

Introduction: approaching performance in Spanish film

Dean Allbritton, Alejandro Melero and Tom Whittaker

The importance of screen acting has often been overlooked in studies on Spanish film. While several critical works on Spanish cinema have centred on the cultural, social and industrial significance of stars, there has been relatively little critical scholarship on what stars are paid to do: act. This is perhaps surprising, given the central role that acting occupies within a film. In his essay 'Why Study Film Acting?', Paul McDonald argues that acting is not only crucial to understanding the affective charge of movies, but integral to the study of film as a whole (2004: 40). Yet, despite its significance, performance remains one of the most elusive and difficult aspects of film analysis. One of the reasons for this, according to Pamela Robertson Wojcik, is its apparent transparency (2004: 1). A 'good' actor supposedly renders their performance 'invisible', thereby concealing the process of acting from the audience, and engaging us within the emotional universe of the character. To this effect, discussion on acting is all too frequently evaluative: we think in terms of how convincing or naturalistic a given performance is, or are invited to appreciate the actorly skills and techniques that are brought to bear on the film.

Yet, when it comes to writing about performance academically, it can prove altogether more challenging. It requires us to single out and momentarily freeze the flow of specific moments of performance within a film, and to break them down to their tiniest details. We need to pay attention to what Paul McDonald has called the 'micromeanings of the voice and body' (2004: 40), intricately drawing out the ways in which gesture, body, facial expression and vocal delivery work together to create meaning. From the clench of a fist to the faintest curl of a lip, we should be attuned to the repetition and rhythm of the most minute and subtle of gestures. The orchestration of all of these signs – which, crucially, are both visual and aural – not only help the actor to construct their character, but enable us to glean a greater understanding of cinematic practices and politics of Spanish film. Analysing the fine grain of performance enables us to connect the micro to the macro, alerting us

to the broader industrial, technological and social-historical contexts in which it is produced.

Breaking a performance down into its constituent parts (or 'micromeanings', to once again follow McDonald) firstly reveals that screen acting cannot be studied in isolation. That is, an actor's performance cannot be examined without considering its interaction with the other formal components of film, such as cinematography (camerawork and framing), editing and sound design. These factors frequently serve to emphasise a performance within a given film, as much as they can work together to delimit its expressivity and stymie its flow. For instance, on the one hand, the energetic and fluid style of acting in the *sainete*-inflected comedies of Berlanga and Ferreri were made possible through protracted long takes and post-synch sound. Compare this, on the other hand, to the performance of Javier Bardem in *Mar adentro/The Sea Inside* (Alejandro Amenábar, 2004) which, through the frequent use of static camera and the closeup, is more finely modulated and minimalist in both gesture and tone. These examples serve to demonstrate that screen acting is always mediated to one degree or another. This process of mediation, moreover, further leads us to challenge an actor's agency or authorship within a given film. To what extent is the final performance determined by the actor, or the filmic apparatus which records her or him? Looking at screen performance from this perspective thus casts a critical light on the broader industrial and technological contexts in which it is produced.

Yet screen acting is of course far more than a passive component of *mise-en-scène* or montage. After all, a performance is vividly brought to life by an actor, whose skill and craftsmanship are most often products of lengthy rehearsals and years of intensive training. An analysis of acting, therefore, also needs to take account of the importance of the actor's labour and craft, and the subsequent lengths to which an actor goes to improve their acting skills. Many of these empirical details draw our attention away from the textual analysis of a given scene or sequence, to a consideration of the pre-production stages of a film. These can often reveal the gruelling regimes and punishing processes of bodily transformation that actors sometimes undertake in order to carry out specific roles. This perhaps found one of its most drastic expressions in Christian Bale's performance in the Spanish-produced film *The Machinist* (Brad Anderson, 2004). The actor famously lost 27 kilograms for the role of Trevor Reznik, a machinist whose insomnia has led to his becoming emaciated.

An exploration of an actor's technique can often lead us back several years to their initial entry into acting school, and the acting methods they were subsequently taught. Several acting techniques taught within

Spain have been influenced and shaped by international practices and methods. According to Elly Konijn (2005: 63), contemporary scholars of performance studies tend to agree that there are three key approaches to acting: Method acting, the detachment approach and the self-expressive approach. If, as Konijn suggests, each of these acting techniques have occupied a prominent place in most Western film industries, then the history of Spanish cinema similarly bears this out. While the Method – a school of acting which draws on the teachings of Stanislavski, and was later modified by the likes of Lee Strasberg and Stella Adler in the US in the 1940s and 1950s – is most famously associated with Hollywood cinema, its influence has also been felt within Spanish cinema. Indeed, several of its techniques were also synthesised and developed by William Layton, an American director and actor who was largely responsible for bringing the Method to Spain. In founding the Teatro Estudio de Madrid in 1960 and the Teatro Experimental Independiente in 1968, Layton trained a generation of Spanish actors, which includes Ana Belén and Julieta Serrano. The subsequent arrivals of the Argentine teachers Cristina Rota in the late 1970s and Juan Carlos Corazza in 1990 further led to the creation of two very influential acting schools in Spain. The Escuela de Interpretación de Cristina Rota trained several contemporary Spanish actors, such as Penélope Cruz (who has also studied with Corazza) and Fernando Tejero. For his part, Corazza has famously coached Javier Bardem for his roles in *Mar adentro* and *Biutiful*, as well as other prominent actors such as Raúl Arévalo and Jordi Mollá. Like the work of William Layton, Corazza and Rota are similarly influenced by Stanislavski, and they encourage their students to find the emotional truth of their performances through improvisatory techniques.

By way of contrast, the detachment approach refuses to follow the Method's belief that one needs to experience an emotion in order to perform it. Quite on the contrary, it proposes that 'the emotionally detached actor [is] more capable of arousing intense emotional effects on the spectator via a reflection on the character and on situational demands' (Konijn, 2005: 63). The detachment approach had a particular presence in Spanish acting in the years of the Transition to democracy (1975–82), in the works of very influential stage and screen actors such as José Luis Gómez, Juan Diego, Fernando Guillén and Rafael Álvarez 'El Brujo'. These actors worked with others who came from different schools, first on the stage and later in films of noted directors such as Eloy de la Iglesia (for instance, José Luis Gómez's performance in *La estanquera de Vallecas*, 1987) and Carlos Saura (Juan Diego in *La noche oscura/The Dark Night*, 1989).

The self-expressive approach, the final technique, encompasses a variety of styles developed by different schools which are interested in the

actor's self-expression, and which argue that the actor should present his or her most authentic self. Peter Brook, for instance, the British theatre director whose work is inspired by the experimental theatre of Antonin Artaud and Jerzy Grotowski, is perhaps the most influential proponent of this approach. In Spain, evidence of the self-expressive approach has shaped acting schools such as Teatro de La Abadía, in Madrid, which is directed by José Luis Gómez. The legacy of Sanford Meisner (1905–97) is of extreme relevance to this third stream. Meisner was originally exposed to the techniques of Method Acting, but he disagreed (as Stanislavski himself would eventually do) with the use of affective memory, that is, actors searching for emotions in their own memories. The influence of Meisner's techniques is particularly significant for contemporary actors. In Madrid, schools such as La Compañía de Cine have been teaching the Meisner method since the 1990s.

While international methods have dominated much of the teaching of acting in Spain, an older generation of actors also drew on traditions and techniques that are intrinsic to Spanish culture, particularly within the genre of comic performance. Pepe Isbert, Rafaela Aparicio and Gracita Morales, for instance, learned their distinctive modes of physical and vocal performance through the comic theatre. These actors famously drew on the tradition of the *sainete*, a theatrical comic form that centred on farcical situations, everyday locations and large groups of actors. Noticeably expansive and gestural, *sainete* performances were made up of external traits and tics – a style of acting that would appear to be antithetical to the three approaches of acting set out by Konijn. While younger generations of actors are more likely to have been exposed to international methods of performance, the *sainete* still tends to shape several of the acting styles encountered in Spanish comedies. Take, for instance, the 'choral' films of Álex de la Iglesia, whose narratives are structured around large casts of stock characters (Buse, Triana-Toribio and Williams 2007: 127); films like *Ocho apellidos vascos/A Spanish Affair* (Emilio Martínez-Lázaro, 2014), similarly, contain traces of the *sainete* in their use of regional stereotypes and humour vividly conveyed through gesture and voice.

If the study of acting brings into relief performance practices that are specific to a particular nation, it also illuminates the ways in which national or regional identities are in turn performed. Situating an actor's work within a consideration of its broader national and industrial context can bring into play the tension between performance and the performative – that is, the differences or similarities involved in acting for the screen versus the conscious or unconscious repetition of signs that coalesce into an identity. The connections between these concepts are

multiple and far-reaching, hence the easy slide from one into another in much work in Performance and Film Studies. Although by no means the first to write about public performance and identity, Judith Butler's coining of 'performativity' (1990) has perhaps had the most influence in the way both are considered today. For Butler, 'performativity' denotes the ways that gender is performed through a series of culturally recognisable signs and actions; her prime example, although later modified slightly, drew on the (often visual) performance of gender amongst drag queens.

By relating the enactment of gender signs to their very construction, Butler's analysis notably correlated action to creation; in doing so, 'performativity' provided another way to reconceptualise how ideals of identity, race and sexuality are constituted and reified. As such, performance and the performativity of identity have long been linked, shared and viewed together. Analyses of screen performance, to that end, have much to teach about the way we perceive identities, as well as our understanding of the cinematic medium. Javier Bardem, for example, became an iconic symbol of Spanish masculinity with his early roles as the bisexual Jimmy in *Las edades de Lulú/The Ages of Lulu* (Bigas Luna, 1990) or the lusty Raúl in *Jamón, jamón* (Bigas Luna, 1992), and has strengthened his Latin lothario image internationally with films like *Vicky Cristina Barcelona* (Woody Allen, 2008) and *Eat Pray Love* (Ryan Murphy, 2010). Although this image is now debated (even in this volume), Bardem's performance of recognisable and approved signs for Spanishness coalesce into an identity that reifies what it means to act – or, critically, *be* – Spanish.

With the crucial exception of James Naremore's brilliant *Acting in the Cinema* (1988), which centres predominantly on performance in Hollywood in its classical period, specific studies on acting in Film Studies were thin on the ground until relatively recently. Naremore's book introduced several critical terms and interpretative frameworks that would be highly influential to the study of acting. While in everyday life people frequently find themselves 'performing' different roles and facets, theatrical performance for Naremore is distinct in so far as it suggests a 'degree of ostensiveness that marks it off from quotidian behavior' (1988: 17). 'Ostensiveness', then, as a term can be used to analyse the scale of the gestures of a performance – a scale which, as he shows, is largely dependent on its 'mode of address' (that is, the size and context of the people the actor is speaking to). Later anthologies on film performance, such as Alan Lovell and Peter Kramer's *Screen Acting* (1999) and Pamela Robertson Wojcik's *Movie Acting: The Film Reader* (2004), have explored screen acting across a more eclectic corpus of films. The anthology *More Than a Method: Trends and*

Traditions in Contemporary Film Performance (Cynthia Baron, Diane Carson and Frank Tomasulo, 2004), which mainly focuses on American cinema, also considers British, French and Cuban practices of acting, while *Reframing Screen Performance* (Cynthia Baron and Sharon Marie Carnicke, 2008) innovatively draws on theatre theory to illuminate acting techniques in film. More recent still is Aaron Taylor's edited collection *Theorizing Film Acting* (2012) and Donna Peberdy's monograph *Masculinity and Film Performance: Male Angst in Contemporary American Cinema* (2011). In addition to these anthologies are textbooks such as Andrew Klevan's *Film Performance: From Achievement to Appreciation* (2005) and Martin Shingler's *Star Studies: A Critical Guide* (2012), which also contains a highly useful overview to the field of performance.

While literature on screen acting has clearly gathered apace since the new millennium, the vast majority of this scholarship has focused squarely on American cinema. In contrast, screen acting in non-Anglophone film industries has received significantly far less attention. Analyses of star performances have been incorporated into monographs on European stardom, such as Guy Austin's *Stars in Modern French Film* (2003), Ginette Vincendeau's *Stars and Stardom in French Cinema* (2000) and Catherine O'Rawe's *Stars and Masculinities in Contemporary Italian Cinema* (2014). Recent anthologies also centre on star performances within global and transnational contexts, such as Andrea Bandhauer's and Michelle Royer's *Stars in World Cinema: Screen Icons and Star Systems Across Cultures* (2015) and Russell Meeuf's and Raphael Raphael's *Transnational Stardom: International Celebrity in Film and Popular Culture* (2013). The focus in these books, however, is more on performers rather than performance *per se*, and to our knowledge there has yet to be a book that addresses screen performance within its specific national context.

In Spain, one of the earlier examples of literature on screen acting is Mainou Pla's *La interpretación cinematográfica: Ensayo sobre su fundamento y su técnica*, first published in 1956. This volume was possibly the first theoretical approach to the techniques of acting in front of the camera, as well as an early attempt to import into Spain perspectives from international cinemas. It also shows how, for decades, the literature of acting was extremely dependent upon the theory of theatre performance. One of the consequences of the scarcity of literature about acting was that the few books that existed had relatively long lives and reached different generations. An example of this is Luis Arana's *El actor: Bosquejo de una sociología del comediante* (1966), which had several editions and was, for decades, one of the few manuals that practitioners, actors and

fans of actors alike were able to get hold of. In contrast, the 1990s saw the publication of several new acting manuals such as Assumpta Serna's *El trabajo del actor de cine* (1999), as well as the translation of a range of texts on performance, such as Iain Mackintosh's *Architecture, Actor and Audience* (1993), which was published in Spain in 2000 as *La arquitectura, el actor y el público*. Another relevant example is David Mamet's *True and False: Heresy and Common Sense for the Actor* (1997), published in Spain in 1999 as *Verdadero y falso: herejía y sentido común para el actor*.

Anglophone studies of Spanish film have frequently addressed figurative performance of identity – with several seminal studies subsequently concerned with the ‘performance’ of nation, region or gender – at the expense of deep analyses of film acting. Notable exceptions here include Isabel Santaolalla's *The cinema of Iciar Bollain* (2012), in which the author provides an invaluable account of both Bollain's directorial and acting career, and Chris Perriam's incisive chapter on the performance of Penélope Cruz and Javier Bardem in *Vicky Cristina Barcelona* (2013). Studies on Spanish stardom have similarly provided useful discussion of actors' techniques: Chris Perriam's *Stars and Masculinities in Spanish Cinema: From Banderas to Bardem* (2003) combines a precise study of acting with the theoretical paradigms of Star Studies, as well as research into masculinities and body representations; Ann Davies's eponymously titled book on Penélope Cruz (2014); Duncan Wheeler's chapter ‘Acting and Directing in Spain: Historicising Stardom and the Author-Function’ (2014) and Rebecca Naughten's article ‘Subtle Gestures and Tonsorial Distractions: Javier Bardem as a Travelling Performer’ (2014).

About this book

Bringing together a range of scholars that attend carefully to the performances, acting styles and historical influences of Spanish film, this book seeks to place the process of acting centre stage. The chapters that follow look closely at the ‘micromeanings’ and gestures of Spanish film acting, offering broad-ranging and probing analyses of individual performances and acting styles from the silent period to the present day. Comprising fifteen original chapters by scholars from the United States, the United Kingdom and Spain, this book casts light on the manifold meanings, methods and influences of Spanish screen performance. In each of the chapters, acting serves as a powerful site of meaning through which broader questions around Spanish film practices, culture and society can be explored. The chapters here situate the development of Spanish screen acting in both its national and global contexts, tracing acting techniques

that are largely indigenous to Spain, as well as unpicking the ways in which Spanish performance has frequently been shaped by international influences and forces.

In Chapter 1, 'Acting for the camera in Spanish film magazines of the 1920s and 1930s', Eva Woods Peiró locates specific instances in which writers, directors and actors of the 1920s referenced the actual object of the camera in relationship to film acting and performance. She further shows how, contrary to how Spaniards have been represented or have portrayed themselves throughout history, the phenomenology of technological mediation – here, acting – is deeply embedded in Spanish filmic culture. This chapter includes extensive archival work in order to analyse how Spanish critics of silent film regularly theorised on complex ideas concerning the need for actors to physically and psychologically adjust their performances to the requirements of the camera medium, the fragmentation and monotonisation of acting, and ultimately its commoditisation. Woods Peiró's study persuasively documents the ways in which the camera influenced acting styles and performances, and how the consciousness of cinemagoers participated in the policing, self-policing and racialisation of subjects as readers of film magazines.

Chapter 2, Sarah Wright's 'Performance and gesture as crisis in *La aldea maldita/The Cursed Village* (Florián Rey, 1930)', examines the significance of gestures and sonorisation and the politics behind these in order to understand the relationships between body, cinema and ideology. Through a close analysis of the 1930 version of *La aldea maldita*, Wright reflects on the influences ushered in by Spain's embrace of modernity. Touted as 'Spain's last silent film', as well as its 'most important' one, *La aldea maldita* presents a harsh, minimalist beauty that has long been praised by audiences and critics. The acting style is influenced not just by trends of the time but also by the film's relationship to sound: according to Wright, after the disastrous experience with the sonorisation of a previous film, Rey decided to film *La aldea maldita* as if it were silent, when in fact the first showing of the film included sound. Wright studies the performance in the version of this film, questioning the sense of anachrony that now pervades them and reflecting on attitudes to aesthetics, acting and the cinematic medium itself.

In Chapter 3, 'Exaggeration and nation: the politics of performance in the Spanish sophisticated comedy of the 1940s', Stuart Green explores the acting styles of the decade that followed. In analysing the so-called sophisticated comedies of early Francoism, Green examines how discourses of nation in the post-war decade determined the study of the performance of their stars and supporting actors. He explores the performance style of both supporting actors, which he sometimes considers

to be exaggerated, and romantic leads, which, as Green demonstrates, is largely influenced by the theatre. The problematic combination of these two acting styles, Green argues, is fundamental to understanding the commercial success of the sophisticated comedies of the post-war period. The author analyses in detail the work of prominent actors such as Rafael Durán or Guadalupe Muñoz Sampedro, in order to problematise Susan Hayward's idea that 'gestural codes are deeply rooted in a nation's culture'. Green ultimately shows that it is more appropriate to talk about general performance paradigms rather than national models. If the acting styles of exaggerated secondary characters and theatrical romantic leads are more prominent in Spanish films of the time, it is because of the persistence of a paradigm that transcended the theatre and was appropriated by the cinema.

Chapter 4, 'The voice of comedy: Gracita Morales' by Kathleen Vernon, participates in recent scholarship on Spanish cinema which revalorises the comic performances and personas of a number of well-known actors. Vernon analyses the typification and standardisation of the voice in Spanish cinema, which she argues is the result of a long history of film dubbing, with its strict codification of vocal types according to gender and role. This practice has resulted in a series of unwritten rules and expectations that continue to shape and restrict the kinds of voices that Spanish audiences hear on screen. Under these norms, while non-standard voices may be permitted and are even cultivated for comic and character parts, leading roles continue to demand what Vernon calls the 'phonogenic' expression of unproblematically feminine and masculine identities. With her unmistakable, high-pitched voice, Gracita Morales was inevitably slotted into supporting roles, her childlike affect and lack of verbal inhibition put to classic comic ends as weapons used to skewer the pretensions of a would-be upwardly mobile and modernising middle class. Despite being categorised in this manner, Vernon argues, Gracita Morales become an example of what Kathleen Rowe calls 'unruly women', female comics who by talking back and laughing loudly claim their right to a traditionally male privilege, thereby challenging the notion of comedy as a male-dominated genre.

Tom Whittaker also addresses the importance of sound and the voice in acting in Chapter 5, 'The sounds of José Luis López Vázquez: vocal performance, gesture technology', exploring the transition from post-synch to direct sound in Spanish cinema through a particular emphasis on José Luis López Vázquez's voice. This chapter shows the ways in which sound design marked a shift in register from a gestural and presentational acting style to a more Stanislavskian mode of performance that stressed interiority and the unspoken. Whittaker argues that direct

sound shaped and transformed Spanish performance, reconfiguring the relationship between body and space in cinema. His analysis of López Vázquez's vocal performance thus casts a light on the limits between the embodiment and disembodiment of performance and sound, as well as providing a means of tracing the emerging acting styles of the 1970s. The presence (and absence) of his voice in his performances, and how these were determined by the synchronisation of sound in post-production, provide a valuable opportunity to understand how technology and acting are linked in complex ways.

In Chapter 6, 'The influence of Argentinian acting schools in Spain from the 1980s', Carmen Ciller analyses the legacy of Argentinian performers and acting schools in contemporary Spanish cinema. Ciller begins by studying how different waves of migration between Spain and Argentina resulted in rich collaborations, both in terms of industry and familial bonds (which favoured the appearance and continuation of families of actors such as the Alterios and Diosdados). The arrival of these Argentinian actors and actresses during the Transition to democracy contributed to the disappearance of traditional acting styles in Spanish cinema and promoted innovative modes and methods of performance. Thus, for Ciller, the generation led by Cecilia Roth provided Spanish cinema with new ways to represent the body and perform femininity and sexual freedom, in films as influential as Iván Zulueta's *Arrebatado/Rapture* (1979). Ciller concludes with a discussion on how the proliferation of Argentinian schools of acting, such as those of Cristina Rota and Juan Carlos Corazza, has contributed greatly to the success of recent generations of actors such as Penélope Cruz and Javier Bardem.

In Chapter 7, 'Askance, athwart, aside: the queer plays of actors, *auteurs* and machines', Brad Epps sharply juxtaposes the Spanish 'comedia de mariquitas' ['poofter comedy'] *No desearás al vecino de quinto* (Ramón Fernández, 1970) with the Argentine film *La niña santa* (Lucrecia Martel, 2004). By dissecting Alfredo Landa's performance in *No desearás al vecino de quinto*, Epps studies how the actor's on- and off-screen persona as modern-day everyman, and his flamboyant character, highlight the split between actor and his craft; this performance, for Epps, also brings to the fore a queer performance of identity that dovetails with the 'queer sensibility' of Martel's directorial hand. While insisting on the multiple positions available to queerness, particularly in two films that seem to teeter on its edge, this chapter questions what it can mean to perform humanity through utterances, gestures and glances, through objects, positions and gestures.

In Chapter 8, 'The future of nostalgia: revindicating Spanish actors and acting in and through *Cine de barrio*', Duncan Wheeler considers

the impact of the television programme *Cine de barrio* on popular discourses surrounding national film and performance styles. First airing in 1995, *Cine de barrio* pairs the viewing of a classic national film (generally made sometime between 1950 and the late 1970s, after the death of Spanish dictator Francisco Franco) with a talk-show segment between a host and an invited guest. By linking discourses on cultural and historical memory with the subsequent revival of classic national cinema brought about by *Cine de barrio*, Wheeler explores the relationship between actors, their films and their audiences; the affective response produced in this encounter, he argues, generates a nostalgia for classic national cinema that also influences contemporary Spanish film. As Wheeler demonstrates the links between the seemingly disparate films of the 1970s and the comedic box office blowouts of the 2010s, he argues for a sustained reflection on nostalgia, memory and their connections to acting and performance.

In Chapter 9, 'Performing the nation: mannerism and mourning in Spanish heritage cinema', Sally Faulkner explores performance and identity in what she terms 'Spanish heritage films', a type of national cinema that operates from within intermedial, intertextual and transnational networks. Faulkner discusses the particular cases of *El perro del hortelano/The Dog in the Manger* (Pilar Miró, 1997) and *Alatriste/Captain Alatriste: The Spanish Musketeer* (Agustín Díaz Yanes, 2006), describing their domestic popularity and international failure. These successes and failures, for Faulkner, ultimately produce a national cultural discourse that (despite the adoption of foreign cinematic aesthetics) fails to be legible to foreign audiences familiar with those very aesthetics. In studying the foreign-influenced performance style of the actors of these two films, Faulkner deftly tracks their attempts to reach local and foreign audiences. The history of these particular acting styles – and in spite of the transnational aesthetics that guide these films – are haunted, Faulkner argues, by earlier performances and roles that ultimately provide a national opportunity for Spanish audiences to experience history, cinema and mourning.

Chapter 10, Alejandro Melero's 'Performing sex in Spanish erotic films of the 1980s', considers the importance of acting and performance in the 'S'-rated sex films that peppered the late 1970s and 1980s in Spain. In this chapter, Melero explores the question of what precisely constitutes 'performance' in films which showcase 'real' sex between its actors; that is, if a lead actor has an erection in a scene, how much of his physical response might be considered acting? Focusing on one film in particular, *Con las bragas en la mano/Panties in the Hands* (Julio Pérez Tabernero, 1981), he argues that the lines between eroticism, pornography and

cinema were blurred by the explosion of sex films in Spain at this time. Finally, and turning to the career of the film's lead actor, Emilio Linder, Melero discusses the attempts to legitimise these films and the performances they contain, and whether or not they may have a space in Spanish cinematic history.

Chapter 11, 'Becoming Mario: performance and persona adaptation in Mario Casas's career' by Alberto Mira, looks at the body of work of one of Spain's most ubiquitous young stars. Analysing Casas's on- and off-screen performances of masculinity and the role that his star persona plays in his filmography, Mira argues that the actor's career has revolved around his carefully sculpted physique and behaviour – and that Casas is indicative of a new generation of young male stars in Spain. As 'The Great Hope of Spanish Cinema', therefore, Casas comes to represent a shift in public perceptions of manhood and is evocative of a new type of manufactured, cinematic masculinity. With ties to the work of Susan Bordo and Richard Dyer, this chapter underscores the importance of physicality to Casas's performance of masculinity, as made evident in his iconic roles in films such as *Tres metros sobre el cielo/Three Steps Above Heaven* (Fernando González Molina, 2010) and *Tengo ganas de ti/I Want You* (Fernando González Molina, 2012).

From a body in its theoretically perfect prime, we turn to those bodies that are seen to be outside the realm of the desirable in Chapter 12, 'Performing fatness: oversized male bodies in recent Spanish cinema' by Santiago Fouz-Hernández. This chapter looks at three actors who have gained weight for roles – Javier Bardem, Santiago Segura and Antonio de la Torre – in order to discuss the role of fatness and fat masculinities in their performances. The substantial weight gain of each actor in all three films, for Fouz-Hernández, becomes a metric for understanding the way that their bodies are represented, filmed and discussed. Like Melero, Fouz-Hernández questions the limits of performance and acting, particularly when the body one inhabits is so drastically altered for a role. These physical alterations between the actors' general appearance and their personal appearances, in turn, negatively mark the masculinity of their characters, Fouz-Hernández argues.

In Chapter 13, 'Disabling Bardem's body: the performance of disability and illness', Dean Allbritton questions what it means to 'perform' sickness and disability, and in particular, how common perceptions of the two may be revealed in their cinematic reiteration. Analysing the Corazza-trained Javier Bardem as emblematic of a whole branch of Spanish acting expertise, Allbritton discusses the appearance of disability and illness in *Mar adentro/The Sea Inside* (Alejandro Amenábar, 2004) and *Biutiful* (Alejandro González Iñárritu, 2010). Rather than

assume that illness and disability are already understood phenomena, Allbritton instead argues that their threat is kept at bay, that the performance of the two serves to reify the importance of the healthy body. Bardem, for this reason, is emblematic, as his physicality has long been praised and admired in Spanish cinema. For that reason, Allbritton concludes, acting choices, cinematic styles and the artificiality imposed by the camera keep illness and disability at arm's length, constantly eluding audiences and actors alike.

In Chapter 14, 'Body doubles: the performance of Basqueness by Carmelo Gómez and Silvia Munt', Rob Stone examines the reconstruction of regional and national identities through acting. In this chapter, Stone dissects the performances of Gómez and Munt, two actors made famous for their multiple and iconic Basque roles. By closely examining their performances, Stone argues that the actors' false identities articulate a Basqueness that is at once desirable and desiring, seeded with unattainability; that is, the creation of Basque archetypes by non-Basque actors may ultimately render nonexistent whatever potential promise or threat they contain. Going against the presumption that an actor may be able to breach the gap between his or her personal identity and that of the character, Stone argues instead that their performances will always be inauthentic, that audiences assume this fact and that this shades cinematic acting in very important ways.

In the final chapter of the book, '*Los amantes pasajeros/I'm So Excited!* (2013): "performing" *la crisis*', María M. Delgado brings us to the present moment in Spain, and in particular the economic crisis which began in 2008 that provides the backdrop to Almodóvar's film. Describing the shift of director Pedro Almodóvar from melodrama to drawing-room farce made evident in this film, Delgado highlights its theatricality; in so doing, she argues that *Los amantes pasajeros* owes much to broad traditions of theatre acting that range from vaudeville, to mime to classic Shakespearian. The language of theatrical acting that the film employs, to that end, incorporates gestures and dramatic histrionics in order to make a clear indictment of the current state of Spain in crisis. By making clear the links between the politics of acting and acting out politics, Delgado's account of performance further demonstrates just how nuanced the landscape of Spanish acting can be.

References

- Arana, Luis (1966) *El actor: Bosquejo de una sociología del comediante*, Madrid: Taurus.
- Austin, Guy (2003) *Stars in Modern French Film*, London: Arnold.

- Bandhauer, Andrea and Michelle Royer (2015) *Stars in World Cinema. Screen Icons and Star Systems across Cultures*, London: I. B. Tauris.
- Baron, Cynthia, and Sharon Marie Carnicke (2008) *Reframing Screen Performance*. Ann Arbor: University of Michigan.
- Baron, Cynthia, Diane Carson and Frank P. Tomasulo (eds) (2004) *More than a Method: Trends and Traditions in Contemporary Film Performance*. Detroit: Wayne State University Press.
- Baron, Cynthia and Victoria Lowe (2008) *Reframing Screen Performance*, Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press.
- Buse, P., Triana-Toribio, N. and Willis, A. (2007) *The Cinema of Álex de la Iglesia*, Manchester: Manchester University Press.
- Butler, Judith (1990) *Gender Trouble: Feminism and the Subversion of Identity*, London and New York: Routledge.
- Davies, Ann (2014) *Penélope Cruz*, Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan.
- Klevan, Andrew (2005) *Film Performance: From Achievement to Appreciation*, London: Wallflower.
- Konijn, Elly (2005) 'The Actor's Emotions Reconsidered', in Phillip B. Zarrilli (ed.), *Acting (Re)Considered: A Theoretical and Practical Guide*, London and New York: Routledge, pp. 62–84.
- Lovell, Alan and Peter Krämer (1999) *Screen Acting*, London: Routledge.
- McDonald, Paul (2004) 'Why Study Film Acting?: Some Opening Reflections', in Cynthia Baron, Diane Carson and Frank P. Tomasulo (eds), *More than a Method: Trends and Traditions in Contemporary Film Performance*, Detroit: Wayne State University Press, pp. 23–41.
- Mackintosh, Iain (1993) *Architecture, Actor and Audience*, London: Routledge.
- Mackintosh, Iain (2000) *La arquitectura, el actor y el público*, trans. Ana Elena Ruiz Reyes, Madrid: Arco/Libros.
- Mainou Pla, Roberto (1956) *La interpretación cinematográfica: Ensayo sobre su fundamento y su técnica*, Roberto Ortigas (pseud.), Barcelona: Sala, Mariano Galve.
- Mamet, D. (1997) *True and False. Heresy and Common Sense for the Actor*, New York: Vintage Books.
- Mamet, D. (1999) *Verdadero y falso: Herejía y sentido común para el actor*, trans. Josep Costa, Barcelona: Ediciones del Bronce.
- Meeuf, Russell and Raphael Raphael (2013) *Transnational Stardom: International Celebrity in Film and Popular Culture*, London: Palgrave Macmillan.
- Naremore, James (1998) *Acting in the Cinema*, Berkeley: University of California.
- Naughten, Rebecca (2014) 'Subtle Gestures and Tonsorial Distractions: Javier Bardem as a Travelling Performer', *Cine-Files*, 6, Spring.
- O'Rawe, Catherine (2014) *Stars and Masculinities in Contemporary Italian Cinema*, London: Palgrave Macmillan.

- Peberdy, Donna (2011) *Masculinity and Film Performance: Male Angst in Contemporary American Cinema*, Houndmills, Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan.
- Perriam, Chris (2003) *Stars and Masculinities in Spanish Cinema. From Banderas to Bardem*, Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Perriam, Chris (2013) 'Vicky Cristina Barcelona: Penélope Cruz and Javier Bardem Acting Strangely', in Maria M. Delgado and Robin Fiddian (eds), *Spanish Cinema 1973–2010: Auteurism, Politics, Landscape and Memory*, Manchester: Manchester University Press.
- Santaolalla, Isabel (2012) *The Cinema of Iciar Bollain*, Manchester: Manchester University Press.
- Serna, Assumpta (1999) *El trabajo del actor de cine*, Madrid: Cátedra.
- Shingler, Martin (2012) *Star Studies: A Critical Guide*, London: Palgrave Macmillan
- Taylor, Aaron (2012) *Theorizing Film Acting*, New York: Routledge.
- Vincendeau, Ginette (2000) *Stars and Stardom in French Cinema*. London: Continuum.
- Wheeler, Duncan (2014) 'Acting and Directing in Spain: Historicising Stardom and the Author-Function', in Duncan Wheeler and Fernando Canet (eds), *(Re)viewing Creative, Critical and Commercial Practices in Contemporary Spanish Cinema*, Bristol: Intellect, pp. 273–90.
- Wojcik, Pamela Robertson (2004) *Movie Acting, the Film Reader*, New York: Routledge.