

Pioneering Agency: Rosario Pi

THE first of Rosario Pi's pioneering cinematographic endeavours coincided almost exactly with the establishment of the Second Republic in the spring of 1931; just as precisely, Pi's Spanish film career slipped away along with all hopes for the fledgling democracy during the Civil War of 1936–9.

If any period in Spain could be considered favourable to feminist ideals, and, by extension, to the emergence of women cineasts, it was the Second Republic. The significant—but isolated—contributions of a number of prominent late nineteenth-century writers and theorists such as Concepción Arenal and Emilia Pardo Bazán had failed to spring from or spark a feminist movement, understood as a collective project (Falcón, 180–1). And although the period from 1910 through the 1920s saw the establishment of a number of important women's groups, an autochthonous feminism could not fully develop apart from the polarized political context that had characterized Spanish life for centuries. While on the right the Catholic Church stepped in to channel women's burgeoning political consciousness back into the traditional terrain of hearth and home, the left insisted on absorbing feminism into the 'larger' cause of class struggle, relegating women's unique concerns to a back seat (Scanlon, 212–57). But by the 1930s the efforts of feminists who had brought gender-based social inequalities to the fore were rewarded as dramatic changes—at least on paper—accompanied the governmental overhaul effected by the Second Republic. The new constitution declared the equality of men and women and allowed members of both sexes to run for office and hold public jobs. The Constituent Cortes (made up, by the end of 1931, of three women and 467 men) soon approved articles allowing women to vote (October 1931) and legalizing civil marriage and divorce (February 1932). Other measures declared the equality of legitimate and illegitimate children, eliminated

from the penal code the concessions granted to wife-murderers in 'honour' cases, and allowed women to serve as guardians of minors and witnesses to wills (Falcón, 183-4). In Catalonia, abortion was also legalized and a family planning programme proposed in December 1936 (Morcillo Gómez, 79).

Within the narrower context of film, it seemed that the Second Republic would facilitate additional opportunities for women. Two articles, one published in April 1931 (the month in which the new government was proclaimed), and the other in June of that year, both enthusiastically support the emergence of women directors. In his contribution to the film magazine *Arte y Cinematografía*, the critic Jesús Alsina asserts that only prejudice and fear of failure have prevented women from taking on the directorial role. Alsina draws on essentialist notions of feminine virtues to highlight the benefits afforded by the incursion of women cineasts into the profession: since women are possessed of 'aptitudes artísticas en extremo delicadas' ('extremely delicate artistic talents'), they are especially suited to the creative processes involved in film-making. Although he mentions a number of women editors, screenwriters, and directors, Alsina chooses to illustrate his argument with the example of Dorothy Arzner, and nearly half of his article is devoted to a summary of her biography and film career. Given what Judith Mayne has called Arzner's 'butch persona', it is interesting that Alsina (who may not have had access to images of the cross-dressing director) subtly highlights her 'femininity': she attended a 'colegio de señoritas' ('young ladies' high school': according to Mayne she was sent there out of concern for her tomboyishness, *Directed*, 18); as a 'mujercita' ('little woman') during the First World War she became an 'enfermera' ('nurse': Mayne notes that Arzner had spent two years as a pre-medical student at the University of Southern California, *Directed*, 15). Alsina also emphasizes that the first film Arzner directed (a romantic comedy titled *Fashions for Women*, 1927, assigned to her when she joined Paramount) was 'de carácter femenino' ('of feminine character'). The main thrust of Alsina's argument is that a woman's femininity need not be diminished once she slips behind the megaphone. His is a particular discursive construction of the woman director, which prescribes that she direct in a self-effacing way. Unlike male directors, who practise 'una construcción forjada al acero y al calor de la virilidad' ('a

construction forged from steel and the heat of virility') and who exhibit a continual 'egoísmo y arrojo' ('egotism and daring'), women directors should direct films 'escondiéndose en la oscuridad de la cámara' ('hiding within the camera's darkness'). Ultimately, argues Alsina, practical skills gained through filmmaking would only enhance the attractiveness of the female sex, 'destinado a las delicias y dulzuras del hogar' ('destined for the sweet delights of the home').

An article by María Luz Morales—a fascinating figure in her own right¹—published several months later in *Films Selectos* appears to pick up the argument in favour of women directors where Alsina left off. In the first half of 'La mujer y el cine' (Women and the Cinema) she alludes to the way in which filmmaking has contributed to the enhanced cultural level of women, pointedly defining 'cultural level' as the ability to keep a modern house, present oneself elegantly, and speak with some familiarity on a variety of subjects. But she then asserts that film has also opened up new career options for women, briefly mentioning their labour in editing rooms before moving on to her central focus, women directors. Like Alsina, Morales makes reference to Arzner, but she prefers to place emphasis on an earlier figure in North American cinema, Lois Weber. Morales seems to find Weber's case more dramatic: condemned to failure by the media, she went on to triumph in the film industry. Unlike Alsina, Morales highlights the leadership, the forcefulness, and the egoism necessary for fulfilling the directorial role, and argues that women are equally possessed of these traits. She notes, for example, that Weber

[h]a resistido, como un hombre, el duro y continuado trabajo físico que impone la dirección de películas, el esfuerzo mental de improvisar detalles, combinar y rectificar escenas, de corregir sobre la marcha el escenario o guión. Ha soportado la pelea brava, sofocante, que irrita y rinde, con escenógrafos, carpinteros, electricistas, mozos y demás empleados secundarios del estudio. Ha aguantado y se ha impuesto

¹ Shirley Mangini includes María Luz Morales in her overview of prominent women of the pre-war period whose contributions were later forgotten. According to Mangini, in 1936 Morales became the head of *La Vanguardia*, Barcelona's most important newspaper, and in 1940 she was imprisoned by the Franco regime (pp. 37, 125). After her release, Morales returned to film criticism, publishing reviews in the magazine *Fotogramas* and producing a three-volume history of cinema; she also took up creative writing, and adapted literary classics for children (Moix, 333).

a los artistas, casi siempre indolentes, remisos y rebeldes. Todo esto dudaba la prensa y el público que pudiera ser tarea femenina.

has withstood, like a man, the harsh and sustained physical labour that film direction demands, the mental exertion of improvising details, of combining and correcting scenes, of quickly modifying the set or script as required. She has borne the irritating and exhausting struggle with set designers, carpenters, electricians, and other secondary studio workers. She has put up with and prevailed over the actors, who are almost always lazy, remiss, and rebellious. The press and the public doubted that all these things could be a woman's work.

While Alsina avoids speaking directly of the possibility that women film-makers might emerge in Spain, Morales ties her arguments explicitly to a national agenda, implying at the end of her article that Spanish film will only achieve success through the collaboration of women cineasts.

These articles might be seen as products of and contributions to the gender debates raging at the time. While Freudian ideas on femininity had begun to circulate on the peninsula (Freud's work was translated into Spanish in the 1920s and early 1930s, and was of fundamental importance to the development of surrealism in Spain), the Spanish doctor Gregorio Marañón's theories on gender, published in the pages of José Ortega and Gasset's *Revista de Occidente*, in medical journals, and in best-selling books such as his *Ensayos sobre la vida sexual* (Essays on Sexual Life) were perhaps more widely discussed. According to Marañón, women were not inferior to men, but simply different due to their specialized biological capacities: while the male metabolism was characterized by strong bursts of energy directed outward, females tended to concentrate and store up energy within.² Men were thus meant to work and take an active role in the public sphere, and women were best suited to procreation and childrearing, or jobs such as teaching and nursing requiring 'minuciosidad, paciencia y habilidad manual a cambio de poco gasto de tensión muscular y nerviosa, y poca inventiva' ('attention to detail, patience, and manual dexterity

² It is important to remember that in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, numerous 'scientists' had attempted to prove the intellectual, physical and moral inferiority of women through, for example, comparative studies of the size, shape and weight of brains. Within this historical context, it is less difficult to understand why Gregorio Marañón was considered a 'feminist' (Scanlon, 161-94).

in exchange for a slight release of muscular and nervous tension, and little creativity'; pp. 289–90, 310–11). But Marañón also admitted that it was possible for biological females to exhibit some degree of masculine characteristics, and he argued that such women should be allowed to practise professions suitable to their metabolic makeup (312–13).

Both Alsina and Morales could be seen as engaged in a process of negotiation with Marañón's theory. While Alsina hastens to agree with the doctor's definition of femininity, he argues that the practice of the seventh art does indeed harmonize with, and would benefit from the influence of, a uniquely female biology. Alsina's unusual metaphor of the woman director as hiding within the darkness of the creative [womb]/camera, in contrast to the male director who rashly throws off energy on the set, neatly inscribes a differentiated film-making practice within Marañón's sex-gender system. Morales, however, takes a different tack. She sets forth the example of Lois Weber, a woman who has directed 'como un hombre' ('like a man'), attempting to debunk the notion that the directorial role is inherently masculine. Marañón, of course, would argue that Weber is simply an example of the abnormal, 'viruloide' type of female, who exercises a profession suitable to her more masculine metabolism. But Morales subtly enables Weber to represent a new norm for her sex by allowing her description of one specific woman to flow naturally into a discussion of Woman: 'Y todo esto ha logrado plenamente una mujer. ¿Qué no logrará en otras actividades más sencillas . . . ?' ('And all of this has been fully achieved by a woman. What could she achieve in other, simpler activities . . . ?') Morales hints that, potentially, all women are capable of taking on roles traditionally reserved for men, implicitly calling into question Marañón's views on masculinity and femininity.

It might be expected that once a flesh-and-blood woman director appeared on the scene in Spain, this polemic would be extended to the analysis of her individual professional demeanour. This was, for example, what had taken place in articles on Arzner appearing in the US press, which were marked by extensive commentary on her gender and a thinly disguised anxiety over her appearance (Mayne, *Directed*, 151–66). Yet in the Spanish trade and popular press of the 1930s, there is a remarkable lack of specific and detailed consideration of Pi's

gender. It is interesting, however, to note the subtleties of journalistic expression in the context of the era's discourse on masculinity and femininity. For example, we find an abundance of references to Pi's energy, clearly coded as 'directed outward', as well as allusions to her willpower, her courage, her confidence, and her decisiveness, particularly with regard to her work as director on *El gato montés*: 'la dinámica cinematografista' ('the dynamic film-maker', 'Noticias'); 'Esa mujer toda entusiasmo por la cinematografía española, a cuya voluntad se deben bastantes películas nacionales' ('That woman who is all enthusiasm for Spanish cinema, to whose will we owe quite a few national films', Don Yo Doble); 'merece aplaudirse la voluntad de Rosario Pi para trasladar la partitura del maestro Penella al celuloide y la valentía de abordar un tema dramático como éste' ('Rosario Pi's will to adapt Maestro Penella's score for the screen and her courage in taking on a dramatic theme such as this one should be applauded', 'En el Cinema Catalunya'); 'la entusiasta cineísta doña Rosario Pi emprendió valientemente la dirección de "El gato montés" . . . se adivina la energía de una dirección consciente y segura que no divaga nunca' ('the enthusiastic film-maker Rosario Pi courageously took on the direction of *El gato montés* . . . the energy of a conscientious and certain direction that never loses focus is evident'; F.); 'La joven realizadora que se ha consagrado en poco tiempo como uno de nuestros más firmes valores' ('The young film-maker who in a short period of time has been consecrated as one of our most outstanding figures', 'Producción nacional'). These characterizations are more akin to Morales's confident prose description of women's ability to meet the 'man-size' challenges of film-making than to Alsina's poetic musings on feminine essences and cinematic artistry.³

Before entering into a discussion of Pi's role in Second Republic cinema, one caveat is in order. Studio fires destroyed many of the films of this period; others disintegrated or were simply lost. Scripts, too, have disappeared over the years. Thus a large percentage of the era's key works now only exists in the

³ In the postwar period, Méndez Leite's comments concerning Pi's 'alientos varoniles' ('manly spirit'; mentioned in my introduction), were inscribed within a very different discursive construction of masculinity and femininity, characterized by the polarization and exaggeration of gender characteristics. This theoretical position, unlike the notion of relatively fluid gender roles which circulated during the 1930s, mandated ridicule of individuals not conforming to expected patterns of gendered behaviour.

form of ancillary textual fragments: a few ghostly production stills or a handful of sketchy reviews. While the Civil War interrupted any nascent efforts at creating Spanish film histories, the biases of the subsequent Francoist criticism marred continued efforts along those lines. Certainly, there was no attempt made to document the life or work of Spain's first woman director of the sound era, who remained a neglected figure for decades. Faced with this 'ruined map' (as Giuliana Bruno, in her study of Elvira Notari, Italy's first woman director, has eloquently termed it), I have chosen to reconfigure the cinematographic geography of the era and Pi's place within it by locating and piecing together remaining textual shreds. This territorial exploration will then ground my analysis of the one film directed by Pi which, fortunately, has survived: *El gato montés*.

Surprisingly little is known of Pi's life. The director herself apparently left no memoirs; most of the actors, film-makers, and technicians who worked with her have long since passed away, and only a few provided details concerning Pi through interviews or in personal narratives of their own experiences in the film industry. Furthermore, any efforts to glean crucial information from living relatives are thwarted by the fact that Pi never seems to have married or had children. According to the few existing accounts, Rosario Pi Brujas was born in Barcelona around the turn of the century to a family that owned a major textile factory in Sabadell. At some point in her childhood or youth Pi must have contracted polio, a disease which left her with the characteristic limp mentioned by nearly all who have written of her (Caparrós Lera, *Arte*, 124; Gómez Santos, 14; Mariscal, 'Rosario Pi'). Several sources agree that in the 1920s Pi set up shop selling imported French lingerie on the Paseo de Gracia, near Valencia Street (Caparrós Lera, *Arte*, 124; Foriscot); this business apparently failed when the Second Republic was established.⁴ Pi's early interest in the Spanish film industry unfortunately remains completely undocumented; all that is known for certain is that by the early 1930s Pi had founded the production company Star Film together with Pedro Ladrón de Guevara with capital provided by the Mexican financier Emilio

⁴ I find Caparrós Lera's claim that María Mercader, who would later serve as set secretary on *El gato montés* and play the lead in *Molinos de viento*, was Pi's partner in the underwear business problematic: Mercader, born in 1918, would have been a young girl at the time.

Gutiérrez Bringas, who was residing in Madrid at the time (Elías, 34–5).

Star Film's inaugural effort was one of the first Spanish-made sound films to appear on national screens: *Yo quiero que me lleven a Hollywood* (I Want them to Take me to Hollywood, 1931). Spain's film industry, caught off guard by the arrival of sound cinema, did not have the immense sums necessary to switch over to the new technology, and foreign film interests, principally from Hollywood, quickly stepped in to fill the gap. North American studios began contracting Spanish and Latin American actors, directors, and writers to make Spanish-language versions of their films, as well as works aimed exclusively at the Hispanic market, in Hollywood and in Paramount's Joinville facilities in Paris. Many of the new arrivals had hopes of achieving fame and fortune, but disillusionment soon set in as it became apparent that equal resources were not being devoted to the Spanish-language product. Furthermore, directorial duties were rarely turned over to Spaniards or Latin Americans, who were sometimes forced to play second fiddle to less qualified Hollywood directors. Hollywood's ignorance of linguistic diversity within the Spanish-speaking world was another sore point (Gubern, *Cine*, 37–43). A number of Spaniards, homesick, disappointed, or fed up, decided to head back home.

One of those returning was Edgar Neville, an aristocratic writer from Madrid whose stint in the US in a diplomatic position had first enabled him to befriend a number of major Hollywood players such as Mary Pickford, Douglas Fairbanks, and Charlie Chaplin, and who was later contracted by MGM to script and supervise film dialogues on Spanish-language productions (García de Dueñas, 213–14). Once back in Spain, Neville was approached by Pi to undertake a film: 'me preguntó si tenía inconveniente en dirigir unas pruebas cinematográficas para que desfilaran unas chicas muy bonitas, a fin de que las vieran en el extranjero' ('she asked me if I would mind directing some screen tests so that some pretty girls could be paraded around and seen abroad'; Gómez Santos, p. 14). Thus the apparently contradictory nature of the Pi–Neville project: one of the first attempts at recharging the dormant national film industry would be, simultaneously, an effort to export talent to the colonizers.

With the coming of talkies, most of the silent-era studios were obliged to close up shop; the first sound facility, Francisco Elías

and Camille Lemoine's Barcelona-based Orpheia Studios (where Star Film would shoot most of its subsequent productions), was not established until 1932 (Elías, 30). Thus in the early years, Spanish film-makers not working in Hollywood had recourse to two strategies: filming in French, German, or Italian studios equipped with the new technology, or shooting a silent film in Spain, wherever and however possible, and adding the sound-track later in a foreign facility (Gubern, 'Traumática', 16–17). Star Film's production took the second, more economical, approach: the film was shot in Madrid, but the sound was recorded in Paris (Gómez Santos, 16). Pi was forced to rely on her own powers of persuasion—which, according to Neville, were formidable—to convince various residents of Madrid to lend her space for filming, and many of the sets were located in the basement of the Press Palace. Neville makes sly reference to the fact that at the time, few were aware of the damage their property would sustain from the heavy film equipment. The technical team as well as the cast members (mostly celebrities and socialites with no acting experience and several young women aspiring to stardom) worked for free, and Pi managed somehow to scare up the necessary equipment and resources from one day to the next (Gómez Santos, 14–15).⁵

The final product—which has since disappeared—was a series of brief 'sketches' cobbled together into an hour-long film by Neville. One critic of the era, José Sagré, condemned the film's superficial and improvisational nature; accusing the work's producers of exploiting the ignorance of Spanish film-goers, Sagré insisted that 'cuando alguien, en España, se lance seriamente a la producción, encontrará en nosotros todo el aliento' ('once some individuals, in Spain, seriously dedicate themselves to production, they will have our full support'). Yet given the nature of the work's subject-matter—slight though it may

⁵ For one brief scene involving a woman in a bath-tub, Pi set about locating a tub in a room large enough to allow for the placement of film equipment. She convinced the owner of a bathroom fixture store to allow her to use an impressive tub on the premises over the two-hour lunch break. When the shop closed at one o'clock, camera and lights were set up and the actress climbed into the tub. Then came the realization that the taps were not connected; water would have to be brought down in buckets from the apartments above. Four hours later, the tub was filled, the actress recited her line, and the scene was shot. Neville and the crew quickly packed up and fled; the shop owner had lost an afternoon of business, and the tub still needed to be emptied, bucketful by bucketful. All were relieved the next day when Pi arrived for work unscathed (Gómez Santos, 15–16).

have been—it is interesting that Sagré framed his comments within a larger advocacy of national cinema. In his book on the director, Julio Pérez Perucha characterizes the picture as a ‘farsa sobre el poder de fascinación que el cine americano ejercía en la mentalidad de las jovencitas de la época, cuya obsesión era ganar concursos de revistas cinematográficas que las hicieran triunfar en Hollywood’ (‘[a] farce about the powerful fascination that American cinema exercised over the minds of young women of the time, whose obsession was to win film magazine contests that would enable them to triumph in Hollywood’; *El cinema*, p. 27). The film featured several such young women, and testimonials provided by Neville as well as by journalists of the era highlight a number of scenes, such as a fashion show for gentlemen whose audience included a priest (a detail which offended at least one critic), and a series of Hollywood tunes sung by a group of schoolchildren. But these frivolous images were apparently mediated by an ironizing and demythifying discourse on the attempt by North Americans to create ‘Spanish’ cinema, voiced by the public speaker Federico García Sanchiz, who during this period had railed in the press against the discriminatory treatment of Spaniards in Hollywood (Rotellar, 64–5; García de Dueñas, 73–4, 125).

One surviving still shows a group of young men and women in evening wear gathered around a shiny metal art deco-styled bar. Three women—presumably the aspiring stars—are standing behind the bar, with their glasses enthusiastically raised to be filled by a grinning bartender; another woman sits at the bar flanked by two men. The set and costumes contribute to the creation of a look typical of Hollywood films of the 1930s, particularly screwball comedies. It is significant, though, that miniature international flags adorn a metallic wall to the right, symbolically signalling the insertion of other national voices into the Hollywood discourse. The key tension on which this film rests is, of course, how that insertion would ultimately be effected: would the Hollywood machine continue to absorb the best foreign talent, closing down other national industries, including Spain’s? Or would a new Spanish sound industry in competition with Hollywood be built up, in part from the labour of those who had passed through North American studios? Román Gubern has observed that some film magazines of the time applauded Hollywood’s Spanish-language productions and

the ‘internationalization’ of Spain’s stars, while others lamented the loss of those who ‘passed over to enemy lines’, crippling the national cinema (*Cine*, p. 38–9). But as *Yo quiero que me lleven a Hollywood* was being made, Hollywood was in fact preparing to dramatically cut down on its production of foreign-language versions, opting instead for the more cost-effective processes of subtitling or dubbing standard releases. Spain would soon see a large influx of film professionals, Spaniards and Latin Americans, trained in the Hollywood method; later they would be joined by still other skilled immigrants, such as Jewish cinematographers fleeing Hitler’s Germany. And, despite Sagré’s scathing (though perhaps understandable) dismissal, Star Film would in fact be one of the first production companies to lay the foundation for a viable Spanish sound cinema (Elías, 35; Gubern, ‘Traumática’, 22).

Yo quiero que me lleven a Hollywood points to another concern which would wind its way through Pi’s career: the issue of female stardom. It is probably not inconsequential that Pi’s company was called Star Film; her request of Neville indicates that she was interested in providing opportunities for as yet undiscovered young women to ‘make it big’ in the movies. In the film’s title song, written by Neville, any notion of professional success was contaminated by the very idea of happiness promulgated by Hollywood films, which ended on the acquisition of romance and money: ‘Yo quiero que me lleven a Hollywood | pretendo en la pantalla destacar | deseo un Barrymore que me bese | y que me paguen mucho en dólares’ (‘I want to be taken to Hollywood | I mean to shine on screen | I want a Barrymore to kiss me | and to be paid with lots of green’; García de Dueñas, p. 68). Life as a Hollywood actress would be . . . just like in the movies. Yet, as we shall see, Pi clearly understood that in the Hollywood system female stardom was intimately tied up with the creation of spectacle, with the positioning of women as objects within a male scopophilic regime. The actresses in *Yo quiero que me lleven a Hollywood* were paraded in a fashion show before onscreen figurations of the male spectator, and Neville himself has fond memories of a scene featuring a young woman in a bath-tub (Gómez Santos, 17–18). Later in this chapter, Pi’s film *El gato montés* will provide a better opportunity to chart the interrogation of the price paid by women for professional opportunities in the cinema.

If Pi was not in fact successful as a starmaker in this short feature (none of the cast members listed as 'aspiring star' ever seems to have made it to Hollywood or triumphed on the Spanish screen),⁶ the producer did demonstrate great foresight in her choice of directors: Neville soon built a successful pre-war career, and later went on to become one of the most acclaimed directors of the postwar era. Star Film's next, and considerably more substantial, directorial job went to Benito Perojo, a proven talent of the silent cinema who had also directed two features for North American studios, and who, like Neville, was to become a central figure in the Spanish film industry. According to Luis Quesada, it was Pi's partner Pedro Ladrón de Guevara who approached Perojo, and it is probably no coincidence that the proposed film, *El hombre que se reía del amor* (The Man who Laughed at Love, 1932), would include his sister, María Ladrón de Guevara, and her husband, Rafael Rivelles, in the leading roles (Quesada, 191).

The film, no longer extant, was based on a novel by a best-selling author of the time, Pedro Mata, which portrayed the amorous adventures of an inveterate libertine, Juanito Herrero (Rivelles) as he hopped from one international hotel to another. Narrative tension centred on Herrero's relationships with an English widow named Addy (Ladrón de Guevara), and with the Spanish singer and dancer Carmen (played by Rosita Díaz Gimeno, another major actress recently returned from Hollywood). The cruel consumption of women's bodies by the arche-

⁶ In addition to García Sanchiz, Pérez Perucha lists the players as Perlita Greco (the star); Antonio Robles (the friend); José Martín (the schoolteacher); Julia Bilbao, Emilia Barrado, and Angeles Somavila (women aspiring to be movie stars); Enrique Herreros and Perico Chicote (*El cinema*, 27). The male cast members seem to have had better luck in the movies: Martín worked regularly in the cinema; Chicote, the well-known owner of a popular café on the Gran Vía, made another cameo appearance in the 1950s in *Todo es posible en Granada* (Everything Is Possible in Granada) directed by José Luis Sáenz de Heredia; Herreros, a sketch artist, took charge of the production company Filmófono's publicity and later became a major force in the postwar satiric magazine *La Codorniz* as well as a successful comic actor (Méndez Leite, i. 331, ii. 149; Mortimore, 'Buñuel', 180). Herreros later ironized on the career impact of his performance in *Yo quiero que me lleven a Hollywood*: 'Yo creí que, después de aquel éxito, me contratarían para papeles de envergadura, y hasta soñé con Hollywood . . . yo estoy seguro de que, en mi caso, hubo sabotaje' ('I thought that, after that success, they would contract me for substantial roles, and I even dreamt of Hollywood . . . I am certain that in my case there was sabotage'; Martínez Sandía, 36).

typical Don Juan was dramatically portrayed in print ads for the film (reminiscent of some surrealist photographs), which depicted a knife-like pair of masculine legs walking across the genitalia of a row of prostrate nude women. The novel's denouement—Addy's suicide upon being abandoned by Herrero, and Herrero's final solitude after discovering that Carmen has settled down with another man—provided a moral anchor to the narrative, demythifying the romanticized Don Juan figure (Rotellar, 89–91). According to Caparrós Lera the film also ended on suicide and featured 'una permisividad erótica [que] alcanzaba cotas nada habituales en nuestro cine nacional' ('an erotic permissiveness [that] reached unusual levels for our national cinema'; *Arte*, p. 274); it is probably for these reasons that *El hombre que se reía del amor* was banned several years later by the newly established Francoist censorship (Oltra i Costa, 95).

At the time of its original release, however, this film was greeted with tremendous enthusiasm. In a dramatic reversal of the opinion previously expressed by Sagra, Pi and her production company were celebrated for promoting an independent and genuinely Spanish cinema, capable of challenging Hollywood's hegemony. As Mateo Santos wrote in *Popular Film*: 'Rosario Pi no quiere que sus producciones sean un cocktail híbrido iberoamericano, y menos aún yanki-español . . . señalamos su labor como el primer paso decidido y en firme para que España logre su independencia cinematográfica y deje de ser colonia de nadie' ('Rosario Pi doesn't want her productions to be hybrid Ibero-American cocktails, and even less Yankee-Spanish ones . . . we single out her labour as the first firm and decisive step so that Spain might achieve cinematographic independence and cease to be anyone's colony'; quoted in Gubern, *Benito Perojo*, p. 221).

But the debate continued to rage, albeit in slightly different guise, as Star Film's next production, *Odio* (Hatred, 1933), was directed by the Peruvian-born Richard Harlan, who had also headed up a number of films for Hollywood studios. The cast was led once again by María Ladrón de Guevara but did not include her husband, most likely since the two had just divorced under the new Second Republic law.⁷ The melodramatic scenario, written by Wenceslao Fernández Flórez, a conservative writer from La Coruña, was set in Galicia and focused on a

woman disillusioned in youth and vengeful in her later years. The film, now lost, was praised for its uniquely Spanish subject-matter, and Caparrós Lera relates the work in passing to the polemic concerning regional autonomy that was played out during the Second Republic (*Arte*, 275). But autonomy of a different sort continued to obsess reviewers of the time. One critic complained in the newspaper *ABC* that *Odio's* material would have been better handled by a Spanish director less influenced by the American aesthetic, a director 'experto en nuestra vida y nuestros gestos que supiese ponerlos de relieve' ('well versed in our lifestyle and our gestures who would know how to emphasize them'; quoted in Rotellar, p. 116). Now that the simple survival of an indigenous sound film industry was no longer an urgent question, the proper character and creative origins of a national cinema began to be disputed in the media, and the shadow of Hollywood continued to loom large.

Rosario Pi's precise role in the production of this last film, as well as in the Star Film short feature *Besos en la nieve* (*Kisses in the Snow*, 1932; dir. José María Beltrán), is undocumented. But with Star Film's next release, *Doce hombres y una mujer* (*Twelve Men and One Woman*, 1934), Pi gained clear recognition in the industry. Although the movie's director, Fernando Delgado, one of the most respected film-makers of the silent period, was criticized for 'uneven' work on his first sound effort, Pi, as author of the screenplay, was singled out for praise in the press. Here we find the first references to Pi's capacity to think in images; crucial, it was argued, to the creation of a national cinema true to the nature of the medium: 'se ve que el argumento está pensado en cine . . . nació cine y se presenta a que lo juzguen como cine' ('it is evident that the plot is thought through in cinema . . . it was born as cinema and is presented so that it will be judged as such'; Guzmán Merino). We also encounter allusions to Pi's significant presence on the film set, where she busily dispatched orders to the crew (Martínez de Ribera).

Once again, however, only a number of tantalizing production stills remain. They document the presence of impressive art deco

⁷ This event was the subject of an article entitled 'También nuestras artistas se divorcian', which compared the restraint and discretion exhibited by divorcing Spanish stars—who would, it was claimed, only break the matrimonial bond for sentimental reasons—to the avarice and flamboyance of their North American counterparts.

sets and costumes, and hint at the studied use of blocking and framing to create a dramatic visual style. In one striking photo, which illustrates the film's title, the female protagonist (played by Irene López Heredia, a prestigious stage actress who ran her own theatre company and who made her cinematic debut in this film) faces the camera, heading up a long boardroom table at which twelve men are seated. Reviews of the time refer to the originality of the storyline, which appears to have centred on a powerful female figure in the international business community and included a love story and an intrigue related to secret societies. The contemporary critic Manuel Rotellar concludes somewhat condescendingly that 'el tema se apoyaba en una teoría matriarcal que el menos avezado de los psicólogos interpretaría como trasunto temperamental de su autora' ('the theme was based on a matriarchal theory that even the least perceptive of psychologists would interpret as a projection of the author's temperament'; 'Lo que contiene'; Rotellar, p. 120). His tome on Republican cinema emphasizes the film's 'apolitical' content, seen as surprising since filming took place as miners were striking in Asturias and the conservative government elected the previous year reacted with repressive measures. *Doce hombres y una mujer* is taken as proof that the early sound cinema failed to engage with the pressing social issues that rocked Spain in the Republican era (Rotellar, 120; see also Caparrós Lera, *Arte*, 284). Of course, it is clear that this film was not concerned with providing testimonial on the plight of the miners, and it may even have skirted the ever-deepening chasm between left and right in Spain. Yet turmoil over gender roles was not an insignificant issue in the 1930s, and for that reason what Rotellar terms the 'matriarchal' focus of Pi's script did indeed represent a political stance.

The work was also absorbed into the polemic mentioned above concerning the proper characteristics of a national cinema. Praising López Heredia's acting, one reviewer suggested this film demonstrated 'un aliento cosmopolita' ('a cosmopolitan air', Guzmán Merino), while another critic spoke of the film's 'dinamismo cosmopolita' ('cosmopolitan dynamism', Emilio Calvo, quoted in Rotellar, p. 120). *Doce hombres y una mujer* was evidently seen as exemplifying the 'cosmopolitan' film, defined as a sophisticated urban comedy or drama modelled on Hollywood productions. According to Gubern, Perojo was the most notable

practitioner of this style, which in ideological terms reflected the bourgeois liberalism of the time (*Cine*, 158–60). Although on the one hand these works could be slavishly imitative of the colonizing cinema, on the other they could also provide the means to re-image Spain on screen, to figure a nation more in accordance with the spirit of the Second Republic.

But these ‘cosmopolitan’ films, clearly in the minority, were condemned by many critics who believed that Spaniards should cultivate a cinema rooted in traditional customs and values. How to achieve such a goal was another question, one which was never rigorously addressed. Instead, impassioned debates sprang up around the vices and virtues of the so-called *españolada*. Although Caparrós Lera has criticized the use of this term in relation to Spanish film (*Arte*, 264), it is undeniable that the word surfaced frequently in criticism of the 1920s and 1930s. With origins in French travelogues of the Romantic era, the *españolada* figured Spain as exotic, primitive ‘other’ by focusing metonymically on the technologically underdeveloped, classist, and sexist Andalucía, presumably the region closest culturally to the Middle East and the Orient, and by populating this space with gypsies—considered to be the most concentrated form of Spaniard—whose flamenco performances and bullfighting tied them viscerally to the instinctive realm. Spanish artists and intellectuals themselves contributed to this particular construction of national identity throughout the nineteenth century and into the twentieth, as did silent films produced on both sides of the Pyrenees (Mitchell, 111–16; Gubern, *Cine*, 124–5). By the late 1920s the Italian film theorist Ricciotto Canudo confessed that ‘Se io fossi uno Spagnolo puro sangue, . . . protesterei con tutte le mie forze contro la rappresentazione, che il Cinema si ostina a ripetere, di una Spagna terribilmente convenzionale’ (‘If I were a pure-blooded Spaniard . . . I would protest with all my might against the representation, that the cinema insists on repeating, of a terribly conventional Spain’; p. 247). In fact, many Spanish cineasts did protest, but others, such as the director Florián Rey, argued that only foreigners were capable of producing *españoladas*; Spanish reflections on native traditions would naturally tend towards a genuine expression of national character (Gubern, *Cine*, 126). One respected critic of the day, Florentino Hernández Girbal, summarized this position:

'Españolada' puede ser y es únicamente presentar tipos y escenas falsos, que no respondan a la realidad, y cuya confección esté animada por un fin bastardo; pero llevar a la pantalla la vida estrepitosa y trágica de los toreros y el alma del pueblo andaluz, derrochando luz y alegría, no es 'españolada,' es pura y auténticamente España en su aspecto colorista.

'Españolada' can be and is simply the presentation of false types and scenes, which do not correspond to reality, and whose creation is spurred on by an illegitimate motivation; but to show on screen the tense and tragic life of bullfighters and the soul of the Andalusian people, brimming over with light and happiness, is not 'españolada', it is purely and authentically Spain in her colourful guise. (Quoted in Caparrós Lera, *Arte*, 264)⁸

When Pi first assumed the directorial role in 1935, she seemed to turn away from the cosmopolitan focus of *Doce hombres y una mujer* to take on a quintessential *españolada*: a film version of Manuel Penella's folkloric *zarzuela*, *El gato montés*, a work set in Andalucía and centred on two men, a bandit and a bullfighter, in love with the same gypsy woman. However, critics of the time were quick to reassure jaded film-goers that Pi's work did indeed manage to represent genuine aspects of Spanish life without falling into the *españolada* trap. One reviewer, for example, echoes Hernández Girbal's arguments concerning cultural authenticity:

Saetas, sangre y arena, enjalbegados cortijos de nítida blancura, la cinta blanca de la carretera—vía ancestral de los gitanos trashumantes—, olivares, sol: Andalucía. Vasto escenario de horizontes sin fin. En este campo de luz se desarrolla esta magnífica película, que si no tuviera otros méritos, si no encerrara valores positivos, la honradez artística de su desarrollo, el esmero de sus realizadores de apartarla de caer en una ridícula españolada, merecería nuestro mayor y sincero elogio. Como amantes de volver por los fueros de la genuina película española, no podemos menos de felicitarlos: hora es de acabar de una vez para siempre con la leyenda de una España de pandereta con

⁸ The debate has continued into the postwar and even the post-Franco period. For example, the 1952 film *¡Bienvenido Mister Marshall!* (Welcome, Mr Marshall!) directed by Luis García Berlanga is a parody of the *españolada* which unveils the complicity of Spaniards themselves in the cultural colonization of their nation (Kinder, *Blood*, 20–2). For a sophisticated analysis of Carlos Saura's engagement with these issues in his 1980s flamenco dance trilogy, see D'Lugo, *The Films of Carlos Saura*, 192–224.

que se nos conceptuaba en los medios cineastas del extranjero, que hasta poco ha no han podido o no han querido desprenderse de la impresión ochocentista de un Próspero Merimée o de Alejandro Dumas (padre) en sus viajes por España.

Saetas [religious songs], blood and sand, ranches of precise whiteness, the white ribbon of the highway—ancestral path of the nomadic gypsies—olive groves, sun: Andalusia. Vast scenery of endless horizons. In this field of light this magnificent film unfolds; if it had no other merits, if it included no positive values, the artistic integrity of its development, the care taken by the film-makers to prevent it from falling into the ridiculous *españolada*, would deserve our greatest and sincere praise. Since we desire to return to the genuine Spanish film, we can only congratulate ourselves. It is time to end, once and for all, the ‘Spain of the tambourine’ legend by which we are conceived in the foreign film media, and which until recently has been unable or unwilling to rid itself of the nineteenth-century impressions of Prosper Mérimée or Alexander Dumas (father) in their journeys through Spain. (C.A.M.)

As I hope to demonstrate in the following textual analysis, Pi’s film in fact enriches this polemic by revealing the tensions inherent in concepts of national and ethnic identity. Through an exploration of the constructed nature of representation, *El gato montés* also reflects a ‘cosmopolitan’ preoccupation with gender issues, as well as with the more particular question of female stardom.

By basing her film on a *zarzuela*—the Spanish national operatic form—Pi inscribed her work within an established cinematic tradition in Spain. Interestingly, it was the world’s first woman director, Alice Guy, who had captured the earliest motion picture fragments of the genre on film and wax cylinder (for sound recording) in the early years of the twentieth century. In the silent era, it was common practice among Spanish directors to film *zarzuelas*, and screenings were typically accompanied by live music; later, technological developments allowed for the rough synchronization of sound on gramophones or phonographs. The filmed *zarzuela* reached the peak of its popularity in Spain in the early to mid-1920s, when it was replaced by adaptations of novels and plays (Sánchez Vidal, 28–9). With the coming of sound, however, the *zarzuela* enjoyed an onscreen renaissance, providing the basis for a significant number of Second Republic films (Gubern, *Cine*, 117–18).

Penella's *zarzuela* had debuted to great acclaim in Valencia in 1916, and it went on to an extraordinarily successful run in Madrid and other Spanish and Latin American capital cities. In 1920, *El gato montés* arrived in New York, with Conchita Piquer and Pastora Imperio among the cast; four years later, it inspired the Hollywood silent film *Tiger Love*, starring Antonio Moreno, directed by George Melford, and with a script by Howard Hawks (Romero, 11, 34–5; García de Dueñas, 169). The *zarzuela*'s marked popularity thus made it a logical choice for adaptation by Pi, although as the opera singer Plácido Domingo indicated recently upon preparing a new recording, the work also presents some serious problems. While in general Penella's *zarzuela* is overly brief, several passages falter, and two of the three protagonists are killed off before the last act, producing a notable decline in dramatic interest (Romero, 36). Pi's film script, with new dialogue and music by Penella, corrected these defects by eliminating the weaker passages, including a lengthy prologue, and delaying the death of the female protagonist. Although Penella's original work was sung in its entirety, most of the dialogue in Pi's film version is spoken, with several specially composed vocal numbers inserted at poignant moments; one critic specifically praised this avoidance of an 'abuso de canciones' ('abuse of songs' Don Yo Doble). The film *El gato montés* also seemed to respond to ideas concerning the adaptation of *zarzuelas* published in specialized journals of the time. Hernández Girbal, for instance, recommended in *Cinegramas* that if film-makers were to use *zarzuelas* as source texts—a practice he discouraged—they should alter the original plots to achieve fresh dramatic effects, focus particularly on the setting, and bolster the secondary characters to add depth to the protagonists. Pi's film does in fact supplement the plot, contribute important contextual details, and shift certain aspects of characterization in fundamental ways. And just as Hernández Girbal predicts, these additions and modifications are oftentimes the most intriguing aspects of the film.

The prologue focuses on the gypsy children Soleá and Juanillo, each apparently orphaned but raised together by relatives (Juanillo's uncle Pesuño and Soleá's grandmother). The film opens with documentary-like shots of a gypsy encampment at night, with men and women of all ages gathered around a bonfire singing and clapping. Curiously, however, the music on the

soundtrack is non-diegetic: instead of the gypsies' singing, we hear an orchestral prelude. The odd aural overlay, breaking with codes of verisimilitude, serves to remind the viewer that this particular representation of gypsies is indeed culturally mediated. Next, the camera cuts to several brief shots of a daytime caravan of horse carts and walkers winding their way along a dirt path, underlining the nomadic lifestyle. These images segue into a fairly lengthy sequence which illustrates one day in the life of the young Juanillo and Soleá, highlighting their affection for one another as well as their socialization within the gypsy context. This portion of the film ends with a lovely cinematic gesture: the children walk towards us arm in arm, the camera pans down to their bare feet, and a series of dissolves reveals the successively more mature feet of Juanillo and Soleá as they continue to advance towards the backtracking camera. Finally, the dissolves cease and the camera pans up from two pairs of adult feet—the male's now in shoes—to the grown-up bodies of Soleá (María del Pilar Lebrón) and Juanillo (Pablo Hertogs), still arm in arm. This succinct but highly evocative transition summarizes a childhood and youth in which the destinies of these characters have been inextricably entwined.

Narrative conflict is introduced in the following sequences. After declaring their love for one another as Pesuño looks on, Soleá and Juanillo go their separate ways in an attempt to make some money. While the men sell a broken-down donkey to a baker, Soleá enters a restaurant and tries to charm some change out of a young bullfighter named Rafael (Víctor Miguel Merás). Later, Pesuño, Juanillo, and Soleá attend Rafael's bullfight; Juanillo, jealous because the matador dedicates his bull to Soleá, insists that they leave. In one last effort to supplement their daily income, Soleá enters a bar and offers to read the palm of a drunken aristocrat named Antonio, who responds by insulting her, throwing wine in her face. Juanillo defends Soleá, and when the other man pulls out a gun, Juanillo stabs him to death. The storyline then leaps ahead in time: after having languished in prison for a year, Juanillo finally manages to escape with the help of Pesuño, and the two become bandits, with the younger man taking on the nickname 'El Gato Montés'. Meanwhile Soleá has been courted by Rafael, who has enjoyed a meteoric rise to fame. When she is detained by a prison warden suspicious that she may have facilitated Juanillo's gaolbreak, Soleá is forced to call on the smitten bullfighter. Rafael secures her release

and takes her to his ranch, called La Gloria; in the car trip home his play on words—‘a La Gloria vamos’ (‘we’re off to La Gloria/Heaven’)—makes clear that the now upper-class bullfighter sees himself as Soleá’s redeemer. It is moments such as this one which probably inspired Gubern to categorize Pi’s film as paradigmatic in its representation of power relations and class advancement through romantic coupling (*Cine*, 129–30).

At this point the film narrative finally catches up with the opening of Penella’s *zarzuela* libretto. While the characters of Rafael, Juanillo, and Soleá have been established, as has the central love triangle and the class-based conflict, a particular construction of gypsy culture has also been put forth in the film. Gypsies played a significant though generally stereotypical role in 1930s cinema; as noted above, they were central to the creation of the *españolada*. Yet as Caparrós Lera has observed, the strengthening of the Popular Front, together with its egalitarian rhetoric, may have paved the way for modifications in the representation of gypsies (*Arte*, 161–2). Several critics have claimed along with Caparrós Lera that the most popular of all Republican films, Florián Rey’s *Morena Clara* (Light Brown) which was shot and premiered several months after Pi’s work, did in fact attempt to reconsider the ‘gypsy question’ (Galán, ‘Imperio’, 96; Rotellar, 138–9; Sánchez Vidal, 220). In Rey’s film the gypsy Trini (Imperio Argentina) and her brother are tried for stealing hams from an innkeeper. The prosecutor Enrique, who spouts racist views at first, is eventually won over by Trini’s charm and generosity, and the film ends with the two planning to marry. Significantly, the gypsies are defended by a female lawyer, who provides the film with a counter-racist discourse, arguing that if gypsies live at war with society, ‘la culpa no es de ellos sino nuestra . . . en lugar de amor encuentran odio y desconfianza, persecuciones y puertas cerradas’ (‘the fault is not theirs but ours . . . instead of love, they find hate and mistrust, persecution and closed doors’; Caparrós Lera, *Arte*, p. 161). As Sánchez Vidal observes, Trini is herself a symbol of reconciliation, since she is a cross between *payo* (non-gypsy) and gypsy, a ‘morena clara’ (p. 220). Yet the lighter colour of her skin also makes her more easily assimilated into the dominant culture. In the final lines of the film, Trini in fact attempts to allay fears of miscegenation by alluding in verse to Seville’s dark Virgin of Macarena and her lily-white son: ‘Y aunque soy morena clara | no sufras por mi color | Morena es la Macarena, | y su

hijo Nuestro Señor | del color de la azucena' ('And although I'm of light brown skin | don't suffer over my colour | Brown-skinned is the Macarena | and her son our Lord | is of the lily's colour').

While *El gato montés* multiplies the filmic references to the Macarena through the nickname of its half-gypsy bullfighter Rafael 'El Macareno', it also includes an emotionally charged comparison between its heroine and a dark Virgin. Soleá, dying of grief after Rafael's demise in the bullring, asks a priest if it is true that gypsies don't go to heaven. Father Antón hastens to reassure her that gypsies are God's children too: 'hasta una Virgen hemos tenío; la de la Angustias' ('we've even had a Virgin: the Virgin of Angustias'). Although in this moment the film would appear to articulate an impassioned defence of gypsies, it is important to note that, as in *Morena clara*, stereotypes in fact abound, probably contributing to the 'legibility' of both works for a popular audience.⁹ In *El gato montés*, however, the confirmation of one commonplace occasionally involves the erosion of another. For example, the prologue first effects a frontal attack on the customary ascription of uncleanness to gypsies. In the morning, little Juanillo is sent off by his elders to fetch water for washing, even though the nearest source is a fifteen-minute walk away. But Juanillo manages to shorten the trip by convincing a sympathetic woman returning from the fountain that his mother is sick and in immediate need of water, a relatively innocent lie that foregrounds the little boy's imaginative skills. Thus in this case one negative stereotype (dirtiness) is displaced by another (dishonesty) more conducive to a positive interpretation (ingenuity).

More frequently, 'racial essences' are linked to questions of class situation and national identity, and thus are reinscribed as the direct or indirect product of particular socio-economic conditions. For example, gypsy women are customarily identified

⁹ Tomás Calvo Buezas recently conducted a poll of primary- and secondary-level students in Spain which revealed that stereotypical notions concerning gypsies persist among *payos*. All of the commonplaces discussed here in relation to *El gato montés* (gypsies as unclean, as ingenious, as swindlers and thieves, as ethnocentric, and as knife-fighters) surfaced in responses to Calvo Buezas's poll. Only the association between gypsies and fortune-telling seems to have diminished, to be replaced by references to the gypsy 'culto', a religious practice which evolved in part through the influence of protestant missionaries (Calvo Buezas, 272-3).

A note on citations: when quoting *El gato montés*, I have taken dialogue directly from the film, but referred to the script (listed in Works Cited under Penella) for spelling, in order to indicate the colloquial 'Andalusian' flavour of the actors' speech.

with black magic or mysticism; such is the case of the superstitious, spell-invoking Trini in *Morena clara*. Penella's zarzuela also included a mysterious character, simply called 'la gitana' ('the gypsy'), whose sole function was to read Rafael's palm and predict his death. The elimination of this figure in the film version of *El gato montés* is meaningful, for although Soleá offers to tell fortunes, it is clearly out of economic necessity and unrelated to her spiritual beliefs, which are aligned with a mainstream Catholicism. The donkey episode mentioned earlier, like the opening conflict of *Morena clara*, plays on ingrained notions of gypsies as swindlers and thieves. But after selling the decrepit donkey to a *payo* baker, Juanillo protests to his uncle Pesuño that the coin they received in payment is counterfeit; it is not just the gypsies, but all Spaniards, who are duplicitous. Although Juanillo later becomes a bandit—a stereotypical gypsy occupation—he is portrayed as a Spanish Robin Hood, attempting to level out class differences while seeking no economic gain for himself. As they discuss the need to recruit more men, Pesuño emphasizes the high rate of unemployment, as well as a more generalized indifference to work: 'sobran hombres sin trabajo, y sin ganas de trabajar tampoco faltan' ('there is an abundance of men without work, as well as of men with no desire to work'). The incident which eventually leads to Juanillo's bandit lifestyle, the death by stabbing of the aristocrat Antonio, taps into an association of gypsies with knives. Yet Juanillo's apparently 'offensive' act becomes defensive once Antonio pulls out and fires his gun; in weapon as well as in social class, Antonio wields power over Juanillo, who will pay a heavy price for his transgression.

While *Morena clara* begins optimistically with the trial and acquittal of Trini and her brother, here Juanillo's encounter with the justice system is, significantly, a filmic ellipsis: in Spain, justice does not exist for the gypsies. This notion is not only voiced by Pesuño as he ruminates out loud over his nephew's imprisonment, it is also visualized in a series of eloquent images depicting Juanillo's first Good Friday in prison. The sequence clearly refers to the centuries-old tradition of *saetas carceleras*, when Holy Week processions sponsored by upper-class charitable organizations halted before prisons, and the inmates sang *saetas*, or brief religious songs, to the sacred figures. This was, according to Timothy Mitchell, a culturally sanctioned catharsis, which publicly acknowledged the pain of the prisoner while recommending resignation and reaffirming the social hierarchy

(101–3). But in *El gato montés* society will no longer recognize the suffering of those it has marginalized. The dramatic cinematography of Isy Goldberger¹⁰ captures the moving shadows cast on the penitentiary wall by the hooded marchers, including one participant who waves his group on; only those bearing the figure of the Virgin would appear, briefly, to pause. Similarly, reverse shots depict Soleá as standing in utter isolation before the prison wall as candle-bearers continue to march along in the procession behind her, oblivious to her anguish as well as to that of Juanillo, weeping at his barred window above. Moreover, it is Soleá who sings a *saeta* here, figuratively stepping into the prisoners' place: 'Madre de los afligidos, | sácame tú de esta pena, | que tengo er corasón preso | entre hierros y cadenas' ('Mother of the afflicted | relieve me of this pain | for my heart is imprisoned | by irons and chains'). Through her song Soleá indicates that she, like Juanillo, finds herself imprisoned, perhaps implying that as gypsies both are cruelly constrained within the dominant *payo* culture.

This *saeta* is one element in a network of symbolic references to Soleá's longing for freedom in *El gato montés*. In the film's prologue, the gypsy children encounter a nest, and Juanillo removes a baby bird which he suggests they keep in a cage. But the orphaned Soleá, clearly identifying with the little bird, begs Juanillo to release the creature. In the next sequence, an adult Soleá sings to an adult bird, now caged, with which she continues to identify: 'igual que tú, pajariyo | en tu jaula prisionero, | así está mi corasón | enserraíto en mi pecho' ('just

¹⁰ Goldberger was one of a number of skilled Jewish cinematographers who fled Nazi Germany and were assimilated into the Spanish film industry. In his book on cinematography in Spain, Francisco Llinás singles out Goldberger's work in Pi's film for particular praise, noting that 'los claroscuros y bruscos golpes de luz edificados por Isy Goldberger para *El gato montés* son inseparables del sistema de la película, que con otro iluminador quizás alcanzara un sentido diferente y en todo caso más trivial' ('the chiaroscuro and sudden flashes of light created by Isy Goldberger for *El gato montés* are inseparable from the film's system; perhaps with another cinematographer it might have taken on a different meaning, in any case more trivial'; *Directores*, 50).

Another lovely shot worth mentioning prefigures a significant moment in the postwar film scripted by Franco and directed by José Luis Sáenz de Heredia, *Raza* (Race, 1941). In *El gato montés*, the camera, initially situated outside the prison in which Juanillo is confined, penetrates through a barred window into the protagonist's cell by means of a carefully matched dissolve. Similarly, in *Raza* the camera (clearly coded here as an omniscient 'God-cam') enters via dissolve through the condemned hero José's prison window as the latter confesses to a priest.

like you, little bird | imprisoned in your cage | thus is my heart | shut up in my breast').¹¹ The image of an encaged heart, which is repeated in Soleá's *saeta* before the prison, links the yearning for freedom with her emotional life, implying that she feels constrained from pursuing or satisfying her desires. It is not until Soleá's last moments of life, while she lies weakly in a patio garden, that birds flutter freely about her, symbolizing, in part, a liberation and a fulfilment that she will experience only in death. As if to underline this notion, the final melodramatic moments of the film—after both Soleá and Juanillo have died—flash back to images of the two snuggling together as children, before showing them walking off arm in arm towards the horizon and then disappearing in a cinematic dissolve.

Soleá's symbolic imprisonment is of course conditioned by her doubly repressed status as gypsy and as woman. It is clear she feels a special solidarity with the one other character who shares these two aspects of her identity: Rafael's mother, Frasquita (Consuelo Company). In this the film diverges significantly from Penella's *zarzuela*, which at times opposed the two women in Manichaean fashion as maternal saint and *femme fatale*. In fact, the cinematic characterization of Soleá presents a number of important differences with respect to its source text. In the *zarzuela* Soleá is a weak figure who, according to Justo Romero, '[p]resenta los rasgos típicos de la protagonista de drama costumbrista, abnegada, silenciosa e indecisa, insegura' ('presents the typical traits of the drama of customs' protagonist, self-sacrificing, silent and indecisive, insecure', p. 46). Yet in the first half of Pi's work—that is, in the material completely new to the film—Soleá is a strong, decisive presence, defiantly defending her rights. This is most evident in the two parallel scenes in which she attempts to tell men their fortunes. In the first instance, Rafael offers her a glass of wine, but she firmly refuses, informing him that gypsy women do not consume alcohol. While his companions are inclined to harass Soleá, Rafael respects her request. In the second scene, the aristocrat Antonio also invites

¹¹ Catherine Jagoe has observed that 'bird imagery was adopted by Spanish women writers during the 1840s as a feminist metaphor for the self' (p. 61); by the end of the century, however, the image 'of woman as caged bird, the winged prisoner' (p. 38) appears frequently in Spanish literature, and is particularly notable in the work of Spain's most outspoken feminists, Emilia Pardo Bazán and Concepción Arenal (pp. 38–9).

Soleá to a drink, but when she declines he propositions her and becomes violently insistent. Soleá holds her ground, angrily shaking herself free from Antonio's grip and proclaiming that 'en mi cuerpo naide manda' ('no one controls my body'). Later, in an encounter with Rafael which takes place a year after Juanillo has been imprisoned for stabbing Antonio, the bullfighter tells Soleá, 'tú necesitas quien te ampare y quien te defienda' ('you need someone to shelter and defend you'), to which the young woman responds firmly, tossing back her head, 'ya me defiendo yo' ('I already defend myself'). At the end of their conversation, Soleá informs Rafael that she will be the one to decide whether or not they initiate a relationship: 'si quiero, lo encontraré' ('if I want, I will find you'). Although these scenes could possibly be read as reflecting a traditional, machista gypsy valorization of female chastity, they are notable for their emphasis on Soleá's personal agency, and they appear even more striking when contrasted with her treatment later in the film.

In fact, as Pi's cinematic prologue flows into Penella's source text, Soleá is engulfed by the aesthetic and ideology which dominates the *zarzuela*. Confined to Rafael's *cortijo*—and effectively incorporated into a higher social class—Soleá is thoroughly domesticated. Her body, once her own proud domain, becomes, simply, a contested ground as the two men fight to possess her. Soleá's last attempt at rebellion takes place outside Seville's bullring. Juanillo has threatened to murder Rafael himself if he is not killed by a bull. Soleá insists on seeing Rafael, but the picador Hormigón forcibly locks her in the chapel adjacent to the ring with Frasquita, intoning 'ahí a resá, que es lo que tenei que jasé las mujeres' ('go on and pray, that's what you women must do'). From this point on, Soleá is no longer allowed control of her body, which becomes a site of visual excess. A tense passage of crosscutting between the women in the chapel and events in the bullring (the latter somewhat clumsily depicted through stock footage) gives way to an alternation between dramatic high-angle and straight-on shots of the clinic as the fatally gored Rafael is rushed inside. Once the women are released from the chapel, the quick cutting and Goldberger's expressionistically lit and angled shots culminate in an odd, almost abstract overhead view of Soleá's body as she lies unconscious, sustained by several men. In this moment, the female protagonist becomes an icon, the central object in a cinematic frame infused with aesthetic impact.

After Rafael's death, Soleá suffers an artful wasting away. Her representation at this point is reminiscent of late nineteenth-century paintings of female invalids analysed by Bram Dijkstra (25–36).¹² Reclined on a rattan lounge chair, Soleá is surrounded by exuberant flowers which serve to highlight her physical decline. The doves fluttering about—mentioned above in relation to the freedom motif—together with the priest by her side, symbolize in this context her soul's impending trip heavenward. Dijkstra has noted the frequency with which women were portrayed as Christ-like figures charged with saving men from perdition; here, as the suffering Soleá calls out repeatedly for her cross, her death serves as an act of sublime abnegation which will atone for all male transgressions, including those yet to come (33). In fact, after she expires Juanillo will spirit away Soleá's body and arrange with Pesuño to be shot dead by her side in what Gubern has termed 'un final necrofílico delirante . . . escena romántica que alcanza una dimensión parasurrealista' ('a deliriously necrophiliac ending . . . a romantic scene that attains parasurrealist dimensions'; perhaps referring to a visual prefiguration of Luis Buñuel's pseudo-necrophiliac scene in *Viridiana*, *Cine*, 174). When Juanillo bursts his way into the wake, Soleá's body is emphatically offscreen; after he lurches towards her, a cut to a wall provides us with a dramatic view of his shadow as he seizes Soleá and carries her off. Following a brief view of Juanillo as he transports the body on horseback, and the insertion of a bottom-to-top horizontal wipe which simulates the final rising of a stage curtain, this climactic sequence concludes in the bandit's cave, where Soleá is laid out, the whiteness of her dress, face, and hands glowing eerily against the surrounding blackness. This artful tableau calls forth Dijkstra's observations concerning the ease with which 'a painterly homage to feminine self-sacrifice could shift toward a necrophiliac preoccupation with the erotic potential of women when in a state of virtually guaranteed passivity' (p. 58).

El gato montés, then, would appear to offer an initially subversive glimpse of female subjectivity, only to provide for a more

¹² Lou Charnon-Deutsch's forthcoming book catalogues and studies these types of images in nineteenth-century Spanish magazines. In chapter 5 Charnon-Deutsch analyses the popularity of the 'collapsed woman', an iconographical representation of the female body especially pertinent to this portion of my discussion of *El gato montés*.

pronounced reaffirmation of perverse patriarchal obsessions in the end. But Soleá is not the only important female character in the film; her portrait is complemented and framed by that of a maid in Rafael's home, Lolilla (Mapy Cortés). In an aesthetic tradition dating back at least to the Spanish classical theatre and carried on in a number of films of the 1930s, servant couples provide comic relief and a romantic counterpoint to the central protagonists; here Lolilla, together with Rafael's assistant Caireles (Joaquín Valle), fulfils that function. According to Gubern, the Republican cinema's adoption of these economically stratified pairings tends to reaffirm Spain's rigid social hierarchy (*Cine*, 115). But in *El gato montés* it is in fact Lolilla who voices an important discourse on class advancement and gender roles, as well as a crucial metacinematic commentary.

Lolilla does not enter the narrative until Soleá arrives at Rafael's ranch, that is, exactly when the female protagonist begins to be folded back into the dominant discourse. This is a significant detail, since as Soleá becomes increasingly more subjugated Lolilla offers a new site for exploration of the woman's place in Spanish society. In her first important scene, Lolilla is washing dishes when Caireles arrives. Lolilla affirms that 'yo no he nasío pa fregar platos' ('I wasn't born to scrub dishes'), protesting both her economic and her gender position. Instead, Lolilla informs Caireles that she plans to become a movie actress, an occupation which she evidently views as affording an alternative means for economic advancement, apart from marriage. For his part, Caireles has a different perspective on her two options in life. After Lolilla responds to his declaration of love by insisting that she will never marry, Caireles asks her, '¿te va a meté a monja?' ('will you become a nun?') Here he expresses the traditional Spanish view that women must either tie the knot or take the veil; remaining single and pursuing a career are not available options. However, despite—or perhaps because of—her professed opposition to marriage, throughout this scene and in the playful song with which it ends Lolilla works to create an equitable domestic space with Caireles. As she enlists her partner's aid in hauling a tub of dishes, she sings in satisfaction, 'así quiero yo a los hombres, | que me sepan ayudar' ('that's the way I like men, | that they know how to help me'); Caireles even seems to parodically acknowledge his own 'feminization' by sashaying about with a broken soup-bowl on his head. In these

moments, Lolilla is clearly 'trying on' different gender roles, actively attempting to negotiate a satisfactory place for herself.

Lolilla's characterization also attests to Pi's continued pre-occupation with issues of female stardom in the cinema, first evident in *Yo quiero que me lleven a Hollywood*. When Lolilla speaks here of her own desire to go to 'Hollywood' she seems to refer specifically to the Paramount facilities in Joinville: 'me marcho a Julivú, y me enreo con un fransés pa que me enseñe la lengua' ('I'll head off to Hollywood, and I'll get involved with a Frenchman so he can teach me the language'). The temptation presented by the big studios was evidently still vivid in the collective imagination, even though most multilingual production had been shut down permanently. Lolilla's casual reference to an 'involvement' with a Frenchman to further her career also suggests that she is aware of the particular price of movie fame for women. Later on in the film, while Caireles sharpens Rafael's swords in the patio of the bullfighter's house in Seville, Lolilla walks by in a floor-length dress carrying a minuscule package which, she remarks, contains the swimsuit she will wear for her screen test. In response to her assertion that 'esta tarde voy a rodá' ('this afternoon I'm going to film/roll'), Caireles asks her maliciously, '¿con quién vas a rodá tú?' ('with whom will you film/roll?'). Such exchanges, although evidently designed to capture audience attention through risqué humour, also serve to place women's available options in the proper perspective: Lolilla's path to 'independence' might entail significant detours into new forms of exploitation.

This latter scene, rife with *double entendres*, in fact includes a wealth of direct and indirect references to the situation of women within the film industry. For example, by addressing Lolilla as a 'nudist' as she saunters out the door, Caireles refers specifically to a cinematic trend of the time: the nudist film. The arrival in Spain of a number of works such as the German documentary shown on national screens early in 1935 under the title *Desnudismo* (Nudism) sparked debate concerning the propriety of nudity in the cinema. In an article published in *Cinegramas*, for example, the critic Bernabé de Aragón looked forward with expectation to the projection 'ante nuestros ojos hambrientos de sensaciones fuertemente bellas' ('before our eyes hungry for powerfully beautiful sensations'). While noting that nudist films feature both sexes *au naturel*, Aragón chooses to

focus specifically on women, and his piece anticipates in some respects Laura Mulvey's now classic (though polemical) description of the male spectator's consumption of the female image. Aragón's eager rundown of the new Salomé's, Frinés, Venuses, and Aphrodites to be found in the cinema seems to confirm Mulvey's claim that the scopophilic impetus of the male gaze is satisfied through the conversion of women into icons (16–17). The onanistic nature of this viewing pleasure is evident in Aragón's references to excited spectators whose blood boils as they experience 'morbosas pasiones' ('prurient passions'). Aragón's article is itself a montage of fetishistic images of female body parts—Francesca Bernini's shoulders, Nita Naldi's bust, Marlene Dietrich's legs—which, as Mulvey would argue, work to assuage any castration anxiety stimulated by the lack represented in the figure of the woman (21).

Together with fetishization, Mulvey outlines another means by which the possible displeasure of contemplation is converted into pleasure: through identification with the active male figure on screen, male spectators achieve, figuratively, a sadistic possession and control of the female character (21–2). It could be argued that *El gato montés* effects a ludic visualization of this process in the screen-test conversation scene, which begins precisely with Caireles addressing Lolilla as 'you Marlene Dietrich you'. Caireles functions here as a symbolic stand-in for the male film-makers/spectators who will soon be eyeing Lolilla. When Lolilla first appears in a balcony above the patio, Caireles is sharpening a sword, sanding away at the blade with the grip supported in his lap and the tip pointed up towards the maid; furthermore, next to him is a fountain vaguely resembling a penis, which shoots a single stream of liquid. After Lolilla descends the stairs, she stops to converse with Caireles, framed on the right by her suitor, whose sword points directly at her genitals, and on the left by the evocative fountain, whose spout will, by the end of the scene, appear to have shifted direction in pursuit of the young woman. For his part, Caireles gazes longingly at Lolilla and lifts one of her skirt ruffles. While at the beginning of this scene an auto-eroticism stimulated by the female form is clearly imaged, the phallic sword (somewhat reminiscent of the publicity art for the Star Film production *El hombre que se reía del amor*) neatly figures both the fear of castration and the subsequent need to mask that fear through a pointed affirmation

of power over and possession of the woman. Even the selection of an editing join contributes to the effect: in *El gato montés*, transitions between takes are oftentimes accomplished through playfully stylized wipes (for example, a ‘windshield wipe’ into an automobile scene), and here the graphic final punctuation simulates a ripping away of cloth or some other delicate material.

Despite the eloquence of these symbolic images of female victimization, it would be a mistake to discount the force of Lolilla’s presence in this multivalent scene. Skilfully navigating the overdeterminedly phallic terrain, Lolilla in fact marches fearlessly towards Caireles’s sword, only to parry with her own double-edged taunts. Her feigned naïveté (as when, for example, she informs Caireles that ‘no me tien que ver más que er diretó, er secretario, er gerente, un cuñado der secretario, y el operador’—‘the only ones who have to see me are the director, his assistant, the manager, a brother-in-law of the assistant, and the cameraman’) thinly disguises a shrewd understanding of the terms of masculine privilege—as well as a desire to turn that privilege to her own advantage (as in this case, where her enumeration is clearly designed to place Caireles in a position of weakness). Her ability to ‘manage’ Caireles suggests that Lolilla might have some chance of holding her own in the overwhelmingly masculine milieu of the cinema. Thus, while vividly portraying the stakes involved for the female body on- and offscreen, this scene also suggests, if only tenuously, that women might, in fact, be able to negotiate a place for themselves in the film industry.

Aragón, clearly untroubled by such issues, concludes his article on women and nudity in the cinema by affirming, ‘[y] aquí estamos. En un momento libre para la explotación del desnudo femenino, siempre interesante y atrayente’ (‘[and] here we are. In a moment ripe for the exploitation of the female nude, always interesting and attractive’). In fact in Spain the German documentary did stimulate a cinematographic response entitled *El paraíso recobrado, o El edén de los naturistas* (Paradise Regained, or The Nudists’ Eden, 1935), although it was quickly prohibited along with other works featuring nudists and gangsters for a six-month period by the conservative civil governor of Barcelona (Gubern, *Cine*, 104; Caparrós Lera, *Arte*, 280). Directed by the painter Xavier Güell, the film is of special interest in the context of an analysis of *El gato montés* since it featured Mapy Cortés,

the actress who would later take on the role of Lolilla in Pi's film. Hence, in a playful extratextual reference (which probably would have been appreciated by avid movie fans of the era) Caireles's 'desnudista' comment is directed as much to the flesh-and-blood actress as it is to the fictional Lolilla. In fact, interesting parallels arise between the offscreen Mapy's adventures (as constructed by a brief biography in a film journal of the time) and the onscreen Lolilla's desires. In the typical scenario of star discovery promoted by the film industry and longed for by Lolilla, the Puerto Rican Mapy Cordero won a national beauty contest sponsored by Fox Films and was offered a shot at Hollywood. But her parents objected, and it was not until after marrying a Spanish actor, Fernando Cortés, that she was able to follow in her husband's footsteps and, eventually, take up acting as a career. Thus, while Lolilla views marriage and acting as mutually exclusive, for Cortés, ironically, the former provided the means to pursue the latter. The fictional Lolilla's clear-eyed recognition of the particular demands made of female stars, on the other hand, would seem to be grounded in a familiarity with real-life actresses such as Cortés, whose reputation must have been shaped by her appearances in Güell's film and in a theatrical revue ('*Siluetas femeninas*', 5).¹³

It is clear, then, that the star image of Mapy Cortés, together with her character Lolilla's metacinematic comments and their studied visual framing, contribute to the film's complex distancing structure; this structure, in turn, serves to foreground the status of the images onscreen as fictional constructs. A scene between Juanillo and Lolilla is key in this respect. Lolilla is sent off to a neighbouring ranch to telephone a doctor for the dying Soleá. As she hurries along a country road, Juanillo—'El Gato Montés'—rides up and interrogates Lolilla about her mission. Juanillo insists on taking her to the ranch on horseback, and as the bandit sweeps her up onto his mount, Lolilla exclaims, '¡ésta sí que e una película!' ('this is really a film!'). Upon her return, Lolilla remarks excitedly to Caireles, 'ahora sí que vengo de rodá' ('now I've really come from filming'). Lolilla's expressed desire to be in the movies is fulfilled in this scene with Juanillo, which for her is distinguished by an unrealistic excess.

¹³ With the onset of the Civil War, Mapy Cortés left Spain for Latin America; once established in Mexico in the 1940s, she enjoyed a successful career as a film actress, specializing in light comedies.

By marking Juanillo off as ‘larger than life’, Lolilla in effect establishes a separate space within *El gato montés* reserved for ‘purely cinematic’ characters and actions. Although Lolilla herself only briefly occupies this realm, Soleá could be said to inhabit it perpetually throughout the second half of the film as she becomes an intensely charged object of exchange between Juanillo and Rafael. Given this context, it is interesting that while in many traditional Spanish theatrical and cinematic works the parallel servant couples maintain close emotional ties with their masters, in *El gato montés* Lolilla and Soleá never partake in a shared intimacy; indeed, the two women seem to reside in separate worlds. However, Lolilla’s apparent situation outside Soleá’s representational sphere does not, of course, entail her location outside representation, as her ‘nudist’ scene with Caireles makes clear. Along these lines Mary Ann Doane has discussed theoretical and practical reactions to the apparent inescapability of patriarchal systems of signification. In the wake of Mulvey’s thesis (which reveals how shooting a woman with a movie camera could be construed as a ‘terrorist act’) some anti-essentialist film-makers, convinced that there is no pure feminine nature to be discovered ‘underneath’ the dominant discourse, have chosen to simply avoid filming the female body. Doane notes that another less extreme response to the dilemma allows for the inclusion of images of women but insists on enclosing the female body in figurative quotation marks (*Femmes*, 165–6). I would argue that this contemporary strategy is anticipated in *El gato montés* through the deployment of Lolilla, who, in effect, places the representation of bodies of women—Soleá’s and her own—within such quotation marks. Thus although Soleá and Lolilla are both, ineluctably, constructed according to patriarchal blueprints of meaning and visual pleasure, their very demarcation within these discursive systems is exposed and problematized.¹⁴

¹⁴ Several brief clips from *El gato montés* appear in Basilio Martín Patino’s documentary *Canciones para después de una guerra* (Songs for after a War, 1971). This film, which could not be released commercially until after Franco’s death due to censorship problems, is a complex collage of fiction and documentary footage, newspaper clippings and photographs, frequently juxtaposed in double exposure, and overlaid with an ironizing soundtrack of popular songs of the postwar years. Several fragments from Pi’s film are woven into a section of the documentary featuring material on the atomic bomb explosions that ended the Second World War. The scene in which the drunken Antonio insults Soleá, tossing a glass of wine in her

El gato montés opened to enthusiastic reviews in March 1936, and Pi was hailed as a new directorial talent of great promise. One critic, for example, asserted that Pi's work surpassed that of more experienced film-makers (F.), while another, seeming to confirm María Luz Morales's assertions concerning the importance of women directors to the future of the Spanish film industry, concluded that Pi was 'una gran esperanza del cine nacional' ('a great hope for the national cinema') (Don Yo Doble). But Caparrós Lera remarks that despite Pi's notable achievements the film failed to ignite at the box office. He attributes this lukewarm reception to the picture's unhappy ending; in a period of increasing upheaval, the Spanish viewing public preferred the cheerful finales served up by Hollywood as well as by the majority of local productions (*Arte*, 128).

Rosario Pi's second and final film as a director was *Molinos de viento* (Windmills, 1937), which, like so much material of the era, is now lost. Once again a *zarzuela*—this time by Pablo Luna and Luis Pascual Frutos—served as her source text. The selection, however, is somewhat unusual since the work is set, not in Spain, but in Holland. The plot centres on the tensions arising between the men and women of a coastal village when a shipload of amorous sailors arrives; a love triangle emerges between the spokesman for the male villagers, the representative of the rebellious women, and the captain of the ship. Pi's crew constructed a miniature Dutch village in central Barcelona, and one month was spent filming aboard a famous vessel, the *Juan Sebastián Elcano*, which was docked in the city's port (Foriscot).

face, and is then stabbed to death by Juanillo, is immediately followed by textbook engravings illustrating the loss of control and destruction of family life occasioned by alcoholism. Shortly after, the climactic scene in which Juanillo asks Pesuño to shoot him follows directly upon newspaper clippings reporting the hara-kiri of the Japanese War Minister, as well as an incident of hara-kiri in Spain. Later on, a scene of the gypsy children chasing after a bus and begging for coins is inserted into a section focused on Lola Flores and flamenco. While in general Patino's film works to reveal the darker aspects of national life hidden or repressed by Francoist discourse and thus expose 'mechanisms of power' (Hopewell, *Out of the Past*, 126–7), these particular segments seem to tap into several of the work's ongoing motifs, including the negative consequences of escapism and the falseness of clichéd notions of 'racial' and regional identity. It is important to note, however, that by failing to distinguish between material dating from the Second Republic (such as *El gato montés*) and material produced under Francoism, Patino's filmic appropriation may actually work to elide significant textual and contextual differences.

Shot in the middle of the Civil War, Pi's film helped fuel a polemic among the different left-wing groups allied under the Republican banner. Communist Party critics felt that, during wartime, the cinema, along with all the arts, should serve propagandistic ends, and any work not complying with that vision was condemned. But those affiliated with the anarcho-sindicalist National Confederation of Labour (CNT) praised efforts to keep the film industry going and maintain workers on a payroll during the war (Sala Noguer, 35–6). Although probably not exactly what the CNT's film critics had in mind, María Mercader, the lead actress in *Molinos de viento*, recalls nothing of the experience other than her excitement at earning the new bank bills printed by the Republican government, at a time when her father lay dying in a hospital and her monarchist family's assets had been frozen (Mercader, 15). At any rate, it is notable that once again Pi had personally struggled to maintain continuity in the Spanish film industry in a time of crisis.

After six months of shooting in war-torn Barcelona, and after post-production work in Paris, *Molinos de viento* was finally finished. But the film was never shown in Republican Spain, and only enjoyed a brief run on national screens after the end of the war in the spring of 1939. Surprisingly, the film also premiered in New York, where it was poorly received by one reviewer, who, clearly unaware of—or perhaps simply unmoved by—the film's precarious wartime production, dismissed it as 'almost in the primitive class' (*Molinos*).

Pi spent a brief period in Paris before moving on to Rome, where she would ride out the remainder of the war and a good number of the postwar years as well. According to Emilio Foriscot, an assistant cinematographer on *Molinos de viento* and the husband of Pi's niece, Pi undertook translations and dubbing projects in Italy, and also ran a club frequented by exiled Spaniards. Foriscot, along with other sources, also mentions Pi's relationship with María Mercader and the latter's future husband, Vittorio De Sica, maintaining that Pi helped De Sica seek out financing in Spain, or that she worked on production in his early films (Foriscot; Mariscal, 'Rosario Pi'). Mercader, whose memoirs are at times oddly sketchy (for example, she fails to mention that Pi directed *Molinos de viento*), does recount an interesting anecdote concerning the Spanish director. While in exile in Paris, Mercader received an offer to make a film in Italy,

but she was also being courted by Fox. Pi, whom Mercader refers to as a film agent, attempted to convince her to accept the Hollywood contract. But Mercader was shocked by the request of Fox's French office that she show her legs: 'Hoy resulta difícil imaginar lo brutal que tenía que sonar para una muchacha como yo, en 1939, la invitación a levantarse la falda' ('Today it's difficult to imagine how brutal the invitation to lift my skirt must have sounded to a girl like me, in 1939'; p. 24). Mercader's experiences with Fox only confirmed the authenticity of Lolilla's recognition of 'Hollywood' misogyny in *El gato montés*; Mercader, however, was better positioned than Pi's fictional maid would have been to successfully negotiate the wider waters of the international film industry. In fact, Mercader claims that, as soon as she signed on with the Italians, she convinced Pi herself to follow her to Rome (23-4).

After her extended stay in Rome, Pi later returned to Spain, working first for the fashion and film costume designer Marbel in Madrid and then as a restaurateur before her death in the late 1960s. In a curious twist of fate, while at Marbel Pi helped to dress the popular actress who would next take on the female director's mantle in Spain, Ana Mariscal. Pi's own efforts at returning to film-making in Francoist Spain, though, were perpetually thwarted; she was never able to secure financing for a new project (Foriscot). In the Republican era, Rosario Pi had managed to earn a solid reputation as a new force in Spanish cinema, but after *Molinos de viento* her attempts to participate in a radically different national film industry would be reduced, sadly, to a quixotic tilting at windmills.