Seeing in Spanish

Seeing in Spanish:
From Don Quixote to Daddy Yankee—
22 Essays on Hispanic Visual Cultures

Edited by

Ryan Prout (Co-ordinating editor)
and Tilmann Altenberg (Co-editor)

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For Alison Charles, Peter Judge, Liza Palmer, and Berwyn Rowlands

RP

“There is always the other side, always.”
Jean Rhys, *Wide Sargasso Sea*

TABLE OF CONTENTS

List of Illustrations xi

Acknowledgements xiii

Introduction
Ryan Prout and Tilmann Altenberg xiv

Part I: Spain

Chapter One
Ana Belén and the Construction of a New Visual Persona: Femininity and Aesthetics in the Political Singing of the Transition
Esther Pérez-Villalba 2

Chapter Two
A Woman for All Seasons: Teresa of Ávila on Spanish Screens
Celia Martín-Pérez 18

Chapter Three
Subjugation, Rebellion, and Power: The Metonymy of the Slippers in Buñuel's *Tristana*
M. Graziella Kirtland Grech 32

Chapter Four
En construcción and *El cielo gira*: The Representation of Space in Contemporary Spanish Cinema
Antonio Sánchez 43

Chapter Five
Visual Nation: Constructing a National Identity on Catalan Television
Silvia Grassi 59

Chapter Six
Classical Confusion: Myths, Paintings, and Other Windows into Don Quixote's Erotic Life
Keith Budner 74

Chapter Seven
River, Rain, Pool: Envisioning Adoptive Identity in Three Women's Narratives from Contemporary Spain
Ryan Prout 91

Part II: Mexico and Peru

Chapter Eight
Body Broken: Fragmented Bodies in Images of Mexico
Nasheli Jiménez del Val 106

Chapter Nine
Subtle Canvases of Mexico and its Revolution: Apprenticeship, Androgyny, and National Identity in Abraham Ángel's Art
Alejandro Latinez 118

Chapter Ten
From Pop to Populism: Jesús Ruiz Durand's Agrarian Reform Posters
Talía Dajes 129

Chapter Eleven
Local and Global Dreamworlds in Diego Rivera's Murals at the Secretaría de Educación Pública
Mauricio Castillo 143

Chapter Twelve
Political Participation Through Art: The Films of Carlos Saura, and the 2006 Oaxaca Conflict
Jaime Porras Ferreyra 163

Part III: Cuba

Chapter Thirteen
Performing the Nation and the Body in Ana Mendieta and Nancy Morejón
Dolores Alcaide Ramírez 178

Chapter Fourteen
The Fractured Female subject in Cuban Cinema at the Threshold of Change: The case of *Mujer transparente*
Guy Baron 192

Chapter Fifteen
The Screening of Cuban Identity: *Madrigal* (2007) and *Viva Cuba* (2005)
Jill Ingham 206

Part IV: Chile and Argentina

Chapter Sixteen
Diffraction and Profanation: New Forms of Publishing in Argentinian Literature
Soledad Pereyra 220

Chapter Seventeen
Visual Dialogues: Street Art and Graffiti in Argentina and Chile
Gudrun Rath 231

Chapter Eighteen
Recobrando la identidad: Chilean Cinema after Pinochet
Verena Schmöller 241

Chapter Nineteen
The Political Dialectic of Violeta Parra's Art
Lorna Dillon 252

Part V: Colombia, Bolivia, and Virtual Spaces

Chapter Twenty
Childhood and its Representational Uses: Cinematic Experience and Agency in Víctor Gaviria's *La vendedora de rosas*
Deborah Martin 268

Chapter Twenty-One
The Online Anti-reggaeton Movement: A Visual Exploration
Michelle M. Rivera 281

Chapter Twenty-Two
T. Ifor Rees: A Welsh Diplomat in Latin America
Diana Luft 300

Picture Credits 311

Notes on Contributors 312

Index 315

LIST OF ILLUSTRATIONS

For illustrations please see the centrefold.

1-1 LP sleeve *De alguna manera* (Rosa León)
1-2 LP sleeve *Cecilia*
1-3 LP sleeve *Señor y dueño* (Cecilia)
1-4 LP sleeve *Alenar* (María del Mar Bonet)
1-5 LP sleeve *Este tiempo ha de acabar* (Elisa Serna)
1-6 LP sleeve *Tierra* (Ana Belén)
1-7 LP sleeve *Calle del oso* (Ana Belén)
1-8 LP sleeve *De paso* (Ana Belén)
2-1 Bernini *Ecstasy of Saint Teresa*
2-2 Aurora Bautista as Teresa in de Orduña's *Teresa de Jesús*
2-3 Concha Velasco as Teresa in TVE mini-series
2-4 Santa Teresa in Rafael Gordon's *Teresa Teresa*
3-1 *Tristana*: Don Lope dressed as a Spanish gentleman
3-2 *Tristana*: Buñuel's heroine in a wheelchair
5-1 Screen grab of Chinese subtitled episode of *El cor de la ciutat*
6-1 Giovanni Bellini *The Feast of the Gods*
6-2 Titian *Bacchanal*
10-1 Key elements of the GRFA's national imaginary
10-2 Resistance hero Túpac Amaru
10-3 Jesús Ruiz Durand's pop art references
11-1 Diego Rivera's mural panel *En el arsenal*
11-2 Diego Rivera's mural panel *El pan nuestro*
11-3 Diego Rivera's mural panel *Cantando el corrido*
11-4 Diego Rivera's mural panel *Fin del corrido*
13-1 Ana Mendieta's *Tree of Life*
14-1 Poster for *Mujer transparente*
15-1 Javier dressed as a nun in a scene from *Madrigal*
15-2 *Viva Cuba*: Jorgito and Malú
16-1 Books produced by Eloísa Cartonera
16-2 Eloísa Cartonera posters
17-1 Grupo de Arte Callejero re-purpose street signs
17-2 "Aquí viven genocidas"
18-1 *Gringuito*: dissolve shot of Jorge and policeman

18-2 *Gringuito*: confrontation of Jorge and Teté
21-1 Pro-reggaeton images as anti-fan signage
21-2 Global and national anti-reggaeton alliance imagery
21-3 Reggaeton's icons as monsters and fiends
21-4 Policing the sexualisation of reggaeton dance
22-1 Morfudd Rhys Clark in the garden at Managua, Nicaragua
22-2 T. Ifor Rees in the mountains at Antímano, Venezuela
22-3 A party of diplomats, Havana
22-4 Rees and Morfudd in the Mountains above La Paz
22-5 Street Scene in Caracas
22-6 Goat Taxi
22-7 A street Scene in Mexico
22-8 Tzendal man with his son
22-9 Family Portrait, Bolivia
22-10 Mother and child, Mexico
22-11 Postcard: "Indios de 'Tenango'"
22-12 A group of Tzendal men

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THE EDITORS

INTRODUCTION

The layout of this book has largely been structured around geopolitical boundaries, although the chapters which engage directly with conflicted identities on the internet and in cyberspace already query the sufficiency of these categories for a taxonomy of the fractured postmodern subject in the Spanish speaking world. To some extent all the chapters collected in the volume question the stability of identity and subject positions, not least with regard to the taxonomies of the nation state. For example, the Ana Mendieta read by Dolores Alcaide Ramírez in her chapter on the artist's silhouettes and on Nancy Morejón's poetry is a figure disputed by two polarised political geographies and was someone who could not *feel* at home in Iowa and who could not *be* at home in Cuba. The Cuban children Jill Ingham turns her attention to in her study of recent cinema are torn between their visceral attachment to the earth on which they are growing up and their parents' imaginary flights to other shores. In the images of Ana Belén used on the singer's albums from the 70s in transitional Spain, Esther Pérez-Villalba finds a moment in time where a newly aestheticised femininity vied for prominence as the legitimate expression of counter-cultural radicalism with a hippie look and dress code. Antonio Sánchez turns his attention to films from Spain which reveal the more recent correlations between fractured and rebuilt urban and rural landscapes and displaced subjectivities. Nasheli Jiménez del Val's study of representations of the fractured body in Mexico suggests a radical somatisation of societal and political disintegration. Elsewhere, fracture can be the harbinger of something beneficial, as in the alternative publishing industry in Argentina studied by Soledad Pereyra. Here we see a new art form, the handcrafted and decorated book, emerging from the breakdown following the economic crisis in the late 90s. Similarly, in her chapter on street art and graffiti Gudrun Rath identifies the role of apparently fragmentary and anonymous protest art in articulating post-dictatorial civil societies in Chile and Argentina.

A collection of essays on fragmentary and fractured identities will of necessity challenge attempts to coral the subject matter into a neatly cohesive unity. Having said that, there are consistent themes running through the chapters and, as well as briefly summarising the content of each contribution, this introduction also suggests other routes through the chapters besides those determined by chronology and geopolitics. What all the chapters share is a focus on some aspect of visual cultures from the Spanish speaking world and together they address film, photography, cover art, body art, television, architecture, ekphrasis, biography, murals,

posters, graffiti, and digital photo-montage. As an ensemble, the chapters give us a view of a world seen in Spanish, a world defined from the inside out where shared aspects of fragmentary and sometimes volatile subjectivities conjoin through an intermittently common perspective the shards of a whole no longer held together by empire, ideology, or the nation state. From Don Quixote to Daddy Yankee, and from Catalonia to Colombia, the chapters present subjects who see or are seen in (or against, or in addition to) Spanish and whose identities are being forged or being taken apart through a dialogue with visual cultures.

PUBLIC ART AND GRAFFITI

In her chapter on street art and graffiti, Gudrun Rath traces the fusion of sloganeering and urban tags from Paris and New York, via Mexico City and Los Angeles, to Buenos Aires and Santiago de Chile: "Along this pathway, graffiti assumed peculiarly Latin American idioms as it spread across big cities and fragmented into a diversity of styles and techniques" (232). Looking closely at the Siluetazo urban art protests in Argentina, and the "NO +" campaign in Chile (both 1983) as well as at the street installations of the Grupo de Arte Callejero, Rath suggests that from a form of anonymous protest and tribalism, graffiti and its street art offshoots have mutated in Latin America to an expression of dialogical and interactive political art which "no longer serves to delimit territories, as in the case of hip hop graffiti, but highlights and claims the visibility of the political past in urban spaces" (239).

Soledad Pereyra's focus is on publishing in Argentina during and after the economic crisis of 1999-2002. Her study of the emergence of alternative publishing houses which used materials salvaged by cardboard pickers to produce affordable books illustrates an overlap between a modified labour practice and public art. In the cardboard publishing house model, book production becomes a collaborative process and the same providers of the found materials are involved in the manufacture of unique hand crafted volumes. Pereyra's reflections on one publishing house in particular, Eloísa Cartonera, suggest that the model adapted to the economic crisis repositioned the book not so much as a monument to individual intellectual property but rather as an expression of public literary tastes and desires: "Arduous economic circumstances have fostered new and highly creative forms of the book that are produced outside the ambit of the publishing establishment" (229). The same adaptive fracturing of the process of literary production produced cohesion between sectors of society which had hitherto not worked in cooperation. Pereyra suggests that with the restitution of book manufacture to an

environment more clearly within the public sphere "The book ceases to be a sacred object worshiped by a select group: instead it evolves and in doing so it recalls the earliest moments in the history of the book as a profane object" (228).

In his chapter on Diego Rivera's murals for Mexico City's Secretariat of Public Education (1922-28), Mauricio Castillo recasts the muralist project as "a complex set of ideological negotiations where artists, patrons and the local and global political context of Mexico came into play" (143-44). Through close analysis of four scenes from this extensive mural Castillo articulates the paradoxical and contradictory demands on a public art form that was expected to meet with a monumental and pedagogical purpose by its government patrons whilst also serving as the medium of avant-garde experimentation and provocation for its creators. In his detailed reading of panels from the SEP commission, Castillo finds an aesthetic caught between glorifying an institutionalised revolutionary past and gesturing towards a future of radical socialist reorganisation of labour, an impasse resolved through the use of an oneiric anachronistic dimension where these competing demands can be blended together: "Understanding the co-existence of these two visions of revolution is fundamental to articulating the ontology of muralism as both monumental art and as an avant-garde" (148). Castillo proposes that ultimately Rivera's attachment to socialist revolution as an unrealisable fantasy won out over the imperative to document a manifesto for tangible change: the SEP murals therefore assume another layer of public meaning inasmuch as their aestheticisation and institutionalisation of revolution can be read, as Castillo indicates, as a harbinger of the fragmentation of modernity.

Alejandro Latinez's chapter on Abraham Ángel, the Mexican artist and contemporary of Diego Rivera, can usefully be read in dialogue with Castillo's chapter on the SEP mural. Latinez reads muralism and its dominance within Mexican art history as itself constituting an orthodox and institutionalising paradigm. In this reading, a medium associated with revolution and with public participation in the arts is itself involved with suppressing the expression of other perspectives, such as the androgynous and queer artistic outlook captured in the few works completed by Abraham Ángel during his very brief lifespan. Where is the revolutionary capacity of gender alterity and of sexual dissidence in the muralist-dominated art history of Mexico? This is a question which Latinez asks to great effect by querying the sidelining of Ángel, within his lifetime, and since, and by contextualising the reception of Ángel's work alongside the greater visibility of gender queers made possible by Mexico's newly emerging industrialised print medium which found in graphic stories about

homosexuals the scandalous content it needed to inflate circulation. Latinez detaches Ángel's work from this legacy and instead sees in the artist's oeuvre the key to another reading of Mexico's art history where a light shone briefly on possibilities for the artistic expression of an aesthetic which brought together national and indigenous traditions with a sensibility outside the binary of gender.

In her chapter on Jesús Ruiz Durand's poster art Talía Dajes examines the reworking by a Peruvian artist of pop art's aesthetic and ideals. A movement based on recycling itself becomes a source of material to be recycled and adapted to a specifically Peruvian frame of reference. In her analysis, Dajes demonstrates that Ruiz Durand's references to pop art are not only homage to artists like Roy Lichtenstein but also function as a means to articulate in aesthetic dialogue the resonances of earlier colonial episodes in Peru's history with the later influence of Untied States foreign policy in Latin America. Dajes suggests that Ruiz Durand redefines "The limits of what is considered to be authentically Peruvian in terms that include the indigenous, the rural, and, more generally, everything that had been marginalised by the dominant Criollo urban culture" (141).

Jaime Porras Ferreyra makes a synthesis between the politically engaged metaphorical films of Carlos Saura and the artistic movement which has grown up around the 2006 Oaxaca Protests. In both cases, Porras Ferreyra reads artistic labour as the expression and instrument of political transition and his juxtaposition of the metaphorical films which characterised transitional Spanish cinema with the plastic arts inspired by the events which developed around the teachers' strike in Oaxaca recasts the more recent period in Mexican history as one of potentially pivotal change. As sites of resistance to a hegemonic past, Porras Ferreyra points up the affinities between the two intervals he studies so that we can draw correspondences between them as well as between more self-consciously artistic endeavours and the more obviously demotic graffiti, "escrache", and silhouettes studied elsewhere in the book.

CHILDREN

Children, and the role they are afforded in films tackling social divisions, figure in a number of the chapters. In her contribution, Jill Ingham compares the child-centred Cuban film *Viva Cuba* (Juan Carlos Cremata, 2005) with Fernando Pérez's more sombre and adult focussed *Madrigal* (2007). Where the more recent film looks to internal migration through the imagination as a route out of Cuba's political and economic difficulties, *Viva Cuba* contrasts adult fixation on migration with a childish impulse to explore the island and to inhabit the present. In *Viva Cuba* and its playful

engagement with intertextual references, Ingham finds a film which "references and ironises in its diminutive would-be fugitives the clichés of the road movie genre" (214). In this analysis, children represent the insular continuity which migration threatens to interrupt, and thus embody both the past and the future, as well as "what the adults are leaving behind: friends, family, ancestral ties, and a much loved island landscape and its music and folklore" (217).

It is precisely the symbolic burden placed on childhood as a store of futurity to which Deborah Martin returns in her reading of Colombian director Víctor Gaviria's 1998 film *La vendedora de rosas*. Martin reads the film as one which tries to negotiate a position somewhere between a documentary view of the real hardships endured by many children in Latin America and another perspective which inherits cinema's tendency to romanticise childhood: "The film treads a wavering path between extreme radicalism in its bid to allow child agency, and a more conventional use of the child: as (national) allegory/symbol within the Latin American narrative tradition of mobilising the child-figure as a means of highlighting exploitation, marginalisation, and racism whilst denying the figure real agency" (270). Martin considers how the unusual circumstances of the film's production contribute to a sense of it being pulled in different directions. Like *Viva Cuba*, this film follows children who are on the move, though, as Martin underscores, the fragmented succession of places and perspectives in Gaviria's film is more about reflecting disconnections in Colombian society than it is about using journeys as a metaphor for self discovery: "Journeys in *La vendedora de rosas* reveal the incoherent, inconsequential and truncated nature of the children's street lives. They are a challenge to teleological views of history […] and also to concepts of progress" (275). Martin looks in the film for instances where the attempt to reflect a childish perspective wins out over cinema's more familiar recourse to an instrumentalist use of the child to represent adult anxieties or aspirations.

In her chapter on Chilean cinema Verena Schmöller articulates a reading of Sergio Castilla's 1998 film *Gringuito* in which we clearly see how children are often charged with effecting reconciliation of adversaries in Latin American film. In this film, again, an errant child's adventures first serve to trace a linear progression through a Santiago de Chile otherwise divided along the lines of class and wealth, and then to provoke a returning exile family to reconsider their relationships both with authority figures and with relatives who were happy to stay and prosper in the Pinochet dictatorship: "By means of the visual POV as well as the film's mise-en-scène it becomes clear that a friendly co-existence of the

two elements of Chilean society represented by the previously fractured family is—in the film at least—not only possible, but worthy and desirable" (250).

In Ryan Prout's chapter on transnational adoption he also considers the meanings invested in childhood, by Asha Miró in her two volumes of autoethnography—*La hija del Ganges* and *Las dos caras de la luna*—and by Sara Barrena in *Venida de la lluvia*, her account of adopting her daughter from China. Prout contrasts the birth or roots narrative prepared in advance for her daughter by Barrena, and pursued across India by Miró, with the quest for identity undertaken by Carla Subirana in her autobiographical documentary film *Nadar*. Though the Catalan director was not adopted, Prout suggests that there are lacunae in Subirana's family biography which resonate with those addressed by Miró and Barrena. Transnational adoption has been read as a technology for suturing or reproducing cultures and in his chapter Prout asks with reference to three women's narratives if it also sets up a space where the polarities of identity read either as constructed or essentialised are in dialogue rather than opposition.

WOMEN

In her chapter on female *cantautores* from the late 60s and 70s, Esther Pérez-Villalba turns her attention to the visual aesthetics used to portray artists like Rosa León, Cecilia, María del Mar Bonet, and Elisa Serna on album sleeves. Pérez-Villalba's analysis discovers a style of representation strongly influenced by the particularities of Spanish party and gender politics of the time. Politically committed female musical artists wanted both to distance themselves from the fusty view of femininity prescribed by the Sección Femenina, and to be taken seriously as political activists. The chapter suggests that this led to the predominance of an aesthetic which privileged a kind of studied nonchalance framed by a graphic design evocative of political pamphleteering: "Politically-committed *cantautoras* wanted to escape their femininity and beauty in a traditional sense and to adopt the more masculine looks which would gain them credibility and influence in the male-dominated world of politics" (10). Within this context, Pérez-Villalba pays special attention to Ana Belén as an artist of the transition whose image, as reflected in LP cover art, also effected a transition between committed asceticism and the aesthetics of glamour. Where the conspicuous eschewal of sartorial femininity had become so codified, Ana Belén's "decision publicly to reassert a somewhat stereotypically feminine beauty seems a significant and considered political act in itself" (14). Peréz-Villalba shows us in Ana

Belén someone whose public image was a bridge between the radical asceticism of the late 60s and the newly acceptable glamour of the 80s: "She offered women fans a different model compared with other political female artists. Furthermore, she also showed men (and women) that progressive political activism, elegance, and the display of a 'feminine' femininity could go together" (15).

Lorna Dillon also focuses on a female political singer, Violeta Parra, though here the emphasis is not on visual representations of the singer but on Parra's work as a visual artist herself. Dillon looks at Parra's embroideries and her papier-collé and papier-mâché collages to suggest continuities between the well-known lyrics and the less studied appliqué work, and also to underscore the radical fusion of indigenous and colonial legacies throughout the distinct media in which the artist worked. Dillon sustains, furthermore, that Parra's representations of state violence are not only of aesthetic interest but that they were also conceived with an activist purpose in mind. The chapter's focus is on works which threw light on the abuse of human rights during Parra's lifetime and on her use of a visual as well as of a musical language to hold responsible for their actions the perpetrators of such abuses.

In her chapter on Saint Teresa, Celia Martín-Pérez considers the visionary mystic's cultural afterlives by looking in detail at three film and television treatments of her biography: Juan de Orduña's *Teresa de Jesús* (1961), the television drama series directed by Josefina Molina, *Teresa de Jesús* (1984), and Ray Loriga's *Teresa, el cuerpo de Cristo* (2007). The figure that emerges "is a constellation of identities, which vary from hysterical religious mystic, through feminist icon, to sex symbol […] reflect[ing] different models of womanhood [and] marking shifts in gender attitudes across five decades of Spanish cultural history" (29). Martín-Pérez suggests that the TVE mini-series re-interpreted Teresa to create a character with a "de-radicalised, progressive quality which echoed the ideal picture the socialists aimed to promote" (25). Whereas state-funded or state-supported versions of the saint's life have inevitably reflected the orthodoxy of political incumbents, Martín-Pérez suggests that independent productions have not necessarily veered far from the established path. In Loriga's film, she reads an image of the saint which "supposedly belongs to post-feminist discourse [but which] in fact […] only serves to reinforce the kind of neo-macho attitudes which usually appear camouflaged" (29). The chapter points towards Rafael Gordon's *Teresa Teresa* (in which an ectoplasmic saint returns to Spain to do the TV chat show circuit) as a text which begins meaningfully to renovate Teresa's image and to question women's roles in the post-feminist era.

In her chapter on Luis Buñuel's *Tristana*, M. Graziella Kirtland-Grech contrasts the director's off-screen conservatism with a story about radical re-invention of a female protagonist. By honing in on the metonymic value of Don Lope's slippers in Buñuel's adaptation of Galdós's novel, this chapter underscores the dramatic economy of the surrealist director's story-telling. Kirtland-Grech suggests that the metonymy of the slippers "Form[s] part of a complex metonymical braid […] enabl[ing] us to delineate the stages through which [Tristana] passes in her journey from subjugation, to rebellion, and finally to power, when she takes control of her life and of Don Lope's household" (41). This chapter also reminds us of the price exacted by this transformation: in the process of shifting from ward to autonomous householder, Tristana's body, like her biography, is torn apart.

Whereas Jill Ingham's chapter looks at the prospect of emigration to the United States for a new generation of Cuban families, Dolores Alcaide Ramírez considers in her chapter on Nancy Morejón and Ana Mendieta the lasting effects of the exile forced on a previous generation of Cuban children by the Pedro Pan airlift. Alcaide Ramírez locates Mendieta's performance art within this history of radical displacement and finds in Morejón's poem about the artist an attempt to reunite a Cuban identity fractured by the torrid politics which has been driving parents and children apart from Pedro Pan to the Elián González affair: "Morejón uses Mendieta's tragic death to criticise the fragmentation of the identity of fourteen thousand children and teenagers who were relocated from Cuba to the United States through the ministrations of Operation Peter Pan" (178). This chapter describes a history of emigration where ideology and economics are constantly intertwined: if the *noventamillistas* left Cuba in 1961 as much to protect their assets as to flee communism on ideological grounds, the *balseros* who risked life and limb in the 90s to escape from Cuba left because of an absence of any assets, either in the bank or in the larder, victims of a dogmatic and intransigent ideology. While the two ideologies across which Mendieta's life was lived seem as far apart as ever, Alcaide Ramírez suggests that Morejón's poetry, at least, "recovers the involuntary exile as a piece of the Cuban mosaic, and as part of the artistic legacy which should be available to all Cubans" (189).

In his chapter on the 1990 Cuban portmanteau film *Mujer transparente*, Guy Baron describes a female Cuban identity fractured not only by division between insular and exile experience but also by a post-modern aesthetic which was beginning to site individual women's lives outside the paradigm of the Cuban national collective. Baron pieces together the five parts in which the story is told in a reading which illustrates the film's

resistance to a unified meaning: the whole is in fact "the erosion of the so-called socialist subject and the fragmentation of female subjectivity […] seen in all of the short films" (194) which together make up *Mujer transparente*. Baron's chapter is especially attentive to the uniquely Cuban iteration of post-modernism and to the parallel crises of subjectivity and of Marxist consciousness which threw into disarray the assumption of a unified female subject. Baron suggests that Cuban cinema sought to work out its version of the post-modern aesthetic precisely through the representation of women so that "the modernist search for truth […] is displaced by the knowledge that there is not one singular reality, but a series of fractured realities" (204), a series of syntagmatically connected disconnections set out in the analysis of *Mujer transparente*'s anthology of discrete yet partial short films.

Cyberspace and Diplomacy

Several of the chapters collected here approach material which presents a clear challenge to interpretations based on the paradigm of the political nation state bounded by physical geography. For example, in her chapter on Catalan soap opera Silvia Grassi looks towards the re-purposing of gay storylines by Youtubers who are more interested in unifying a narrative around a common sexuality than a common language. Grassi's chapter first examines the emergence and evolution of long-running soap operas within the arena of regional television output designed with an explicit nation-building and normalisation process in mind before considering how viewers' re-editing of this content for participatory new media platforms has produced meanings and functions which exceed those foreseen by the original scriptwriters. Whereas cineaste and theorist Tomás Gutiérrez Alea's concept of the spectator's dialectic, and of cinema's radicalising potential, seemed always to fall short when faced with the question of how audiences could actually be involved with a film (as opposed to being moved by it, shocked by it, or outraged by it), in the digital universe where Grassi's chapter finds unscheduled mutations of television content re-ordered by viewers themselves, exactly the dialogue Alea envisaged (without being able to situate it) assumes potentiality. Collage has gone from the preserve of art house to the demotic arena of the home PC.

Similarly, in Michelle Rivera's chapter on internet expressions of reggaeton anti-fan sentiment we find de-territorialised possibilities of cyberspace being used to stage a debate over the situation of the hypothetical Latino/a music consumer. Whereas the music industry seeks to create an homogenised Latino audience by prescribing an ethnographically determined set of tastes, in Rivera's chapter we see that

on the one hand the national amorphousness of the web allows anti-fans of one particular music genre to deploy electronic avatars of this deracinated consumer to stage trans-national alliances against such an interpellation and, on the other, to insist on the heterogeneity of tastes and of national allegiances, and on the poly-faceted identities of the individuals who comprise the putatively uniform Latino consumer base. Rivera's chapter sets up a lively dialogue between attempts by the music industry to use genre to create a Latino market (and thereby bulldoze individuality and specificity) and resistance in the form of images on the web manipulated and queried by individuals interpellated or targeted by such marketing. In a web space increasingly monopolised by corporate activity, the forums Rivera's chapter explores "are a central location of identity negotiation and formation as well as an alternative public sphere where anti-fans speak back to, interact with, and produce images and text that resist the apparatus that seeks to define them" (296).

Diana Luft's chapter on T. Ifor Rees, the Welsh diplomat who was also a writer, photographer, and translator also deals with a subject who, while representing British national interests as a diplomat, lived between and beyond national frontiers.[*] Luft discovers in T. Ifor Rees a subject whose identity was deeply rooted in Wales, and in the Welsh language, and who also formed attachments in Spain and Latin America where he spent much of his diplomatic career. Rees took photographs in the form of a diary and the albums he created offer a unique view of a Welshman's perspective on the Spanish speaking world in the first half of the twentieth century. Luft weaves in to her portrait of Rees's life some of his official diplomatic reports which sometimes recall perspectives outlined in other chapters in the present volume. For example, Rees's account of the overthrow of President Gualberto Villarroel in Bolivia brings to mind Nasheli Jiménez del Val's focus on broken bodies in Latin American politics. The images he took are poised somewhere between colonial photography, family snaps, and anthropology, and Luft makes a convincing argument that the framing of the photographs reflects the sensibilities of a photographer who was in some ways himself an outsider.

Reconstruction and Disintegration

In his chapter on two recent documentary films from Spain—Mercedes Álvarez's *El cielo gira* (2004) and José Luis Guerín's *En construcción* (2001)—Antonio Sánchez considers how the reordering of urban and rural

[*] T. Ifor Rees himself used the Anglicised spelling of his surname. His family now uses the Welsh spelling, i.e. Rhys.

space in Spain has been represented in cinema. While the pneumatic drills of the Spanish construction boom now lie idle (with devastating consequences for those who depended on it to make a living), Sánchez shows us in *En construcción* a film which was attentive even before the bubble burst to the speculative uses of capital and to the communities and histories brought sharply into focus by the threat of gentrification. The pairing of *En construcción* with *El cielo gira* also underscores the symbiosis between rural depopulation and urban regeneration. Between these two films, Sánchez's chapter opens up a vista which stretches from the dinosaurs to the nouveaux riches and uncovers space in rural and urban Spain not as something eternal and unchanging but as susceptible to and sometimes determining of history. The fragments of the past in the sites explored by these two films, and underscored by Sánchez's reading of them, reveal that "space is littered with historical, archaeological, and even biological vestiges" (56).

Where Antonio Sánchez examines a body politic pieced apart by the expediencies of urban regeneration and rural depopulation, Nasheli Jiménez del Val considers the social meanings ascribed to representations of broken Mexican bodies in a chapter that begins with the first European engravings of Mesoamerica and ends with images of assassinated drug barons: "For the Spanish conquistador, the spectacle of the pieced body was used as evidence of the savagery of a godless Mesoamerican society that thrived on violence. For the drug cartel boss, the broken body functions as a statement of purpose and as a visible threat to competitors" (107). Tracing the meme of the broken body across several centuries of Mexican history, Jiménez del Val suggests that the violence which inheres to the use of images of physical dismemberment is as constant as the recycling of the scenario itself. In the war on drugs in Mexico, Jiménez del Val sees an especially troubling one-upmanship of spectacular killings: "If the Mexican government has fed into the strategy of semiotic intimidation by presenting tortured bodies as cautionary tales, the war against drug cartels has already been lost; for by playing under the rules established by others, the government reveals a power void born of the illegitimacy of its ascent to power" (116).

In his chapter on *Don Quixote*, Keith Budner gives us a fictional character who is not only at loggerheads with the world outside but is also, in a prototypical fashion, torn inside, between the chivalrous gentleman and a red-blooded individual whose motivation is not only to put the world to rights but to satisfy pent-up sexual frustration. Budner illustrates the fragmentary interior of Don Quixote (and the added texture this gives him as a fictional creation) by linking three incorrect classical allusions made

by Cervantes's hero to Alfonso de Ferrara's picture gallery, and with it to memory as something conceived of in visual and pictorial terms. By tracing back Quixote's failed allusions to an architectural marriage of image and text which Cervantes knew of and may even have seen first hand, Budner unravels Don Quixote's lapses to show the recesses in the mind of a character whose knowledge of antiquity was built, at least in part, on familiarity with an illustrated recess. Budner suggests that Cervantes uses a visual conception of the mind to articulate the inner workings of a character torn between social niceties and desire: "It is the paintings that speak and give voice to these unspoken and repressed elements of the psyche" (88).

NOTE ON TRANSLATIONS

Wherever possible English translations of all quotes in languages other than English are provided in footnotes, and, for very brief quotes or individual words, in the main text. Except where indicated otherwise, translations are by the individual contributors and Ryan Prout. Kurt Hackbarth translated Jaime Porras Ferreyra's chapter into English.

PART I
SPAIN

CHAPTER ONE

ANA BELÉN AND THE CONSTRUCTION OF A NEW VISUAL PERSONA: FEMININITY AND AESTHETICS IN THE POLITICAL SINGING OF THE TRANSITION

ESTHER PÉREZ-VILLALBA

In the 1960s, an important left-wing, politically-committed musical genre was born in Spain, popularly known as *canción protesta* (protest song) or *canción de autor* (singer-songwriting). The authors and performers of the genre were known respectively as *cantautores* and *cantantes políticos* (Torrego Egido 1999: 42, 43; González Lucini 1998: 32). These *cantantes políticos* defied censorship in order to communicate their political messages in support of democracy and freedom through their musical work and they became crucial icons of cultural and socio-political resistance in the 1970s as Franco's regime approached its dying days (Boyle 1995: 291; Turtós and Bonet 1998: 22, 26). The arrival and consolidation of institutional democracy led this musical movement to lose much of its strength in 1982 (Barbáchano and Domínguez 2006: 61). Heavily influenced and inspired by French song, and by North American and Latin American folk music (Menéndez Flores 2001: 62; Gracia García and Ruiz Carnicer 2001: 360), Spanish *canción protesta* constituted a world largely orchestrated by men. However, some female *cantautoras* succeeded in making a space for themselves in this conspicuously male-centred universe. In Catalonia and Majorca, creative authors Guillermina Motta and María del Mar Bonet managed to become important and valuable members of Els Setze Jutges, a musical movement closely linked with a desire to reassert Catalan identity and language (Román 1994: 339, 340).[1] In the Basque country, Lourdes Iriondo became a well-known member of Ez Dok Amairu, while Castilian-based Canción del Pueblo counted Elisa Serna and Julia León among its number (Turtós and Bonet 1998: 25, 30). The list of popular female political singers could be

[1] Although her career began later, singer-songwriter Marina Rossell also became well-known, especially in Catalan circles.

completed by adding the names of Cecilia, Mari Trini, Rosa León, and Ana Belén, four unclassifiable, independent artists who became very popular during the final years of the regime (González Lucini 1998: 119; Turtós and Bonet 1998: 27).[2]

Out of all the singers mentioned, Ana Belén deserves special attention as she was one of the best-known *cantantes políticas* of the period, especially from the late 70s onwards.[3] As Jordi Sierra i Fabra notes (2000), the 70s generation had in Ana and her husband, Víctor Manuel—also a very popular *cantautor*—"its official couple." Born María Pilar Cuesta Acosta in Madrid in 1951, Ana Belén started her career as an actress at the age of thirteen. Although her first films were not successful, she continued to pursue her career as an entertainer, and became involved with political singing in 1973 with the release of *Tierra* (Philips). A year later, she became a militant member of the illegal PCE (Spanish Communist Party). By the mid 1970s, she had emerged as a fashionable actress featuring on front covers and was also a well-known political singer, dual roles which she has successfully maintained up to the present.[4] This double artistic dimension apparently shaped her public image—her femininity—which seemed markedly different from that exhibited by most other female political singers. This chapter thus considers aesthetics in the world of *cantautoras*, the ways in which Ana Belén's femininity deviated from those aesthetics, and the possible meanings her new femininity may have had during the Transition. To this end, the chapter focuses on looks in two different senses: it examines different *cantautoras*' physical appearances

[2] Singer-songwriter María Ostiz also achieved popularity at the time of the Transition, especially with her song "Un pueblo es." She is not included in this discussion, however, because unlike all the other artists mentioned above, she adopted a rather conservative ideological position.

[3] Ana Belén was not a singer-songwriter in the strict dictionary definition of the term: that is, she did not compose her own songs, but sang other people's. However, this should not be seen as problematic: some of the singer-songwriters who were described as epitomising the genre were not always best-known for songs that they wrote themselves, but for their versions of poems put to music, or for singing other authors' songs (for example, Paco Ibáñez and many of his songs on the 1969 album *Paco Ibáñez en el Olympia*, Emen-SGAE). It should also be noted that many of Ana Belén's songs were written expressly for her. Moreover, she was the author—or at least co-author—of her songs in the sense that she performed them and by so doing provided them with specific meanings and interpretative nuances.

[4] See, for example, the front covers of *Miss* (10 July 1970), *Dígame* (20 March 1971), *Garbo* (13 October 1971, and 31 May 1972), *Lecturas* (29 October 1971), *Nuevo Fotogramas* (7 April 1972).

and clothing styles, and also considers issues of the gaze as captured on album covers. LP sleeves are chosen here as appropriate visual documents because they may be read as texts that directed not only how the singers should be seen by audiences, but also how their images related to their own musical work as committed artists. I will also briefly explore how the particular pioneering (postmodern) femininity which Ana Belén aimed to articulate visually relates to her musical repertoire and to those aspects of her life which extend beyond her musical career.

In terms of style, most *cantantes políticas* of the Transition usually displayed the type of femininity that was fashionable in the streets among left-wing circles. Influenced by American and British hippie trends, this style emphasised long, tousled hair and a natural female beauty unenhanced by cosmetics. These trends were clear to see in many of the photos used on protest singers' album covers. Such visual documents repay attention, for we rarely remain indifferent to visual input; either consciously or unconsciously, we tend to interpret visual stimuli, and these induce and shape what Patrick Maynard calls our "imaginings" (1997: 97). In fact, photographs especially have the power to "involve thought and feeling, stirring will and desire" (Maynard 1997: 68). Moreover, images are important "because they are indicators of social position and power [and] powerful framers of self-image, social identity, and public values" (Korsmeyer 2004: 1), and are central in "producing meanings, establishing and maintaining aesthetic values, gender stereotypes and power relations within culture" (Rogoff 1998: 14).

We turn first to Rosa León, the first performer to record Luis Eduardo Aute's "Al alba" (1975 Ariola-Eurodisc), a milestone of anti-Francoist political singing.[5] The cover of León's 1973 album, *De alguna manera* (EMI-Odeón), illustrates the template used for several of the artist's releases in the 70s. A photo of the singer appears within a brown, square frame, in the middle of the sleeve, against a plain, greyish background. León's name appears in big, bold, brown letters above her framed photo (Fig. 1-1). The names of the authors whose repertoire she is interpreting—Aute, Benedetti and Krahe—appear below her photo, also in a sober, bold, brown typeface, although smaller than that in which the singer's name is written. The titles of four songs from the LP are also visible at the bottom. This layout, which stresses the importance of authorship and of the lyrics, apparently emphasises the content of the album over the singer's visual persona, and it appears with relative frequency on the covers of other

[5] Here as throughout the chapter the year in which an album or single was released and the name of the record label on which it appeared are given in parenthesis in the course of the main text.