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Elena Oliete-Aldea, Beatriz Oria and Juan A. Tarancón, eds. 2016. *Global Genres, Local Films: The Transnational Dimension of Spanish Cinema*. London: Bloomsbury. 270 pp. ISBN: 978-15-013029-8-5.

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The edited volume *Global Genres, Local Films* offers a welcome addition to the growing literature on Spanish transnational cinema written in English, providing a range of thoughtful analyses that augment the insights already made in such recent works as Benet (2015), Dapena, D'Lugo and Elena (2013) and Dennison (2013), as well as in the articles published in the journal *Transnational Cinemas* by Berger (2016), Cerdán and Fernández Labayen (2015), Falicov (2013) or Craig (2010), to name but a few. Many existing studies of transnationalism in Spain approach the topic from a predominantly economic perspective—such as Ibáñez (2013)—and *Global Genres, Local Films* continues this tradition by offering several contributions which comment on the financial benefits of coproductions for Spanish filmmakers. Yet the collection also attempts to provide a more innovative, postmodern reading of Spanish cinema through exploring the manner in which many historical and contemporary films add nuance to the very concept of transnationalism itself.

The opening chapters of the volume efficiently establish the context of the debate. In the “Foreword,” Barry Jordan expresses his concern that the transnational might (already have) become a “passing panacea [that is] overly prescriptive and superficial” (xviii). Instead, the editors’ “Introduction” informs us that *Global Genres, Local Films* will provide a “counter-history” of Spanish filmmaking (8). In doing so, the book analyses the points of contact between “cross-cultural aesthetics and narrative models on the one hand, and indigenous tradition on the other” (8-9). The most successful essays in *Global Genres, Local Films* do precisely this, providing thoughtful and provocative insights into films whose richness is enhanced through the consideration of their complex transnational dimensions.

Although the editors emphasise that the book has been organised into three distinct time periods, in an attempt no doubt to emphasise the historical continuity of transnational concerns in Spanish cinema, such a structuration can, at times, seem a little forced, with part 2 in particular including several films outside of

the supposed remit of cinema from “the 1970s to the 1990s” (11). Part one of the book, “Rethinking Spanishness: The Soft Edges of Early Cinema,” focuses on films from the silent era until the early 1950s. In it, the various authors provide a series of illuminating readings to challenge the accepted notion that Spain’s political situation led its early cinema to be culturally isolationist and self-referential. Indeed, Valeria Camporesi’s analysis of Spanish musicals from the 1930s emphasises that, despite their particularly local, folkloric flavour, films such as *La verbena de la Paloma* [Festival of the Virgin of the Dove] (Benito Perojo, 1935) and *Morena Clara* [Dark and Bright] (Florian Rey, 1936) display an attempt to construct a vision of *españolada* [Spanishness] which had transnational appeal. As such, Camporesi concludes that what we now understand as globalisation should be recognised as an important element of Spain’s cinema from its earliest beginnings. Leading on from this, Vicente J. Benet’s essay on historical film dramas debunks a reading of Franco-era cinema as simplistically propagandist, arguing that such a political interpretation limits the overall effect and complexity of the films. Although indebted to work already done by Jo Labanyi (2002), Benet suggests that women spectators had a crucial effect on Spanish drama productions such as *Locura de amor* [The Mad Queen] (Juan de Orduña, 1948) and *Lola la piconera* [Lola, the Coalgirl] (Luis Lucía, 1952) and, as a result, that these films share an important communality with other foreign cinemas at the time. The latter film is also the subject of Federico Bonaddio’s extensive and insightful analysis of how transnational hybridity—in this case, the blending of the historical epic (a staple of Franco-era filmmaking) and the musical—serves to illuminate the social and cinematic dynamics at the time of *Lola la piconera*’s creation. The author convincingly suggests that changing spectator demands for the escapist narratives offered by Hollywood caused the production company (CIFESA) to change its approach, downplaying the politics of patriotism in favour of a more commercially viable, transnational product. Hybridity is also a concern in Daniel Mourenza’s essay on the work of celebrated Spanish director, Juan Antonio Bardem. However, rather than examining his merging of neorealism and melodrama, a topic that has already been insightfully discussed by Diana Roxana Jorza (2011), Mourenza focuses exclusively on Bardem’s use of melodrama as a transnational element in his filmmaking. In this way, he proposes that, rather than understanding the director in auteurist terms, films throughout his career—such as *Muerte de un ciclista* [Death of a Cyclist] (1955), *Calle Mayor* [Main Street] (1956) and *Nunca pasa nada* [Nothing Ever Happens] (1963)—reflect how genre cinema allowed Bardem to comment on the social and ideological conflicts of Spain through the prism of more personal and individual relationships.

Although perhaps a little unfocused in its detailed discussion of US films, Juan A. Tarracón’s chapter on Spanish crime cinema still offers an interesting account of the genre’s emergence during the Franco years. Despite its transnational origins, Tarracón argues effectively that crime cinema was an appropriate form through

which filmmakers such as Julio Salvador—*Apartado de correos 1001* [P.O. Box 1001] (1950)—Ignacio F. Iquino—*Brigada criminal* [Crime Squad] (1950)—and Francisco Rovira Beleta—*Los ojos dejan huellas* [The Eyes Leave a Trace] (1952)—could explore the complexities and ambiguities of contemporary Spanish society.

The overarching concern of part two of the book, “Broadening Perspectives: Crossing Borders, Crossing Genres,” is with the exploration of transnationalism in Spanish films during the country’s transition to democracy—that is between the end of Franco’s regime and the 1990s. However, as not all of the contributing authors focus exclusively on films that fall within this period, the demarcation of such a specific historical period can seem at times somewhat redundant. Arnaud Duprat de Montero recovers Carlos Saura’s critically undervalued road movie, *Stress-es tres-tres* [Stress is Three, Three] (1968) from obscurity, arguing that it embodies a rich, intertextual dialogue with the *Nuevo Cine Español* [New Spanish Cinema] and the work of auteurs such as Jean-Luc Godard and Luis Buñuel. The film can thus be understood, he argues, as a particularly European/transnational take on the US road movie but one which allows Saura to address specifically Spanish social concerns, such as his subversive representation of the new technocratic bourgeoisie. The transnational road movie is also the subject of Carmen Indurain Eraso’s essay which examines how Spanish filmmakers have re-codified the genre in order to explore specific “glocal” (154)—or a conflation of global and local—concerns. In particular, she identifies *Airbag* (Juanma Bajo Ulloa, 1997) and *Fugitivas* [Fugitives] (Miguel Hermoso, 2000) as films that exemplify the postmodern and realistic trends within late twentieth century Spanish cinema.

Both Andy Willis and Anne Davies offer interesting analyses of other genre films, the former’s “Violence, Style and Politics: The Influence of the *Giallo* in Spanish Cinema of the 1970s” exploring how the thematic and stylistic conventions of *Una libélula para cada muerto* [A Dragonfly for Each Corpse] (León Klimovsky, 1974) become “entwined with the ideological morality of the Spanish dictatorship” (112). An inventive, alternative reading of the canonical *El espíritu de la colmena* [Spirit of the Beehive] (Victor Erice, 1974) is offered by Anne Davies who explores this and two other films—*La residencia* [The House That Screamed] (Narciso Ibáñez, 1969) and *Tras el cristal* [In a Glass Cage] (Agustí Villaronga, 1987) in terms of their gothic elements. Rather than limiting herself to an analysis of how the films can be read for their political engagement, Davies instead suggests that they contribute to a broader gothic mode within transnational cinema.

Noelia V. Saenz’s chapter positions 1992, the Quincentenary anniversary of the discovery of the Americas, as a defining year within Spanish transnational film production. Although flawed initially by a somewhat clumsy understanding of the link between historical epics and heritage films, this shortcoming does not, however, detract from Saenz’s highly productive comparison between *Christopher Columbus: The Discovery* (John Glen, 1992), which maintains a Eurocentric view of

history, and *También la lluvia* [Even the Rain] (Iciar Bollaín, 2010) which represents “a discursive critique of the role of film and film industries as both a vehicle for continued exploitation and potential resistance” (132-133). Chantal Cornut-Gentile D’Arcy’s essay ends part two with a close reading of another Iciar Bollaín film, *Flores de otro mundo* [Flowers from Another World] (1999). After establishing historical emigration as a basis for transnationalism in Spain, the author suggests that Bollaín’s film evidences the emergence of a new genre in Spanish cinema, one in which immigration, displacement and globalisation are key elements.

Part three of *Global Genres, Local Films* deals with Spanish productions in the twenty-first century which are much more self-consciously transnational. Re-examining several of the genres already discussed in the previous sections, the contributions in the final part explore the multiplicity of cultural identities in the new millennium. Beginning with Beatriz Oria’s excellent study, “Isn’t it Bromantic? New Directions in Contemporary Spanish Comedy,” the author examines the globalising effect of Hollywood through a detailed analysis of *No controles* [Lovestorming] (Borja Cobeaga, 2010), a film which appropriates many of the elements of mainstream America cinema whilst maintaining “a model of Spanishness [that] is firmly rooted in the past” (183). Luis M. Garcia-Mainar’s essay on the crime genre includes a rewarding exploration of the television miniseries, *Crematorio* [Crematorium] (Jorge Sánchez-Cabezudo, 2011), in terms of how the Spanish cinematic industry has tried to emulate its US and European counterparts. In doing so, a noticeable shift in emphasis from action onto the characters’ personal and emotional experiences can be observed and it is this, the author argues, that allows for recent productions to scrutinise specific Spanish social and historical concerns. A similar argument is proposed in Hilaria Loyo’s study of the transnational elements in Isabel Coixet’s films. The Catalan filmmaker’s predilection for the transnational genre of melodrama is interpreted by Loyo as a strategy through which she can explore universal human suffering in a more specific, localised context. Loyo’s observation that Coixet’s characters are “uprooted” (202) participants in the process of global mobility finds an echo in Alberto Elena and Ana Martín Morán’s chapter on recent Spanish immigration films. They suggest that, by making modifications to existing transnational genres such as the romantic comedy and the French *cinéma de banlieue* [suburb cinema], filmmakers such as Irene Cardona—*Un novio para Yasmina* [A Fiancé for Yasmina] (2008)—and Santiago Zannou—*El truco del manco* [The One-Handed Trick] (2008)—have been able to convey the often unrepresented reality of migrants’ experience in contemporary Spain.

Migration is also a key concern in Iván Villarrea Álvarez’s productive close reading of recent Galician documentaries. The author considers the notions of marginality and estrangement to be central to the *Novo Cinema Galego* [New Galician Cinema] and these ideas are explored in both *Bs. As.* (Alberte Págan, 2006) and *Vikingland* (Xurxo Chirro, 2011) such that “the filmed subjects express and defend their national

identity as a consequence of their transnational experience” (242). The final chapter in the book is perhaps the most conventional in its emphasis on coproduction as a key element of transnational cinema. Yet, Vicente Rodríguez Ortega undertakes an interesting comparison between “visible” and “invisible” coproductions so as to explore how “filmmaking has turned into a transnational practice in which the national is strategically mobilized for a variety of purposes” (256).

*Global Genres, Local Films* is a diverse, rewarding and thought provoking collection of essays which adds significant value to the scholarly analysis of transnational cinema. Although focusing specifically on Spanish films, the cogently written articles will be of interest to both specialists and to casual readers who enjoy world cinema. With a pleasing range of contributors from Spain, the UK, France and the US, the volume provides a comprehensive overview of some of the key dynamics at work in the Spanish film industry from the 1930s until the present day.

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