarenta años antes, la vida había sido de una manera muy diferente. La gente no se casaba y no pasaba nada, no bautizabas a tus hijos y no pasaba nada etc, etc, etc.

Cuesta de creer.

Cuesta de creer. Y luego te encuentras con mujeres pues eso, las mujeres con las que yo me encontré, jolín, eran muy fascinantes.

Bueno, Patricia Ferreira ha hecho un documental sobre estas señoras...

Ha hecho *Señora de*.

...que no han podido hablar y que a algunas no les han dejado ni siquiera en este documental todavía hoy, leí en algunas críticas.

No sé, me imagino que todavía habrá gente que pues no le apetece. Yo pienso que eso es porque personalmente tú no quieres

No, no, yo leí que no les dejaba su hijo. Su marido probablemente estaba muerto y su hijo tampoco le dejaba.

Ah su hijo, madre mía.

Claro es un poco criticar, ¿no?

Sí, eso ya son otras cosas.

Entonces ¿tú crees que tu película o sabes si tu película ha ayudado a reflexionar sobre todo este tema?

Yo creo que sí. Yo no sé. Mujeres lo que abrió fue un debate muy grande. Y Mujeres se vio en muchísimas clases de cultura, por ejemplo, en muchísimas asociaciones, en escuelas, en institutos, en festivales, en todos esos debates se abrió un torrente de emociones, de palabras y de historias. Yo con eso tengo suficiente. O sea sí, claro que abrió, desde luego yo lo he visto cómo lo abrió. Yo he oído contar cosas espeluznantes, espeluznantes y no, ¿no? Y de gente agradecida. Para ellos envalentonaba hacer una cosa así. Yo nunca lo hice como un acto de valentía, pero para muchas personas sí que lo era porque no habían tenido la oportunidad de decir nada. Y luego por muchas cartas que vas recibiendo a lo largo

de los años. Bueno, en el 2004 fue el documental más visto en Cataluña también. Tuvo una respuesta importante.

¿Recibiste algún premio?

No, estuvimos nominados a bastantes cosas pero los premios se dan de una manera diferente (risas).

A mí me ha sorprendido muchísimo la serenidad con la que aparecen la mayoría de testimonios, con la memoria intacta, como si hubiera pasado ayer, sobre todo la primera, Sara. Esta señora era increíble, sin atribuirse méritos. Bueno, lo hemos comentado antes, ¿es tu película un homenaje a todas aquellas mujeres?

Sí, totalmente.

Y probablemente deberían hacerse muchas más.

Deberían hacerse muchas más. Sí porque *Señora de*, por ejemplo, y no la critico, ¿eh? Pero *Señora de* está hablando de víctimas otra vez. Y yo quería hablar de heroínas, por favor que nos presenten como heroínas a veces.

Hay que cambiar un poco.

Hay que cambiar un poco.

Pero bueno, luego por otra parte también está bien darle voz a esas mujeres que nunca la han tenido y por lo menos ahora...

Sí, pero como estamos acostumbradas siempre a ver el machaque, pues estas mujeres de lo que están hablando es de la alegría de vivir, de la alegría de luchar por tus derechos con todo lo que ha ocurrido y que han vivido. Ese punto de vista yo creo que se ve poco. En los documentales de la guerra civil que vemos siempre los señores. Eso está poco. Está poquísimo. Y fueron héroes, fueron héroes de la revolución, fueron héroes de la historia, hicieron muchísimo, tanto ellas como ellos. Se fueron a Francia y siguieron luchando. No tuvieron bastante, volvieron y siguieron luchando.

Sí, porque mi abuelo por ejemplo no tendría que haber ido a la guerra porque tenía a su familia y dijo “no, no, yo me voy”. Y hala, siete años en la cárcel.

Sí, sí, mi abuelo era cojo y dijo “pues yo me presento y ya está, y hago botas para los niños, lo que sea”.

Pero como decía también luego Rosa Laviña, eran muy románticos y querían cambiar la sociedad.

Es muy bonito eso que dice Rosa.

Y hoy en día ¿tú piensas que esos ideales, esas ganas de luchar se han evaporado? Ahora somos una generación muy acomodada. Como tenemos...

No tenemos nada, ya no tenemos nada.

Materialmente lo tenemos todo, pero esos ideales...

Aparentemente lo tenemos todo. Yo creo de todas maneras que era una época muy diferente, que se luchaba por unos derechos diferentes. Y se luchaba bajo ideas políticas diferentes. Yo creo que lo que nos pasa ahora es que las ideas políticas del siglo XVIII no nos valen. Quizás estamos buscando nuestro propio sentir político para poder luchar y defender algo. Igual es así. Yo no quiero creer que estamos adormecidos porque ahora tampoco tenemos nada en realidad. Yo recuerdo una entrevista que hizo una mujer excepcional, que no sale en el documental, pero sale en un documental que tienes que ver que se llama *Dones del 36* de Llum Quiñonero, que se llamaba Trini Gallego y murió este año también y Trini decía "la gente no protesta porque tiene coche y vive bien".

No, claro, por eso te digo...

Pero es que ya la gente ni tiene coche ni vive bien. O sea, las generaciones que vienen por detrás nuestro tienen un futuro negrísimo, negrísimo. Hay gente de 35 años compartiendo habitaciones. Pues eso quiere decir que ya la gente no vive tan bien. Lo que pasa es que los sistemas políticos, las grandes ideas políticas bajo las que ampararse no sirven para nada, no sirven para nada. Entonces claro dices me pongo la bandera ¿no? No te puedes poner esa bandera porque esa bandera defendía ideas de 1901. Y a mí eso no me sirve porque estoy en el 2011. Y entonces la manera de protesta tampoco yo creo que sea la... Yo creo que la gente tiene que encontrar la fórmula para vivir mejor. Estamos viviendo igual de mal, igual de mal. Lo que pasa que aparentemente tenemos más cosas materiales. Y eso el que tiene curro, pues eso tiene trabajo y más o menos va salvando la papeleta. Pero bueno, yo pienso, no sé, en mis sobrinos que tienen treinta y es que no se pueden plantear, o muchas amigas que tienen treinta y no se pueden plantear ni el hecho de tener hijos.

Es que no podemos.

No puedes.

En una de las canciones se menciona que las mujeres tendrán que hacer de tripas corazón, ¿crees que ahora en el siglo XXI las mujeres siguen haciendo de tripas corazón pero en otras condiciones?

(Risas) No, yo creo que las mujeres no hacen de tripas corazón y se acabó. Se han enfadado mogollón. Otra cosa es que no te dejen sacar la cabecita, pero no. No hay nada más que ver lo que pasa en algo que igual es diferente a la política, pero no deja ser culturalmente de llamar la atención, ¿no? Tantas víctimas de la violencia de género porque son porque esas mujeres han dicho que se acabó, tú a mí no me pegas más. Yo creo que no, que se acabó, que ya no hay de tripas corazón. Lo que pasa es que no nos dejan a veces. Y otra cosa es que el sistema no te deje, que los hombres no te dejen, o que tu marido no te deje, o que tu jefe no te deje y te siga echando porque te quedas preñada y todas estas cosas. Pero las mujeres ya se cansaron, yo creo que ya no hay mujeres sumisas en el planeta, pocas. Bueno, sí que las habrá, quiero decir, pero tal y como entonces lo entendemos no.

Entonces ¿hemos recuperado el tiempo perdido las mujeres?

No, tampoco lo creo. Yo creo que somos más conscientes de que el tiempo es nuestro.

Estamos a medio camino.

Y de que somos seres independientes y que no dependemos de nadie pero de ahí a recuperar el tiempo perdido no sé y luego hay mucho mal cultural que afecta las criaturas. Quiero decir, estamos viendo unos modelos de mujer sobrecogedores.

Me pareció curioso que los testimonios casi no mencionan a sus parejas en el documental.

Sí, Rosa habla de su marido y muestra sus cartas de amor.

Sí, pero ellas tenían como otras prioridades en la vida, ¿no? Era la lucha y tampoco es un documental dedicado a ellos. Se muestran como mujeres muy independientes.

Sí, yo creo recordar que en las entrevistas siempre hemos hablado de los hombres, ¿eh? Pero supongo que no los quise sacar o que salieron de la circulación. Por ejemplo, el caso de Rosa Laviña no porque lo maravilloso eran esas cartas de amor.

Cuando decía que lo veía muy feo (risas).

(Risas) Pero además yo creo que todas antes de y por encima de, no por encima de, pero sus ideas estaban ahí muy, muy muy. Luego, por ejemplo Sara cuando se va con el niño embarazada y el marido le dice no vayas y le dice pues voy pues tal, pues no sé qué...

¡Qué valientes!

¡Qué valientes! Pues luego el marido le riñe ¿no? Cuando vuelve además. “¿Tú estás loca?” Luego, por ejemplo, Neus Catalá, eso no aparece en el documental, pero sí por ejemplo en los libros que ella ha escrito sobre sus experiencias sí que lo cuenta. Cuando a ella la detienen, la detienen junto a su marido. Y cuenta una historia que yo no sé si tiene parte de ficción o no, pero cuenta que ellos se pudieron despedir en dos trenes que marchaban en direcciones opuestas y él nunca volvió del campo.

Entonces ha sido un poco más una decisión tuya para darle más protagonismo a ellas.

Posiblemente. Ahora no me acuerdo, pero posiblemente sí porque yo recuerdo haber hablado de hombres con ellas, con todas. Excepto con las hermanas, pero bueno, pero la historia de las hermanas tenía un punto de vista completamente diferente.

Luego otro tema por el que te quería preguntar es la banda sonora, es como un proyecto doble. ¿Puedes contar un poco como surgió?

Bueno, con mi compañero que es Loquillo. Él ha hecho muchos discos de rock y tal. Su padre luchó en la Guerra Civil también. Estuvo como esclavo de Franco ocho años en esos campos horribles por ahí por Aranda del Duero. Y él estaba escribiendo en ese momento un libro que se llamaba *El chico de la bomba*, donde contaba la historia de su padre. Y bueno fuimos alimentando una especie de rueda purificadora entre los dos sin darnos cuenta. Primero, sin darnos cuenta, y luego pues eso, que quedaría muy bien que hubiera canciones para ellas. Y es que quedaría muy bien que hubiera cuadros para ellas. Entonces por eso aparecen los cuadros de Fernando también, ¿no? Entonces, de pronto nos vimos ahí inmersos en un proyecto que tenía muchas cabezas y que de alguna manera era como una generación cuenta lo que le han contado desde un punto de vista gráfico...

Son los cuadros estos de color que aparecen.

No, no te confundas. Hay una serie de cuadros que aparecen de color con trazo muy de la época, que eso es un calendario de la CNT muy famoso que hay muy pocas copias, etc. Luego hay un cuadro final que se colorea y ese sí que lo hizo Fernando Pereira, que es un pintor gallego y él hizo una serie, una colección sobre *Mujeres en pie de guerra* y también es el cartel de la película, etc, etc.

Entonces lo de los dibujos de color es un calendario.

Es un calendario de la CNT. La CNT editó este calendario para recaudar fondos. Y entonces la gente los arrancaba y se los ponía en casa. Y no hay muchos juntos.

¿Y cómo lo conseguisteis?

Y nosotros encontramos uno en una tienda de cosas militares. Además este hombre, el que dibujó estas pinturas murió en Rusia. Él se fue al exilio y murió allí. Yo encuentro el dato del tipo y te lo mando porque ahora no me acuerdo. Pero son muy famosos, los vas a encontrar.

Porque me llamó un poco la atención. No sabía tampoco de dónde venían.

Son espectaculares además, son unas imágenes hermosísimas.

Luego, las imágenes de archivo, ¿te costó mucho conseguirlas?

Jo, muchísimo. La verdad es que lo de las imágenes es el horror. Primero porque son excesivamente caras, tremendamente caras.

Lo he oído por, ¿has visto *El tren de la memoria* sobre la inmigración? Las directoras comentan lo mismo, 6.000 euros por minuto.

Es una vergüenza. Es una auténtica vergüenza. Yo no quería recurrir a las de siempre porque se han visto muchas, muchas veces y entonces encontramos a un tipo que está en Madrid y que tiene un archivo enorme de Rusia con imágenes muy curiosas sobre los campos de arena y sobre los niños y sobre la huelga de los niños, etc. Luego recurrimos a las únicas imágenes que hay sobre los niños que se fueron desde Bilbo, porque no hay más, no hay más, son las únicas que hay y en la Filmoteca Vasca encontramos imágenes de la represión franquista. Esas sí que eran un poco más baratas, me acuerdo que además era como sí, sí, sí, por favor. Porque esas eran más o menos asequibles dentro de todo, pero bueno hay poquísimas imágenes de archivo porque es que eran, es que no se puede, eso debería estar abierto. En *Vindicación*, por ejemplo vas a ver que directamente no hay.

¿No es que no pudiste comprarlas es que no hay?

Es que no hay y no podía comprarlas porque lo hice con una ayuda de la diputación de Barcelona. Y no había manera. Aparte había muy poco o se ha tirado mucho archivo en televisión por ejemplo. Aparte porque televisión sólo por la búsqueda te pide mil euros. Entonces claro, eso para los grandes, desde luego haciendo documentales sin presupuesto, pues imágenes de archivo tienes que poner doscientas mil fotos, pero imágenes de archivo no. Y luego *Mujeres* yo creo que contándolas hay como mucho cinco minutos, pero imágenes no hay imágenes, sí están todas puestas por algo, por alguna razón que no había. Y nos fuimos a Alemania un poco por lo mismo. Vamos al campo y se acabó lo que se daba. O sea, vamos al campo nosotros y ya está, ya tenemos las imágenes en movimiento, que está bien porque además yo creo que el documental abre como una brecha, hace que la gente descanse entre comillas y que pueda reflexionar.

Yo creo que ahí, por ejemplo, la banda sonora actúa muy bien como un narrador más de la historia y que hace que puedas descansar y que no sea una galopada emotiva todo el rato. Entonces la música te ayuda pues a aflojar un poco y a descansar un poco de las emociones entre una y otra. Y a veces además, algunas canciones se escriben para la película. Algunas se buscan para la película como *La mala reputación*, que era inevitable que estuviera o *De tripas corazón*, que es de Aute, una canción de los 70 antifranquista y esas cosas, pero otras se hacen para la película. No se hacen cuando la película está terminada, se hacen durante el proceso que es diferente, es decir, no se hacen cuando ya has visto lo que has grabado, lo que se hacen es al mismo tiempo que yo estoy haciendo las entrevistas, y se van grabando al mismo tiempo. Y luego yo sí que por ejemplo, llamo a Jaime Espino y le digo yo necesito un trozo de musical instrumental para esto, alárgame esta canción. Pero las canciones ya estaban. De hecho la banda sonora se estrenó al mismo tiempo que la película.

¿Se puede comprar todo como un pack?

Se compra como un pack ahora. Salió la banda sonora como un CD normal y luego se hizo un pack con los dos.

A mí me sorprendió un poco el último testimonio de las hermanas Puig Antic, quizás porque no conociera el caso porque no era un testimonio directo de ellas, estaban hablando a través de su hermano mientras que el resto de testimonios eran mujeres que habían estado en primera línea.

Bueno, ellas han sido las protagonistas de la capilla de su hermano. De alguna manera sí que eran protagonistas, lo que pasa es que el asesinado era él, el ajusticiado es él. Pero para mí, para mí era contar desde el punto de vista, pues igual que el de las niñas, ¿no? La niña no participa en la Guerra Civil tampoco. Y esto era como de pronto alguien tiene que acompañar a su hermano hasta el último momento. Yo era un caso que tampoco conocía porque yo vivía aquí, pues es un caso de la historia antifranquista muy, muy, muy de Cataluña y coincidió, fue un poco como accidental toda la historia de Salvador, pero nos venía muy bien porque era el último ajusticiado a garrote vil, la última condena a muerte.

Esto del garrote vil, ¿qué es?

El garrote vil es una cosa espantosa. Era la manera de matar en este país, te sentaban en una silla y un tornillo entraba dentro de tus cervicales y te desnucaba. Y había que apretar. Hay una película de Berlanga que se llama *El verdugo*, muy divertida que habla sobre un verdugo. Sí, sí, así era. Luego por ejemplo después de Salvador hay más ajusticiados. Él es el último ajusticiado a garrote pero después hubo los fusilamientos de Chiquillo Taevi y de los chicos del Frac. O sea, hubo más condenas a muerte, pero él fue el último ajusticiado a garrote. En ese momento, mi compañero, que para él sí que fue, él fue el que me contó la historia. Yo me sabía las de aquí. Luego aparte se sabía menos, te quedabas con lo de casa. Él había escrito una canción sobre Salvador. Entonces la historia era vamos a ponerla, vamos a ponerla, vamos a ponerla, y entonces bueno pues vamos a estar con las hermanas y luego ahí pues también descubres otra historia más, y luego realmente el punto de vista de una persona que tiene que estarse allá hasta el último momento, ¿no? Es muy sobrecogedora. Y luego aparte ellas eran unas crías, eran unas chavalas y Merçona era una niña de 12 años. No tenían madre, y además su padre no quiso saber nada. Una historia muy peculiar. Y luego el juicio fue muy peculiar, sí. El juicio fue muy peculiar. De hecho todavía están esperando a que se revise el caso y se demuestre que pues que no se ajustaron las pruebas de balística, la causa por la que se le juzgó y se le condenó a muerte no era tal. Ellos estaban atracando y punto.

¿Esto sucedió en el 74?

Esto sucedió en el 74. Nada muy poco, nueve meses antes de que Franco muriera. Muy poquito antes. Entonces, pues bueno, era una manera de cerrar el círculo también. Y luego además, Teresa habla de la causa de Salvador. Entonces ahí,

pues había cosas que al final iban encajando en el puzle. Yo todo el exilio francés, cercano a Cataluña estuvo muy con esa causa, muy cerca de esa causa. De hecho el MIL, que era el grupo al que pertenecía Salvador, que eran libertarios, pero bueno, no dejaban de ser unos chavales, habían tenido muy poca formación política, desgraciadamente, y tenían un lío mental muy considerable. Pero fueron a pedir ayuda a los anarquistas de Toulouse, los exiliados de la guerra civil y ellos les ayudaron, pensando que iban a trabajar para la causa. No les dio tiempo realmente a los chavales que estuvieron dos años e hicieron cuatro atracos y poco más. Hay documentación sobre el MIL, mucha porque todos los que quedaron vivos han escrito libros y luego esa época se ha documentado más, ¿no? Se han escrito varios libros sobre Salvador, entonces han aparecido pues los expedientes. Su expediente, por ejemplo, yo lo consulté sin ningún problema. O sea era una causa a la que se accedía fácil. No había problemas. No sé si hubiera sido igual con Chiquillo Taevi, por ejemplo. No lo sé, no lo intentamos porque estábamos allí. Nosotros también trabajamos con las facilidades. A mí también la gente me preguntaba ¿y por qué no has puesto una mujer andaluza? Coño, pues porque tenía un hijo recién nacido y a mí lo que me daba el cochecito. Trescientos km como mucho. De arriba pa abajo, de aquí, pallá. Y ya está, trabajabas con las facilidades. A mí me hubiera gustado, por mi historia personal y mi cronología, poner la historia de Yoyes, pero pues no. Aparte meterte en berenjenales etarras era muy complicado. Antes más, ahora sigue siendo todavía mucho y había que venir aquí, y empezar a buscar aquí y eso era un lío. Y nos quedamos pues con lo cómodo. Las hermanas de Salvador eran muy accesibles, lo fueron, estuvieron encantadoras siempre con nosotros. Y eso pues trabajamos pues con lo fácil porque trabajamos sin un duro. Lo pusimos todo nosotros, con lo cual trabajas con lo que tienes cerca.

También me gustaría hacerte unas preguntas sobre la situación actual de las mujeres directoras en la industria cinematográfica. ¿Crees que el aumento de directoras en las últimas décadas está creando una imagen más positiva y más real de la mujer en la pantalla? ¿Sería ese uno de tus objetivos como directora?

Sí, por supuesto. Somos las mujeres las que salen en la pantalla, cuando están vistas desde un punto de vista femenino, eso desde luego, tenemos más matices (risas). Nos sabemos mirar mejor. Sí, sí yo creo que sí. Y ahí en eso sí que se está normalizando. Se está normalizando en el sentido de que ya no es tan raro que haya una mujer directora, hay muchas mujeres directoras, directoras que tienen

premios y hacen buen cine además. Aunque los chicos sigan diciendo misa, de verdad. Porque hay mucha tontería. Pero por suerte la imagen cambió y lo están cambiando por supuesto las directoras.

¿Crees que están empezando a crear referentes estas directoras y están ya teniendo influencia en otros directores, tanto hombres como mujeres?

Eso ya no lo sé. No lo sé. No me puedo aventurar a decir que sí.

No sé, a lo mejor hay más personajes femeninos de la mano de directores también.

Diferentes, sí personajes diferentes, por ejemplo, tratados de una manera distinta. Hace diez años hubiera sido inviable que alguien hiciera una película sobre Clara Campoamor y que todo el equipo fuera femenino. Y que estuviera contada, no solamente su lucha política sino que el personaje tuviera algo más que el aspecto de una abogada con, sino que era una mujer y está muy bien explicado.

Sí, a mí me gustó mucho.

A mí me gustó muchísimo.

¿Alguna vez te has sentido discriminada en la industria cinematográfica por el hecho de ser mujer?

Yo no sé si por el hecho de ser mujer o por los temas que yo he tratado, no sé. Yo creo que más por los temas que por ser mujer. Porque al fin y al cabo yo no soy una directora de ambición. Quiero decir, que igual lo siguiente es un libro, no sé si me voy a seguir dedicando a esto. Ahora lo tengo clarísimo que no porque es inviable tal y como están las cosas. Vamos, con hacer un corto al año, vamos que ardemos algunas (risas). Igual por ser novata, pero eso le puede pasar a los chicos también, pero más por los temas que tratamos.

¿Te interesa hacer una película de ficción?

(Risas) No sé. La verdad no lo sé.

Me ha llamado la atención también que en el siglo XXI muchas directoras han empezado con documentales y han seguido...

Es que el documental es barato.

Principalmente por eso, ¿no?

Yo creo porque es un género barato, porque es un género generoso donde cabe todo. Es un género muy divertido de cocinar. Y no sé, lo de la ficción me parece muy difícil, me parece muy difícil, muy difícil. De hecho, sí que cada año trato de hacer un corto. Y que a veces se quedan sin acabar y todas estas cosas pero bueno de estar ahí, de estar haciendo cosas. Y luego de estos meses atrás por historias personales también pensaba pues hacemos un documental sobre las mujeres y el cáncer y siempre pienso en el testimonial. A mí el testimonial me gusta mucho. Me gusta en la literatura, me gusta la imagen y me gusta

También te permite incorporar escenas de ficción

Exacto. Y desde luego si hiciera cine (de ficción), haría un cine parecido al de Ken Loach. No me comería el coco. O sea, las situaciones las reales. Yo lo que no entiendo son los presupuestos. Lo entiendo por un lado y por otro lado no. Ayer veía con mi hijo *Sweet Sixteen* y dices mira si no hace falta dinero de verdad, no hace falta. Solo con que tengas una buena historia que contar y gente generosa en ese proyecto queriendo contarla, ya está. No hace falta tener un millón de euros de presupuesto. Que ojalá los tenga el que quiera. Pero yo creo que lo que falta en realidad son buenas historias, que es la base, sí.

En el cine, como en otras disciplinas artísticas, hay una falta de modelos femeninos, ¿ha habido alguna directora de cine que te haya inspirado?

Ay, no sé. Si pienso, me aparecen chicos, la mayoría, porque es que son mayoría. Entonces, tienes que remitirte a las pocas que hay, a la Von Trotta. No sé, un poco porque tienes que remitirte a alguien pero no creo que me hayan influenciado más o menos. La verdad es que no lo veo desde ese punto de vista el cine. Cuando veo una peli me gusta o no me gusta. Sí que es verdad que si ves una peli dirigida por una mujer la mirada es distinta. Las películas de hoy en día tienen una mirada diferente, las mujeres diferentes y un punto de vista completamente muy diferente del que tendría un hombre, incluso planteando planos. Pero no sé si me he dejado influenciar y aparte eso es el documental es más cómo haces tú el collage, cómo quieres montar tú ese puzzle, como... No sé, yo no me remití a nadie. Así como me había gustado mucho *Kandahar*, pero me había gustado mucho el personaje, el yo de *Kandahar*, el punto de vista de *Kandahar*. Me parecía importantísimo y me ayudaba a entrar en la historia. Si quieres que te diga la verdad ni recuerdo el nombre de la directora de *Kandahar*, pero sí que a mí me llegó.

Esta pregunta creo que no hace falta ni que te la diga ¿te está afectando la crisis a la hora de seguir con tus proyectos y está influyendo en los temas que eliges para escribir tus películas?

A todos. Y aparte yo llevo un año parada porque me están tratando un cáncer y no. Y cuando acabé *Vindicación* acabé tan quemada que por un lado dije, mira de verdad carpetazo, escribo. Es que no puede ser. Papel y lápiz y se acabó y yo y mis cosas. Depende mucha gente de ti. Es un esfuerzo tremebundo que si no tienes detrás el apoyo de una producción que te proteja mínimamente es que es una lucha sin cuartel. No sé, a mí no me apetece. Entonces, cuando acabé *Vindicación* pensé igual, bueno cuando acabé *Mujeres en pie de guerra* dije lo mismo. Y luego me encabroné, me fui encabronando y no sé qué no sé cuantos y acabé haciendo otro. Igual es posible que me pase lo mismo pero tal y como están las cosas ahora veo que es muy complicado, muy complicado, muy difícil. Entonces, la verdad pues no sé.

Además me imagino que con el tipo de gobierno que tenemos y los temas que tú tratas hay una incompatibilidad.

Hay una incompatibilidad, sí. Pero bueno, de todas maneras estaba el PSOE y lo del feminismo tampoco les hizo puta gracia, ¿eh? (risas)

Entonces, ¿estás trabajando ahora en algún proyecto?

Estoy escribiendo un libro sobre, bueno estoy recopilando una serie de textos que he ido escribiendo durante la quimio y todas estas cosas y sí que me gustaría hacer un documental sobre esta fantasía del cáncer que nos han colocado y todo su maravilloso negocio.

Yo creo que sería muy importante porque es la enfermedad del siglo XXI.

Yo creo que también. Y luego lo que hacen con el cáncer de mama es que es bestial. Nos colocan el mismo protocolo independientemente de la gravedad de tu bicho y a todas nos hacen pasar por el mismo tal. Y luego le quitan importancia haciendo campañas, diciendo que el 85% de la población lo tiene, que algunas veces nos curamos y hacen anuncios muy bonitos con el pañuelito rosa y eso. De verdad, o sea, basta. Ni es una buena experiencia. Es una experiencia de mierda y punto. Entonces, si voy por un lado, iré por ahí, lo tengo claro. Lo que pasa es que es difícil que haya gente que le apetezca contar.

Pero sería una idea muy buena para apoyar a toda esa gente.

Sí. Lo que pasa es que también como es una voz discordante. Pues decir, vamos a hablar solo del positivismo, ¿no? La medicina te dice que el tratamiento te va a curar, lo que no te dice es que el tratamiento te va a joder viva, pero no momentáneamente, para toda la vida porque va a matar todas tus células, las buenas y las malas. Por lo tanto, va a destruir órganos que tú tenías bien. Esas son las grandes mentiras que nos están contando. Lo que pasa es que en esos momentos tienes cáncer y dices sí, sí, póngame lo que sea, quíteme lo que sea, haga lo que sea. Pero luego por ejemplo, a ti se te cae el pelo literal que es lo que les pasa a todas las mujeres porque a todas nos ponen el mismo componente en la quimio que es un componente que te da alopecia y a todas las mujeres que tenemos cáncer de mama se nos cae el pelo. Pues, no hay ni una sola ayuda para que tú te compres una peluca, por ejemplo. Sí que hay servicio de apoyo psicológico pero muy tarde. Te das cuenta muy tarde. Nadie te dice que la quimio va a afectar a tu coco. En fin, todas estas cosas. Como no es un mensaje positivo no sé si mi idea puede tener una buena aceptación. Y entonces por lo tanto me he lanzado al libro digital que creo que es la manera más simple y sencilla de que nadie me diga lo que tengo que hacer y que escribir, y de que nadie me corte las alas. Y me diga, no, no porque esto es negativo. Negativo no. O sea le pasa a todas a todas. Y vete por ahí, pregunta a un hospital de día y pregúntele a la señora cómo se encuentra o a gente que lleva un año que le han hecho el tratamiento, que sigue encontrándose mal o gente que luego le dicen.

Y luego las recaídas...

Y ahora tienes no sé qué. Y ahora tienes no sé cuántos. Y luego te rallas. Y luego no sé qué y luego tal. Y luego te estropean un pulmón porque te han radiado y patatín. Hay un círculo muy grande que no se cuenta y es un gran negocio farmacéutico. Pero eso, luego nadie puede, nadie se atreve a decir, no, no me pongo. Digo que no al tratamiento. Y luego aparte tampoco te lo permiten porque yo me negué a radiarme y me plantaron el protocolo delante y me dijeron si no lo aceptas, te vas a otro hospital. Sí, es complicado, entonces bueno, por ahí, como todavía es todo muy reciente también está todo como aposentado. Entonces en un principio pensé y luego ya veremos.

Primero recuperarte.

Primero recuperar y escribir y tal y bueno. Y luego ya veremos porque para eso se necesita energía y se necesita alguien, médicos que tengan una lectura diferente para hacer un documental así, que los hay evidentemente pero eso, no es un

documental fácil. Entrás en territorio donde tienes que hablar con gente que sabe muy bien aparte de que salgan las enfermas enfadadas diciéndote fijate lo que nos han hecho. Es muy complejo. Entonces, claro, es un poco para pensarlo. No estaría nada mal que saliéramos del armario un poco en ese aspecto.

Para concluir, la última pregunta ¿qué consejos les darías a las mujeres que quisieran ser directoras de cine?

Pues lo mismo que a una que quiera ser fontanera, que siga su instinto y que 'palante' con él. Y que se ponga muy pesada y que ahora pues es más fácil porque puedes grabar con una cámara de fotos y puedes hacer cosas preciosas con el móvil y puedes editar en tu casa. Y no es tan difícil hacer cine si tienes una buena historia y muchas ganas de contarla, yo creo. La misma que le daría a mi hijo de trece años que tiene que salir adelante.

Interview with Marta Arribas

(12 August 2012)

Mi tesis versa sobre la representación de la España del siglo XXI en el cine dirigido por mujeres. Un tema de especial interés entre las directoras en esta década es la inmigración, ya que aparece reflejado en un gran número de películas tanto como tema principal o tema secundario. Vuestro documental *El tren de la memoria* vuelve al pasado y, más que tratar la inmigración actual, rescata del olvido a aquellos españoles que fueron emigrantes hace muchos años, en los años 60. ¿Por qué os interesó ahora hablar sobre este tema?

Pues mira nos interesó precisamente por la inmigración en España, es decir, esto nosotros nos lo planteamos cuando España se convirtió en país de acogida de inmigrantes de otros países que venían buscando el pan simplemente. Y entonces en su momento nosotros empezamos a escuchar. Había mucho debate sobre la diferencia entre el tipo de inmigrante que llegaba y los emigrantes que nosotros habíamos sido en los 60. Y, en general, lo que nosotros oíamos es que se vendía, sin ahondar mucho en el tema, que los inmigrantes de ahora eran inmigrantes ilegales. Pues sí es cierto, una gran mayoría y tal, que venían sin contrato de trabajo a buscarse la vida en contraposición con unos emigrantes legales, con permisos de trabajo, bien recibidos, bien acogidos en países en los que se les necesitaba. Y bueno, nosotros realmente no teníamos cercanos a nuestras familias que hubieran sido emigrantes, no conocíamos mucho el tema. Y dijimos si hablan tanto de este tema, ¿por qué no se les da voz a aquellos emigrantes de los años 60? Es como que no aparecían, entonces este tema interesantísimo no aparecía.

Decidimos ir a buscar a estos emigrantes a ver si ellos tenían también ese mismo punto de vista, sobre todo, cuál había sido su experiencia. España había sido un país de emigrantes y ahora España se convertía en un país de acogida de inmigrantes, cuál era esa diferencia, esa diferencia de tipo de inmigrante, cuál había sido su experiencia. No teníamos ni idea, es decir, lo que había en ese momento era lo que todo el mundo sabía, que sí, que había habido muchos emigrantes fuera, que habían colaborado en el desarrollo de España y tal y que habían estado ahí y habían hecho lo que podían y punto. Pero generalidades y tópicos, muchas veces, hablar por hablar. Y vimos que es que no habían tenido presencia. Es decir, esos emigrantes españoles no habían tenido presencia en los medios de comunicación desde aquella época. Se habían hecho algunas películas de ficción y poco más. Y decías, bueno ¿y esa gente dónde está? Ya habrán regresado y tal. Y no sabíamos ni siquiera si iba a haber un tema interesante. Fuimos a investigar, nos parecía interesante como punto

de partido y tuvimos la suerte de que en una asociación de inmigrantes retornados, que fue a la que primero fuimos buscando emigrantes ya de vuelta.

Pues encontramos a Josefina, que es una de las protagonistas de nuestro documental. Y Josefina cuando nos contó su historia, pues Ana y yo dijimos aquí hay una película pero, sobre todo, lo bueno, en lo que nos ayudó Josefina es que nos dijo “mira, yo soy una persona escarnada, que no edulcoro mi propia historia ni mis recuerdos, he hecho todo un ejercicio para no tratar de protegerme”. Y dijimos “bueno pues hablamos contigo, pero queremos hablar con un montón de gente”. “Pues ir, hablar, pero os vais a encontrar que la gran mayoría os van a decir que su experiencia fue perfecta, que fueron unos emigrantes todos legales, bien tratados, ganaban mucho dinero, fueron muy felices... y hasta aquí. Vosotros tiradles de la lengua porque puede haber puntos de vista diferentes porque, sobre todo, los que fuimos la primera generación eso fue duro, lógicamente, la emigración económica del último de la fila, del casi analfabeto que llega a los trabajos que nadie quiere pues en un país encima que no conocemos el idioma, pues es dura”.

Y con esa advertencia pues fuimos a hablar con mucha gente. Estuvimos muchísimo tiempo hablando con la gente. Sí que es cierto que al principio vendían una historia bastante exitosa y luego iban saliendo las cosas, sobretodo la primera etapa y al final llegamos a la conclusión que se nos había vendido una historia oficial que no cuadraba con la verdadera. Es decir, evidentemente se hizo un esfuerzo, no hay que quitar importancia al hecho de que sí se organizó la inmigración a sus países pero no del todo es decir porque había mucha gente que quedaba fuera de esa posibilidad de ir a otro país porque había unos requisitos médicos muy estrictos por una serie de tal, y entonces de los dos millones de españoles que fueron a trabajar en Europa, la mitad fueron con contrato y la otra mitad fue ilegal. Y bueno pues nos pareció que había que contarlo y que sobre todo había que contar también ese esfuerzo de esa gente, de esa generación, de la mejor gente que es la que suele lanzarse a la inmigración, que se dejó su piel, su vida, sus relaciones personales, familiares, hasta su estabilidad económica porque mandaban y mandaban dinero a España y tanto hicieron por el país. Y nos parecía que había quedado como que ni a ellos les interesaba mucho remover el pasado, ni España como país había reconocido de alguna forma su trabajo. Y dijimos, vamos, vamos a ello.

¿Y lo queríais hacer desde su punto de vista, nunca os planteasteis hacer una película de ficción? ¿Queríais los testimonios?

Pero tampoco por nada, es decir, nosotras es que hacemos documentales, nosotras no hacemos ficción, venimos además del mundo de la televisión, tenemos un programa de reportaje documental y dijimos hacerlo largometraje documental, y nosotras somos absolutamente fan del documental, y es lo que nos gusta y lo que sabemos, más o menos, hacer. Y sobre todo, nos parecía que había ahí un hueco, es decir, ¿por qué hacer una ficción si esta historia real no estaba contada? Y sus protagonistas nunca habían dicho ni pío. Su testimonio, no se había contado con su testimonio, nos parecía un tesoro.

¿Por qué piensas que no se sabe sobre este tema?

Bueno, porque en su momento eran los años 60, que había una dictadura. Para el régimen de Franco no era plato de gusto admitir que el país no podía emplear a sus ciudadanos y que tenían que largarse. Entonces, evidentemente, sí se sabía que esta gente se iba, pero se vendía de una forma que parecía que íbamos a hacerles el gran favor a los alemanes y a los franceses, y que hacemos el esfuerzo de irnos allí para ayudarles. Entonces, se vendió de una forma, por un lado, triunfante, no eran trabajadores ni obreros, sino que eran “productores españoles” los que iban para allá. Que las palabras del lenguaje utilizado también tiene un valor y luego todo lleno, pues muy folclórico, no pasaba de ser que el inmigrante español que estaba allí que era muy bien recibido, muy bien acogido y vivía muy bien. Lo que echaba de menos era el chorizo, el vino y el flamenco, y no pasó de ahí. Y de hecho, por ejemplo, cuando empezamos a ver archivos de imagen pues aquí lo único que había eran unos nodos muy bien hechos desde el punto de vista técnico, esto hay que decirlo (risa) pero absolutamente “naif”, por un lado, pero naif visto desde ahora, pero también desde el otro punto de vista dices qué forma de contar la historia.

Y prácticamente ¿no hay nada más que las imágenes que habéis incluido vosotras?

En España lo que encontramos fue el Nodo y luego alguna cosa ya de finales de los 70, ya de principios de la democracia y de principios de los 80. No había nada más que esa visión absolutamente folclórica y propagandista. Entonces tuvimos que ir a archivos de fuera de España con la excepción de algunos documentos de archivo fílmico privado de súper 8, de cineastas amateurs. Encontramos algunas joyitas que estaban allí pues durmiendo en las filmotecas y que la verdad es que, no se si has visto las imágenes que hay al principio de los trenes, que en vez de parecer los años 60 parecen los años 40. Los españoles que llegan con la maleta y miran, y todas esas miradas y caras, es de un cineasta amateur de Barcelona. Y estaba en la Filmoteca

de Barcelona. Y eso fue también una joya. Y eso fue un señor con su lucidez que sabía que todos los martes, todos los jueves se iban miles de españoles fuera y que eso era un documento histórico. Y él con su cámara fue a grabarlo, pero excepto eso todo lo demás lo conseguimos en archivos en Europa, en Francia, en Alemania, en los Países Bajos, en Suiza...

¿Y fue difícil conseguir esos archivos?

Bueno fue una labor, evidentemente hubo que trabajar, hubo que buscar. No fue tanto difícil, es decir nos llevó trabajo, pero no fue difícil en sí encontrarlos. El problema fue el coste. Es increíble que la memoria nuestra, de la historia de Europa que sea tan cara. Es que echaba para atrás a cualquier productor.

¿Tanto las imágenes de archivo españolas como las extranjeras?

Sí, había diferencias. De repente, había un archivo más barato y otro terriblemente caro, pero eran carísimas, sobre todo si querías tener los derechos para todo el mundo. Y sí, sí, era muy caro, muy caro. Lo que pasa es que había cosas muy buenas. En Francia encontramos cosas muy buenas cosas y en Alemania también.

Parece ser que la memoria no es uno de los puntos fuertes de este país, en muchos aspectos...

No, no, no.

Y lo estamos viendo porque ahora volvemos a emigrar otra vez. Tenemos otra vez una situación...

Sí, hombre ha cambiado porque ahora no es la misma situación, los medios de comunicación... Es decir que yo creo que de lo que pase ahora va a quedar testimonios de todos los colores, pero de aquella época en España, pues ya sabemos la imagen que se dio.

De todas formas vuestro documental habla de los años 60 y muchas de estas películas de ficción son de los años 2000, pero yo veo que las condiciones, las penalidades y los problemas de los emigrantes no han cambiado mucho en cincuenta años, en diferentes contextos y en diferentes épocas pero el racismo, la xenofobia se sigue sufriendo igual ¿Piensas que vuestra película ha contribuido a reflexionar sobre este tema?

Yo creo que sí porque la verdad es que se ha movido mucho y se han hecho muchos debates. Aparte de la televisión, ha ido a un montón de universidades, ha viajado

bastante y siempre se abre ese debate sobre las diferencias, sobre lo que se aprende de las experiencias que normalmente es cero. Y sí, lo que ha contribuido es a reflexionar por el paralelismo que a nosotros nos parecía, sobre todo cuando ya terminamos, el paralelismo tremendo de una situación de los años 60 con la situación de ahora salvando las distancias y salvando pues algunas características o condicionantes. Al final la inmigración económica es el mismo desgarró, la misma situación... Incluso psicológicamente es muy parecida. Esa idea de intentar vender que una vez que yo ya me he ido voy con una misión, y no puedo fracasar. Y admitir ya no el fracaso, sino que lo paso mal y que esto no es lo que yo pensaba y que qué mal lo estoy pasando es durísimo, con lo cual me callo y no lo digo, solo digo lo bueno.

Por eso costaría tanto que la gente os contara realmente...

Es un mecanismo psicológico de autodefensa general. Primero, los recuerdos todos los edulcoramos un poquito cuando no nos gustan y es muy duro, pero luego yo creo que pasado o no, nosotros hemos hecho algunas cosas con inmigrantes marroquíes y también venderles a su familia que estaban fenomenal, cuando estaban en una chabola. Yo lo que no puedo decir es, después de todo este esfuerzo de salir, soy como el enviado de mi familia para salir adelante, ahora les digo que es que lo estoy pasando mal. Y luego ese paralelismo de aislamiento, psicológicamente la dureza del idioma, del choque cultural que en los años 60 era brutal, ahora estamos acostumbrados. Es decir, los que fueron en los años 60 iban dos o tres días de tren y llegaban a un país que les parecía China. No sabían casi muchas veces ni ubicarlo en un mapa. Ahora Berlín, coges un avión, vas en un momento y te cuesta cincuenta euros, con lo cual tenemos una visión del mundo como que se ha hecho más pequeño para nosotros, antes era algo, era gente que no había salido de su pueblo. Evidentemente no es lo mismo ir en tren que jugarte la vida en una patera, evidentemente.

Pero también los emigrantes que iban ilegales también se jugarían la vida.

Pero no se jugaban tanto. Yo ahí creo que hay que poner cada cosa en su sitio. No es lo mismo cruzarte el Sáhara. O yo pienso en las chicas, por ejemplo, que vienen. No quiero ni imaginarme, pues vienen la mitad con niños, embarazadas, más la patera, más el riesgo. Yo creo que lo que es el viaje hay una diferencia de los que vienen ilegales. Pero yo creo que en otros aspectos es muy parecido. Luego hay gente a la que le va muy bien, que iban a lo mejor con menos presión de la familia, que estuvieron a lo mejor cinco años en Alemania, ahorraron, volvieron, pusieron un bar

en el pueblo y estupendo. En principio la familia le cuesta desprenderse, digamos, afectivamente de esa persona pero conforme pasa el tiempo todo eso, bueno, pues uno se va acostumbrando y también se va acostumbrando a que todos los meses te manden un dinero que es fundamental aquí. Entonces, mucha gente se vio atrapada en eso de tener que seguir mandando, mandando, mandando y mandando. Y yo creo que ahora pasa también eso mismo. La gente que viene y dice estoy un año, dos, cuatro, cinco y al final vienes con una mentalidad temporal para luego quedarte casi toda tu vida y eso es fatal, porque cuando vienes con una mentalidad temporal no te vas a integrar. Estás allí, en tu país, estás aquí para hacer dinero y punto. No te interesa gran cosa porque estás en otra, piensas en otra aventura. Entonces yo creo que eso también es terrible.

De hecho, con las dos protagonistas del documental, a mí parece que Leonor ha tenido una vida más feliz porque ha decidido quedarse y se le ve como más satisfecha. Se le nota en la mirada y en su forma de hablar, mientras que Josefina está como más... Porque volvió mucho años después... Pasaron dieciséis años o así, entonces ya...

Josefina también tuvo experiencias muy duras porque también se separó, estuvo muy enferma y mucho, mucho por la gente. Entonces yo creo que le quedó un sentimiento amargo de todo aquello. Por un lado, porque por otro, siendo más positivo, creemos y lo hablábamos con Josefina que si ella se hubiera quedado en su pueblo posiblemente hubiera sido más feliz personalmente, hubiera tenido más estabilidad emocional, familiar pero desde luego no hubiera pasado de ser una chica de pueblo y una analfabeta. Es decir, que su maduración y su gran avance como persona y profesionalmente fue gracias, por culpa de unas condiciones muy duras que le hicieron un poco ponerse un mundo por montera y decir 'allá voy'. Aquí no se hubiera convertido, no creo, en una líder sindical.

También tuvo otro tipo de logros...

Se hubiera quedado quizás más feliz.

¿Sabes si se planteó quedarse en Alemania?

Es que como ella se separó y luego estuvo tan enferma, ella tuvo que volver porque estaba muy mala. Además, ya vio que aquello no... Yo creo que también con las expectativas también en España, con la llegada de la democracia, el cambio, pues yo creo que mucha gente, entre que hubo crisis del petróleo y que afectó bastante a Alemania y aquí parecía que se abría un nuevo periodo, pues mucha gente se vino.

Me preguntaba si el reencuentro de Josefina y Leonor en Alemania estaba pensado para la película o era algo que ellas querían hacer porque llevaban muchos años sin verse.

No, fue lo que nosotras le planteamos a Josefina, le dijimos “volvemos a hacer este viaje contigo, volvemos a Alemania y volvemos a Núremberg y volvemos a ver a tus amigos”. Y eso hicimos. Nos pareció estupendo por parte de la estructura narrativa y de que además la historia avanzara un poquito y volverla a traer aquí. Nosotras pensamos que lo que les pasa muchas veces a los documentales es que muestran una situación que puede estar muy bien pero que se queda en eso. Pero que no tienen esa estructura de primero pasa esto, luego hay un nudo y luego hay un desenlace. Y lo que nos parecía en esta historia era que sí podía tener o que le podíamos dar un poquito más de tensión en lo que yo te planteo una historia, en principio, de gente mansa que va ahí, es decir, unos perdedores, que lo pasan muy mal. Y llega un momento que toman conciencia es decir ahí ya hay un cambio, todo eso no es, “fíjate pobrecitos los inmigrantes que lo pasaron mal y punto”. Pero nos parecía que lo bonito era que muy mal, muy mal, en un momento determinado toman conciencia y dan la vuelta a la tortilla y luchan por ello. Si que al final es un final amargo porque yo creo que consiguieron muchas cosas pero al final económicamente, al final tuvieron que volver muchos y otros se quedaron ahí y ahí se han quedado. Así nos parecía como que podía avanzar.

Por eso te planteaba antes lo de hacer ficción porque es bastante poético el reencuentro de las amigas.

Hombre porque el documental no es simplemente, el documental digo en general, el documental no es solo... Sobre todo lo que pasa es que teníamos tan poco rodaje que cuando tú tienes un tema histórico, del pasado, pues tienes muy poco rodaje, ¿no? Bueno, pues creíamos que tienes que utilizar, y en el documental se utiliza mucho, se utilizan muchos recursos de la ficción. Tienes que provocar, no te las inventas pero sí provocas muchas situaciones de lo que la gente te dice, del propio testimonio, tienes que provocar ciertas situaciones. A nosotras nos parecía lícito.

¿Queríais hacer este documental expresamente con mujeres como protagonistas o ha sido una coincidencia?

Pues mira fue desde el principio una coincidencia pero luego empezamos a pensar que no era tan coincidencia. Nos dimos cuenta que las mujeres son mucho más honestas consigo mismas y les cuesta menos admitir las cosas malas. Hemos barajado varios factores: uno en el que creemos es que a lo mejor los hombres están

muy presionados por conseguir el éxito y esa presión es muy fuerte. Yo como hombre estoy llamado a... y no puedo decir esto. Las mujeres yo creo que en ese momento y yo creo que sigue siendo así nos cuesta menos decir pues mira las cosas como son y la verdad es esta. Yo creo que tiene algo que ver porque en principio no íbamos buscando ni mujeres ni hombres, íbamos buscando antiguos emigrantes a Europa. Con lo cual no teníamos prejuicios sobre el tema, ni sabíamos lo que iba a dar, ni tampoco íbamos buscando ni hombre ni mujeres ni nada. Y nos encontramos con ese puñado de mujeres valientes y que luego veíamos que en esa [palabra incomprensible] sindical. Y fíjate que el porcentaje de mujeres es bastante menor en la inmigración pero al final fueron las más valientes a decir: “venga os voy a contar lo que verdaderamente pasamos”.

Sí, además así por regla general cuando piensas en la inmigración nunca te planteas si fueron mujeres o no porque como tampoco se ha hablado del tema...

Sí, bueno se ha hablado, hubo muchas mujeres que fueron a Francia, a París que eran las porteras, la figura de la portera o la chica de servicio sí que es un tema que ha salido muchas veces. Pero luego en Alemania era una inmigración más fabril, más de cadena de producción parece que uno lo asocia a hombres cuando no, las cadenas de montaje están llenas de mujeres. Pero bueno al final fue casualidad pero no tanta casualidad. Yo creo que en general lo que nosotros vimos es que eran más valientes.

¿Piensas que ser inmigrante es más duro para una mujer que para un hombre?

Pues yo creo que en esa época sí por el tema familiar, por el tema de los hijos porque yo creo que ahora que hay como una paternidad más consciente, esas cosas también sería muy duro pero yo creo que en ese momento el peso de la familia, de los hijos incluso la carga emocional y el apego era de las madres sobre todo. Entonces yo creo que en eso hubo un desgarró impresionante.

De hecho, uno de los testimonios es bastante emotivo, la madre es algo que le ha marcado la vida y se siente mal.

Que ese es un paralelismo bestial con las mujeres latinoamericanas que están en España. Es la misma historia, es terrible dejar un hijo con dos años, tres años y no volverle a ver porque ahora bueno, pues estás en Berlín y te vienes aquí, pero ahí pasaban años sin verle y luego pues no te reconocen como madre. Eso al final tú sigues apegadísima a tu hijo pero tu hijo ya no. Y eso a mí me parece que es una burrada. Yo la verdad es que hablando con ellas y luego con otras inmigrantes aquí

latinoamericanas, no puedo sentar cátedra, pero soy de la opinión de que a no ser que te estés muriendo de hambre si tienes un niño pequeño, si tienes patatas para comer no se debería emigrar, que es durísimo, me parece brutal.

De hecho, con muchos emigrantes latinoamericanos sucede lo mismo también, se quedan los niños con las abuelas y se vienen aquí las madres, que a mí me parece una valentía tremenda.

Pero al mismo tiempo dices ¡madre mía! Sufren, es un sufrimiento brutal y al final las familias son un desastre, se despegan muchísimo. Hay chavales que cuando llega la adolescencia hacen un lío con todo el dinero que les está mandando, con todo el sufrimiento la madre. ¡Es terrible! Luego a lo mejor les traen aquí y ya son chavales que no se han adaptado a ti ni a nada. Y hay mogollón de problemas con los chavales adolescentes que vienen de Latinoamérica. Están perdidos. Y un chaval perdido con pocos media y tal y tal...pues en fin.

¿Habéis seguido investigando sobre el tema de la inmigración?

Sí, mucha gente nos dijo que porque no hacíamos una parte del documental que uniéramos, que hiciéramos una historia paralela con la actualidad, y dijimos que no porque no hace falta. Simplemente tú ves esto y con este paralelismo dices ya no lo necesito. Sí que luego estuvimos intentando buscar productoras que al final no ha salido, lo tenemos ahí... Hacer una historia de una inmigrante sudamericana que ha pasado por todo este desgarró que tiene su hija aquí. Y entonces estuvimos indagando mucho sobre ese tema. Al final no ha salido y estamos en otra cosa.

¿Cómo ves la situación actual en España? ¿Piensas que España se está transformando en un país multicultural o todavía nos queda mucho?

Bueno pues para mí el problema es que yo creo que sí ha habido un cambio en la mentalidad de la gente, para mí el problema es la crisis. Las crisis en general generan un sentimiento de exclusión hacia el de fuera. Si no tengo para mí... pues quiero que este vecino que me caía muy bien ya no me cae tan bien. El problema es que hay que luchar contra ese sentimiento, porque además se politiza, se manipula, se exagera y acaba terminando en xenofobia. Y yo creo que cuando decía mira los alemanes que malos fueron, no es que fueran malos ni buenos, yo creo que porque pasa en todos los países en Alemania, Francia o España, en donde sea que hay miedo al diferente, al que viene de fuera. Que es un sentimiento casi innato, de la prevención, el diferente. El problema es que si eso se racionaliza, que es lo que se debe hacer, te das cuenta que no hay razón para casi ninguno de esos miedos, que

uno tiene como un instinto natural. Pero como eso no se hace sino se utiliza sobre todo cuando hay crisis para echar la culpa a otro. Políticamente en vez de echar la culpa al político acabas echando la culpa a los pobres que han venido hace unos años, que han venido aquí cuando había vacas gordas y ahora qué, ahora qué hacemos. Pasó lo mismo en Alemania. Cuando llegó la crisis del petróleo, decían que los alemanes no tenían trabajo porque los españoles se lo quitaban. Pues no. No es así.

¿Y os está afectando la crisis a la hora de hacer nuevos proyectos?

Sí, yo creo que a nosotras y a casi casi todo el mundo en el cine, tanto el documental como ficción. Yo creo que ha habido unos años que ha sido como un espejismo, que de repente había mucha más posibilidad de hacer documentales que ficción. De repente pues. Yo tenía un cierto sentimiento de rabia porque cuando empezamos a hacer documentales éramos de segunda categoría. La gente en documental es segunda categoría, poca cosa, es decir, lo importante es lo de ficción. Inclusive íbamos a festivales donde había una discriminación clara. Es decir, era un festival de documentales y ficción, y los de documentales éramos de segunda también: peor alojados, peor tratados, así de claro. Y de repente, cuando el mundo de la ficción vio que tenía menos posibilidades, el mundo del documental empezó a conocerse, a ver que no era ese rollo de reportaje, porque aquí es que somos muy analfabetos en el tema del documental.

Con el tema audiovisual diría yo.

Pero con lo de largo documental, no te quiero decir. Pero hemos avanzado mucho. De no haber nada a haber y que haya documentales en las salas de cine. Eso ha sido un avance. Entonces cuando empezaron a ver que no estaba mal y que además era más barato, y había más posibilidad de producir, pues mucha gente de la ficción se pasó al documental, con lo cual el documental era maravilloso ya. En fin yo tenía mi sentimiento, ¿cómo, pero no decíais que era de segunda? Ahora es un gran descubrimiento, es una maravilla. Pero bueno, todo eso es positivo porque hace que la visión hacia el documental sea mejor. Entonces, yo creo que ha habido unos años que el largometraje documental ha sido posible en España y yo creo que ha habido cierto apoyo dentro de que es pequeño y que aquí el negocio es un negocio muy pequeñito. El caso es que existía porque hace muchos años que no existía. Y entonces eso está muy bien y yo creo que ha habido unos años que no ha estado mal, con tu pequeño presupuesto independiente, pero que se podía hacer, por lo menos se podía hacer. Y ahora mismo con la casi desaparición de las

subvenciones, el recorte de TVE que era quien compraba documentales, pues estamos que yo no sé qué va a pasar, pero no hay, no hay dinero, no hay nada. Ha habido un parón, un parón total. Entonces es un empobrecimiento otra vez. ¿Por dónde puedes buscarte una salida? Pues en los medios de producción, que ahora son muy baratos. Antes el cine necesitabas una infraestructura industrial, es decir, una cámara que cuesta un... Y ahora puedes hacer cine guerrillero que le llamo yo, o documental guerrillero, que es yo, mi colega y una camarita que me he comprado. Si quieres seguir haciendo. Ahora, no esperes vivir de ello.

¿Nos puedes desvelar en qué proyecto estás trabajando ahora?

Seguimos Ana y yo juntas trabajando y estamos empezando ya el rodaje. Estamos con un tema de jóvenes que han pasado casi toda su vida tutelados por el estado, en centros de acogida y que al cumplir los dieciocho años ahí acaba el papel del estado y les dejan directamente en la calle, con todo ese bagaje complicado, afectivo-emocional y de madurez y muchas veces sin preparar para lo que les espera. Hay un porcentaje de ellos que acaban en la calle directamente como jóvenes sin hogar. Estamos con una gente que lo que hace es intentar repescar a esos chavales que han acabado en situación de calle. Es como al final el sistema de tutela con todo el esfuerzo económico y también de los propios educadores, que no ponemos en duda su buena fe, pero fracasa en general. Y sobre todo con esos chavales, que con dieciocho años se quedan en la calle.

Yo tengo amigos que son educadores sociales y ellos están siempre muy frustrados porque las normas de los centros son terribles. Yo tengo una amiga que se tiene que dejar los centros porque es que no puede no permitirle al niño que coja una jarra de agua porque está en una habitación a la que no puede tener acceso. No sé, que son normas muy estrictas pero que no generan confianza y no generan una fluidez, una dinámica de equipo y de grupo. Entonces no confían en los educadores y los ven como enemigos y son las normas de los centros.

Yo más que eso lo que estamos viendo son dos cosas. Que como bien dicen los educadores esos chicos no tienen una existencia normal, la familia lo que hace es que tú ves el mundo real, y ves cómo cada uno tiene un papel, el papel de la madre, del padre, del que sale a trabajar. Ves que trabajar cuesta, que para conseguir dinero tienes que trabajar. Es decir, ves los roles. Ves un poco la perspectiva. Tú en un centro de acogida vives en un limbo con unos educadores que te ponen la comida y la cena, no maduras en ese sentido ¿no? Tú vives ahí y

luego por mucho que un educador se vuelque, que hay educadores excelentes, son educadores de ocho horas. O sea, el turno de la mañana, el turno de la tarde, el turno de la noche. Eso no funciona bien con chicos además que han vivido experiencias en zonas muy duras con mucho desarraigo, con mucho fracaso escolar, porque están en otra totalmente, tienen otros problemas.

Entonces, ¿no se crean programas de formación profesional?

Sí, sí, sí, pero muchas veces hay chicos que es que no se han sacado ni el graduado escolar y fracasan una y otra vez, y es muy complicado. Y es tanto porque el sistema no funciona bien porque el propio chico percibe que para qué. No tiene un proyecto de vida porque tampoco lo ve, que uno tenga que hacer un proyecto de vida. Ya verán lo que hacen cuando salgan. Y luego por otro lado que aquí había proyectos interesantes de pisos con muy pocos chavales y que funcionaban en una estructura más familiar y de confianza, más de unos educadores viven allí también.

En Australia se utiliza mucho este modelo.

Y aquí también. Aquí se ha utilizado y hay un montón de asociaciones que están co-subsuencionadas por el estado, la comunidad, el ayuntamiento y que funcionan en pequeños pisos. Pero con la excusa o no de la crisis, y yo creo que también el desinterés porque esos chicos son muy pocos y no votan, pues se vuelve a ir otra vez al macrocentro. Elimino todo eso que me cuesta más y meto a cincuenta en un centro y ya está. Y otra vez a volver a empezar porque esa pequeña estructura sí que daba mucho más fruto y de eso ya queda menos. Les van quitando, quitando, quitando, y cada vez peor.

Hasta ahora tú has hecho tus documentales siempre con Ana, ¿qué ventajas tiene dirigir con otra persona?

Para nosotras muchísimas. Una vez que encuentras a alguien que tiene una mirada parecida, que hay química y entendimiento y tal pues es un alivio porque el tener a alguien al que manifestar tus dudas, cuando piensas cómo hacer esto, poder hablarlo y al hablarlo se te ocurren muchas más cosas. De alguna manera descansamos la una en la otra y la otra en la una en ese sentido. Y bueno nos gusta. Luego nosotras es que venimos, teníamos un programa en la tele y éramos un equipo de más gente. Yo vengo más de periodismo y Ana es realizadora. Entonces hacíamos equipo periodista-realizadora. Como llevamos mucho tiempo trabajando juntas ya esas fronteras se diluyen un poco y aunque seguimos teniendo cierto peso cada una de lo

nuestro pero ya es todo como una mezcla. Y esa fue la razón de empezar juntas que veníamos pues de eso del [programa] *30 minutos* y como nos ha ido bien trabajar juntas, pues hemos seguido así. La verdad es que es fundamental. Te tienes que llevar muy bien, somos muy diferentes, no tenemos nada que ver ni en carácter ni nada pero nos conocemos bien y si no tenemos exactamente la misma mirada que solemos tenerla parecida sí nos complementamos. De repente, ella dice algo que me ilumina y yo lo mismo. Tienes como un apoyo ahí.

¿Os habéis planteado alguna vez hacer ficción?

En principio no. Ana es más favorable. Está como más pensando en el mundo de la ficción. Le atrae más. A mí me parece que es meterme donde no me llaman, en principio. Sí tenemos un guion. Mi marido es director de cine también y guionista y de un documental que hicimos de fotógrafos españoles de la guerra civil pues tenemos un guion de ficción pero para mí es algo así... No realizaría ficción.

¿Es el de *Héroes sin armas*?

Sí, sí. Pero vamos en principio yo... no, no, no, nunca se sabe pero no.

También me gustaría hacerte unas preguntas sobre la situación actual de las mujeres directoras en la industria cinematográfica. ¿Crees que el aumento de directoras en las últimas décadas está creando una imagen más positiva y real de la mujer en la pantalla?

Yo creo que te voy a frustrar con mi respuesta (risa). Porque a mí me parece que es mucho mejor decir y que prueba que nos hemos ido incorporando a todos los sectores del arte, la literatura y la sociedad en general. Y el cine no iba a ser aparte. Con lo cual sí claro me parece positiva, me parece normal que haya directoras. Evidentemente ¡Cómo no va haber directoras! Sería extraño si no las hubiera. Y también yo creo que hay muchísimas mujeres en el cine pero sí es cierto que abundan en producción. Producción, no sé por qué, es el campo de las mujeres en España. No tengo respuesta para eso la verdad.

Bueno, según las estadísticas tampoco es tanto, 20%.

¿En la producción? O es la nueva hornada. Pero nosotras siempre que hemos hecho cortos, siempre en producción, mujeres, pero no producción del productor, te digo producción de campo, es decir no el productor ejecutivo.

Vale, mis estadísticas son de esto.

Yo te digo lo que es la producción de campo, directoras de producción, digamos, el que está en el día a día sacando adelante. Pues eso está, hay un montón de mujeres. Y en dirección cada vez hay más. Y no sé, yo tampoco creo que haya demasiadas trabas. Yo discuto a veces porque tengo conocidas que están en CIMA, que es una asociación. Y ellas piensan que realmente hay obstáculos claros. Yo la verdad es que no lo sé. No veo tanto obstáculo, no veo realmente ahí discriminación pero tampoco conozco muy bien. Yo lo que sé es que yo he intentado vender mis historias y mal que bien las he sacado adelante.

¿Personalmente tú no has sufrido esta discriminación?

No, ¿y si hubiera sido un chico lo hubiera tenido más fácil? Pues no lo sé. Es que no tengo muchos datos ni mucha experiencia negativa en ese sentido. Las de CIMA tienen muchos más datos sobre eso.

Sí, tienen opiniones completamente contrarias a la tuya.

Yo también es un poco por desconocimiento, yo no lo he sentido y es que no, no lo he sentido. Cuando en otros campos lo veo claramente como puede ser el periodismo. Hay un montón de periodistas, hay jefas de sección, pero directores de periódico y directoras de tele apenas hay. A mí sí me parece que hay ahí techo de cristal. Ahora es una cosa más sutil de lo que uno piensa pero al final yo creo que los hombres se defienden aunque sea inconscientemente. O sea, que no opino así en general de todo. También me asombra que salgan de la universidad chicas con notas buenísimas y luego dices ¿dónde están? Luego las ves aquí y allá pero no corresponde con la cantidad de gente que sale.

Las cifras oficiales son un 7 % de directoras en contraposición del 93, mientras que en la universidad son 50 y 50 ó 60 a 40.

También tiene que ver cuánta gente quiere ser directora de cine y no lo consigue. También habría que ver esos datos.

¿Tienes alguna directora de cine que te haya inspirado?

Modelos no, hay directoras que me encantan. Iciar Bollaín, por ejemplo, me encanta. La película *¡Hola!, ¿estás sola?* me encantó. Me gusta Mercedes Álvarez que hace documental también. Ya así como modelo no tengo a nadie.

Entonces tú sientes más la discriminación por el hecho de ser documentalista en vez de directora de ficción.

Antes sí, ahora ya menos. Ahí porque por eso porque mucha gente en ficción que se interesa por el documental, pero que hemos sido de segunda categoría durante mucho tiempo, por supuesto.

Para concluir, ¿qué consejos les darías a las mujeres que quisieran ser directoras?

Pues mucho ánimo y yo creo que un poquito más de seguridad en ellas mismas, que yo creo que a veces nos falla. Yo creo que tenemos una cosa buena, que en general las mujeres somos mucho más autocríticas que los hombres. Los hombres tienen más confianza en sí mismos, no sé por qué, porque muchas veces no deberían tenerla por el producto que hacen (risas). Pero sí que es cierto que a veces nos perdemos en nuestras dudas, nuestra inseguridad, y sobre todo las mostramos demasiado. Eso tiene un factor buenísimo, que es que nos planteamos las cosas mil y una vez, con lo cual sacas mucho más jugo a las cosas. Muchas veces tienen una visión más profunda del mundo, de lo que te rodea, creo que somos más observadoras muchas veces pero que se entiende mal cuando expresamos hacia los demás todas esas dudas e inseguridades que tenemos. A veces son malentendidas, son como entendidas como un punto flaco. A veces hay que tener cuidado a quién muestras todas esas dudas que a lo mejor entre nosotras son buenísimas y sirven para que el producto se enriquezca pero creo que muchos hombres lo malinterpretan. Visión absolutamente personal, de piel, lo noto. Mostramos mucho nuestras inseguridades.

Los hombres muchas veces veo en sala de montaje parecen que lo tienen todo controlado, a lo mejor están por dentro como un flan pero parecen y muestran que todo está controlado y que lo tienen todo muy claro. Ana y yo cuando estamos ahí estamos con nuestros nervios, no nos lo callamos o no nos lo dejamos para luego. Ellos dan siempre como una sensación de lo tengo controlado, aunque no tengan controlado absolutamente nada.

Yo creo que es algo que en general difunde el tipo de sociedad en la que vivimos. Pasa en todos los ámbitos. En el mundo académico es lo mismo. Yo he asistido a cursos donde se les tiene que dar muchos ánimos a las académicas para que vayan a puestos de catedráticas porque los hombres siempre han sido los triunfadores y los que han ido a luchar y los que han conseguido cosas. Y nosotras como nos lo tenemos que currar todo el doble es un poco como que realmente tienes que mostrar un buen producto y tienes

que estar muy segura de ti misma pero como para ellos parece ser que es más fácil acceder.

Pero porque también yo creo que utilizan eso de “yo proyecto una sensación de seguridad”. Y yo veo que nosotras somos...

Quizás sea algo hormonal...

No sé si hormonal. Tiene para mí elementos mil veces mejores que los suyos. Mil veces, por esa carga de profundidad. A mí a veces, sí, muy controlado, muy controlado, pero es infantil, totalmente infantil u obvio o tal. Y luego las mujeres nos comemos la cabeza muchísimo, yo creo que con todo. Y podemos perdernos en todo eso o quedarnos así como seguras pero sacamos mucho más jugo a las cosas.

Me está pareciendo muy interesante cuando leo las críticas sobre las películas dirigidas por mujeres, los críticos los veo siempre super críticos y van a criticar muchísimas cosas que a lo mejor para una mujer es el punto fuerte de la película. No sé, es interesante esos puntos de vista, esas perspectivas, y ver como también hay menos críticas de cine, mujeres que hagan las críticas.

Pues quizás haya ahí un prejuicio. No lo sé. Hay veces que dicen eso de “no, es que se nota que lo ha hecho una mujer”. Y me pregunto ¿por qué?

¿Pero se puede tomar como algo muy positivo?

Sí, sí, pero me lo pregunto. Y ¿por qué?

Pero esa frase tiene como con un ríntintín?

Y te dicen porque tiene mucha sensibilidad. O sea que en los hombres no hay sensibilidad, pues eso es un horror. Porque entonces para hacer cine hay que tener sensibilidad, si no apaga y vámonos.

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