

## RECORDING THE END TIME IN TWENTY-FIRST-CENTURY SPANISH FILM

*Elizabeth Scarlett*

Films dealing with the end of the world, or at least the end of civilization as we know it, are a popular source of entertainment for audiences around the globe. Film industries have answered by continually updating and diversifying their production. The turn of the millennium, interpretations of the Mayan calendar, and growing concerns about climate change, ecological sustainability, terrorism, new pandemics, human population growth, income inequality, resource consumption, and the extinction of other species seem to feed the appetite for such films in the last two decades.<sup>1</sup> Their development also owes much to newly enhanced forms of digital animation for achieving more convincing large-scale catastrophic effects. While universal in appeal, as cultural texts they often manifest questions of national identity that are specific to the communities in which they arise. As Linnie Blake argues, horror film in its reliance upon the uncanny and the abject “is uniquely situated [ . . . ] to expose the terrors underlying everyday national life” (9). Particularly with regard to past trauma associated with national history, Blake asserts that horror tends to unravel the bindings of hegemonic discourse and reopen wounds denied by this discourse, and this may in fact constitute a step in the healing process.<sup>2</sup>

Spanish filmmakers have been at the forefront of the twenty-first-century renewal in end-of-the-world cinema, with films placed at many points along the spectrum of approaches to apocalyptic phenomena. Any film that posits the end of days may be assumed to be traumatic, but there are a few different general approaches to the theme. One broad division is the one between action movies that focus on a violent source of destruction and the accumulation of victims, and others in which interpersonal relationships, reactions, and interactions are primary. Spain is represented in the first category by *28 Weeks Later*, the four-part [*REC*] franchise, and *Los últimos días* (*The Last Days*). In the second group we find *3 días* (*Before the Fall*), *Fin* (*The End*),

**Writing in the End Times: Apocalyptic Imagination in the  
Hispanic World**

*Hispanic Issues On Line* Issue 23 (2019)

and *Los días no vividos* (Days Not Lived). This study will explore apocalyptic constructions that respond to Spanish history and culture in these films and several related ones. Comparisons with the work of non-Spanish filmmakers will be made. Some common currents present themselves: 1) the Catholic religion presented either as source of destruction or as supposed ally that proves ineffective in combatting the evil; 2) invisibility or vilification of immigrant communities that now compose one tenth of the Spanish population, hence, ethnocentrism or xenophobia; 3) polarization of women into objects of desire or of abject repulsion, often in alternation with each other; 4) referencing of certain precursors in the theme, such as Luis Buñuel, Miguel de Unamuno, and Alfred Hitchcock, in addition to twentieth-century entries in the relevant subgenre (zombie, Cold War sci-fi, psychological thriller, supernatural melodrama).<sup>3</sup> Spanish approaches are also marked by their grotesque elements, bleaker outcomes, and confinement/claustrophobia (with the notable exception of *Fin*). Analysis will be limited to non-comedic treatments of the apocalypse (except for the dark humor of [*REC*] 3 and *Las brujas de Zugarramurdi*), since the genre of comedy is primary in such Spanish offerings as *Una de zombis* (Zombie Flick) and *Juan de los muertos* (*Juan of the Dead*) as well as their English-language counterparts *Shaun of the Dead*, *Zombieland*, and *This Is the End*.

Apocalyptic motifs have appeared in Spanish film for many decades, with Buñuel pursuing his obsession with humanity's violent nature to its extreme conclusions in *Simón del desierto* (*Simon of the Desert* 1965). The epilogue fast-forwards to a postmodern disco in which the ascetic early saint and his faithful demon watch couples dance to a post-nuclear twist. Buñuel's end-time penchant was fueled by preoccupation with the Cold War and atomic armament; the finale of his entire oeuvre is an explosion at the conclusion of *Cet obscur objet du désir* (*That Obscure Object of Desire* 1977), implying that civilization itself would fall victim to a destruction created by the frustrated impulses it had tried to repress in all the ways depicted by the director throughout his career. As schlock horror became one of the central genres for the Spanish film industry in the 1960s and 1970s, there was no scarcity of apocalyptic menace in films by Jess Franco and Amando de Ossorio, as well as *¿Quién puede matar a un niño?* (*Who Can Kill a Child?* 1976), in which children turn on the adults who had been their abusers and oppressors, shot in Mallorca by Chicho Ibáñez Serrador.<sup>4</sup> Álex de la Iglesia's *El día de la bestia* (*The Day of the Beast*) is an important transition between the twentieth and twenty-first centuries in end-of-the-world filmmaking in its conflation of scripture, the Final Judgment, and modern media in a way that would become characteristic of Spain's sacred-laden horror films of the following millennium.

Moving ahead to twenty-first-century Spanish cinema, it becomes clear that genre film must be studied alongside auteur film, both as a possible source for future auteurs and as social barometer. The lines have blurred between pop genre and art-house cinema for spectators and critics.<sup>5</sup> The low earnings of many recent films by consecrated contemporary directors, combined with their relatively high budgets and the scarcity of government subsidies, have sent many toward the commercially viable genres, such as low-budget comedy, thrillers, and horror. Besides constituting some of the major Spanish productions of the last two decades, horror films coincide with several of the hypotheses with which I concluded my study of religious themes in Spanish auteur cinema from its beginnings up to 2010. I had postulated that Spanish film makers would persist in implementing embodiment practices and other structures from Roman Catholicism embedded in the Spanish habitus (173). According to Pierre Bourdieu's social practice theory, structures embedded in the habitus are reproduced without the explicit direction of an individual or group. Although the time of Catholicism as the official state religion is long gone, one still finds inflections of this belief system in cultural production. This is apparent in another pop genre in *El capitán Trueno y el Santo Grial* (*Captain Thunder*), directed by Antonio Hernández in 2011 and based on a popular comic by Víctor Mora and the artist Ambrós. Comparing the imagery of this Disney-backed fantasy movie for children with that of similar entertainments like *Star Wars*, *Lord of the Rings*, and *Harry Potter*, the Spanish film incorporates the sacrament of communion and the miraculous qualities of a holy relic, drawing visibly upon the cultural capital of Catholic dogma, while the other franchises mentioned exhibit less specific, archetypal sacred overtones. Catholicism is perpetuated along the cultural grid without institutional inculcation, although a degree of official affiliation persists in the Spanish taxation system and the monarchy.

In horror as well as in auteur cinema, Catholicism in the Spanish habitus often merges with structures of oppression to suggest unresolved issues of the Civil War, the Franco years, the Pact of Silence, and the continued inequalities of historical memory. A paradigm for this is Álex de la Iglesia's *Balada triste de trompeta* (*The Last Circus* 2010), which concludes with a grotesque chase scene at the Valle de los Caídos, using the Nationalist monument in a more problematic way than Alfred Hitchcock's situating of climactic chase scenes at the Statue of Liberty and Mount Rushmore. In 2013, de la Iglesia was the producer for *Musarañas*, (*Shrew's Nest*) the premiere feature directed by Juan Fernando Andrés and Esteban Roel, whose Youtube short satirizing bureaucracy named *036* went viral. The shrews' nest is an apartment in Madrid of the early Franco dictatorship where two sisters live in isolation until an injured young man finds himself trapped within their walls. The older sister is a re-

ligious fanatic intent on repressing the younger one's blossoming sexuality. Borrowing from *Whatever Happened to Baby Jane*, *Misery*, *The Beguiled*, *La casa de Bernarda Alba*, *Amantes*, *La monja*, *El laberinto del fauno*, and *Mar adentro*, *Musarañas* appears symptomatic in a more derivative than original sense of the tendency to conjure an atmosphere of gothic horror with remnants of Spanish National Catholicism. A more original approach to horror may be in order, and the Australian film *The Babadook* from the same year demonstrates how this is still possible.

Comparison to related films from non-Spanish directors and other national cinemas throws into relief the persistence of Catholicism. Since it is placed near the juncture of the new millennium, the zombie duo composed of *28 Days Later* by British director Danny Boyle (2002) and *28 Weeks Later* by Spanish director Juan Carlos Fresnadillo (2007) is emblematic. Still photos are key in apocalyptic/zombie movies for referencing pre-post-human times. In this case, Fresnadillo has the camera focus on a First Holy Communion photo to show the innocence of a family's children; they will wind up destroying the precarious safe zone that protects them in the United Kingdom, and the final frames will be from a subjective zombie angle recording their own marauding predations in Continental Europe. The *cine con niño* (child star vehicle) that was a staple of the Franco era blends perfectly with the zombie genre to create a dramatic fall from innocence and rite of passage, not into adulthood but into an undead existence. Boyle's original entry had opened with animal rights activists unleashing the rage virus in a laboratory with chimpanzee subjects, and quickly moved to a church with apocalyptic graffiti ("Repent: the End is extremely fucking nigh") where a clergyman is one of the first to attack. The powerlessness of all ideology, whether traditional or New Age, in halting the spread of aggression is quickly established, and sacred music plays over some of the footage of the after-effects throughout. Boyle had intended to end *28 Days Later* with two rather than three survivors from among the main characters being rescued, but contrary reactions from trial audiences caused him to reshoot the conclusion so that the male hero would be saved as well. In Fresnadillo's sequel, on the other hand, there is no hope for any of the main characters; all are victims, though he grants subjectivity to the child zombies in the final camera angle. This does set the tone for the Spanish apocalyptic genre in general; it tends to be even more pessimistic than its contemporaries, and to kill off its victims more grotesquely.

*28 Weeks Later* makes an exception to the death drive of its rage virus in the magic of the mother-child bond, a theme that is replayed in J.A. Bayona's *The Impossible (Lo imposible)*. Although in the final analysis it is a survival story, this disaster flick features apocalyptic destruction wrought by the 2004 Indian Ocean tsunami that ties in with the more broadly dystopian visions of

the former film. When the boy in *28 Weeks Later* finds his infected mother, she is able to restrain herself miraculously from biting him; the suspenseful moment elongates as she hugs him tighter until he complains of discomfort. She is the only character able to control the murderous urge created by the viral infection, and she keeps it up while in quarantine in the hope of reuniting with her children. The children's father, who had run off and abandoned her to assailants in the first place, gives in to sensual desire when he finds her bound to her bed in quarantine, and the saliva exchanged in their kiss infects him. He shows no restraint as he then brutally murders her and takes off after any victims he can find, including his own children. The immunity to aggression based on maternal love may be seen as a link to the Madonna and child dyad of Catholicism, and its reverence for the Holy Mother. As benign as she is toward her children, the mother is still an unwitting femme fatale who inflicts contagion on her male partner when he is tempted by her beauty. Carrier status, or partial contagion, is represented in Fresnadillo's film by a vividly bloodshot eye, something the adult male protagonist should have noticed.<sup>6</sup> The sanctity of the mother-child dyad is echoed as well in *The Impossible*, which constructs its miraculous survival theme around the search of a boy for his mother, and the mutual love that enables them to endure together. *The Impossible* may be seen as an apocalyptic movie from a different point of view, focusing on an unlikely survival enabled by the magic of the mother-child pairing.

The [*•REC*] series (2007–2014) has notably conflated the Spanish religious heritage with the apocalypse.<sup>7</sup> Infectees in both [*•REC*] and *28 Weeks Later* exhibit the twenty-first-century preference for faster and more agile zombies, which adds to their entertainment value and their ability to translate the high-speed stresses on human life in the globalized and digital age.<sup>8</sup> The first, second, and third installments of this four-part franchise partake of the Hollywood tradition from the 1970s of religious-themed horror found in *The Exorcist* and *The Omen*.<sup>9</sup> The seed for this is planted in the first [*•REC*] movie, with the origin of a zombie plague pinpointed in a possessed Portuguese girl surnamed Medeiros. Vanishing while the Vatican investigated her for possession, she was taken to a top-floor apartment in the Eixample neighborhood of Barcelona. Religious knowledge proves useful for detecting and explaining evil and destruction. However, unlike their Hollywood predecessors (and even Álex de la Iglesia's parody of them, *El día de la bestia* from 1995), the [*•REC*] movies do not place hope in religion for eradicating the evil or protecting humanity. [*•REC*] 3: *Génesis* engages religion more directly than the fourth and final [*REC*], which is subtitled *Apocalipsis*.

Jaume Balagueró and Paco Plaza's [*•REC*] starts with a duo of reporter (Ángela Vidal) and cameraman (Pablo, named for the film's cinematographer

Pablo Rosso, who presumably holds the camera throughout) ready to follow a crew of firefighters to the first call of the night on a late-night reality show/documentary called *Mientras usted duerme* (*While You Sleep*; *Mientras duermes* would become the title of a psychological thriller scripted and directed by Balagueró two years later in a similar Barcelona apartment building). Once inside the apartment building that will be the locus of the rest of the movie, the plot quickly follows a standard zombie movie structure of the infected versus the uninfected, with the ranks of the former perpetually growing at the expense of the latter. Comparing [*•REC*] to a similarly claustrophobic zombie film from South Korea, Yeon Sang-ho's *Train to Busan* (2016), the latter also derives horror from the close quarters in which the uninfected are trapped with the infected. However, *Train to Busan* touts solidarity and self-sacrifice as the remedy for a zombie plague. The characters are carefully selected to represent all ages and social classes within the Korean ethnicity/nationality. In [*•REC*] there is little value attached to self-sacrifice, as first responders fall victim one by one. Unlike *Train to Busan*, there are ethnic differences that prove divisive, with a Japanese family initially targeted (wrongly) as the origin of the plague. Their neighbors loudly impugn the family's smelly raw fish as the cause of illness first exhibited by an elderly woman on an upper floor. Indeed, the first skull to be crushed is that of one of the Japanese characters, and unlike all who became infected in the course of the plot up to that point, she is not seen being bitten. [*•REC*] seems to both denounce xenophobia and ultimately confirm suspicions of the immigrants. Outsider status and contamination appear to go hand-in-hand; even the one doctor who is allowed to enter the building once the outbreak begins speaks with a Northern European accent. William J. Nichols detects the embedding of the 2004 attacks on Madrid (11-M) in the contamination being of a non-Spanish character (195). As mentioned, a Portuguese girl is the one who imports the virus, which is subsequently spread by saliva and detectable in the bloodstream.

Suspicion of social outsiders is coupled with suspicion of authority and of the pillars of society associated with Francoism. The Health Department promptly cordons off the building with plastic to quarantine the rescuers, TV journalists, and residents, trapping them with the infected. The police outside take aim at all doors and windows, and block off the adjoining street to ensure that all inside stay put. Being isolated from the outside world to deal with the spread of deadly contagion may bring to mind the situation for Spanish Republicans during and after the Spanish Civil War; bodies that cannot be removed accumulate throughout the building.<sup>10</sup> As more become infected, the first responders, reporter, and cameraman make their way up the stairwell toward the lair of the Medeiros girl, finding an attic apartment that was supposed to be vacant now has walls plastered with First Holy Communion pho-

tos, a large crucifix, a portrait of the Virgin Mary with the Sacred Heart, and cryptic yellowing newspaper clippings in several languages. An eight-track tape player spouts a back story involving the Vatican's condemnation of the girl, and the need to discover a vaccination for the plague she is capable of spreading. Although the source of infection is demonic possession, a scientific solution rather than an exorcism is sought, as apparently attempts at exorcising the evil have failed. [*•REC*] uniquely blurs the secular and the sacred to create a horror that is too supernatural to respond to modern medicine and methods of containment, yet resistant to liturgical and sacramental solutions as well.<sup>11</sup> The clergy, in fact, appear to have aggravated rather than abated this plague by abducting and isolating the first victim.<sup>12</sup> The unstated legacy of Catholic clerical pedophilia, in addition to the association of Catholicism with atrocities of the Civil War and Franco dictatorship, cast a shadow in the first [*•REC*] that will become broader in the sequel.

The inversion of the sacred becoming abject and execrable marks the [*•REC*] series from this first installment; so does the ambiguous critique of xenophobia in Spanish society. These two tendencies stand out further when compared to the nearly shot-by-shot remake of [*•REC*] in English for Hollywood distribution, *Quarantine* (2008).<sup>13</sup> The American adaptation makes no mention of a religious source for the pernicious onslaught. Instead of a foreign possessed girl being investigated by ecclesiastic authorities, the vague incupation signals a doomsday cult that has managed to break into a weapons lab in a remote area to extract an Armageddon virus. Religious iconography is therefore missing in the fifth floor apartment. Taking its place are lab rats, and a nebulous conspiracy between the medical and military industrial complex that has fabricated an uncontrollable virus of potentially worldwide impact. Militarized medicine usurps the place of religion, and this more impersonal origin is less conspicuous in general in the proceedings. *Quarantine*'s horror is therefore more banal, and also lacks the "real feel" of [*•REC*], despite its shared reliance on hand-held camerawork (often described as found footage).<sup>14</sup> Lighting and other production values are substantially higher, reflected in its budget being quadruple the size (\$12M, compared to under \$3M, although of course filming would have been less costly in Barcelona than in SONY studios of Hollywood).<sup>15</sup> Like [*•REC*], *Quarantine* begins in an actual fire station. In fact, *Quarantine* spends twice as much time in the fire station, establishing the playfully competitive personality of the TV show's emcee Angela Vidal. Whereas Ángela in [*•REC*] was played by an actress best known for hosting a top-forty hits of the week program, and the cameraman, who never appears onscreen, was the actual cinematographer Pablo Rosso (called Pablo in the first installment and Rosso in the sequel), *Quarantine* casts an accomplished scream queen (Jennifer Carpenter, of *The Exorcism of Emily Rose*), and an ac-

tor who makes a few cameos is credited as the cameraman. [*REC*] is monolithic about the male world of firefighters; two women who appear briefly in the fire station scamper off screen giggling, as though caught in a place where they don't belong. *Quarantine* has Angela question the absence of females among the crew, and challenge a male to a race, maintaining that she can do anything men can do. Her hubris may be interpreted as part of her undoing. [*REC*]'s Ángela doesn't engage in feminist discourse (she is content to poke fun at the self-importance of some of her male subjects). Once the call comes in for respondents needed at an apartment building, [*REC*] residents immediately blame the foreign-born family for the strange happenings, when the Japanese family is faulted for their culinary preferences. Ethnic blaming doesn't enter the discourse until much later in *Quarantine*, and it is met with skepticism by the more reasonable residents, who defend the African Muslim family who bring the required diversity into the building.

Like [*REC*], *Quarantine* derives some of its shock value from contrasting the beauty of the female lead with the ugliness of the zombie plague. This reaches an apex with the juxtaposition of Ángela against the ghastly Medeiros girl in the final frames of the original. A male actor plays the Medeiros girl, adding gender difference to the binary opposition of the two, who become two sides of the same monster. *Quarantine* avoids the transgender dimension by having a male actor play an ostensibly male entity who attacks in the darkness of the fifth floor apartment. The identity of the monster, as the cult member from Boston who used to rent the apartment, and who subsequently defected from the doomsday cult after becoming infected with a weaponized disease, is presented as mere pretext. In [*REC*] the religious source of the virus is essential since it opens the door to the sequels. The second *Quarantine*, therefore, completely diverges from the [*REC*] franchise to explore claustrophobic bioterrorism onboard a passenger plane and the surrounding airport.

Confinement to close quarters supplies the maze through which the uninfected run while fleeing the infected. It also guards against a spiraling budget, since it is easier to represent an epidemic inside of an enclosure than in open spaces, which would require a cast of hundreds, extensive CGI, or both (as was the case with *World War Z*). Within the walls of a Barcelona apartment building, Balagueró/Plaza located the festering remnants of Spanish National Catholicism, and placed them in play with xenophobia directed at new immigrants to Spain (in addition to the Japanese family, there is also a Colombian hairstylist). The position on outsiders fluctuates between revealing xenophobia as ignorant scapegoating, and placing the foreign alongside the religious remnants as sources of contamination. The Medeiros girl is and isn't foreign (being non-Spanish yet Iberian); the Vatican is and isn't foreign (being a separate country, but also the seat of the formerly official religion).



These Spanish-based dimensions that add flavor to [*•REC*] are lost in *Quarantine*, as well as the ironic/ludic non sequitur finale provided by the raucous rock song played over the end credits (*Quarantine* closes with less surprising sound effects of muffled sirens and helicopter blades). The profit motive of capitalism, and its effect of pushing the media toward sensationalism, is maintained in both the [*•REC*] tetralogy and *Quarantine*: “¡Grábalo todo!” / “Record everything!” rings like a commercial slogan uttered in all five films, urging toward revelation of truth as well as attracting viewers with the goriest details.<sup>16</sup> Balagueró and Plaza’s [*•REC*] 2 deepens the conspiratorial impact of the Catholic Church on the contamination.<sup>17</sup> A new cameraman replaces Pablo, killed at the end of the original, and this time the cinematographer’s surname Rosso supplies the moniker. Ángela the reporter is presumed dead, having been dragged out of the unmoving camera range of her dead partner and into darkness. Replacing the camaraderie of onscreen talent and cameraman in the first, the spotlight is on a stark, bug-eyed and English-accented investigator accompanied by a SWAT team. The new leader is a far cry from Ángela’s playful charm, as he barks orders, telling Rosso to shoot and not ask questions. The leader, at first termed a technician from the Health Department, is revealed to be a Catholic priest when he strips away his collar; his ruthless quest to obtain infected blood samples from the original infectee is similar to the robot scientist from *Alien* and the corporate representative from *Aliens*. However, Father Owen sacrifices his life rather than give the order to allow a possessed/infected Ángela out into the general population. Despite Father Owen’s insistence that the virus is akin to rabies (a possible carryover from references to rabies in *Quarantine*), Ángela was not bitten. Instead, the concluding flashback reveals that an enormous larva was deposited orally into her GI tract from the Medeiros girl herself in a monstrous symbolic rape. Ángela in her new state constitutes a resurrection of the original contaminant rather than an infectee.

The slower-moving [*•REC*] 2 concerns itself more with backstory and false authentication than did its more kinetic predecessor.<sup>18</sup> Much of this is intoned by the deadpan Father Owen. The spirit possessing the Medeiros girl is doomed to be a prisoner of darkness until Judgment Day; she is visible only with night vision eyewear. The exorcism incantation that proved efficient in *The Exorcist* forty years before has little effect on the Medeiros girl or those she has infected. The first priest sent to study and quarantine her was defeated. The demon who has possessed her is able to speak through the mouths of all those infected, which did not happen in the first film. The possession takes on a corporate structure, with the Medeiros girl functioning as corporate headquarters, and the newly infected as hostile takeovers, making infection the equivalent of branding. The weightier proceedings and authoritarian behavior

of Father Owen emphasize the church/state merge that still has Spain in a discursive frame determined by Catholicism, its clergy, rituals, and metaphysics. Having usurped the role of a public official and declared the church as being in charge of the mission, Father Owen must repeat orders to fire upon infected children, and the officers also balk at photos that seem to indicate attempts at medical exorcism of some children. The shadow of the Catholic clergy pedophile scandals, with the toll this has taken on trust between Catholic communities and their church, looms in the suspicion aroused in *[•REC] 2* of malfeasance toward infected children, including the Medeiros girl. The discovery of Father Albelda's body when it drops from the attic in a desiccated state is the abject remnant of unfinished business in historical memory in which Catholicism played a significant role.

With all inhabitants of the building already dead, *[•REC] 2* has a hard time generating new encounters for the priest and his SWAT escort other than with the infected and their destructive path. To infuse more opportunities, a trio of mischievous teenagers making their own video slips into the building. The xenophobia of the first movie directed at non-Spanish neighbors is replaced with an ethnocentric voice from beyond the grave that ironically proclaims Spanish cultural superiority. This is the fleeting but well-timed effect of a vinyl record playing in the apartment of an infected senior citizen: Concha Piquer sings "En tierra extraña" ("Suspiros de España" had graced the first film).<sup>19</sup> One of her hits from the before the Civil War, it relates Spanish people's nostalgia for Spanish things when abroad, in this case a Christmas Eve in New York City when party goers are brought to tears after tasting Spanish wine and hearing a *pasodoble*. The dreamlike chauvinism of the older generation comes to an abrupt halt as the needle is dragged excruciatingly across the vinyl. Hence, the xenophobic strain is perpetuated by the continuing evil presence of a possessed Portuguese girl, with the Vatican in hot pursuit, while Spanish ethnocentrism sounds an ironic note in a building that has been completely taken over by the evil from beyond Spanish borders.

*[•REC] 3*, directed by Paco Plaza alone, begins with the wedding of two appealing and typical young people, Clara and Koldo, in a historic town on the outskirts of Barcelona. The wedding context allows this film to play on the trope of the bride and deconstruct her sacred image, in much the same way that Buñuel did in *Viridiana*. The imprint of Buñuel does not end with the inversion of the sacred bridal image, but extends as well to the erudite incorporation of non-canonical Christian texts similar to Buñuel's loving resurrection of early Christian heresies in *La Voie lactée (The Milky Way)*. A movie that spends its first reel as an affectionate parody of wedding customs, against the background of 1970s and 1980s pop songs like Pablo Abraira's recording of "Gavilán o paloma" and Tino Casal's "Heloise," takes a turn into zombie

territory when an infected guest begins to spread the fast-acting virus with bites and vomit. The guest works in the veterinary clinic where Max from the first film, the infected dog taken to the vet, has apparently delivered the bite he nurses on his hand before going berserk. “Gavilán o paloma” provides meaningful key lyrics that will shape the proceedings: “Hay que ver como es el amor, que vuelve a quien lo toma gavilán o paloma” (You must understand what love can do; it turns all who accept it into a hawk or a dove.) The transformational quality of sanctified love will be a major ironic premise. A sacrament that should mark the threshold of new life instead initiates a descent into infernal suffering and grotesque doom, in an echo of José de Espronceda’s four-part Romantic poem *El estudiante de Salamanca* (*The Student of Salamanca*). The religious theme is introduced in the church wedding and continues as the grandmother pronounces the zombies traitors to their religion (“¡Apóstatas!”). Bride and groom are divided in the pandemonium and must embark on a quest to find each other. This quest has Koldo donning a suit of armor purported to be that of St. George the dragon slayer, while Clara teams up with the priest, whose incantations about Judgment Day appear to paralyze their adversaries. However, as in *The Omen*, although Catholic rites may possess the power to vanquish the evil, human limitations interfere.

The priest’s utterances reveal a scholarly intricacy that is on a par with Buñuel and his collaborator Jean Claude Carrière’s research into historical texts that made *La Voie lactée* an authentic engagement with heresy and heterodoxy from Priscillian through Jansenism.<sup>20</sup> Plaza’s script quotes from the Book of Judas, a second-century Gnostic gospel that was prohibited by the early Fathers of the Church. Judas and Christ converse in it, and it is revealed that Judas, far from being a traitor, was the only apostle to truly comprehend the Lord’s meaning; therefore he is part of the holy genesis, while the other apostles will sink into degradation. The priest references a passage about angels who abandoned their dwelling places and consequently were imprisoned for eternity; this explains the origin of the spirits inhabiting the bodies of the wedding guests and imperiling the bride and groom. Demonic possession was also interwoven into the cause of zombie infestation in *[•REC]* and *[•REC]* 2, but all infestation was considered to be a single malignant spirit spreading from a single source, the Medeiros girl. The third installment diversifies this into a legion of fallen angels. The Book of Judas had all but disappeared, and resurfaced only in the 1970s; *National Geographic* published an English translation of its Coptic text in 2006. Hence, the use of this rediscovered non-canonical scripture is theologically cutting-edge. As in Buñuel’s obsession with anathema, this scriptural fixation calls attention to the push-and-pull between Doxa and opinion that accompanies any time of social upheaval, according to Bourdieu. Clara and Koldo’s salvation, and ability to enact their own personal

genesis into the next generation (as Clara divulges that she is pregnant), appears certain until a grandfather with a defective hearing aid intervenes. Once again, an abject remnant from the twentieth-century Spanish legacy ropes the characters back into a world of horror. The metamorphosis of the bride into a Sigourney Weaver-style weapon-wielding heroine still insisting that this is “mi día” (my day), and finally, into the instrument of the groom’s destruction (like Elvira in *El estudiante de Salamanca*) completes the sacrilegious picture.

While some see *[•REC] 3* as a departure or detour in the *[•REC]* series, there are many reasons why it should be regarded as continuous with the whole tetralogy. While it is true that the wedding ceremony and reception make the background showier, the performative dimension of bride and groom blends well with their being protagonists of a reality show, in this case their wedding video, which quickly turns into a documentary of a wedding disaster. Before it is abruptly abandoned, the handheld camera footage alternates between an amateur guest (Adrián) and a paid professional videographer known as Atún, who works for Filmax, the production company behind the *[•REC]* series. Atún makes metafilmic remarks about *cinéma vérité* and Renoir, much as Ángela in the first film maintained a meta-documentary banter with her cameraman. This third film takes a self-conscious and ironic approach to recapturing the “real feel” of the original, though the found footage technique is discarded well before the survivor count boils down to the bride and groom.

Perhaps in a reaction to the showiness of *[•REC] 3*, the final film in the series is grim and spare. Set onboard a ship moored offshore, the use of CGI is introduced for long shots at the start and at the end; the latter also relies on digital animation for an underwater epilogue. The xenophobic element is supplied by an Asian cook, who is among the first to turn zombie and attack the rest. An elderly guest who managed to nap through the wedding reception is the carryover from *[•REC] 3*. Relatively little of the sacred backstory surfaces, as the medical research establishment becomes the primary human antagonist. Dr. Ricart is in charge of finding an antidote, and, like Father Owen in the second film, he needs blood from the original victim of possession (presumably Ángela, although it is revealed toward the end that the larva or worm had been transferred from her to Officer Guzmán while nobody was looking). Much of *[•REC] 4* feels like a dutiful trudge through the necessary plot twists that will lead to the desired outcome of Ángela and her rescuer (a nerdy technician named Nick) surviving while the rest of the crew is infected; the ship slides to the bottom of the sea, and the demon/parasite lives on as a worm that is swallowed by a large fish. The next step (though outside of the *[•REC]* franchise, which is promised to remain a tetralogy) will evidently be an ecological catastrophe arising from the source of all life, the sea.

A real disaster arises from the sea in *The Impossible*. Its reworking of the conventions of the Spanish miracle movie may serve as a counterpoint to films of religious horror. A rescue from the Indian Ocean tsunami of 2004 is portrayed as approaching the supernatural. In this way, the director Juan Antonio Bayona sought to transcend the horror genre of his earlier work and attain auteur status. Despite its independence from an iconography of organized religion, *The Impossible* partakes of the Spanish Catholic habitus in many ways. The Buñuelian imprint from *Los olvidados* (The Young and the Damned) may be found in the foregrounded bonding of a young son (Lucas) and his severely injured mother. This Madonna and son dyad reverses the traditional Christian *Pietá*, because the mother is visibly wounded and suffering while the son frets over and comforts her. As much of Western art going back to the middle ages testifies that physical suffering brings out truth from the subject, pain and weakness also elevate *The Impossible* to an aura of the miraculous, without any characters uttering a specific belief in God or in Providence having saved them. Instead, backlighting and hushed musical tones create a space for the supernatural. The mother is portrayed as being uplifted toward the heavens in a quasi-divine light while others sink to the bottom of the tsunami wave. This ascension toward the light is repeated when the whole family is airlifted to safety at the very end. The mother has been supine, in a *Cristo yacente* position familiar in Counter Reformation art, particularly from the baroque, when ostentatious physical suffering became a hallmark of the Catholic path to holiness. As in the approach of the Nativity, the husband of María feels he is about to be made redundant. Checking his Blackberry, he fears that he will lose his job in a corporate merger. He will in fact be taken out of the central narrative for much of the film. After María and her eldest son find each other, they also come upon a Baby Jesus figure, a toddler boy swaddled in straw as if in a manger amongst the tidal debris. They unwrap him, and he becomes their talisman. Halo lighting and low-angle shots continue to infuse the survival and rescue sequences with an ethereal mise-en-scène.

Once the mother and son find themselves in a makeshift hospital, bird's eye views compress the extensive wreckage and human loss into a single frame. This was the aftermath of Christmas for many of the vacationing families; María and her family had opened their gifts in the hotel. One of the presents was a bright red playground ball. The association with Christmas tree ornaments is unmistakable though unstated. Through this red ball, the father is able to locate the missing members of his family. The palm trees connect to Holy Land imagery, and the Dad and his boys have to wait on the floor for lack of space. In the swelling strings and minor key piano interludes of the post-rescue portion of *The Impossible*, an aura of miraculous timelessness dominates as there is an absence of all media culture including television and

popular music. Existence is pared down to its essentials in the wake of a natural disaster, laying bare the habitus of wash-out and halo lighting, low camera angles, and upward movements, mother-son dyad and *Cristo yacente*, that survives into a New Age configuration of spirituality.

Returning to standard apocalyptic fare, *Los últimos días* (2013) is a quieter and subtler entry directed by David and Álex Pastor. Like M. Night Shyamalan's *The Happening* (2008), the manifestation of doom is psychological, a panic that makes fear the victims' worst enemy. While the cause of the perplexing psychiatric malady is not directly tied to religion (a Pinatubo-like volcanic eruption exposed new pathogens from heretofore buried geological layers), a preoccupation with procreation and family ties fuels the fight for survival. The protagonist had been delaying having a baby with his longtime girlfriend as he sought stability in his career first. He is unaware that a corporate fixer from outside of Catalunya plans to fire him; ironically, as the social order disintegrates, he becomes a surrogate son to the executive, and translates from Catalan for him. Meanwhile his girlfriend is about to surprise him with the news that she is pregnant. His fear of parenthood runs parallel to the agoraphobia that soon paralyzes him and everyone else in Barcelona. Xenophobia runs strong as the protagonist discovers that a North African family now occupies his former apartment, where they are raising a child. Australian tribespeople are credited with awareness of secret knowledge of which citizens in the developed world are ignorant; the former thereby emerge on top in the new world order. When the couple surmounts their challenges and the pace accelerates in the final reel, the result is not quite post-human, but definitely post-industrial, as their son joins a tribe to begin a nomadic adolescence. Woman appears as a figure that puts man back in touch with the nature he has forgotten. The return to a pre-capitalist social order with pro-natal family values is posed as the answer to anxiety over Spain's low birth rate among natives (compared to the higher birth rate of immigrants), high unemployment, and insecurity about the environment.

Moving from action films of contagion, invasion, or contamination toward the interpersonal side of the apocalyptic spectrum (what might be termed supernatural melodramas, a major genre in the middle of the Franco régime), Jorge Torregrassa's *Fin* (2012) explores the fraying psychological stability sparked by a sense of impending doom. In Lars von Trier's *Melancholia* from the year before, an asteroid was on course to hit and pulverize planet Earth. *Fin* does not supply a cause when one by one people disappear from a reunion among old friends (pals from a youthful *pandilla*) as they share a cottage in the woods. *Fin* begins firmly rooted in the Catholic tradition, with St. John's Eve celebrations on the beach in Alicante alluding to the apocalyptic motif in the Spanish holy calendar (bonfires of purification), followed by a portrait

of the Avenging Angel from the Revelation of St. John. The visionary artist of the group, who is sensitive to what is about to happen, never makes it to the reunion, which he apparently planned in order to give them solace as the end sets in. Without him, they lash out at each other and blame him in paranoia. A film that is in apparent dialogue with Buñuel's *El ángel exterminador* (*The Exterminating Angel*), reversing its predicament of party guests who are unable to leave into invitees who leave against their will and spur those who remain on a journey that leads across some of Spain's most dramatic natural landscapes (locations range throughout Valencia, Catalunya, and Aragón, with some scenes shot in Madrid and Segovia), *Fin* seems to respond to the trend of claustrophobic horror with a yearning for wide open spaces that prove equally menacing. Quotation from Alfred Hitchcock's *The Birds* is conspicuous in the wildlife and pets that progressively turn on humans; there is also reworking of *Panic in the Year Zero*, Antonioni's *L'Avventura*, and the American ensemble film *The Big Sleep*. Religious moorings are never far, as the original plan of watching a comet shower known as St. Lorenzo's Tears becomes a trek that leads across the aforementioned natural scenery to an abandoned church replete with a sculptural *Cristo yacente* and St. Teresa of Ávila as well as a convincing full-body saint's relic encased in a glass coffin. The interesting premise of the movie, and its resonant mélange of cultural quotations, leads to one more when the two remaining characters sum up their travails with existentialist conclusions, then sail off into a mist reminiscent of Unamuno's *Niebla*. This final quotation may point to the ambitious killing-off impulse behind end time narrative in the first place: what Unamuno did to Augusto Pérez takes on a global dimension in apocalyptic film.

*Los días no vividos* directed by Alfonso Cortés-Cavanillas the same year on a smaller budget (and without an underlying novel as basis) also centers on a group of friends and a stranger as they face impending doom. In this offering, the end has been announced beforehand—as in *Melancholia*, a meteor will crash and burn up the entire planet. People post to social media such farewells as “Nos vemos en el otro lado” (See you on the other side), “Gracias por compartir este viaje conmigo” (Thanks for sharing the journey with me), etc. Money loses all importance, and the bar downstairs is free. We watch voyeuristically as a couple climaxes simultaneously during their last lovemaking session, and a man says goodbye to himself in the bathroom mirror, only to be interrupted by another who needs to take his last shit. There is the last supper, and a range of reactions to the apocalypse, from the preemptive suicide of a pregnant woman, a small-time drug dealer who uses up his inventory, a father and son in reconciliation, and a man who finds love, but will never learn that his new girlfriend is not the ex-nun she told him she was, but a prostitute. Repeating a motif from [*REC*] 3 and *Fin*, if the end is near it's best to meet it in a final embrace.

Unlike the more horrific and violent apocalyptic genre, which often associates foreign origin with the source of destruction, the supernatural melodrama focused on psychological and social reactions to the end of time notably avoids reference to immigrants living in Spain. In what may be a reflection of anxiety about the low birth rate of non-immigrant inhabitants of the Iberian Peninsula, it is as if only native-born Spaniards were facing the crisis. A clichéd impression of an Arab is effected by a clowning character in *Los días no vividos*, but this hardly counts as providing a subjectivity to a foreign-born character.

*3 días (Before the Fall, 2008)* directed by Javier Gutiérrez gives characters three days to sort out their lives before an asteroid impact. Set in rural Andalucía near Seville, gritty realism accompanies the dissolution of law and order, with prisoners being released in a spontaneous amnesty similar to those occurring at the outbreak of the Spanish Civil War. Upsetting the fragile peace in a place with many unresolved issues also suggests the legacy of Francoism and the Pact of Silence. It is almost as impossible to escape the grudge-bearing serial killer who is unleashed in the pre-apocalyptic chaos as it is the apocalypse itself. A movie that borrows heavily from *Night of the Hunter*, but with a contrasting hero protecting the children, *3 días* takes a distressing turn into torture porn involving children. The hero's mother quickly runs to the parish priest for protection, but is turned away. The film seems to assert that the end of the world is not what should be feared; our inhumanity toward each other is still the prime threat. The hybrid apocalypse/serial killer merge of *3 días* lends weight to the perception that serial killers are the most paradigmatic capitalist monsters of all (more so than zombies, according to David Schmid, 105). As El Soro goes about his grim work before his victims can be annihilated naturally, Annalee Newitz's assessment rings true: "Even as audiences learn about the profound violence to which alienated labor can lead, they are alienated from their own discovery. All that's left for us to do is consume these stories—again and again and again" (51).<sup>21</sup>

By the twenty-first century, former enfant terrible Álex de la Iglesia is now a veteran director. He had assembled a raucous parody of the religiously-themed apocalypse movie with *El día de la bestia*, but his devious priest who seemed at first a devil worshipper saved the day with a final exorcism that sent the evil back from whence it came. His *Balada triste de trompeta* also marked the vestiges of Catholicism as a source of gothic horror associated with lack of closure concerning the Civil War and the Franco years. With *Las brujas de Zugarramurdi (Witching and Bitching 2013)*, he returned to the appropriation of religious imagery for comedic and horror effects with a grotesque flavor. The opening displays a provocative montage of women who are celebrated for their leadership or artistry, or simply for being evil. Mata



Hari, Marlene Dietrich, Frida Kahlo are mixed in with Angela Merkel, Margaret Thatcher, Simone de Beauvoir, the Princess of Eboli, Dama de Elche, Venus of Willendorf, and serial killer Myra Hind. The film careens from the heist genre into the gross-out destabilizing farce or *pasada* (often practiced by Santiago Segura in his Torrente movies—and here he is cast as a transgender witch). A Puerta del Sol street entertainer portraying a living statue of Christ carrying the cross departs from his role to participate in a jewelry store heist. The silver clothing, crown of thorns, and metallic make-up he wears as he shoots at law enforcement invoke visions of the Second Coming. The Christ enactor is a divorced father who has brought his ten-year-old son along for the heist. This means not only police, but also his ex-wife are in hot pursuit before long. Consequently, the robbers decide on a route through Navarre on their way toward the French border. In a town they encounter a grimy old bar with equally shady locals, and then an opulent mansion inhabited by witches. The latter are descendants of the inhabitants who were persecuted by the Inquisition as the Witches of Zugarramurdi in the early sixteenth century.

What is meant as a purge of the Spanish black legend of intolerance through a parody Second Coming of the Redeemer turns into an ambivalent narrative about female autonomy and the relatively new freedom of divorce. The robbers are doomed, according to their driver, because the golden rings in their haul represent broken matrimonial vows, adultery, and couples who now hate each other. The Christ figure is suffering because he cannot get custody of his son, and his ex-wife has all but exiled him from his son's life. A backlash against women gaining the upper hand against men in real life is reflected in the over-the-top witches who literally cannibalize any male bodies that come their way. The movie gets lost in its own carnivalesque commotion, and cannot decide whether to purge Spain of its historic intolerance or start burning witches all over again.

The expectation of an apocalypse was built into Christianity with the Book of Revelation, and all permutations of Spanish filmic approaches to an end of time are laden with sacred overtones. Organized religion in the form of vestigial Catholicism is ubiquitous. Often, it is an abject remnant that harks back to unresolved issues of Francoism and the Civil War.<sup>22</sup> *28 Weeks Later* allows for the sanctity of motherhood to overcome the fury of a murderous virus, although this does nothing to arrest the overall spread of contamination. The [*•REC*] tetralogy carries over structures from the Spanish Catholic habitus into a twenty-first-century plague capable of ending life as we know it. The blurring of the secular and the sacred mirrors the legacy of Spanish National Catholicism, and is one of the foremost ways that Balagueró and Plaza remained true to their motto, “Think local; act global” (quoted in Lázaro Reboll 2017, 163). Unholy communion and monstrous resurrection enable the

transition from the first to the second film in the series. The second focuses on a failed exorcism. The third holds out hope for a clerical solution to a religious menace, informed by scriptural scholarship on a level with Buñuel's implementation of heresy in *La Voie lactée*, only to snatch away all hope at the last moment. It also provides ironic commentary on the sacrament of marriage, in a style similar to Espronceda's *El estudiante de Salamanca*. The fourth film concludes, perhaps rightly, by suggesting that ecological catastrophe is where we should expect the unexpected. End times films with a zombie theme also suggest threats to selfhood from economic instability, and their xenophobic streaks register reactions to immigration and global terrorism. The transition from being alive to being one of the undead in the Spanish zombie genre perhaps mirrors the swiftness with which the market economy can turn citizens into financial nonentities, with the added accelerant of the Spanish real estate bubble and banking crisis. In most of the action-movie treatments, being a social outsider is associated with contamination. *Los últimos días* instead proposes that Europeans follow the example of the new immigrants and other social orders from the developing world, in a context that has halted development entirely. The slower-paced interpersonal approach to filming the end time emphasizes facing it in solidarity with family and friends; this tends to occur in a monolithic setting devoid of the new immigrants. One difference between religion and horror of the twentieth century and now is the ineffectuality of ritual and dogma in eradicating the evil and averting destruction; connection to others takes the place of the security offered before by religion. Many films muster some version of "love conquers all" to greet total destruction with a semblance of human dignity (maintain *bios*, in Agamben's term); this may resonate with the sacred in the form of the Holy Mother or with the figure of woman as source of new life and link to nature. Meeting the apocalypse in an embrace is presented as important, as are renewal of ties and reconciliation with loved ones who had grown distant. The adaptation of the *cine con niño* into apocalyptic film is conspicuous; child zombies are everywhere, and preserving the next generation up to the very instant of a meteor strike is the motive behind *3 días. Fin* stands out for its externalization of much of the action; most representations suggest with their reliance on claustrophobia that fear of isolation and interior exile still lurk close to the surface. Buñuel (*El ángel exterminador*), Unamuno (*Niebla*), Espronceda (*El estudiante de Salamanca*), and Hitchcock (*The Birds*) resonate as inter-texts for these films. They stress that no matter how deeply the Book of Revelation is written into the habitus, interpretations will remain open until the last moment.

## Notes

1. David R. Castillo examines the relationship of the zombie trope to neoliberalism and environmental devastation (59).
2. Víctor Pueyo skillfully relates many plot developments in recent Spanish zombie, end of history, and haunted house films to the real estate bubble, banking crisis, and citizens' protest movements initiated in 2011 (154). There is an annual Zombie March in Madrid that commemorates the realization that the financial crisis in effect turns citizens into non-people (157).
3. Dona Kercher establishes the importance of Hitchcock for many Spanish and Latin American thriller directors, including those who got their start in the nineties (2); a similar prominence of the Hitchcock legacy is found in twenty-first-century Spanish apocalyptic film, thanks in part to the Catholic sensibility of the British director.
4. Milagros Expósito-Barea and Miguel Ángel Pérez-Gómez chart the end of the world motif in a precise prehistory, beginning with Mariano Ozores's *La hora incógnita* (*The Unknown Hour* 1963), and extending through films by José Ulloa, León Klimovsky, Jorge Grau, and others, in addition to those mentioned in the text above (93–94).
5. Antonio Lázaro-Reboll traces how the economy of sensibility and taste has evolved, from critical and scholarly dismissal to appreciation of Spanish horror; he accents the role played by film festivals, fanzines, and increased home/personal access through technological advances, beginning with the VCR (2013, 279–85).
6. Once the father figure joins the other side, *28 Weeks Later* becomes a child-centered narrative film, a type that began in earnest in the fifties and has been revitalized with the resurgence of Spanish horror, according to Sarah Wright (4).
7. For a detailed overview of the series, see Lázaro-Reboll's *Spanish Horror Film*, in which he singles out Jaume Balagueró the co-director of [*REC*] and [*REC*] 2, and director of [*REC*] 4, as one of the three most important Spanish horror directors at the time of writing. He names the other two as Guillermo Del Toro (whom some would not classify as a Spanish director) and Nacho Cerdà (2012, 234).
8. Sherryl Vint theorizes the twenty-first-century shift to high-speed zombies and nearly instantaneous infection in terms of Agamben's *zoe* (simply being alive) versus *bios* (fully human life, possessed of a spirit or essence), and Timothy Campbell's expression of the threat neoliberalism poses by making the market the arbiter between the two (136–37). From about 2002 (*28 Days Later*) onward, zombie movies reflect the swiftness with which the globalized labor market can cause us to “slip from the *bios* of being gainfully employed to the *zoe* of economically irrelevant biological life” (Vint 137). Pueyo likens viral development to a neoliberal strategy that instills fear of the kind of solidarity that would eventually result in the Indignados protest of 15 May 2011 (143).
9. A more folkloric, period treatment of diabolical possession predates *The Exorcist* in

- Spanish cinema: Adolfo Marsillach's adaptation of Ramón del Valle-Inclán's *Flor de santidad* (*Flower of Holiness* 1972) set in Galicia.
10. The horror produced is akin to that described by Jonathan Ellis and Ana María Sánchez-Arce regarding Guillermo Del Toro's two Civil War-themed thrillers: "Spanish citizens still live in a land of crypts full of child-eating monsters, forests of forgotten graves and wells that hide unspeakable secrets" (189).
  11. While Expósito-Barea and Pérez-Gómez are correct in identifying the religious alongside the surgical as leitmotifs in Balagueró's cinematic work (100), the sacred goes deeper than fetishism or concern with paraphernalia for shock value, as this essay hopes to demonstrate.
  12. Although this study is limited to the cinematic corpus, a comic-book prequel timed to coincide with the debut of [*REC*] 3, called [*REC*]: *Historias inéditas*, exacerbates the abuse that the Medeiros girl (herein called Tristana Medeiros) suffered at the hands of clergymen to include beatings and rape. Lázaro-Reboll details this and other offshoots of the [*REC*] franchise (2017, 162).
  13. [*REC*] went straight to DVD in the United States.
  14. Cecilia Sayed situates the introduction into mainstream horror cinema of found-footage documentary as a claim of veracity in *The Blair Witch Project* (1999), after which it would show up in the *Paranormal* series, *Diary of the Dead*, and many others (44). She states of this framing technique: "The image, we are playfully led to believe, is not artificially staged; it is the unmediated record of reality in the making" (63). While Anne Hardcastle is correct about the modernity and trans-nationality afforded by the found footage format, it is not exactly lacking in "Spanish flavor or style" (120), since it harks back to the found manuscript authenticity claims of Cervantes and the Cervantine tradition.
  15. Although *Quarantine* turned a tidy profit, it was panned by many critics, especially in Spain (Lázaro-Reboll 2017, 178).
  16. Jean-Claude Seguin's interpretation of "Record everything," based on a formal analysis, is intriguing: "All we are left with are the traces of what has been [ . . . ] The image has not only replaced us, but without it, everything disappears" (229).
  17. Shelagh M. Rowan-Legg notes the expansion of both religious and political ideology in this second installment (213).
  18. When Officer Larra is separated from his companions and confronts the zombies on his own, [*REC*] 2 briefly rekindles the frenzied spontaneity of the first [*REC*]. Few of the other sequences recapture the suspense or the "real feel" of the original.
  19. Icíar Bollain also selected "En tierra extraña" (In a Strange/Foreign Land) for the title of her 2014 documentary about Spaniards working abroad because of the economic crisis, which some of her compatriots blame on the influx of immigrants.
  20. By spotlighting Priscillian, a bishop of Ávila during Hispano-Roman times, Buñuel called attention to the first heretic put to death by Christianity once it became the dominant religion.
  21. Another hybrid end times film, *La hora fría* (*The Dark Hour* 2006) directed by Elio

- Quiroga blends dystopian post-apocalyptic famine with attacks by an invisible foe.
22. Non-apocalyptic Spanish horror is also sacred-laden, and accents the ineffectuality of religion in defeating evil. At times, it takes the form of a quick gesture, as in the St. Anthony medal passed from husband to wife in *El orfanato* (*Orphanage*), which established Juan Antonio Bayona in 2007. The medal only protects the heroine from her own inclination toward sin, not from the evil lurking in her habitat. *Orphan* (2009), filmed in Quebec by the Catalan director Jaume Collet-Serra with an American cast, has a sociopathic adoptee transferred neatly into a host family by unsuspecting Catholic nuns. Among the crudest of Spanish convergences of religion and horror is Luis de la Madrid's *La monja* (*The Nun* 2005).

## Works Cited

- Blake, Linnie. *The Wounds of Nations: Horror Cinema, Historical Trauma, and National Identity*. Manchester, U.K.: Manchester University Press, 2008.
- Castillo, David R. "Zombie Masses: Monsters for the Age of Global Capitalism." In *Zombie Talk: Culture, History, Politics*. David R. Castillo, David Schmid, David A. Reilly, John Edgar Browning. London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2016. 39–62.
- Ellis, Jonathan, and Ana María Sánchez-Arce. "'The Unquiet Dead': Memories of the Spanish Civil War in Guillermo Del Toro's Cinema." *Millennial Cinema: Memory in Global Film*. Ed. Amresh Sinha and Terence McSweeney. NY: Columbia University Press, 2011. 173–91.
- Expósito Barea, Milagros, and Miguel Ángel Pérez-Gómez. "El apocalipsis doméstico: el fin del mundo según Jaume Balagueró." *Altre Modernità* 9 (May 2013): 92–112.
- Hardcastle, Anne. "Why They Film: The Camera and Viewer Address and Found Footage Horror Films from Spain." *Mari* 108–123.
- Kercher, Dona M. *Latin Hitchcock: How Almodóvar, Amenábar, De La Iglesia, Del Toro and Campanella Became Notorious*. NY: Columbia University Press, 2015.
- Lázaro-Reboll, Antonio. "Generating Fear: From Fantastic Factory (2000–2005) to REC (2007–2014)." *Mari* 161–89.
- \_\_\_\_\_. *Spanish Horror Film*. Edinburgh, U.K.: Edinburgh University Press, 2012.
- \_\_\_\_\_. "The Horror Genre." *A Companion to Spanish Cinema*. Ed. Jo Labanyi and Tanjana Pavlović. Malden, MA: Wiley-Blackwell, 2013. 275–90.
- Marí, Jorge, ed. *Tracing the Borders of Spanish Horror Cinema and Television*. NY: Routledge, 2017.
- Newitz, Annalee. *Pretend We're Dead: Capitalist Monsters in American Pop Culture*. Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2006.
- Nichols, William J. "The Medium Is the Monster: Metadiscourse and the Horrors of Post 11-M Spain in the [*REC*] Tetralogy." *Mari* 190–211.
- Pueyo, Victor. "After the End of History: Horror Cinema in Neoliberal Spain (2002–

- 2013).” Trans. Megan Devirgilis. *Mari* 141–160.
- Rowan-Legg, Shelagh M. “Don’t Miss a Bloody Thing: [*REC*] and the Spanish Adaptation of Found Footage Horror.” *Studies in Spanish and Latin American Cinema* 10.2 (October 2013): 213–33.
- Sayed, Cecilia. “Found-Footage Horror and the Frame’s Undoing.” *Cinema Journal* 55.2 (Winter 2016): 43–66.
- Scarlett, Elizabeth. *Religion and Spanish Film: Luis Buñuel, the Franco Era, and Contemporary Directors*. Ann Arbor, MI: University of Michigan Press, 2014.
- Schmid, David. “The Limits of Zombies: Monsters for a Neoliberal Age.” In *Zombie Talk: Culture, History, Politics*. David R. Castillo, David Schmid, David A. Reilly, John Edgar Browning. London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2016. 92–107.
- Seguin, Jean-Claude. “‘I am an eye, I am a mechanical eye . . .’: The [*REC*] Series.” *Mari* 212–31.
- Vint, Sherryl. “Abject Posthumanism: Neoliberalism, Biopolitics, and Zombies.” *Monster Culture in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century: A Reader*. Ed. Marina Levina and Diem-My T. Bui. London: Bloomsbury, 2011. 133–46.
- Wright, Sarah. *The Child in Spanish Cinema*. Manchester, U.K.: Manchester University Press, 2013.

---

Scarlett, Elizabeth. “RECORDING the End Time in Twenty-First-Century Spanish Film.” *Writing in the End Times: Apocalyptic Imagination in the Hispanic World*. Ed. David Castillo and Brad Nelson. *Hispanic Issues On Line* 23 (2019): 184–205.

---