INTRODUCTION

BEYOND THE BOUNDARIES OF A NATIONAL CINEMA

Blood Cinema: a title that is likely to evoke Lorca’s Blood Wedding and Saura’s cinematic adaptation of that work as well as familiar images by Goya—of Saturn Devouring His Son, Duel with Cudgels, and The Third of May—and the frequent reference to them in Spanish films. And beyond these specific allusions, a national cinema that is frequently described as excessive in its graphic depiction of violence and obsessive in its treatment of incestuous relations. And beyond the cinematic context, a nation whose history is marked by a fratricidal civil war with bloody repercussions, by a long period of Francoism that glamorized death, by a deep immersion in the conventions of the Counter-Reformation that fetishized the bleeding wounds of Christ and other martyrs, and by a “Black Legend” of cruelty and violence dating back to the Inquisition and the Conquest which Spaniards have tried to overcome for the past five hundred years. And beyond this Spanish specificity, the question of whether the cinema of any nation carries distinguishing traces of its own unique history, culture, race, or blood and the correlative issues of how these “fictional” concepts of national identity are constructed through cinema and other forms of popular culture.

Blood Cinema is not another English-language historical survey of filmmaking in Spain. Yet it draws and depends on the existence of
such works, especially on Peter Besas's *Behind the Spanish Lens: Spanish Cinema under Fascism and Democracy*, which was one of the first, and John Hopewell's *Out of the Past: Spanish Cinema after Franco*, which is probably the best.\(^1\) Though not organized strictly chronologically, *Blood Cinema* does have a historical trajectory, starting in Part I with a focus on the 1950s and ending in Part IV with an emphasis on the late 1980s and early 1990s but drawing examples from earlier periods and moving freely backward and forward throughout.

Nor is *Blood Cinema* an auteur study focusing exclusively on well-known filmmakers like Saura, Luis Buñuel, and Pedro Almodóvar.\(^2\) Instead, the films are usually chosen to illustrate broader conceptual issues, and they are drawn from the authorized Francoist cinema as well as from the cinema of opposition and of the post-Franco period. The two chapters that do focus on selected works of single auteurs (chapter 6, on Buñuel, and chapter 7, on José Luis Borau) present these figures as case studies for the broader issue of exile and diaspora. As a consequence, several of Spain's most accomplished filmmakers—such as Saura, Almodóvar, Víctor Erice, Manuel Gutiérrez Aragón, Vicente Aranda, Jaime de Armiñán, and Luis García Berlanga—and many of their best works receive less attention than some readers might expect or desire.

Nor is *Blood Cinema* a study of a film movement strictly within a national context, like the New Spanish Cinema, which was the focus of a special issue of *Quarterly Review of Film Studies* edited by Katherine S. Kovács in spring 1983 (the first book-length work on Spanish cinema published in the United States). Yet it does stress the importance of that movement in its cultural specificity and expands it beyond its usual location in the 1960s. Drawing on the historical divisions made by Robin W. Fiddian and Peter W. Evans, I would distinguish among three phases of the New Spanish Cinema. Fiddian and Evans observe,

It is possible to perceive four clearly delimited stages in the country's economic history between 1939 and 1982, with significant points of
articulation in the years 1951, 1962, and 1973. Spain's domestic political history as mapped out by the radical reorganisation of government ministries in July 1959 and July 1962, the assassination of Admiral Carrero Blanco and his replacement as Prime Minister by Arias Navarro in December 1973, and the victory of Felipe González's Socialists in the democratic elections of October 1982, illustrates the same trends, as does a particularly important set of relations between the State and the Church which underwent major transformations in 1953 (when the régime signed a new Concordat with the Vatican), 1961–63 (upon the publication of two encyclicals by Pope John XXIII), and 1971 (when the Joint Assembly of Bishops and Priests issued a communiqué which was sternly critical of some of the policies of the Franco régime). This sketchy outline . . . confirms the practical value of the conventional historiographic tool of analysis-by-decade. At the same time, it draws attention . . . to certain crucial dates . . . which may be regarded as turning points in contemporary Spanish affairs . . . allowing us to perceive [the texts discussed here] as events embedded in a highly complex field of historical and cultural forces.

Mapped against this historical grid, my reading of the New Spanish Cinema dates the first phase between 1951 and 1961. Beginning with an Italian film week in Madrid in 1951 (which featured a program of neorealist films that strongly influenced Berlanga and Juan Antonio Bardem) and ending with Buñuel's return to Spain in 1961 to make Viridiana, this period includes the founding of Spanish television in 1956 and the Salamanca Congress in 1955, where Spanish filmmakers from diverse ideological backgrounds came together to reject the Francoist cinema and to demand a new kind of cinema that could address contemporary social problems in Spain and achieve international recognition abroad.

The second phase occurs between 1962 and 1972, beginning with Franco's appointment of Manuel Fraga Iribarne as the new minister of information and tourism, a position he held from 1962 to 1969 (the period of apertura, or cultural opening, usually associated with the New Spanish Cinema). One of the ways Fraga helped to accel-
erate the liberalization of cultural production was by appointing cinephile José María García Escudero general director of cinema, a position he had already held from September 1951 to February 1952 (when he promoted the neorealism model) but from which he had been forced to resign. Now that Spain was moving toward greater integration with Europe, he was able to accomplish more tangible goals. He reformed government policies on censorship by making the rules more concrete; he reorganized the Instituto de Investigaciones y Experiencias Cinematográficas (where Berlanga and Bardem had studied), turning it into the influential Escuela Oficial de Cine-matografía (EOC), which trained an entire generation of filmmakers; and he considerably expanded the government subvention system, not only increasing the amounts of the grants but also changing the basis of selection from political issues of “National interest” to aesthetic concerns of “Special interest” so as to privilege sophisticated art films. All these measures led to the government’s active promotion of what García Escudero called the New Spanish Cinema—a movement that proved to be an effective vehicle for liberalizing Spain’s image abroad, especially through innovative, award-winning works like Berlanga’s El verdugo (The Executioner, 1964), Miguel Picazo’s La Tía Tula (Aunt Tula, 1964), Basilio Martín Patino’s Nueve cartas a Berta (Nine Letters to Berta, 1965), Saura’s La caza (The Hunt, 1965) and Peppermint frappé (1967), Buñuel’s Tristana (1970), and Armiñán’s Mi querida señora (My Dearest Lady, 1971).

But in 1969, this period of liberalization was seriously disrupted by the Matesa scandal, which intensified Spain’s economic crisis and led to the firing of Fraga. Hopewell (1986:80) reports, “On 10 August 1969 the government admitted that credits of about L80 million granted to the textile firm, Matesa, for the export of machinery had in fact been used for private investment abroad. Fraga was slightly too keen to publish the involvement of three Opus Dei Cabinet Ministers in the affair. Franco sacked him.” Fraga was replaced by the extremely reactionary Alfredo Sánchez Bella, who held the post from October 1969 to June 1973. While he was in office, rigorous censorship was restored and government subventions
to filmmakers were severely cut. As Hopewell notes, these cuts were particularly devastating since they occurred precisely when the Spanish film industry was just beginning to experience serious competition from television. The sixties ended with a political and economic crisis that went far beyond the Matesa affair. As Fiddian and Evans observe, “Divisive debates about the legalising of political associations took place between 1967 and 1969 against a backcloth of severe economic difficulties, open rebellion by the student population in April 1968, and a state of emergency imposed in January 1969”—conflicts that structure works like Saura’s Stress es tres, tres (Stress Is Three, Three, 1968) and Elías Querejeta’s anthology film, Los desafíos (The Challenges, 1969).

The third phase of the New Spanish Cinema occurs between 1973 and 1982 and moves into the post-Franco period. Although by this time many Spaniards perceived the New Spanish Cinema to be over, it was now becoming more widely recognized internationally. Beginning with the assassination of Franco’s anointed right-wing successor Admiral Luis Carrero Blanco by Basque terrorists in 1973, which assured that Spain’s move toward liberalization would continue after Franco’s death in 1975, this period of “soft dictatorship” (or dictablanda) includes courageous, ground-breaking films, many of which obtained critical acclaim and distribution abroad, such as Erice’s El espíritu de la colmena (Spirit of the Beehive) and Saura’s La prima Angélica (Cousin Angélica) in 1973, Armiñán’s El amor del Capitán Brando (The Love of Captain Brando) in 1974, and Borau’s Furtivos (Poachers) and Saura’s Cría cuervos (Raise Ravens) in 1975. It also includes blatantly subversive films from the period of transition that immediately followed Franco’s death, such as Jaime Chávarri’s El desencanto (Disenchantment, 1976), and A un dios desconocido (To an Unknown God, 1977); Vicente Aranda’s Cambio de sexo (Sex Change), José Luis García’s Asignatura pendiente (Pending Exam), and Gutiérrez Aragón’s Camada negra (Black Brood), also in 1977; Saura’s Los ojos vendados (Blindfolded Eyes), José Juan Bigas Luna’s Bilbao, and Eloy de la Iglesia’s El diputado (The Deputy) in 1978; and Pilar Miró’s El crimen de Cuenca (The Crime of Cuenca)
in 1979. The terrorist bombing of theaters that were playing *Camada negra* and the temporary banning of *El crimen de Cuenca* because of its attack against the Guardia Civil clearly demonstrated that political censorship was still operative during the transition. As soon as the Socialists were voted into power in 1982, they appointed the controversial Miró as general director of cinema, dramatically demonstrating that censorship was long gone and that a new era was beginning both in politics and cinema. One dimension of this change in the 1980s was the acceleration of Spain’s integration into the European community and into the emerging configurations of global mass media. This acceleration was at least a contributing factor to Spain winning its first Oscar (significantly in 1983) for the earnest, yet sentimental *Volver a empezar* (To Begin Again, 1982), and to the stunning international success (even in the daunting North American market) of Saura’s dance trilogy and of Almodóvar’s outrageous comic melodramas.

*Blood Cinema* emphasizes the international dimensions of the New Spanish Cinema. Like Homi Bhabha’s *Nation and Narration*, it traces a movement “from the problematic unity of the nation to the articulation of cultural difference in the construction of an international perspective.” It assumes that every national film movement seeks to win legitimation as the “valid” representative of its culture by striving for international recognition—the way revolutionary governments seek to be recognized by other nations. Virtually all film movements attack the dominant cinema within their own nation as nonrepresentative and unrealistic or as too reflective of foreign influences, yet ironically they themselves usually turn to other marginal cinemas within a foreign context for conventions to be adapted to their own cultural specificity. This was true of Italian neorealism, which turned to French poetic realism. It was true of the French *nouvelle vague*, which turned to Hollywood B movies and to outsiders like Rossellini and Lang. And in the 1950s—that first phase of the New Spanish Cinema—it was true of Spanish filmmakers like Bardem and Berlanga, who dialogized the neorealist aesthetic against the conventions of Hollywood melodrama. And at the end of the decade,
it was also true of Saura, who tried to signal the break from Bardem and Berlanga and the move toward a second phase by claiming the exiled Buñuel and the French new wave as his models instead of neorealism. And at the beginning of the third phase, it was also true of Erice and Armíñán, who dramatized very concretely in El espíritu de la colmena and El amor del Capitán Brando how Hollywood films and stars were culturally reinscribed by Spanish spectators living under Francoist repression.

In contrast to the New Spanish Cinema, most of the European film movements that emerged during the post–World War II era, whether in Western or Eastern Europe, were struggling to demonstrate their independence, not only from the dominant cinema at home but also from the hegemonic power (either the U.S. or the USSR) in whose sphere they were placed by the Yalta treaty. Simultaneously in the international sphere, they also tried to distinguish their own national culture from those other countries in a similar position (e.g., Czechs as opposed to Poles or Hungarians and French as opposed to Italians or West Germans). But since Spain had stayed out of the war and was locked in hermetic isolation under the Francoist regime, the New Spanish Cinema could turn to the cultural productions of any other nation as a means of escaping the Francoist hegemony. Within all these national contexts, critics, historians, and participants frequently argued over whether it was really a coherent movement, that is, one with shared goals and aesthetic principles. But this essentialist argument is not really an important issue. What is more significant was the break from the dominant cinema within the nation and the international acknowledgment of that functional difference.

Using Spain as a case study, this book seeks to explore and problematize the concept of a national cinema, claiming that it must be read against the local/global interface, which has become increasingly important in the new world order of the 1980s and 1990s. This interface operates in every national cinema, primarily because the film medium has always been an important vehicle for constructing images of a unified national identity out of regional and ethnic diversity and for transmitting them both within and beyond its
national borders and also because from its inception, the history of cinema has always involved a fierce international competition for world markets. This competition has been intensified at certain key historical moments—the coming of sound at the end of the 1920s, the restructuring of the world order at the end of World War II, the globalization of mass culture in the post–cold war era of the late 1980s and early 1990s—moments that will be stressed in this study.

I have chosen Spain for my case study primarily because, despite the richness of its film history and its success at international festivals, with very few exceptions, Spanish cinema is largely unknown or ignored in the English-speaking world. In fact, it is virtually omitted from most of the currently popular English-language one-volume texts of world film history, which necessarily depend on the primary research of others. This dearth of critical and scholarly attention is obviously linked to material conditions of distribution. Except for the works of Buñuel, Saura, and Almodóvar, few Spanish films have been widely distributed in the United States, or, for that matter, anywhere else outside of Spain.

Thus, as a North American scholar trying to help demarginalize Spanish cinema, my own work (like that of Besas, Hopewell, Virginia Higginbotham, Kovács, and D'Lugo) is immediately absorbed as part of the government-sponsored culture industry—a dynamic that Thomas Elsaesser has brilliantly analyzed in the context of Germany. His analysis is also applicable to Spain, where the Socialist Ministry of Culture has been active in financially supporting the promotion of its cinema and auteurs for world consumption—a tradition that was also operative under García Escudero. As Christian Metz observes in The Imaginary Signifier, the film historian frequently finds herself becoming an intellectual publicist for the texts she describes: “Often, by unexpected paths, unperceived by those who have quite unintentionally taken them, . . . writings on film become another form of cinema advertising and at the same time a linguistic appendage of the institution itself.” I cannot deny this dimension of my own work; in fact, far from being “unperceived,” I hope to demonstrate that it is part of the process being described—
the reconstruction of national identity through the production, promotion, and reception of popular culture.

In working toward the demarginalization of Spanish cinema, I choose not to focus exclusively on industrial history or the distribution of Spanish films in foreign markets (in order, for example, to update and globalize Santiago Pozo’s valuable 1984 study, *La industria del cine en España: Legislación y aspectos económicos, 1896–1970*) but rather to apply many of the theoretical concepts that have been developed over the past twenty years in film studies, concepts that are not present in the historical surveys by Besas, Hopewell, and Higginbotham but that inform the writings of scholars like Marvin D’Lugo, Kathleen M. Vernon, Robin Fiddian, Peter Evans, Victor Fuentes, and Román Gubern. In this sense, *Blood Cinema* takes a transcultural approach, which leads me to the second reason for focusing on Spain.

I am convinced, and I hope to convince my readers, that a knowledge of Spanish cinema alters and enriches one’s understanding of world cinema. I have been convinced not by Spanish film scholars focusing exclusively on the national context but by three works that have nothing to do with Spain: Noel Burch’s *To the Distant Observer: Form and Meaning in Japanese Cinema*, which demonstrates that an intensive focus on certain issues within a single national context can substantially alter the way one conceptualizes the history of world cinema and its reception; Elsaesser’s *New German Cinema: A History*, which shows how film can be used as a means of ideological reinscription both by filmmakers struggling against a dual hegemony in domestic and international markets and by the government that hopes to change the international image of the nation; and Kay Schaffer’s *Women and the Bush: Forces of Desire in the Australian Cultural Tradition*, which illustrates how “master narratives” like the Oedipal plot can be inflected by a specific cultural context and a particular national imaginary. Like those three works, *Blood Cinema* seeks to decenter a national cinema by reading it in relation to several other cultures both within and beyond its own national borders, both in the regional and global contexts.
For this reason, my book addresses at least two different audiences—those who already know Spanish culture and Spanish film history but who are unfamiliar with English-language film studies and those who already know film studies and culture theory but who are basically unfamiliar with Spanish history, culture, and cinema. For the former, my goal is to demonstrate that theoretical approaches currently being used in English-language film studies can lead to new and valuable readings of Spanish texts both in their local and global contexts and that an “outsider” can sometimes perceive patterns that are less visible to those inside the culture. Since I am the only non-Hispanist (at least, the only scholar based in a film school rather than a Spanish department) who is currently writing on Spanish cinema, I hope to turn this factor (which many might see as a limitation) into an advantage. For the latter, I seek to demonstrate that a knowledge of Spanish cinema is as essential to those in film studies as a knowledge of French, Italian, German, or any other national cinema.

In this way, I am trying to bridge the gap between two quite different kinds of discourse with very different assumptions, which leads to certain difficulties concerning accessibility and the choice of language, methodology, and texts. For those unfamiliar with English-language film studies, I have tended to quote at length from theoretical sources and to include definitions and explanations of key assumptions that would probably be unnecessary for other readers. The greater difficulty arises with those unfamiliar with Spanish cinema and culture, for I am writing about films that few of these readers have seen.

Although the main lines of my argument are based on the viewing of hundreds of Spanish films, I have purposely avoided long lists of unfamiliar titles, brief plot summaries, and superficial critiques. Rather, I have chosen to develop my argument through the close textual analysis of a relatively small body of films, the analysis of which should be clear even to readers who have not seen them, especially when supplemented by many still photographs as illustrations. In addition to those works described in great detail, I keep
returning to another group of key texts—including, for example, La aldea maldita (The Cursed Village, 1929), Raza (Race, 1941), and Marcelino, pan y vino (Marcelino, Bread and Wine, 1954)—so that I can provide the plot summary and basic description once and then frequently refer to the film without repeating that information. Because of my focus on the local/global interface, I have tended to choose films that have been seen outside of Spain, that have won recognition at international festivals, or that have played a significant role within the film history of the nation or region.

Despite all these strategies, the problem posed by the readers' unfamiliarity with the films still remains. Thus, I arrived at a solution that draws on the current state of interactive technology and that is particularly well suited to this project. Blood Cinema is accompanied by a CD-ROM (specially produced for this purpose), which contains brief excerpts from fifteen of the films being discussed, with commentaries that address my dual audiences. I am unaware of any other book in film studies that uses a companion CD-ROM in this way.

The book is organized around four basic issues that problematize the notion of a national cinema: transcultural reinscription, cultural specificity in the representation of violence and in the Oedipal master narrative, exile and diaspora, and micro- and macroregionalism. While all four of these issues can be applied to most cultural contexts, they are particularly central in Spain.

Part I, Transcultural Reinscription, is concerned with the ideological reinscription of conventions that are borrowed from other cultures and set in conflict with each other, a process of hybridization that is capable of carving out a new aesthetic language. More specifically, this section focuses on the 1950s, that crucial period when Francoist Spain began to emerge from its hermetic isolation and to become allied with the West and when Spanish films began to be seen and to win prizes at international festivals. Drawing on the writings of Mikhail Bakhtin, Ernesto Laclau, and Stanley Payne, these chapters explore how Spanish filmmakers, both on the Right and the Left, used a dialectic interplay between conventions borrowed from Italian
neorealism and Hollywood classical cinema to structure their own films and to develop a new language that would help characterize the New Spanish Cinema. This process is traced in considerable detail through four of the most influential films from the first phase of that movement: *Surcos* (Furrows, 1950), *Muerte de un ciclista* (Death of a Cyclist, 1955), *Los golpíos* (Hooligans, 1959), and *El cochecito* (The Little Wheelchair, 1960). Then it moves ahead to the third phase, to see how transcultural reinscription of similar conventions functions in Erice’s internationally acclaimed film, *El espíritu de la colmena* (1973).

Part II, Blood Cinema: The Representation of Violence in the Spanish Oedipal Narrative, explores the cultural specificity of violence and of the Oedipal narrative within which it is frequently dramatized—two forms of representation that, in any given moment of history, are capable both of reproducing and challenging the dominant social order. This section traces these cultural inflections in Spanish cinema from the 1940s to the present but emphasizes the post-Franco period.

Drawing primarily on René Girard’s *Violence and the Sacred* and Tzvetan Todorov’s *The Conquest of America: The Question of the Other* but also on the images of Goya and the writings of Sade, Bataille, Deleuze, Unamuno, Ortega y Gasset, and Gubern, chapter 4 argues that one of the distinguishing characteristics of the representation of violence in Spanish cinema is the interplay between primitive sacrifice and modern massacre. While this duality was glossed over by the unifying ideology of the official Francoist cinema, the filmmakers of the opposition explored Spain’s paradoxical role as a dual signifier of Europe’s barbaric past and dehumanized future. This duality is traced, first, briefly through two Francoist epics of the 1940s, *Raza* (1941) and *Los últimos de Filipinas* (Last Stand in the Philippines, 1945); then, with increasing elaboration through four productions from the oppositional cinema of the 1960s, *Llanto por un bandido* (Lament for a Bandit, 1963), *La caza* (1965), *Peppermint frappé* (1967), and *Los desafíos* (1969); and finally, through a detailed comparative analysis of the two most excessive and threatening ex-
amples of violence from the post-Franco period, *Pascual Duarte* (1975) and *Tras el cristal* (Behind the Glass, 1986).

Chapter 5 examines the way Oedipal conflicts within the family were used to speak about political issues and historical events that were repressed from filmic representation during the Francoist era and the way they continue to be used with even greater flamboyance in the post-Franco period after censorship and repression were abolished. Drawing on Spanish literature (particularly nineteenth-century novels by Benito Pérez Galdós and Leopoldo Alas) and paintings (especially by José de Ribera and Francisco de Goya) as well as film, it describes the specific cultural inflection of that master narrative, demonstrating how this Spanish version leads us to new readings of the original myth. Then it traces these patterns through a diverse range of filmmakers, genres, periods, and tones, from Florián Rey’s silent classic, *La aldea maldita* (1929), to recent romantic melodramas like Aranda’s *Amanentes* (Lovers, 1990) and Almodóvar’s *¡Atame! (Tie Me Up, Tie Me Down!)* (1989) and *Tacones lejanos* (High Heels, 1991). The chapter concludes with a detailed reading of Bigas Luna’s notorious *Bilbao* (1978), as one of the most extreme and illuminating examples of the Spanish Oedipal narrative in post-Franco cinema, comparing it with other related texts either from the same year (Armiñán’s *Al servicio de la mujer española* [At the Service of Spanish Womanhood]) or from earlier decades (Saura’s *Peppermint frappé, 1967*, and Buñuel’s *El [This Strange Passion], 1955*).

Part III, Exile and Diaspora, examines the ways in which the idealized cultural unity of any nation is challenged and ideologically reinscribed by the exile and émigré. After briefly sketching how the theme of exile has been represented in Spanish cinema and citing a number of examples of different kinds of exile within the Spanish context (including both Spaniards who left and foreigners who emigrated to Spain), this section focuses on two case studies. Chapter 6 deals with the unique case of Buñuel, who during his three quite different periods of exile became widely perceived (however erroneously) as the single embodiment not only of an international hi-
torical movement like surrealist filmmaking but also of two national cinemas—the Mexican and the Spanish. Chapter 7 describes the voluntary aesthetic exile of Borau, which was represented in his choice of Spanish film projects and aesthetic style as well as in his critical and scholarly writing and which was pursued through international coproductions that culminated in *Río abajo*, the film that turned his dream of working in Hollywood into a nightmare.

Part IV, Micro- and Macoregionalism, argues that regionalism is an ideological construct like nationality which refers to areas both smaller and larger than a nation. Functioning co-dependently, the terms “microregionalism” and “macoregionalism” fluidly shift meaning according to context and thereby serve as an effective means both of asserting the subversive force of any marginal position and of destabilizing the hegemonic power of any center. Once regional structures and the center are seen as sliding signifiers, then there is a movement toward the proliferation and empowerment of new structural units both at the micro and macro level. This cluster of issues is explored first in the context of European television, arguing that Spain provides a particularly effective model for the local/global nexus and for the refiguration of cinema and nations. Then it turns to cinema, showing how this regional/national/global interface was addressed, first, in the regional cinema of Cataluña, particularly in a sophisticated Catalan film from the 1940s, *Vida en sombras* (Life in Shadows, 1947–48), then in recent European coproductions like *El sueño del mono loco* (Dream of the Mad Monkey, 1989) and *Boom boom* (1990), and finally, in films (whether made in Madrid, Barcelona, or the Basque region) that reinscribe the “marginal” as the center—a dynamic that is particularly strong in the international success of Almodóvar and Erice.

Having been completed in 1992, *Blood Cinema* assumes that the present moment demands a global perspective on Spain, as has been dramatized by the events designed to celebrate the 500-year anniversary of Columbus’s voyage: the world exposition in Seville, the Olympic Games in Barcelona, and the “rediscovery” of a new “Europe without borders,” in which Spain is at last recast in a starring role. This perspective was also partially responsible for the selection
of Madrid as the site for the important October 1991 opening of the international peace talks on the Middle East (with Bush and Gorbachev in attendance), as Spain had once expelled both the Moslems and the Jews from its "holy land" but now had been peacefully converted into a reasonable modern nation fully committed to global diplomacy. From our post–cold war perspective, we can now look back and realize that just as the Spanish Civil War was the dress rehearsal for the ideological conflicts of World War II, which originally put the cold war into place, Spain's miraculously rapid and bloodless transition from Francoism to democracy also prefigured the other miraculous transitions that were soon to erupt throughout Eastern Europe. One could even argue that Spain's conversion to democracy was one of the first steps in constructing the new world order of the 1990s, a reconfiguration that is bound to have a dramatic impact on mass media around the globe and to seriously challenge the concept of blood cinema.

Lest this sound too utopian, one must remember that 1992 is also the hundred year anniversary of the birth of Franco, who, after seventeen years of dormancy, is beginning to arouse new interest in Spain, especially in the wake of recent economic crises and a resurgence of xenophobic racist attacks on foreign emigres, particularly from North Africa. These dynamics are part of the wave of post–cold war nationalism now sweeping Europe, with its disturbing calls for ethnic cleansing and its threats of proliferating civil wars that have already devastated what was once Yugoslavia. This new nationalism threatens to undermine the recent moves toward European unity and global democracy—a conflict that will undoubtedly be played out in the new configurations of regional, national, and global mass media and that may give new resonance to the phrase, blood cinema.